

ISSN - 1359-4893

Page 3 & 25

WANTED

Treasurer and
Egg Artist. (See
related pages)

Various Pages

**FAREWELL
TAFFY, WE
SHALL MISS
YOU.**

Page 3

**JUNIORS
XMAS PARTY**

Dec 28th,
Raunds,
Northants

£7.50



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Cover - Gingernutt as "Santa Clown"

Editor - Caroline 'Bubblz' Ainslie

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Hello, all you wonderful people! Well, I haven't written my article about South Africa.... Yet!

Just as well, since we needed loads of extra room to celebrate Taffy's inspirational existence which a few of us were lucky enough to have shared with him. Apparently Taffy had a natural sense of timing – well he used it to the end. He left us with just enough time to get most of the tributes sent in to him in the winter Joey. Please keep them coming in (we need pictures too). He was clearly loved and I for one am benefiting from reading them. It's OK, my virtual postman has a strong back!



In the meantime, the tributes and pictures in this Joey set the tone for a reflective time of year. A good man, a generous man, a truly caring man – AND funny! Something we can all aspire to being – except, if it's OK with you, I won't aspire to being a good MAN, I don't think Julius would be too pleased with that either!

We are having a Christmas Social for our Juniors and well, any excuse for a party really! It'll be great to catch up with everyone after the busy Christmas season and get a chance to play some party games (well, I LIKE party games!..... OK, they are optional). Pippa has generously offered to arrange it, so it is being held in a nice central spot. Traffic should be OK that Monday as well. See you all there!

I am very sad to have to tell you that I can't be your editor any more. I love you all and I love being in touch with you. I will continue to write for The Joey and encourage all of you to do the same. Stevie D has generously agreed to take on the whole task, so he will be your point of contact in future, although I will always be glad to hear from you if you have any ideas. I would like to sincerely thank all those who have helped me during my time as editor. Many hours and much love has been poured in by so many people. Thank you.

Finally, the perfect Christmas present for all clowns (second only to Gerry Cottle's Autobiography of course!):

“The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi: Laughter, Madness and the Story of Britain's Greatest Comedian” by Andrew Stott is now available at a bookshop near you

(or <http://www.amazon.co.uk>)

WANTED

TREASURER – Please send in your nomination form today. THANK YOU, Anco for all your hard work and for giving and caring SO much.

C.I. EGG ARTIST - Please let Bluebottle know that you are interested: secretary@clowns-international.co.uk

C.I. JUNIOR XMAS PARTY

Monday, December 28th 2009 (casual dress).

Christmas Social, all welcome to come and make a fuss of our wonderful Juniors

To be held in Raunds, Northants. Contact Pippa on 07940301865

More information will be emailed via the C.I. list. If you are not receiving emails from C.I., please contact Pippa direct so that she knows you are interested and can keep you posted.

**PLEASE NOTE: We are bringing the article submission deadlines forward:
JAN 1st - ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR SPRING JOEY - JAN 1st**

Hi all, I sit here on a dark night as the winds start to batter and the rain pelts down, wondering what is going on with you all.

Recently, Sonny and I attended an Equity-run protest outside Parliament regarding the latest legislations on entertainment licences; I won't bore you with the ins and outs but just to say it was a lovely sunny day and there was some wonderful entertainment by several song and dance performers.

What is happening to our world? It seems all we will be able to do is wave at passers-by rather than entertain, but let's not wave the wrong way or you will be in trouble.

It has been harder than usual obtaining work, then what with all new regulations and another company to register with as well as the CRB lot, there are small mountains building. I do believe in trying to cut out any bad people, but let's try and understand what we have to do.

In the last few days I have heard the sad news about our dear Taffy. I remember my first time with C.I. when I attended C.I.'s Southport festival back in the 90s, I had just started clowning and one of the magnets I was drawn to was Taffy. I watched intently at this gentle, slender, calm clown who had time for everyone. In fact I watched so much, that while he was carrying out a spot on stage, he shouted out in the middle of his act, "are you taking notes, Rainbow?" It got a laugh from me, because yes, I was - I was watching and listening to every move. Soon as years went past, I had the great pleasure in serving under him during his time as Chairman.

What a pleasure that was: he was so wonderful in dealing with all sorts of delicate situations, wanting to resolve every matter amicably, and what's more he did. I didn't as much like him, I loved him: Taffy as a human being should be an example matched by all other humans, and this would then make a much more lovable world to be in. Rest in peace dear man.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful Christmas and take care.

Love Rainbow



XMAS CAROLS FOR THE DISTURBED

1. Schizophrenia --- Do You Hear What I Hear?
2. Multiple Personality Disorder --- We Three Kings Disoriented Are
3. Dementia --- I Think I'll be Home for Christmas
4. Narcissistic --- Hark the Herald Angels Sing About Me
5. Manic --- Deck the Halls and Walls and House and Lawn and Streets and Stores and Office and Town and Cars and Buses and Trucks and Trees and.....
6. Paranoid --- Santa Claus is Coming to Town to Get Me
7. Borderline Personality Disorder --- Thoughts of Roasting on an Open Fire
8. Personality Disorder --- You Better Watch Out, I'm Gonna Cry, I'm Gonna Pout, Maybe I'll Tell You Why

Greetings From "Across The Pond"!

Greetings from Across the Pond



myself, two very different clown extravaganzas were the highlight of the summer for me...

On June 30th I made the 5 ½ hour drive from my home in Davenport, Iowa, USA to the Marriot Hotel near the Kansas City International Airport in Kansas City, Missouri. After checking into my room I made my way to the lobby to greet the 7 other clowns whom I knew would be arriving soon from as far away as Las Vegas and Los Angeles. We were all gathering to film a TV commercial!

Once everyone had arrived we met with the director, producer, and a few other folks involved in the project. We were introduced to them but there was absolutely no need for us clowns to introduce ourselves to each other as we had all worked with each other...somewhere, sometime...in the past. We had all worked for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus at one time too but not all at the same time. Over dinner we discussed a basic outline of what the commercial was all about, some ideas were thrown around for different shots, and everyone got a feel for what was in store for the next morning. After dinner we got our first look at the 1957 Morris Minor that would be our clown transportation in the commercial and then spent a few minutes figuring out which of the costumes we had brought with us would work best in the commercial. Even clowns need to coordinate their clothing!

Pickup...already in makeup and costume...was the next morning at 7:00 AM sharp. It was a quick 5 minute drive over to the economy parking lot of the airport (the subject of our commercial). As we arrived I was blown away to see approximately 35 people scurrying around...getting cameras in place, arranging lighting, prepping props, etc. Craft Services was putting out the first of several rounds of delicious foods. This was a top notch operation!

We filmed from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. with just a few brief rest periods...in the air-conditioned bus provided for us... while camera angles were



If your summer has been like mine you have kept yourself quite busy with the "usual"...as if anything we do can be considered "usual"... clown gigs. I have appeared at libraries, company picnics, grand openings, anniversary celebrations, summer camps, church socials, etc over the past 3 months. While all of these events have proven to be fun for both the audiences and

changed, we switched shot locations, etc...but none of us got tired-out in the least! It was such an amazing day and everyone we worked with treated us like gold! Add to this the fact that I was performing with friends I had not seen in quite some time was the icing on the cake for me!

Are you curious to see what the finished commercial looks like? You can see it if you go to www.youtube.com and type in "KCI Economy Parking TV Commercial"!



The other big clown gala of my summer took place just a few days ago...September 5th to be exact. On that day, two members of the local clown club (The Quad City Clown Troupe)...Bob "Mulligan" Smith and Karen "Flower" Smith...renewed their wedding vows in full makeup and costume in celebration of their 10th anniversary. As a matter of fact, the entire wedding party was made up of members of the Quad City Clown Troupe!

Both Bob and Karen have had an extremely difficult year health-wise. Bob has had heart problems and had 2 toes amputated due to complications from Diabetes. Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer and went through a mastectomy. She just finished her chemotherapy a week ago. With all of the sadness and worry that has filled their lives this past year, they decided that they wanted to renew their vows on their 10th anniversary in the happiest and most celebratory way they could think of...as clowns!

"Flower" looked delightful as the bride...carrying her flour sack rather than a bouquet of flowers and with her train...an actual wooden train...trailing behind her. Her Maid of Honor was "Hiccup" and the Bride's Maids were "Daizy Dee" and "Giggles". "Mulligan" cleaned up as well as he could...but there is only so much you can do when you are a hobo clown. He asked me to be his Best Man while "Sluggo" and "Doodle" were his Groomsmen.

Even the Pastor of their church got in on the act...turning the 2 ring ceremony into a 2 LINKING ring ceremony.

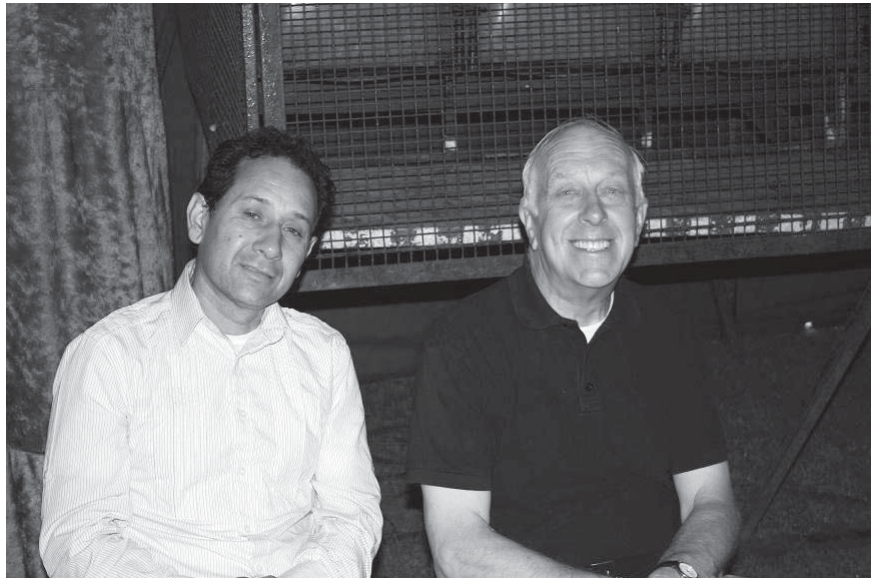
Afterward a reception was held in the church hall...a mingling of family, friends, clowns, and the media from two newspapers and one TV station that came to cover the unusual, but oh so meaningful, ceremony.

So now my summer has come to a close. Soon I will be getting back to my shows in elementary schools and fall carnivals....but first...well...I am off to China once again (my 5th trip in the past 2 ½ years)! I just signed the contract and I will be performing at a festival in Shanghai, October 1-8...but more on that next time.

Take care one and all...

"Toto" Johnson

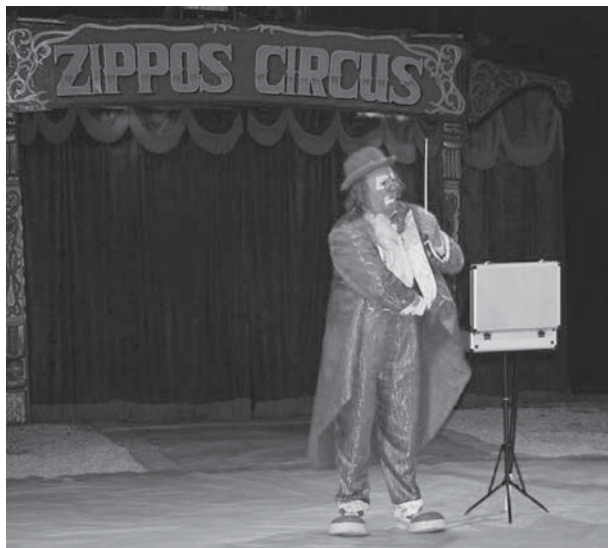
What a fantastic host our Hon. Vice-President Martin 'Zippo' Burton is. As one of the sponsors for the December 2010 "Frankie's Festiclown" Show in Monaco, he has allowed Clowns International to once again use his Big Top as a rehearsal and audition space and it does make a great difference performing in such a grand auditorium. All attendees enjoyed breakfast of coffee and tea with cakes and a lunch provided by Martin so a huge thank you to him.



The main sponsor, Francien Giraudi of 'Les enfants de Frankie', was there as well to join the judging panel. Several acts performed including Gingernutt and Conk. Bel (UK) and Denni (from Denmark) performed an act called 'Send in the Angels' which had me chuckling out loud. Ninetto (a new member of French origin) and Dr Quackers also showed their acts with magic and music showing the different disciplines which some clowns choose. All the acts seemed well received and advice and guidance was given to all the artists to help with developing their acts with a view to proceeding to Monaco next year.

What was wonderful for myself as an observer, was how friendly and welcoming Zippo's Circus staff and performers were. Norman Barrett, probably the most famous ringmaster in the world, and Pepino, a clown with Zippo's Circus, stayed and watched the performances whilst technical staff dealt with music and, of course, the catering. Also there were Clown Bluey (Director of the forthcoming show and our Festival Organiser); Chris Stone who was the prime mover in getting the degree of sponsorship from those he now represents in this project - Francien and Zippo's Circus (actually WOC Ltd, Martin Burton's Company); Rainbow (C.I.'s Chairman) and Arthur 'Vercoe' Pedlar.

A really enjoyable few hours were had by all who attended and the countdown to Monaco really has started! But remember, there will be one more 'try-out/audition' session at our "Circus Circus" International Clowns Festival in Bognor Regis next March, 2010, so if you would like to be considered for the show, or if you would like to be added to the list to go as a Mix & Mingle clown, that will be your last chance to register.



UPDATE NEWS:

The dates have been confirmed as Tuesday 14th December 2010, returning on Thursday 16th December (flying out early Tuesday, returning late Thursday). This will give all clowns plenty of time to get to any weekend Bookings.

All clowns will receive a memento for taking part in the event, and clowns in the show will have a chance to win The Frankie Trophy for 'Best Clown in the Show' as judged by Frankie and a selection of children. Francien Giraudi will be hosting a Gala evening in a

top Monaco restaurant after the Show on Wednesday 15th December.

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So don't be shy – put it in your diary now and let Clown Bluey or Chris Stone know you are interested in attending this once in a lifetime opportunity!

Martyn “Eek” Cooper C.I. PRO

(See C.I. Monaco Festival in this Joey for more information, Ed)

A reprint from an old Joey, just for you...

Being Nosey with . . . Ian “Taffy” James

How long have you been performing?

Since I was eight - 68 years.

Who makes YOU laugh?

Myself - and of course Laurel and Hardy. Stan Laurel's timing is absolutely great.

What's the first thing you would do if you won one million pounds?

First of all, I wouldn't want to win a million pounds at my age, but if I did, I'd see my family was OK and then give the rest away.

Which is your favourite prop and why?

Two favourites:

“Sympathetic Silks” - I get a kick out of it every time I do it and my “Silver Sceptre” which I get a lot of fun out of too.

What's the funniest thing you've ever seen in real life?

I see the funny side of everything.

Can you describe your worst ever performance and how you felt about it?

Oh God - my worst show was in a working-men's club - all the women were drunk. They didn't think I was funny. I gave up after 5 minutes and I was so disappointed I didn't ask for my fee.

What are you working on at the moment?

I'm working on my lectures to Women's Institute groups etc. about my life and work - and I love it!

If you had an extra pair of hands, what would you use them for?

To replace my old ones.

When and where did you give your best performance to date?

My last show.

Do you have any 'pocket philosophy' you'd like to share?

If you see someone without a smile - give them one of yours.

IAN "GINGERNUTT" THOM

Taffy.

Being a new member to C.I. when I joined at the "last" Bognor - before the break and coming back to Butlins, Taffy was well known and, I believe, the Chairman at that time.

My first proper sighting of him in action was in a circus show organised by Leon Lawrence where Taffy did a routine with a feather flower and a magic wand.

I asked him about it, and he happily said - use it! I did, and I still do to this day in my "as known" magic show, although not in the same manner, as I couldn't - and wouldn't, copy his style or patter.

His gentle style was something special, I also remember him lecturing on how he sits in front of younger and playgroup audiences putting on his make up - when he "sneezed" into his talcum and covered everything, including his face in a white dust - believe me, there wasn't a dry eye in the audience.

I knew him for years, just as Taffy, before I eventually found out we had the same name - Ian!

Taffy / Ian you have left a gap in our lives, and I know your new audiences will love you as we do.

Ian / Gingernutt



GARETH "BIPPO" ELLIS

I always found Taffy a very warm person when I was younger in C.I. I used to be very taken aback by a lot of the clowns but for some reason Taffy never had that effect on me. I can remember talking to him on many occasions and him giving me some very good advice which I still use to this day. A very kind man and an inspiration to me and others - I hope you're making 'em laugh up there Taffy!

*Feeling in the dark
about getting paid,
contracts, insurance and
other work stuff?*

*We shed light on it
all for our members*

Equity

www.equity.org.uk
mday@equity.org.uk ♦ 020 7670 0235

BARBARA "Dr. QUACKERS" COOPER

Dear Taffy,

Thank you so much for being you, you understood so deeply about the vulnerable side of human nature from your "social worker role". I loved how you projected HUGE respect for human vulnerability and enchanted me with your gentle caring clowning ways with young impressionable children, weaving into that clowning stories to empower, stories to point towards moral conscience and stories to bring a happy natural countenance. You engendered waves of delightful understanding both within my hurt tiny inner child, and also evoked within that new young adult clown, a confidence to find ways forward for developing the care and open heartedness within my own clowning.

Your life will continue to be a blessing within my heart, for sure.

I am really grateful for all your love and encouragement.

God Bless You,
Love Barbara

KARI "FLO" ROBINSON

A lovely gentle soul. I remember the first time he saw me in my char lady outfit he said 'You remind me of my dear old Mum', bless him



JOHN "FURRY FOOT" RIVERS

Many years ago, for two years running, I attended the C.I. conventions in Southport and had the honour to work with Taffy on both occasions. He gave me and my brother some great advice and constructive criticism, which we took on board and it really helped our work. At one of these conventions, Taffy gave a workshop on working with the under 5s and lots of the ideas he suggested, I adapted for my party work and still do to this day. The simplest of these was to bring putting on my slap into the act, so that younger children are not frightened of a clown just turning up, as they can watch the transformation done in a fun and interactive way. Many, many times I have been told that "this is a wonderful thing to do, as so and so was scared of clowns but was not at all scared of me", and each time, I have tipped my hat to Taffy and said a silent "Thank You".

At one convention we did some walkabout stuff together in a run down shopping centre, Taffy had his little barrel organ and was giving out his little stickers, "I have met Taffy the clown" Imagine his surprise when children started appearing with very big stickers that said Furry Foot's is bigger than Taffy's". I only had about 20 made just to amuse him.

Also, over the few other times I met Taffy, I really just enjoyed his company and stories as he was a true gentle man. May your God be near you Taffy.

Love and huge respect

John "Furry Foot" Rivers

Calendar of Events

Clowns International Events

December 28th 2009 (casual dress), C.I. JUNIOR XMAS CELEBRATIONS.
Raunds, Northants. Contact Pippa on 07940301865
Celebrate Christmas with our wonderful juniors.
More information will be emailed via C.I. list.

February 7th 2010 (in Motley). ANNUAL EVENT

Annual Grimaldi Memorial Service, Holy Trinity Church, Beechwood Road,
Dalston, London.

Participants arrive at 12.00pm noon, lunch (12.00pm-2.00pm) is provided. Service takes place at 3.00 p.m., followed by the traditional cutting of a Clown Cake and a Clown Show for the local children.

March 3rd – 8th 2010 “Circus Circus” International Clown Festival

at Butlin's, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. Our annual festival will once again include workshops and lectures for clowns, so book these dates in your diary and register now. (Registration forms in the Joey).

May 1st 2010 (in Motley) Birthday of All Clowns. Informal event at Zippo's Circus. Mid-day Photo opportunity/Press call and refreshments to celebrate “Birthday of All Clowns”. Venue place will be advised on our C.I. Website and in the Spring “Joey”.

August 2010 Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, Azores. Clown Festival within the Praia da Vitoria Summer Festival. Dates to be confirmed. A Registration Form and information will be printed in a future “Joey”.

December 14-16, 2010 “Frankie's Festiclown Show” for Les Enfants de Frankie Charity, Monte Carlo [Performance day 15th only]. Other days for travel to and fro and technical rehearsals in this very large 4,000 seat Chapiteau/Big Top venue.

See write-up articles in this magazine. For further details, please contact Festival Organiser Clown Bluey tel 023 80873700 or Francien Giraudi's Representative Chris Stone tel 01202 301602

Popular Annual non-C.I. Events

January 1st 2010 (in Motley) New Year's Day parade.
Contact Conk for details.

July 2010 (in Motley) The Amazing Great Children's Party
Children with Leukemia, Battersea Park, London.
To attend contact: 020 7404 0808; info@leukaemia.org, www.leukaemia.org

Other Clowning Events

September 2010

Kidology, Wolverhampton, Weekday convention for children's entertainers

May 2010 Punch & Judy Mayfayre, Covent Garden. London

May 2010 Danish Clown Festival,
expanding geographically around Southern Fyn Island.

To attend contact Jo Jo: mail@clownjojo.dk www.klovnefestival.dk, www.clownjojo.dk

May 31st 2010, in or out of motley. (Annual event)
Clowns attend Joey Grimaldi's graveside to commemorate his life. Contact John
"Frosty" Cooper. frostini2000@yahoo.co.uk

Other Clown Festivals:

Monaco: www.veress.se/montecarlofestival.htm, www.festiclown.com,
Denmark: www.clownfestival.dk,
USA: www.clowncamp.org, www.clownfest.com Spain: www.magiclown.org

Clown Training:

London, mime at www.playful-clown.co.uk.
Bristol, circomedia.com; Bristol, www.circusmaniacs.com; London,
www.thecircusspace.co.uk; London, www.contemporaryclowningprojects.com;

Do you have a date's page you want to have included in the Joey?

Let me know:

editor@clowns-international.co.uk

New Year's Day Parade Important Changes

If you are thinking of joining with us for the New Year's Day Parade on 1st January 2010 please get in contact with me, **Conk the Clown**, because if you turn up on the day at the Houses of Parliament, Westminster at 12 O'clock you will be disappointed, since there has been a change to the route.

I am waiting for the events people to get back to me with the new route. Please phone or e-mail me and I can tell you more about it. Conk.

Tel: 01217487862 or Email membershipsecretary@clowns-international.com

EGG ARTIST REQUIRED

This month sees the well earned stepping down of Kate Stone, after 15 years of producing eggcellent registration eggs of your clown characters. So we need a new egg artist, do you know someone who could do it? If so contact the secretary as soon as possible.

What do you call a man who claps at
Christmas?
Santapplause !

Who delivers presents to baby sharks at
Christmas?
Santa Jaws!

Twinkle Twinkle chocolate bar
Santa drives a rusty car
Press the starter
Press the choke
Off he goes in a cloud of smoke !

AGM POSTAL VOTES

Postal votes should be applied for no later than Sunday, February 21st 2010 (14 days prior to the AGM) and returned to the secretary no later than Sunday, February 28th 2010 (7 days prior to the AGM).

Secretary: Tony 'Bluebottle' Eldridge, 26 Sherwood Road,
Barkingside,
Ilford, IG61 1BL
secretary@clowns-international.com

NEW YEAR'S DAY PARADE

This is your last chance to book to take part in what is the largest parade of its kind in Europe. The New Year's Day Parade gives C.I. the chance to show the good side of clowning and we are the only group allowed to make a charity collection apart from the official parade charity.

We need to make an impression and as many members as possible are needed to take part and to act as collectors.

Please fill in the form below or email Conk on dave@conkthec clown.co.uk

To Conk

193 Shard End Crescent, Shard End, Birmingham. B34 7RE

Name: Membership No:

Address:

Tel No: Number of Clowns:

PLEASE NOTE ONLY THOSE RETURNING THIS FORM WILL BE ENTITLED TO EXPENSES.

**PLEASE NOTE: We are bringing the article submission deadlines forward:
JAN 1st - ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR
SPRING JOEY - JAN 1st**

JOEY ARTICLE DEADLINES

Spring Issue (posted March)	1st January
Summer Issue (posted June)	1st April
Autumn Issue (posted Sept)	1st July
Winter Issue (posted Dec)	1st October



Your Photos

I first met Taffy 25 years ago when I started clowning – he took me under his wing, at least that's what it felt like. I knew little about clowning then, and looking back, even less about life. Taffy taught me lots of things – not in the form of a lecture – just listening to him made me feel like I wanted to be a better human being.

He lived down the road and we shared many late breakfasts in a variety of local cafes over the years. It was always a pleasure to visit too – always something new to show, a routine being worked on, a new prop with infinite possibilities for having fun with an audience – exchanging perspectives on all manner of things.

In the mid 80's he invited me to see a show he was doing in a local school – 60 minutes' entertainment lasted an hour and a half and the audience were screaming for more – I was in awe. A year or so later, having developed an act, I returned the invitation and asked him for some advice after the show. It was the only direct advice he ever gave me and I'm sure it was only because I asked for it.

The advice, encouragingly put: if you ask the audience a question, wait for them to answer before you carry on. A simple reply but it had an enormous effect – he was talking about humility and respect for others: qualities he had in abundance.

At our International Clowns' Festival in Weston-super-Mare we shared a room. I came in full of energy and a bit stressed from the afternoon's PR activities to find Taffy lying on his bed relaxed and smiling. He too had had a busy afternoon.

There had been much disquiet amongst several CI members about something-or-other and he had spent his time quietly encouraging people to reflect on certain things. The details are long forgotten but hearing the story left me with the memory of having had a Master-class in diplomacy.

He was mischievous too, with a quick wit.

On the morning of his second hip-replacement operation the consultant surgeon visited Taffy's bed-side and routinely and dismissively asked for permission to keep the part of the femur bone which was to be removed and use it for research purposes. When Taffy gave him an emphatic "NO!" the surgeon was taken aback and enquired, "Why ever not?" Taffy's reply, "Because . . . I've already promised it to the dog."

Readers of the 'Being Nosey With' column will be reminded of Taffy's response to the question:

Do you have any 'pocket philosophy' you'd like to share?

If you see someone without a smile - give them one of yours.

Taffy, when I go – I hope it's to the place where you are.

Friend, diplomat, mischief, entertainer, loving family man: gentle man.

Paddy

TREASURER REQUIRED

Our Treasurer, Chris "Anco" Fincham, has indicated to the committee that she will not be standing at the next AGM.

The committee is therefore looking for someone to take over. If you feel you could take on this responsible position as Treasurer for C.I. then please let our Secretary know and submit your nomination form (on page 25) by January 1st 2010.



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It's not too late to sign up for this fantastic opportunity for clown members to participate in this super, prestigious event in December 2010 - a chance to experience clowning in Monaco as well as supporting a very deserving charitable cause.

Our PRO (Martyn "Eek" Cooper) has described the last round of auditions at Zippo's Circus in this Joey and the last chance currently planned, to audition for a performing spot in the show will be on Thursday March 4th 2010 (Date to be confirmed) at our annual festival Circus Circus.

If this is the first you have read about this event, please refer to page 44 in the Autumn Joey. In brief; The EVENT will take place in December 2010 at the 14th "Noel de Frankie" event at the Chapiteau de Fontvieille (the famous permanent venue of the world famous Circus Festival each January) and within that December event, "Clowns International" members have exclusively been invited to stage a show for the charitable purposes of entertaining some 8000 needy children over two shows.

The auditions are for those who wish to take part in the gala show, we also have some places for front of house, mix and mingle and caring clowns for visits the day after the gala show.

There is an opportunity to participate for all Clowns International clowns.

Blue Brattle will produce the Clowns International show

SPONSORS

a] CLOWNS INTERNATIONAL are providing the Producer of the Show and encouraging all the necessary clown performers to attend including clowns who express an early interest to fulfil Front of House duties, which will be needed as well. As up to 30 clowns can and will be accommodated, those participating clowns will also have the opportunity of visiting a local hospital, OAP Homes etc as required by the organisers.

b] WOC Limited trading as Zippo's Circus, has offered through their Company Secretary - Chris Stone - and the generosity of Martin Burton the owner, to provide on several occasions a London audition space and refreshments. www.zipposcircus.com Zippo's Circus has generously hosted the two audition days so far.

c] Madame Francien Giraudi has asked Chris Stone to represent her organisation "LES ENFANTS DE FRANKIE" - founded in 1997 as a Monegasque Association [see www.frankiemonaco.org] in providing the sponsorship being offered:

- i) Free transport to and from Nice to Monte Carlo.
- ii) Free hotel accommodation with continental breakfast at the Hotel de France or similar on the basis of two clowns sharing for the anticipated two night occupation.
- iii) Free food during the rehearsal and performance days.
- iv) Chris Stone to co-ordinate the delivery of all the sponsored items to the attending clowns.

ACTION REQUIRED

Those wanting to be seen for performing roles should attend the final March Auditions: Those Acts who have already auditioned are asked also to attend again, so that Bluey and Francien can continue to monitor their progress following advice given previously.

Those Clowns wanting to perform Front of House, and/or take part in hospital / OAP visits etc should contact Chris Stone on 01202 301602 who will describe what is likely to be needed. He will maintain a list and will, before the 2010 AGM in March, announce those chosen for the December 2010 event. It is a possibility that Bluey, the Producer, will require all clowns attending to be part of the show in some form (for example in a Grand Opening March-in or Finale – tba).

DURATION: 14-16 December 2010

This event will occupy three days in December 2010 – which will give everyone time to fulfil Xmas bookings the following weekend. A full programme will be published in 2010.

FLIGHTS

All participants will fly together from GATWICK early morning to arrive mid morning in NICE. They will all travel back together from NICE to GATWICK. These allow good organisation of the group. If anyone needs to travel separately then they need to advise Chris Stone and try to be at NICE airport at the arrival time of the group so that they can be transported as part of the group to Monaco.

REGISTRATION

A registration of £100 needs to be paid to CLOWNS INTERNATIONAL around February 2010 so that funds will be ready after the final selection Auditions March 2010 at “Circus Circus” in Bognor Regis. The major part of the registration will be used to pay the Easyjet airfare. Once the airfare is booked any excess over the fare amount will be treated as a non returnable Deposit Contingency. Any clowns cancelling for whatever reason shall not be entitled to any refund once the flights are booked, as they cannot be redeemed.

We will need details of the legal travel information of all participating clowns to speed the ultimate booking so please make sure Chris has you correct your passport details and check that it will be current after December 2010. The deadline for this is February 28th 2010.

Any queries at this stage can be dealt with by Chris Stone on 01202 301602

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS CHANCE TO CLOWN IN MONACO! TELEPHONE CHRIS STONE TODAY, OR ATTEND THE AUDITION AT BOGNOR.

Monaco 2010 Registration form

Clown name:

Clowns international membership number:

C.I. membership expiration date:

Name (as it appears on your passport):

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Passport information (now required by law or the airline will not permit travel):

Passport number:

Date of Issue:

Expiry date:

Country of Issue:

Nationality:

Date of Birth:

Your £100 deposit, made out to Clowns International, will be required around the end of February and will be paid direct to the C.I. Treasurer. In the meantime, please fill in the above form and send it to:

Chris LO Stone, 207 Queens Park Avenue, Bournemouth BH8 9HD
to make sure that Chris knows that you want to go.

The period from 1980 to 1984 was a very busy time with crafts and just enough variation of jobs to keep me fully employed and happy. It was very heavy work manually for Deena and I, in so far that every outing was rather like moving shop. The hours were very unsociable too. Just as it had been with the Sausage and Egg acts, it was often very early rising with long journeys. But at least then, my beloved wasn't dragged along every time we had a date.

Now we only had ourselves to get up and go, unload, carry in, set up, work all day, then reverse the procedure before we got home to cook and eat a slap up-meal, before crawling up to beddy-byes. If we'd had a good day, the 'good day' feeling stayed with us right up until we dropped off to sleep. If we hadn't had a good day it seemed a heavy price to pay for the privilege of being self-employed.

The carting around of sixteen hundred different names and sculptures was not to be lightly undertaken. Often we would have parking problems. Even if you could find a space, the venues were nearly always in a high tariff region. Charges were skyrocketing. A bigger problem often was the journey from van to table, which seemed in many cases more demanding than the assault courses of my army days.

A new customer requiring my red nose came onto the scene about now. Court's the furniture people. It was a kind of mix and mingle in store on special promotion weekends and bank holidays.

I went prepared with short games and drawings to supplement the large reservoir of plastic balls that the children were romping about in, during normal shop times. The larger stores were increasingly seeing the wisdom of giving the children something to do so the sales assistants could tackle the parents unhindered. The plastic balls were also a sign someone in the toy market saw a niche for their products. Plastic for toys was the new material that was to dominate in their manufacture.

One of the very early companies for whom we used to do the works parties in Wales was Mettoy. Their primary material was metal, as befits their name. As well as our fees this firm always provided Christmas toys for our two children as well.

This work in the furniture store helped this entertainer a lot. With children of all



ages, temperaments, size and abilities to entertain, between my offerings and their inclinations it worked well. I enjoyed my stints with Courts, over quite a long period in their different stores. Pleasant places to work in, well paid, and promptly too. I would have liked to have indulged in their merchandise, but there wasn't much chance of that owing to our precarious way of earning a living.

I am always reminded of my mum's first purchase of a new piece of furniture, a Berkeley armchair, when I was nineteen. Strangely enough it was an armchair that was one of our first buys when we got married, but it was nothing so grand as mum's. After the war everything was controlled materials wise, and carried the government logo, 'Utility'. Thus the wooden arms of our new chair were bare. It was still very comfortable though and it was years before it finally left the Brooks' home.



clown and carpenter. She herself also had a very special combination of talents, being a retired dancer, and a former member of the world-renowned dancing troupe the Bluebelle Girls of Paris.

Sylvia had taken a series of photographs to accompany her article. In one she had me reclining in a deck chair in our back garden, very comfortably thank you, umbrella aloft, size thirty-two boots to the fore, and a smile on my face that almost made me look handsome. I expect you can guess which of these shots I used to paint a self-portrait with. I show it wherever our group exhibits even now. Anyway she got published and it duly got noticed I was a carpenter clown.

Each year, The Woodworker held a wood carving competition. That year the subject was 'clowns', and so my picture was on the front cover with Sylvia's words.

The Woodworker Show was held in the old Wembley Conference Centre. At this moment in November 2006, it was in a state of metamorphosis, in due time to rise again with as a centre befitting the twenty-first century with a brand new stadium to boot.

I exhibited myself a few times at the Woodworker Show. It was always a joy being looked at by fellow craftsmen and wood enthusiasts during opening times. Some were from overseas. I have snaps taken by these folk of me and my stand, with some very complimentary remarks made of my works.

One year I got there with no voice. A cold had put paid to my vocal chords. Some unkind people would say, out of hearing, I'm glad there's something that will shut him up! But it was got over by a series of messages on cards and the help of neighbourly crafts workers. This was prior to me coming to terms with the fret saw from Eileen, so at that time I had no fun names or any workings with plywood. Most of my work was in pine.

All my pine products were finished in varnish to protect them and bring out the colour of the wood grain. There were two main manufacturers. Ronseal and Ruskin's.

While at this show a gentleman came over and spoke to me. He was very complimentary about my work, and I in turn extolled the virtues of Ronseal as a finishing agent. Later I saw the same gentleman on an exhibition stand. It was Ruskin's, Ronseal's rival. I realised I had been talking to Mr Ruskin himself. A few years later I did start using their products in my other calling of prop making. And very good stuff it is too. It was very nice meeting him though.

On returning home from one such event I became very worried. Whilst driving back I realised I was not at all well. What with cramps, aching joints and stiff and painful fingers on both hands I reported to my GP, a Doctor J. McLaughlin, who has looked after me since we moved to Middleton. He sent me to see a specialist in Worthing. He confirmed what was already suspected. It was rheumatoid arthritis. There are several kinds of this disease that attacks various joints and causes painful inflammation. I had the kind that attacks the hands.

When I was in hospital with a damaged knee after falling over, many years ago, whilst running behind buses and lorries, the doctor told mum I had rheumatism. It seemed a bit out of place then. I was only twelve. Now it seems the early signs were already showing. A treatment of steroids followed and luckily I responded. However, much worse was to follow for our younger son Michael. For us, it was the beginning of our darkest and most worrying time.

Michael and his long time partner Hazel, were about to go on holiday to Greece when Hazel, always observant where Michael was concerned, noticed that a mole on the left side of his face had changed. Thankfully she insisted that Michael had it removed before they went away. We are eternally grateful for her persistence, because on their return from Greece, a letter awaited him to report at once to the hospital.

From there it was a roller-coaster of despair and worry for us all, as it was a particularly nasty form of cancer, and a big operation was duly performed. This was not completely successful, and the ensuing very big operation, which saved his life, was performed by a fantastic surgeon, who will always be our hero.

Many months of convalescence followed, waiting for the scars to heal. Hazel was told that with due care and watchfulness Michael would be alright. Thus it was that life took on some sort of normality again, in spite of a few scares spotted in time by the wonderful Hazel.

They are fortunate to have two lovely girls, Tina and Casey, from Hazel's first marriage, and their supporting help, especially from Tina, the youngest, who has always regarded Michael as her 'Pa', has been invaluable.

Back to my troubles again. Being washed by another person, armed only with a flannel, was no real solution. I longed for a bath. So it was decided we would try. I got in alright and I got a similar feeling I had from an experience whilst in hospital a few years before. Complete and utter relief plus the water was lovely too. Then I had just had an operation for haemorrhoids, commonly more known as piles by the ones who couldn't spell it.

My first bath after surgery was a relief that was way past explanation. The nature and the whereabouts of the operation put an end to nature's habit of relieving itself whenever necessary of excess flatulence. The warm water unleashed the pent up pressure likened only to letting a car's tyre down. I seemed to shrink a further three inches lower into the bath. This settling down, ever so gently, produced a look on my countenance of such sheer joy, and relief, I have the feeling many would volunteer to be in the same situation just to experience it.

However, I had just managed to get into the bath virtually unaided, but it was quite another tale getting out. With sore joints and no grip left, I was immovable. My poor wife was very much aware of the fact that her beloved had become a thirteen stone slippery ailing person who denied all her efforts to be prised out of our lovely Victorian cast iron piece of bathroom furniture. Normally water would lubricate movement and be welcomed for this quality, this time being wet worked against us. Letting the water out plus diligent rubbing of towels found me nearly dry but still stuck. With the various strategies we tried it was over half an hour before I was set back on terra firma again. So for quite a while, until my grasp returned, it was back to the flannel and calling out for my back to be washed.

The fact that steroids came to my rescue was not the ideal solution to my problems by any means. Having a serious condition requires using heavyweight measures in tackling it. The strong measures used to gain control again now had to be phased out. So a period of withdrawal was needed, otherwise the drastic treatment itself might begin to cause problems in other organs. It turned out to be a very difficult process, for me anyway. Halving the dose for a while, then halving that further, and so on, took months. Now and again warning signs meant going even slower. But, and it was a big but, I had the use of my hands back, free of pain.

Over the years now, except for the occasional flare up, I have enjoyed good health again. I am now ticking over nicely on a very low daily dose of my powerful ally, steroids. I have nothing but praise for the N.H.S., and the care given by the medical staff.

We visited some very famous and well known places during this period. Another historic fair we did was at Penshurst, Kent. The event was organised by the local scouts, although the significance of this was not fully taken on board until we found ourselves under canvas, in good scouting style, and not in the welcoming portals of the stately home.

Further into Kent we did a couple of years at a hop festival. Seeing the oast houses I incorporated them into my designs and was rewarded with several commissions from customers who chose name sculptures which included this feature, a reminder of their beautiful county.

Whilst growing up, there was a time when large numbers of working class families regularly holidayed in the Kent hop fields, picking hops and getting paid for it. Quite a few were from North Kensington, where I grew up. The camaraderie of these gatherings was also a big draw for them. There are not a lot of places where a group of cockney types could mould into an enjoyable shindig. And the hop picking attracted all sorts.

Most of the historic houses we saw possessed a beauty all their own, built in wonderful countryside when their owners didn't much have to tolerate the planning laws and regulations of today. It was the classic case of 'if you owned the fiddle and the fiddler, you would certainly choose the tune'. The wealthy demanded excellence and could afford to employ the best artisans. A proud statement to the talents of the past.

One such stately pile house we went to was Longleat. We were put in a large marquee in the grounds, overlooked by the house and within sight of the lake. It was a perfect setting. If you had to walk there from outside the estate you needed to allow plenty of time. The grounds seemed vast to me. There was no shortage of customers though, they had already paid to see the house and we were an extra free attraction, similar to the ferry jobs.

Early one morning a tall person from the estate came and had a look at what we had to offer. It was the late Lord Bath. He was attracted to my work and requested me to do a sculpture for his wife Virginia, and his daughter Silvi. After he gave me all the details of what he would like included in my designs, he paid me I remember, with two old crumpled and well handled pound notes, then left. Virginia was very fond of King Charles cocker spaniels and if possible 'could he have some reference to the dogs along with the name'? He also left the design for Silvi to me.

In due course he received my designs and once selected I got on with it. There was one hiccup. His lordship rang me to tell me I had spelt Silvi in my designs with a 'y' instead of an 'i'. I changed the design accordingly.

Having three 'i's to deal with in his wife's name, Virginia, I carved a small cocker spaniel's head on one of them to represent the dot of the 'i'. My commission completed, I posted both sculptures to Longleat. Within days I had received a cheque and my invoice back, bearing a hand written message stating,



'Thank you, very satisfactory, Bath'. July 8th 1981.

I was increasingly being asked to give talks on my woodwork. The first was for a meeting of Women's Institute area delegates. Then followed two more for the W.I., one in London, and another in the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill. It struck me that other W.I.s might also be interested, including those much nearer home. It transpired that one had to audition to get on the list of approved speakers. Off I went to Chichester and demonstrated my prowess to the local selection committee, and was put on the list. You don't have to hold your breath whilst awaiting an engagement as the W.I.s often booked a year in advance. The pay is negotiable and reasonably prompt in coming.

My antenna went up a little higher and I added other subjects to my offer. In the end my 'how I earned a living as a clown' seemed the most popular. Others on my woodwork and 'how to become a lightning sketch artist', did not get quite the same response.

The W.I.s had a strict rule that forbade pressurising members to buy things. Here arose a snag. Showing my woodwork provoked a lot of interest and led naturally enough to enquiries to buy. My solution was to hand out my card if requested that could be followed up after the event. This proved to be an acceptable compromise and I sold a number of pieces that way.

On one journey to a meeting Worthing way, I had transport trouble. I had to get a taxi to finish the journey, arriving late. Luckily the talk was well received, except that the order of the day was upset by my delay. The all-important tea and biscuits became somewhat dislocated from normalcy. My causing this was akin to committing a cardinal sin.

WIN A ONE YEAR JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP TO CLOWNS INTERNATIONAL.

All welcome to enter.

Do you know any young people that might like to join C.I? Give them this page to colour in and enter the competition! They do not have to be a member to enter. They do have to be under the age of 16 on January 1st, 2010.

Send the competition entries with completed name, address, age and phone number to: David "Conk" Vaughan, 193 Shard End Crescent, Shard End, Birmingham B34 7RE
Or scan and email them to editor@clowns-international.co.uk

Entries must be received by February 1st 2010. The winner will be announced in the Spring Joey.

Last Issue Winner was Jordan Vigay (age 8 years) of Portsmouth



Xmas Quips for Kids

‘alf-‘itched, garnered, borrowed, nicked by Clown Bluey

What did Adam say on the day before
Christmas ?
It's Christmas, Eve !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Wenceslas
Wenceslas who ?
Wenceslas train home ?

How do you make an idiot laugh on
boxing day ?
Tell him a joke on Christmas Eve !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Snow
Snow who ?
Snow business like show business !

What do you have in December that you
don't have in any other month ?
The letter "D" !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Wayne
Wayne who ?
Wayne in a manger... !

What does Father Christmas suffer from if
he gets stuck in a chimney ?
Santa Claustrophobia !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Donut
Donut who ?
Donut open till Christmas !

What do you call a letter sent up the
chimney on Christmas Eve ?
Black mail !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Oakham
Oakham who ?
Oakham all ye faithfull... !

Who delivers cat's Christmas presents ?
Santa Paws !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Avery
Avery who ?
Avery Merry Christmas !

Why does Father Christmas go down the
chimney ?
Beause it soots him !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Holly
Holly who ?
Holly-days are here again !

Who delivers elephant's Christmas
presents?
Elephanta Claus !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Rudolph
Rudolph who ?
Money is the Rudolph of all evil !

How many chimney's does Father
Christmas go down ?
Stacks !

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Igloo
Igloo who ?
Igloo Suzie like I knew Suzie... !

Why is Santa like a bear on Christmas
Eve ?
Because he's Sooty!

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Mary
Mary who ?
Mary Christmas !

What do you get if you cross Father
Christmas with a detective?
Santa Clues!

Knock Knock.
Who's there?
Centipede.
Centipede who?
Centipede on the Christmas Tree!

Father Christmas wins a saucepan in a
competition.
Now that's what you call pot luck!

What do the reindeer sing to Father
Christmas on Christmas Day ?
Freeze a jolly good fellow!

Clowning in...

Thailand!

(c) 2009

Five years after my safari through East Africa (which I've written about in the last four *Joeys*), in 1997 I visited Thailand for a friend's wedding, and took Puzzle with me.

I landed at Bangkok Airport soon after midnight. Customs, Immigration and money changing took a while. A taxi doing 150km/h on the motorway delivered me to a Bangkok hotel after 2am. The clerk who showed me to my room asked if I would like him to get me a girl. (Accommodation staff have a low opinion of tourists' morals!) After breakfast I walked the short distance to the Bangkok Central Railway Station and bought a ticket to Buriram in eastern Thailand. I managed to miss the first Buriram train—I think the ticket seller sent me to the wrong platform. (Although I studied Maori at university I think I could get numbers confused in my second language, too.)

The journey to Buriram was fun. I bought peanuts that had been cooked in their shells. I've had peanuts roasted in their shells before but these nuts surprised me—they had been boiled! During the journey other foodstuffs were delivered by vendors, too.

I talked with some passengers who wanted to practice speaking English. And I did balloon sculpting. By the time I disembarked the carriage was looking very festive.

The wedding was a success, but there was no clowning, so I won't tell you any more about it. About a week after the wedding, I visited a New Zealander, Judith, who was working with the Hmong (a minority tribe in the north and west) in a village called 'Kilo 44' because it was 44 kilometres from the start of some road in the west of the country. I told her that I'd like to do some clowning, so she told some people and in the afternoon a crowd of children gathered in Judith's yard.

Puzzle's manner of work is to play without speaking, which evades language barriers.

With my costume on, but not my make up, I stepped out of Judith's cottage and sat on the doorstep with my make up kit. As I began to put my white on, Judith told me that one of the children was asking, "Is he going to become a spirit now?"

Without speaking, I put on my white (which in many cultures signifies death), pulled faces at myself in my mirror and then painted red on my lips, nose and cheeks, and with eye liner drew the usual black lines around my eyes. Then Puzzle did 'the usual business' -- blowing bubbles, juggling and twisting balloons.

I don't know if anyone learnt anything special that day. (Maybe some people learnt that not every performance is a supernatural experience.)

A couple of years later I saw Judith in New Zealand when she was home on leave. She told me that when she was packing to leave Kilo 44 one of the local children had asked her, "Are you going to the country the funny man came from?" Judith asked for clarification and found that the funny man being referred to was me. "When you see him, tell him to come back and bring more balloons."

So if/when I return to Thailand I will be 'returning by popular demand'! (Judith has now retired. I had better take her with me to make sure I find and perform for the right person! She also worked with Hmong in northern Thailand. Maybe she could arrange for me to perform there, too.)

After performing in Kilo 44 I visited Chiang Mai for a few days. I met an American who worked in the drama department of a Christian university in that city. She invited me to teach a one-day workshop at the university.

My students were proficient in English so I found it easy to demonstrate and explain elements of mime and clown. At the end of the day I was shown a video of a play similar to the story of the Prodigal Son from the Bible, but changed to be about a Thai girl who went to Bangkok to make her fortune in a garment factory and fell on hard times. The video had been made by my 'students' ten years before—they were staff in the Drama Department! (I'm not good at guessing the age of an Asian person who doesn't have grey hair.) I was impressed that people who had already reached a high standard of performance had been humble enough to come to my mime and clown workshop!

After seeing some of northern Thailand, I returned to Chiang Mai for a final weekend before catching a train to Bangkok. I checked in to a hostel. As I unpacked my bag and settled into my room I heard festive sounds coming from the courtyard. I investigated and found that the proprietor was celebrating his daughter's birthday and had laid on a dinner for the guests! I got bags of 6" hearts and 260Q balloons from my room and entertained with some balloon sculpting.

On the train to Bangkok one of the other guests from the hostel gave me photos she had taken at the birthday dinner. She said I didn't need to pay her for them—she had felt awkward that the guests were receiving the generosity of our host without giving anything in return, until I turned up with the balloons, so she felt I had saved the honour of the guests.

Keep looking up!
Nigel from New Zealand

NOMINATIONS FORM FOR COMMITTEE OFFICERS 2010

I _____ wish to apply for the position of;

(please tick post(s) applying for)

- a) Chairman []
- b) Vice Chairman []
- c) Treasurer []
- d) Secretary []
- e) Membership Officer []

I am a full paid up member

Signed _____ Membership Number _____

Proposed by _____ Membership Number _____

Seconded by _____ Membership Number _____

From the Notebook of the Custard Clowns

Just recently Woo and I have been doing a bit of travelling for various organisations. Motorways, dual-carriage ways etc. M3, M45, A1 are just some we have driven on and they all have one thing in common – or they did when we drove along them: CONES Hundreds of them, thousands of them and do you know the most annoying thing? – you do not see a workman anywhere! I tell you, the man that owns the firm that makes those brightly coloured objects must be a billionaire!



Many people have been asking me whether Woo is still painting his pictures, a hobby he started a few years ago. In fact, I was the person he gave his very first completed picture to and it has its pride of place in my home. Well, let me tell you, since then Woo has completely renovated his shed to adapt it for his art work, whereby he can, at his leisure, retreat to a bit of peace and solitude whenever World War Three (sorry Isobel) gets too much for him. HA! HA! Actually Woo has been very busy lately; he has completed a dozen new pieces of artwork which he has offered to our chairman of C.I. Rainbow, to try and sell to raise much needed funds for our club. He is also now taking commissions from individuals. He had a lovely lady knock on his door recently who asked him if he could do a portrait of her in the nude! Well, Woo pondered for a while and then he told her “I certainly can, but do you mind if I keep my socks on as I have to have SOMEWHERE to put my paint brushes!”

One of Woo’s favourite TV programmes at the moment is “Who do You Think You Are?”, where a chosen celebrity’s family tree is researched on TV. Some are more interesting than others but in general, a good programme. This got Woo thinking about tracing his own family tree. It wasn’t long however before he hit a snag: he got as far as his grandfather when a dark cloud started to hang over proceedings. He found out that Cornelius Woo had been sentenced to six months in prison for making love to a suffragette! I said that seemed a harsh sentence. Woo then said that she was chained to railings at the Houses of Parliament at the time! (*he failed to mention that they were BOTH arrested! Tee hee, Ed*) Needless to say, Woo abandoned all hopes of going any further. HA HA!

The Vetting and Barring System V.B.S.

First of all, let’s make it quite clear. Woo and I and all the rest of the members of C.I. cannot put into words the repulsion we feel about paedophiles. They are clever, manipulative and will stop at nothing to gain access to children to abuse them. That is the justification for the Vetting and Barring System from this government. Critics of the scheme are already voicing their opinions as “Unworkable”, “Bonkers”, “Corrosive to healthy social interaction.”, “It will discourage volunteers from giving free transport and the children will suffer.” Which gives other viewpoints. Woo and I do sincerely think the whole system has to be given a complete re-examination, as far as the rules are concerned.

We spoke to a lovely lady named Carol at the V.B.S. We explained who we were, that we performed at house parties, carnivals, fêtes, private parties and asked if we would have to sign up to this system. “NO!” she said “Not under those circumstances!” Now, if we visited hospitals, especially children’s hospitals or adult care homes once a month or three times in thirty days - “YES!” We would have to register. Don’t ask us why, when you would be visiting either or both with a view to entertaining some or all of the lovely people in those places. I have done both over the last thirty odd years, as a clown or compere-entertainer/pianist and have always had a supervised audience for the young and old. No problem.

As far as we can understand, this system will not stop foreign criminals, including sex offenders and murderers slipping through the vetting to work with children and the vulnerable. Background checks by The Independent Safeguarding Authority (the I.S.A.) will not pick up offences committed

abroad because of poor information-sharing between countries.

(FYI: The V.B.S. will apply in addition to the CRB check. A person coming from abroad is required to show a police check from their country of origin, Ed)

The loop-hole remains, despite a government promise three years ago, to close it. Woo and I thought that the CRB checks said as much about you as anyone could want to know but again, that did not exclude foreign clowns from coming over here and working because their countries do not have a similar scheme in operation. In fact Woo and I were just saying the other day, how many future clients for entertainment failed to ask us if we are CRB checked over the phone, before they book.

(Foreign clowns HAVE to have a CRB check if they move to the UK and want to work in certain fields and a CRB check is STILL required for non-residents by some community establishments such as schools, unless the clown is given special dispensation – in my experience, this is ONLY given when they are accompanied by a CRB checked UK clown OR at a special event, such as a festival, Ed)

Please note

ISA-registration for the Vetting and Barring Scheme does not start for new workers or those moving jobs until July 2010 and ISA-registration does not become mandatory for these workers until November 2010. All other staff will be phased into the scheme from 2011. Further information on how to apply for registration will be provided in due course.

Read more for yourself at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/vettingandbarringscheme/vettingvandbarring/> Ed)

I remember one of the great pleasures each day Woo and I had, at the World Clown Convention in Southport in 1993, was lunch time, because - I don't know how many of you C.I. members will remember – we found a café that got very popular with us clowns. It ended up our base more often than not, at lunch times, because we all loved their version of Lancashire Hot Pot.

We can't remember the name of the place but for a couple of quid it was the only real meal of the day you needed, it really filled you up. Since then, I really haven't seen a suitable recipe for it, or should I say, not here in East Anglia. Until now – courtesy of The Hairy Bikers, Si and Dave – which I will now share with you (take note Bubblz)

[and me Mum who is currently dictating this to me – looks like Lanky Hot Pot is on the menu for tomorrow!, YUMMY! Ed].

Lancashire Hot Pot Recipe

Method: Butter a casserole dish and lay potatoes on the bottom. Add lamb and kidneys. Add a layer of black pudding. Pour gravy over. Cover with potato, then meat, then black pudding, then gravy. The top layer of potatoes can be in a scalloped pattern or funky circles. Dot with butter cubes. Cook until the top layer of spuds is golden. There you have it. What a wonderful low calorie meal that is! HA HA!!

(At least compared with a Knickerbocker Glory!!!! Ed)

The festive season approaches as I write this. (September – I've had my "where is your column?" phone call from our editor, who is helping to put this Christmas edition together.) I had my first Christmas card delivered in August (no joke!).

It's a funny old world, I get my electricity from a gas supplier, I phone my local bank with a phone number in Hampshire, only to be spoken to by somebody in India. INCREDIBLE! But let's not end on a Mr. Grumpy mode *(but you're SO good at it!!! Ed)*. This year seems to have flown past, we hope for bigger and better things for C.I. in 2010. We hope that all members and their families have a great Christmas and New Year.

Bernard Moore and Colin Walker, The Custard Clowns.

Often in our business an entertainer will subsequently take another better paid booking somewhere else on the same day, knowing full well they would not be able to get to the next date on time, so turning up late with some excuse or other. Unfortunately this practice 'tars us all with the same brush' and an unconvinced member complained, in writing. She intimated to the gaffer in Chichester, who was by now a firm friend, that I was trying to sell.

In all my work producing name sculptures only once did I manage to include the subject's surname in the design. I had previously made a name sculpture for the gaffer. Her husband was a keen fisherman, so as well modelling his name in a fishing position I had also managed to work their surname in the turbulent waters. She was well pleased with the result.

This counted for nought though in matters W.I. The gaffer explained the rules of the organisation were 'set in concrete'. I appealed, but the verdict stood and I was taken off the list of the approved! It was such a shame because a large proportion of the members come to the meetings for more than the cup of tea and a chat. Talking to and engaging a group of articulate women was always to me a highly enjoyable experience. I was also not a huge consumer of biscuits nor did I take sugar.

The cost of the taxi back to my abandoned vehicle was more than my fee, but after alerting the A.A. I eventually got home. I might have been better off not to have turned up at all, but that isn't my way. My reason for lateness was genuine, nevertheless I got the boot. 'Just like that', as Tommy Cooper used to say!

There were also large annual craft shows dotted about the country that we regularly visited. One was held on the former Lord Louis Mountbatten's estate at Romsey, a class show, it was a joy to be a part of it. Another was the New Forest Show held in Brockenhurst, and I was invited to attend, and was pleased to be awarded a silver certificate for my display.



We met other craft workers here that we already knew. One, Maureen, a seamstress whose work was often to be seen in our craft shop in Aldwick, had a distinctive theme of children at play sewn on her wares. A feature of this show for me were the cider makers. Beautiful stuff that added a glow to everything around, including one's legs. They got such a soaking sometimes that they imparted more than just a glow, rendering them useless for balance and walking on. Legless is the term used, I think. Strong stuff this!

Appearing regularly on our regional ITV station was a meteorological expert and forecaster named Trevor, affectionately known as 'Trevor the Weather'. I received a commission to portray him as a subject for a name sculpture. A design was chosen by the studio and made up. It was to be presented to him on air, at the same time I was exhibiting at the New Forest Show.

There were several retailers of electrical goods also showing on site and a friend of mine alerted me when the local ITV news was on. I dashed out in time to catch it on a television set in their marquee. I was expecting some sort of presentation to be made after his forecasting spot, him being such a popular personality on the programme, but it wasn't to be so. The announcer held up this small item of my woodwork saying something like 'and here's something that's been made up for Trevor'. No explanation, and no Trevor present. I still don't know to this day whether he ever did get it, let alone if he liked it or not. Very disappointing. My account was settled in due course and that was that.

In the design of Trevor's sculpture I used an open umbrella to represent his initial T. To indicate rainfall a large drip was formed on one of the ribs. A small cloud had a smiling section of the sun peeping over it. The base holding everything together was a choppy sea with a grinning fish half out of the water. If Trevor ever got it, I hope he liked it

Two experiences at the New Forest Show I remember. One nice, one nasty. A visitor to the show came and introduced himself, we were both in the same business, workers of wood. He said he had a great admiration for my work but there was a big difference between us. He was not exhibiting and told me why. Whereas I was happy dealing with many commissions for small amounts, he was quite the opposite.

He took great care in choosing the wood he be worked on. Nothing but the very best to be had. He was pouring in his skill to get the absolute utmost increased value into the job, selling through an agent or gallery.

I really hadn't given the matter much thought then. We had such a different approach. He only worked in wood, but I was keen to explore the possibilities of other materials, like chipboard and hardboard. I enjoyed the variety. I loved the changing scene on the workbench. Not so much a flitterbug, but restless with the new ideas that constantly came into my head. Wasn't I lucky?

The nasty part of being at New Forest was due to a police decision on the exit plan after the show ended. Instead of going out the way we came in the exit route used a forest track instead of a road to form a vast one-way system. This route did not qualify to be called anything but a forest track. It was awful. Miles of it too. The forest might suit the wild life, but I can assure you that the wildest folk in the forest for those few hours were us drivers of cars, lorries and caravans, wondering if our springs would survive the very rough treatment they were experiencing. I never did that show again.

A friend of mine, Nigel Purchase, an artist, kindly let me show a few of my pieces in his Chichester Gallery. It wasn't a success, as my novelty is movement. A lot of my sculptures needed a gentle push or twist to show their true potential. I suppose I should have sought out the same kind of help as with my public sculptures for the Regis Centre. When at craft fairs no such problem existed, because Deena or myself were always on hand to demonstrate.

A few years later we were in Woking, doing our stuff. I was holding up one of my table spinners at the time, when a voice behind me said 'Oh, I'd like one of those'. A female voice gently said 'Well, get one dear'. I recognised the voice. It had not long ago been delivering the Christmas Lectures on BBC2. It was Professor Alan Laithwaite.

Both Jim and I were keen on these lectures. Broadcast over three or four days, they consisted of talks and demonstrations given by an expert at the very forefront of their particular scientific subject. Professor Laithwaite was the authority on electro-magnetism and the inventor of the linear motor that powers high speed trains today, allowing them to 'float' above a special track. He was also an expert on gyroscopes.

He was a large man whose shape and bearing fitted exactly my perception of what the head of an experimental university department should look like. A proper professor. Both he and his wife were very likeable people. As well as ordering one of my spinners, he was also interested to see all my designs and ideas. Living in Surbiton at the time, when he retired, he came to live in Bognor Regis, and we became friends.

Raising the profile of his campaign for a local radio station was a constant for son Jim at the time. To this end he devised a putting contest to raise money and awareness. To add extra interest a prize was offered for the best mechanical putting machine.

There were several entries and Professor Laithwaite generously adjudicated. He also calculated that the way the putting competition had been sequentially organised meant that it would take eight months to complete. With only one afternoon available, changes were hastily made. Later he also kindly contributed to Jim's science programme 'The Brain Exchange' which took to the air on Radio Bognor some time later.

One evening I had a telephone call from the professor. He would like to come and see what I had in stock that would make a suitable birthday present for a forty-year-old. It was for a close friend of his. Prince Charles, heir to the throne!

More later.
Hal Brooks 28.10.09.

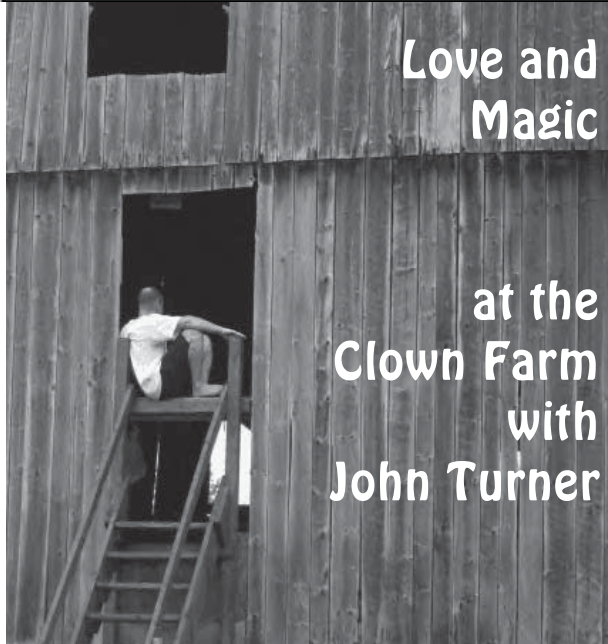
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Love and Magic at the Clown Farm

Love and
Magic



at the
Clown Farm
with
John Turner

From Shobi Dobi

Lying in my tent staring up at the fourth mask I've made this week The Fourth Direction - West, I feel like I'm suspended in a globe of creative images -- ancient creatures, elves, fairies, shamans, witches, spirits of every kind -- all wiggly creative thoughts that swim around in my mind in colors and costumed in emotions. The thoughts fly in and fly out with ease.

Who are you, *West*? A wind outside whips my tent, as I float in and out of sleep with the mask hanging in a net over my head. Images float in my mind - one stays. I am a boulder on top of a mountain. It is very cold and still. Nothing moves except the wind blowing against my hard rock surface. I am alone, very alone. It begins to snow - light little beautiful flakes of crystal water. They dance around me and land on my hard surface. They cover me completely. I am not alone. There are thousands of the little ones, I love them. I delight in them. I am young and free and happy. All around me there is innocent play and dancing and joy.

But slowly the snow flakes begin to melt. Their juice runs off my surface and again I am a lone, cold, stone. The morning sun begins a glow over my tent. There is a message there. I go into the barn to *physicalize* it -- express it with the love and magic of the Clown



Shobi took a Baby Clown Workshop with John Turner on his farm on Manitoulin Island - that's in Lake Huron, Ontario, Canada. It was a 16-day intensive of precognitive creative exploration - and Shobi will never be the same. The Baby Clown experience is the creation of the visionary teacher/director: Richard Pochinko.

How does all this relate to Hospital clowning and to the caring clown? It was about honesty and connection, love and magic. John kept repeating "love and magic, love and magic."

Those of you who have taken workshops with me know I'm always talking about love and magic. And you've experienced the 40 + character masks I use to pull the magic out of the pedestrian. Well, at the clown farm we painted, danced, growled, laughed, screamed, talked gibberish - and made masks.

I was worried about taking the workshop, as I thought I would not be able to access the innocence of my clown. All three areas of our work: clown, mask and painting, I've done professionally for years. But actually I found it very easy. Especially as John was so open to questions. He also never criticized us, only encouraged us. In the later days of the workshop when we did "turns" (short skits) he only made suggestions. Interesting that all the Native American Shamans I've studied with, all did the same kind of teaching. For me it was like reaching back into my life and pulling out my baby clown. Now how many of us can have that experience?

But how do I tell you about the process? I can explain what we did, but not in detail. When I got home and tried to explain it to my friends, it took an hour. I look back and wonder how we did so much in 16 days. So I will tell you briefly what we did, but the process was, I'm sure, different for everyone. But here goes.

After physical warm ups and theater games, we *physicalized* the color of the spectrum into our bodies and spirits. It involved being talked through the process of becoming each color: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. After each color we made a painting of the color. We then moved on to the mask making. This includes looking into your inner directions. Native American Indians revered the six directions: North, South, East, West, Sky (above) and Earth (below).

After we were "talked" through taking in and physicalizing each direction, we worked with clay with our eyes closed. (The Mask "Above Above" was done out in the middle of one of the farm fields under the stars!) Talk about magic!

EGG ARTIST REQUIRED

This month sees the well earned stepping down of Kate Stone, after 15 years of producing excellent registration eggs of your clown characters. So we need a new egg artist, do you know someone who could do it? If so contact the secretary as soon as possible.

C.I. MERCHANDISE

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Fill out the form below and send to

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I would like to order the following:

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Please make cheques out to 'Clowns International'

C.I. Merchandise

The
Joey

We then papier machéd the clay, and painted the masks – but not just painted the mask. We went through all our colors and asked the mask what colors it wanted. More magic!

As you can tell, this workshop was not for the weak of spirit or heart. And we did all this living in tents in the fields and cooking our own food on camp stoves. Mostly magic and a few mosquitoes!

After each mask and while working on the other masks, we went through a process of wearing the mask, finding its voice. The description on the cover pretty much tells that process. Some did that process in the barn. Shobi had to take the masks to her tent and let the unconscious seep in.

Physicalizing the mask was something to behold. In the mask character we ravaged through bags of costumes and let the mask pick out the clothes. Most of us looked like creatures from other worlds (indeed our imaginary worlds) – far, far from anything we in the US or Europe would call a clown. Maybe the Hopi Kachinas would recognize us right away! But let me tell you, with no critical mind or drill sergeant telling you what to do, the sky was the limit. What fun! What fun and what incredible magic! And are you beginning to understand the self honesty part? We were exploring our own inner worlds.

Once the mask had its colors and costume, we were “talked” through a process of finding our environment - the emotional environment which gave off a flight of imagination. We went through experience and innocence in each mask, finding out where we lived and who we loved. We went into childhood and adulthood. We floated through seas of images following and letting go of impulses until something faintly settled in our minds - becoming a rock, a child, a chief, a warrior, a priest, a gnarled old tree. Shobi tended to be non humanoid at first. Out of this process came a “turn.” We put together a little script for each mask. We were also told to let go of the script when performing, if the impulse was there.

Again nothing was ever wrong unless you went longer than two minutes and John had a stop watch! There were rules and guidelines up on the wall [See Sidebar entitled: *Things to Remember*]. This process of “turns” was where the imagination became externalized. All through the workshop, flashes of ideas and images came up. We created basic skits that would have taken months in other workshops. In this process there were infinite places to go to find material. In my workshops at Clown Camp in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, I kept saying “You are your own best source of material - inside you!” This was about being honest. Finding your source, not reading a script or performing a role as a clown, but being a clown!

So how did all this fantasy and magic become a clown? That was in the “turn” process. AND with the incredible teaching skill and coaching of John Turner!

On the first page, I described my mask’s process of being a boulder on top of a mountain. How does this become clown? I go into the barn and begin to *physicalize* it - walk through the feelings of innocence and experience. I am cold. I have an old pillow case that I had picked up as part of my costume. It barely covers me. I am shivering. I am contracted, I am shy, but then how do I show snow?

We were told not to use mime. Wow! No mime, but read on. So if I can't use mime how do I show snow? I go into town and buy some confetti. In my “turn” after establishing myself as the clown boulder alone and freezing, I pull out a little purse hanging around my neck and throw confetti up into the air and react to it with the delight of a child. I play with it, taste it. Ok, sounds ridiculous. Yes, I am a clown, and I can do that.

I hope you can picture Shobi playing with the confetti. I loved the joke and so did the audience. It was really fun. And that was the point. I was having fun and so was the audience. I then went back into *Mask 3 West Experience* to “frozen and alone.” Yes, poignant, pathetic, sweet, real, profound and honest!

John restricted us from using mime in Baby Clown largely as a teaching technique. Richard Pochinko did this also. And Shobi learned from this technique. If I had just decided to mime snow, I would have never discovered that ridiculous place. For me miming would have been the familiar route to take. By not being allowed to mime, I had to go somewhere else. The snow confetti was a clown's reality - a clown's spoof - and it is totally believable that I, as a clown can do this. I am being dishonest, but I am not pretending to be anything else. As John says, “Clowns are honest about the fact that they are lying!”

It's like doing clown magic. We all know and the audience knows that magic is a trick - that is its given in the 21st century in most places on the planet (except in remote areas of India - I speak from experience). A great magician will astound the audience; we clowns make them laugh at us. We screw up the trick or get the audience to do it. We are always the butt of the joke.

So if we mime, it presents a different “reality” to the audience. John explained further:

“Mime and non-mime are presenting two conflicting realities at the same time. On some level this confuses or disengages or distracts an audience. For example, an actor drinking mimed fluid from a real coffee mug is a double reality. The mug is real, but the hot fluid is not. We notice there's no fluid. At this point the audience, however minimally, is distracted by a technical reality.”

A clown beginning to drink “something” from a mug, might stop and share with the audience that there is nothing in the mug and then go on drinking it. A clown might even “use it” by doing a clown fake mime (ridiculously exaggerated) gagging on nothing and then go on drinking it. It is sharing the joke with the audience. It would also probably involve switching into another mask. Hmm. For me, being aware of mime makes me open up to other possibilities rather than taking a familiar path. It is a learned clown habit for me to mime. In the Baby Clown workshop, not using mime makes me “clown think” and find more, more, more . . . and open up to new clown antics.

So what does this have to do with hospital clowning? When we are vulnerable and share our feelings with patients, we make a connection to them. I'd better give you another example of a “turn,” so you'll get the idea. And because that is not the end of the process!

Below, Masks drying on the barn wall



The image/environment of my mask "Above Above" was of a child on an ocean, delighted with everything she is finding. Then she gets hit by a big wave. There is a message here. We developed messages for every "turn" which helps to develop the "script." The message was simply: "Watch out for the big waves of life." The *innocence* of this mask, finding things on the beach, was easy - that is so much a part of Shobi before. But how do I show a big wave without miming it? So I asked John. He said "a bucket of water." So I had a tin can with a wire handle (I couldn't find an unused bucket) and some rocks on the floor to examine in innocence and a couple of inches of water in the bucket. I then convinced someone in the audience to throw the water on me, and got hit by the wave and could react to it dripping ever so slightly. Are you getting it? It was fun. Getting hit by the wave from a bucket was clowning. It was ridiculous, and what a clown would do. And it involved the audience. What is happening here is a way of allowing the inside to create the clown.

There were other things to consider in this "turn." Was the audience safe? Had I used a full bucket of water, maybe not. I could also have thrown the water on myself. In another "turn" I used a plastic lid for a mirror. I could have used a real mirror, but believing that lid was a mirror was being a clown. It's clown thinking.

Another example: One of the other students in the workshop did a "turn" where he was a bird and got shot. He yelled "bang," pulled a red tie out his pocket (the blood) and fell on the floor in classic dead clown (on his back with his feet up in the air). Would it have been more fun (funny) to mime being shot? It could be great mime, this was great clowning.

I remember we took a solo walk through the farm property. One of the best moments I had was getting thirsty and then going through all my masks drinking as they would drink. I believe Mask 5 put the water in her eye.

There was a lot more to the process as we progressed through the directions of the six masks. We were to use other mask feelings and later gestures mixed in. So for example when I went to explore the beach as a child, my mask number one which "experienced terror" would suddenly scream at what I found, but then switch back immediately to the innocence of the child with a surprised look at the audience. All this is done not really concretely scripted, but there is just so much to access besides just sweet little Shobi.

Here is the list of rules posted on the barn wall that John gave permission to reprint.

Things to Remember (Clown Rules)

Afer a 100 hours of workshop, we were only beginning to understand these "rules"

- Get yourself off! (And take us with you)
- Rule of three
- Be honest
- Have fun
- More, more, more
- Clown Logic
- Take us into your world
and bring us back with a new awareness
- Make contact (with audience)
- Present yourself
- Up and out
- Ride the wave
- Physicalize
- Be zany
- Listen to us (audience)
- Listen to yourself
- Impulse six
- Surprise us
- Surprise yourself
- Follow the impulse
- Drop the script - you can always go back to it
- Know when to leave
- Keep the audience safe
- Keep the conversation going
- Breathe
- Go for the unknown
- Play with rhythm
- Trust
- Believe
- Break All The Rules!

Things that you may not know about from the list:

The Rule of Three: This is one of the great mysteries of the universe. There are probably a thousand ways that the *Rule of Three* works and twice that many ways to describe it. Here is one way: Do a specific action only three times. First the audience sees it, then they understand it, then they appreciate it. What we do know is that usually more than three times usually becomes redundant.

Impulse six: We worked with degrees of "emotion" - one being the lowest, six being all out there. I mean ALL OUT THERE. Getting yourself off.

Up and out: Looking up to the audience, not over their heads or at the floor, but making contact and including the audience - like having a running dialogue or awareness of them. Shobi in *Mask One - North* would recognize the audience with a growl and then go back into innocence Done very quickly this is very funny. But it is honest, and connected both inside and out.

*By the way, what ever happened to . . .
Sweet Little Shobi?*



John Turner and Shobi mugging for the camera

Oh, Sweet Shobi is still there, but there are all sorts of dimensions that got exposed. There are now more places to play and explore! The picture above is of John and I "mugging." We clowns tend to "mug" (facial expressions) for the camera and get into habits of doing the same expressions over and over. We took this photo as an example of this habit. Mugging is a mask that is a pasted on, an expression unconnected with our emotions. This kind of dishonesty was discouraged in our workshop.

We as clowns still live in a big world of people walking around with dishonest responses to everything. It is a lot of work to live with an awareness of the now. Our adult minds are so used to being in the future and the past and not in the present. Can we be honest with our audience or our environment unless we are really aware of it?

Imagine sitting back in your mind and watching the world like one big TV set. Just letting it play. It is not about judging, but about observing: silent awareness - the wide angle observer. As Kristnamurti said ". . . look with eyes that are full of affection - not with condemnation, not with judgement, but with care" It is in the daily life that the clown thrives - in our own follies, falls and surprises. How fortunate we are to practice an art that demands that we live in the present moment. There is magic in those wonder-filled moments. As caring clowns working in the hospital and health care facilities, we are even more aware of the need to be aware of everything - without judgment, but with care . . . and love and magic.

Consider that walking through a nursing home or hospital is like walking through life wearing our clown SOUL. We react out of that clown soul, not out of a scripted routine. This is what brings the magic into the hospital. We connect into parts of us that are really silly, really ridiculous and sometimes really stupid, innocent, scared, frightened etc. You all know the response when you have a child that is frightened of you and you fall right into getting really scared of a child's pet teddy bear. "Will it bite me?" The connection is fabulous.

Another example of being honest: I remember the time I walked into a hospital room of a man dying of skin cancer. The room had a terrible odor and I gagged. I tried

to get back into "Shobi" but still gagged. I was so embarrassed. That is because I wasn't being real. I had no place to go spontaneously except to sweet Shobi. With the experience of my masks, I might have gone to one of my other faces (masks) and become a bag lady looking around for the garbage that smelled so badly. And both the patient and I could have had a laugh. It's a risk, but it would have been better than being dishonest and helpless. He might have just told me to "get out." Then I would have reacted to that with another mask (and probably wept pathetically).

Another example was visiting a young girl who just had a leg amputated. "Where did it go?" asked Shobi, looking under the bed. This is an honest response from Shobi's innocent six year old side. The girl got to tell me what happened. If I had just ignored it, like everyone else, it would have been dishonest and there would have been no connection. And as we all know, in hospital clowning it is the heart-to-heart connection we are aiming for, not the applause or the audience approval.

The Clown Nose Is the Seventh Mask

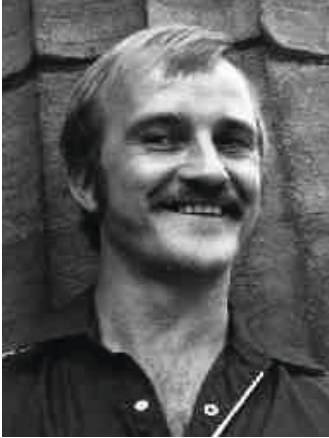
As I said, the process didn't end with the sixth mask. We had to be born into the *Seventh Mask* and were then given our clown noses! It was very interesting for me that during the birthing of my clown the ultimate clown came out as Shobi Dobi. Which actually surprised me. However, in 16 days I experienced parts of Shobi that I never knew nor would have even imagined I could play with.

The clown nose represents the heart connection. It is the hat that is our connection with the sacred - the Universe. We had to always wear a hat or cover our head with something called a "hat." This is in the Pochinko Method. I often wondered why, as Shobi, I felt naked as a clown without a hat. In China when I loaned Lui, our guide, my hat, I had to put a bow on my head. I don't mean I put a bow on my head. I HAD to put a bow on my head.

What Baby Clown Workshop gave me was a whole world for Shobi to live in. I didn't have to live in just sweet 6-year-old Shobi in a flower garden. I could be 6-year-old Shobi as an old soul picking through garbage. In my processing of a mask (2- *South*) I was an old snarled lonely tree that picked with curiosity at everything that landed on her - her only companions. She played with everything. The part that makes all this really interesting and funny is going from one mask to another - surprising myself and going yet to another mask. It was like putting the process on the outside of the clown. It is unrefined emotion that gets exposed. It is honest, honest and honest. Baby Clown is just the finding of those worlds inside - an infinite place.

I don't know how all this will play out in my teaching and workshops. I can't tell because I never use a script for teaching either. Teaching is a fluid process. When I trust the Universe and listen to my "student audience," we create something together. I learn from them and they learn from me. It no longer retains a teacher student relationship, but is more like - I take you on a journey to a place I've loved - a guide who has traveled the area a few steps before you. I go there so I can take you there, too. What magic! What magic! And it is all based on love - the real force of the Universe. It is true that our clown cars are fueled by love and our exhaust is Joy, and now our road is paved with magic.

Richard Pochinko and "Clown through Mask"



Richard Pochinko, while studying mask and mime with Jacques Lecoq in the 1970's in Paris, became fascinated with clowns.

"We lived across the street from the Cirque d'Hiver. From the window I could see the clowns coming and going and became intrigued with them. I began following circus after circus all over Europe . . . It wasn't just the circus I was following.

"It was something bigger, something to do with the ability to laugh at yourself. I realized that this must be what clowning is all about and got more deeply involved."

In 1972, he returned to Canada but was immediately invited to teach mask work at the University of Washington in Seattle. While in Seattle, he came into contact with his North American Indian, spirit-guide Jon Smith.

It has been said to me that Jon Smith only visited Richard in his dream state. But his influence is part of the mystery and magic of Richard Pochinko. Jon Smith told Richard how "his people had always had clown clans as part of the social make-up of their tribes, and that clowns were revered as powerful shamans, healers, as well as being *delight-makers*. . . . They were the ones who kept people in touch with the every day while fulfilling the need for a connection with the sacred. Functioning as social regulators, they had absolute freedom to ridicule whomever they pleased, and whenever the society became too rigid, the clowns were called out to perform their raunchy antics. They would insult and humiliate the chief and the elders in public, to show them that they were only human. They would defy accepted behavior, turn the world topsy-turvy and bring new insight into the truth about Man's place within the order of the universe."

"Then one day, quite abruptly," Pochinko reported, "Jon Smith sent me away: *'I'm not going to see you again. Good-bye,'* he said. *'But I'll always be there if you really need me.'* Pochinko continued, ". . . sometime when I'm standing in a class facing a problem, not knowing which of the multiple possible solutions to choose from, I can feel him looking over my shoulder . . . and I hear him giggle."

It is with the native American Indian tradition of honoring the directions that Pochinko developed the search for the inner clown. The results of exploring the six directions: North, South, East West, Sky and Earth all come together to make the direction of the clown which becomes the seventh direction.

Richard Pochinko believed North American Indian clowning to be the highest refinement of the ancient art. "In the American circus," he says, "the clown is not important. What's important is the gag . . . the audience laughs, not at the clown, but at the gag.

"In the European system you're laughing with the character in a situation. . . . But the North American Indians consider the

clown to be a holy man; he is the *Messenger of the Gods* - and the gods have an incredible sense of humor."

Richard died of AIDS in 1989, but his tradition lives and gets stronger every year with clowns and within the theater because his work rings with the sounds of pure truth. I am grateful that he lived and I will probably hear Richard giggling in the corner of my workshops, but more likely he'll be snarling at me if I am dishonest. I am also grateful to John Turner for taking the work into his life and sharing it so abundantly and honestly. Richard must giggle for John too!



From Pochinko to Pediatrics

by Kathleen Le Roux, a.k.a. Doko, the Clown

Therapeutic Clown at Sick Kids Hospital in Canada

I have been studying the Pochinko method of clowning with John Turner and Michael Kennard for five years and I have attended "Boot Camp" at John Turner's Clown Farm on Manitoulin Island for four consecutive summers. The work I do developing my clown at these advanced workshops each summer feeds and strengthens my work as a therapeutic clown at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. The Pochinko method of clowning engenders an incredible flexibility of spirit, emotion and imagination, all rooted, as Shobi explains, in honesty. Honesty is the root of connection and connecting with patients, family and staff as we all know, is the ultimate work of the therapeutic clown.

Masks



Having the six masks to draw on as well as their respective states of innocence and experience (that makes 12 distinct characters and histories influencing the clown) allows for a huge range of expression and adaptability to people and circumstances. My clown, Doko, can be very articulate, mature and savvy about pop culture with teenagers (drawing on all my experience masks) and yet totally clueless, wordless and tentative about the world with a younger child (drawing on all my innocence masks). The beauty of the masks is that one can choose to draw on them or not, combine them, use them in varying degrees or

forget about them completely. They are useful as a tool and as an anchor from which to play. In my work, I have found that different situations and children will draw out different masks. For example, I have noticed

that with babies I tend to draw specifically from my *Mask 1* experience and *Mask 3* innocence. *Mask 1* experience is a 200-year-old man with quiet superpowers and whose message to the world is "love it all." He lives in a futuristic underground cave where there are hundreds of small babies that he cares for and nurtures for the future of humanity. *Mask 3* innocence is an awe-struck child who is mesmerized and delighted by any reaction, any thing that moves, anything that happens in the world. So, when *Doko* meets a new baby, there is often a mixture of omnipotent, paternal love (externalized by slow movements, gentle, wizened singing and power-giving gestures) and awestruck excitement and delight when the baby kicks a leg or gurgles or flutters a finger. At which point a conversation might begin between *Doko* and the fluttering finger. The play thus begins.

In general, I would say that in the pediatric hospital setting, my clown *Doko* draws more from my innocence masks than from my experience ones. Indeed there are aspects of some of my experience masks that would be entirely inappropriate to bring into the hospital setting. My *Mask 5* experience is an angry, jilted bar owner who is curt, abrupt, rude, prone to yelling and is very confrontational. There is no place for her in the hospital setting. My *Mask 6* experience is an alien sent to Earth to frighten people to death. Needless to say that in its pure form such a mask would not be appropriate to use. However, I have drawn on some of the gestures for these masks and I can bend and soften up these masks by colouring them with innocence or by combining them with other masks. So in effect, all masks can be used and tailored to suit one's needs.

Honesty

One day at work I was feeling totally cranky and out of sorts. I truly did not feel like going onto the units and bringing light and joy to the world. What to do with these unwelcome and negative feelings at the beginning of a clown day? I decided that rather than ignore it and put on a false happy face, I would sink my teeth into my disgruntled state and in fact have a bit of fun mocking my own negativity. I folded up one of my yellow collapsible tubes so that it resembled a lightning bolt. And out I went into the world holding the lightning bolt above my head and making thunderous cracking sounds as I walked miserably towards the unit. To my great relief, it was so much fun and caused so much delight in the interactions I had with people, that I soon found myself in a giddy and happy mood again and ready to play.

Take the audience into your world

In theatre clowning we are taught to first get our own world going (the reality of the clown) and then to hold up this world for the audience to enter. I've recently been experimenting with this concept and seeing how it can facilitate connections in a hospital setting.

Generally speaking, I try to approach each new child and each room in a neutral, open state, with no particular world, in no particular mask and with no agenda. From this open place, the clown holds the world of possibility open to the child and follows the child's lead in the development of the interaction. Magnificent things come of this approach. However, on one occasion, out of pure impulse, I decided to try a different approach.

Doko noticed that the floors had just been cleaned and waxed. They were shiny and smooth and really fun to slip and shuffle on. *Doko* felt like skating. *Doko* became a world class figure

skater and spent the whole day skating down the halls and doing pirouettes, triple axels and backwards cross-cuts. (Clown skating was a slow motion kind of shuffle along the floor with exaggerated arm movements and a steady rhythm) To my delight, this image, the world of *Doko* as a skater, facilitated an enormous amount of effortless connections with families and patients. *Doko* skated past each door, fully in her own world, waving to her "fans" as she passed. At the end of the hall, she skillfully swept around and then skated down the hall backwards this time. She added a few triple lutztes at each door and continued on, fully absorbed in her world. Parents and children came to the doors to watch. On *Doko*'s subsequent passes she called a "time out" from her sport to chat with the fans, skating into each room. One little girl who was mobile but attached to an IV pole wanted to join in the skating. She challenged *Doko* to a race. The parents became the officials and *Doko* and the girl had various races down the hall, backwards, forwards, bent over speed skating style, all manner of skating positions. And of course, the girl always won. There was great energy and enthusiasm generated throughout the day as *Doko* skated from room to room and down the halls. *Doko* had established her world and held it open for others to enter and play. And they did.

Such an approach was a delightful change in routine for me and I was amazed at how readily people would enter into the game and come along for the ride. In some cases the game continued in the room, in other cases, the skating scenario offered a fun way to introduce myself and then it evolved into something else as I followed the child's lead. But no matter what happened in each room, when *Doko* bid farewell, she tightened up her "skates" and returned to the ice, skating off to her next destination.

The Six Impulses

In Pochinko language, emotion, physicality and impulses can be measured on a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is a mere inkling and 6 is an all-out, no holds barred expression of a feeling. If there is one thing about Pochinko technique that needs specific attention and adaptation in the hospital environment, it would be the impulses. Much of the time, very small and subtle impulses have a profound effect in the hospital setting and they are the most conducive to listening and connecting. But every now and then, with certain children, the higher impulses beckon. In these cases, it is important to monitor the impulse level. Impulse 6 is typically so big that it is simply inappropriate in such close proximity to other people and in the hospital environment. Yet, impulse 6 is often the funniest and most ridiculous impulse to be in. Clowns are often most vulnerable, most charming and most delightful when expressing something big. A four-year old child delights in the game of scare *Doko* with his plastic dinosaur. The child gets maximum pleasure from maximum fear in *Doko*. To make the impulse 6 work in a way that does not disturb others and that is appropriate to the child, I have learned how to reach an emotional impulse 6 while keeping my physicality and voice in a mid-impulse range.

There are many ways in which Pochinko technique is particularly useful and supportive of the work of the therapeutic clown. While this technique is predominantly characterized by the creation and use of the masks, the fundamental clown principles are the same as any other good clown technique. Listening, honesty, vulnerability, clown logic, playfulness and following impulses are not Pochinko specific concepts. But Pochinko training gives one a vocabulary and a structure through which to explore and discuss these aspects in a gloriously personal and freeing way. I have not yet found a method or training system for therapeutic clowning that compares to the depth and breadth of the Pochinko model.

*. . . хр врнднъ зр
шцеуе пр гнршп
ибф зрне вежруе . . .*

(. . . To boldly go where no clown has gone before)



Photo by Gary Mulcahey

Mump & Smoot, Michael Kennard and John Turner

Mump & Smoot reside on the planet Ummo, worship their clown god Ummo, and speak their own brand of gibberish - Ummonian. Their work is funny, disturbing, "enormously disquieting, spectacularly funny show," Max Wyman - Vancouver Province

They met in 1986 in Second City workshops. As a duo they discovered they had a good connection, especially when doing gibberish exercises. When hearing about the extraordinary visionary clown work of Richard Pochinko, they enrolled in his workshops and on Friday the 13th of May, 1988, Mump & Smoot were born in their first show "Jump the Gun."

Their joint credo later became "Enjoy the process of living." Their resulting work developed from their joint passion about human values, dreaming, magic and spirituality all with a dusting of human fears.

Mump & Smoot have had enormous success in Canada and have done a stint "Off Broadway" in New York City. Their mission is to contribute to Canadian Clown Theatre and through creative explorations expand its current parameters (...to boldly go where no clown has gone before...)

Excerpts from an Interview with John Turner by Shobi Dobi

From John Turner "Smoot"

"I did actually no clowning before I met Richard Pochinko. My partner Michael Kennard had done quite a bit of clown work, and he actually talked me into taking the Baby Clown Workshop with him. I loved the workshop, but I was not very good at it. Of course, with this kind of workshop, we are not to make those kinds of judgements. Right? I loved the color work, and I loved wearing masks. It really blew open what I perceived the clown to be - it was an atom bomb type of explosion. I've been creative in music and arts my whole life and studied a lot and performed some. And it just jazzed me entirely - the enormous creative distance you travel in Baby Clown. It blew me away. The worlds we created were so wonderful. I suddenly saw clowning as unlimited. I went from not seeing Clown as an art at all, to seeing it as an unlimited art form in a short few weeks. However, it wasn't really until our second tour (almost 3 years later) that I started admitting I was a clown. By then I couldn't say I was doing anything else but clowning.

"With the success of *Mump and Smoot*, it wasn't so much the Baby Clown workshop that I wanted to teach. I was interested in the process of going from Baby Clown to professionally performing as a clown - a theater clown. Baby Clown doesn't have anything to do with that. Baby Clown is a beginning, an opening. Our second show was booked "Off Broadway," so our work had progressed quite quickly. The workshop I wanted to teach was from "*Baby to Stage*." However, as Richard [Pochinko] had died in 1989, there was no one teaching Baby Clown workshops in the Toronto area, so there were few to work with.

"So I realized I needed to generate students. I was actually very intimidated about teaching Baby Clown. Why? As much as I latched onto the style, and we became very quickly successful at it, it's pretty involved work. It's pretty deep and sometimes harrowing work for the teacher as much as the students. It's a big responsibility. I was intimidated out of respect for the work.

"I got together with Fiona Griffiths, who had apprenticed with Richard and was our Mump and Smoot movement coach, and went through all her notes that she had for Baby Clown. Mike and Karen Hines had notes also. So between these sources, we pretty much had it covered. Richard had trained many people at that point to teach Baby Clown. He had also made it clear that Mike, Karen and I were to carry on the work as well.

“So I taught my first class of eight and just loved it! Loved it! Loved it! The workshops just evolved from there. Whenever we had down time with the shows, I would teach.”

Breaking People out of Their Glass Jar Creative Prisons.

[How did Richard arrive at this technique?]

“Richard had a vision or a dream that he was flying over the Earth and all the people were in glass jars which represented creative prisons. It came to Richard in this dream that his mission or destiny is to try to break people out of their glass jars. I think Richard had a mission -- a destiny to help people break out of their creative prisons, and he used primarily mask and clown to do this. I think ultimately that chaotic, free, wild dream state, and clown logic world was a perfect place for Richard to go in terms of breaking people out of the glass jar prisons. It's such an insane crazy world, the world of the clowns, and the simplest thing to the most complex thing. from the wildest thing to the most mundane thing. It covers the whole spectrum and it keeps switching itself at the drop of a hat. It's a great form for creative development.

Basking in an Emotions Rainbow

[Watching the work of students] “It's breath taking and it's heart wrenching and it's fulfilling and it's satisfying, And sometimes there is anxiety and I get nervous for them, but I love that all dearly. If you spend two weeks focusing intensely on freeing the impulse and on free movement - that incredible image river that we all have inside - it's so breath taking, the power that comes into the room. You feel it right away when you walk into the room with the walls covered with paintings and masks and the bizarre world of costumes and hats. It's like basking in an emotions rainbow. I've never had a bad group in the 40 some odd times I've taught this workshop.”

[Can you speak to the importance of innocence in this work.]

“Richard stressed innocence quite a bit. I think it was about returning to the original impulse (pure impulse) the time in our lives when we deal without editor. The clown needs to

have access to everything. The problem with our editor is, we need it. We can't tolerate our impulses without our editor, especially in big cities. But we get into too much control and cut off all the options that could be open to us. So by returning to the innocence of each mask, there is a sense of birth - a sense of wonder and newness about seeing the world. Innocence is about being in the pre-editor phase of impulse work. You practice listening to that first impulse. It's “follow the impulse.” It's not “follow the second impulse” or the third or denying all the impulses until you come up with an intellectually acceptable action or idea. It's just “follow the impulse.” There is a sense of laughter and play in the innocence of the child. **The glee and the joy that can accompany childhood is a great starting place for the clown.**”

Creation of the Three Dimensional Creative Play Ground.

“The mask gives a sort of structure to this world. The six masks of Baby Clown are representative of specific directions. Each of the masks is a point in the compass - the directions and the above and below are dimensions. These dimensions represent the three-dimensional creative play ground.. What you generate is, if you think of the creative self as a globe, then you realize that the masks represent points on the surface and the better you know your masks, the brighter the light - the stronger the guide posts. And each light illuminates all the area inbetween - North Northeast etc. The Self is in the center - the clown bounces around between the masks and the Self. So if you think of all the positions that are possible in a sphere that's how many masks you have access to - infinity.”

For more information about Mump and Smoot visit their website at: www.mumpandsmoot.com

For more information on the Clown Farm please visit: www.theclownfarm.com



Mump and Smoot in sleeping bags in “Flux”

What kind of music do elves like best? “Wrap” music!

How many elves does it take to change a light bulb? Ten! One to change the light bulb and nine to stand on each other’s shoulders!

What kind of bread do elves make sandwiches with? Why, shortbread of course!

What kind of money do elves use? Jingle bills!

Why did Santa’s helper see the doctor? Because he had low “elf” esteem!

How long should an elf’s legs be? Just long enough to reach the ground!

What did the elf say was the first step in using a Christmas computer? “First, YULE LOGon”!

Why did the elf put his bed into the fireplace? He wanted to sleep like a log!

What’s the first thing elves learn in school? The “elf”-abet!

Who sings “Blue Christmas” and makes toy guitars? Elfis!

Who lives at the North Pole, makes toys and rides around in a pumpkin? Cinder-”elf”-a!

Knock Knock. Who’s there? Elf. Elf who? Elf me wrap this present for Santa!

Knock Knock. Who’s there? Holly. Holly who? Holly up already and Elf me wrap this present for Santa!

Knock Knock. Who’s there? Yule. Yule who? Yule be sorry if you don’t Holly up and Elf me wrap this present for Santa!

Knock Knock. Who’s there? Snow. Snow who? Snow time to be playing games! Yule be sorry if you don’t Holly up and Elf me wrap this present for Santa!

One elf said to another elf, “We had Grandma for Christmas dinner”. And the other elf said, “Really? We had turkey!”

Why do elves scratch themselves? Because they’re the only ones who know where its itchy!

How do elves greet each other? “Small world, isn’t it?”

Santa rides in a sleigh. What do elves ride in? Mini vans!

What do you call an elf who tells silly jokes? A real Christmas Card!

What do they call a wild elf in Texas? Gnome on the range!

Why did the elves spell Christmas N-O-E? Because Santa had said, “No L!”

Why did the elves ask the turkey to join the band? Because he had the drum sticks!

If athletes get athlete’s foot, what do elves get? Mistle-toes!

What’s another name for Santa’s helpers? Subordinate clauses!

Where do you find elves? Depends where you left them!



An Equity /Musicians' Union Demonstration was held in Parliament Square at noon on Thursday 22nd October. This was to bring more awareness to the problems for performers created by the Entertainment Licensing Act.

The Government seem to have accepted changes which would help circuses, but not those to reduce the bureaucratic burden particularly on small venues that were in the recommendations by the parliamentary committee which looked into it.

There was entertainment, with a lively modern Oompah Band, and a large contingent of African dancers from a show that was appearing at the Hackney Empire - produced by our own Gerry Cottle, who attended in person.

C.I. presence.... Gerry Cottle, Rainbow and Sonny, Mattie, Rhubarb (of course - he's on Equity's Council!) and Gingernutt as Bigwig the Wizard. Beano and other clowns were there as well as Mr Punch with John "Chippy" Wood, also a lady who appears as Mary Seacole, *the contemporary of Florence Nightingale, clockwork soldier, and lots of helpers.

The colourful protestors were treated to speeches by MP's of all parties, who then went back into "The House" as the recommendations were being looked at again that very afternoon. Michael Day and other Equity folks also were there to make sure the Equity presence was high profile. It was agreed that it was a successful demonstration.

Report information provided by Gingernutt and Rhubarb.



HAVE YOU ENJOYED THIS ISSUE

Found any errors (we are human)?

Feel you could have helped find them
before the issue went press?

Then why not offer your help to the editor.

Email her today on:

editor@clowns-international.com

Dear Lord,

I thank you for calling me to share with others your most precious gift of laughter.

May I never forget that it is your gift, and my privilege.

As your children are rebuked in their self-importance and cheered in their sadness, help me to remember that your foolishness is wiser than our wisdom. Amen.

The Grimaldi Service

The Grimaldi Service is one of the first dates that gets chalked off in my diary every year, and I think I've only missed it twice in the last thirty or so years - once because I was in Australia and once when the car broke down en route. I've been involved in organising it for many of those years, though Taffy did that for a while and was very good at it too. He had a great sensitivity to the feel of the service, a willingness to include all sorts of people, and a great attention to detail as well as theatre. The service has always been terribly important to him, and it will be a poignant moment when we remember him at the next service and his candle is at last carried up the aisle.

Looking back, when there was a fire at The Holy Trinity at Dalston in the mid-eighties, for two years we held the service at the church in Tooting, where I was Vicar at the time. I happened to be visiting Michael Shrewsbury, the then Vicar of Dalston, at the same time as there was a C.I. meeting in his front room, and I seem to remember Zippo and Smokey and JoJo and Bingo amongst others were all there. I made the offer for the service to come to Tooting and what finally sealed it, I think, was my parting shot that it would be an appropriate venue, not least because my father, Richard Findlater, had written Grimaldi's biography. Now, of course, a new 'definitive biography' of Grimaldi has been published - we shall see how definitive it is! Anyway, Grimaldi has always been part of my life and landscape, but little did I know that my father would die six months later. At the second service, the Bishop of Kingston, Peter Selby, agreed to come and preach and he dedicated the reordering of the new nave altar and platform to my father's memory at that service. The plaque on the wall records that it all happened at the Grimaldi Service.

It was while we had the service in Tooting that I introduced actual clowning into the service rather than just have clowns doing the readings, and performance has featured ever since. Clowns speak of the things and mysteries of God in so many ways, and it's terribly important that we do what we do in church as well as elsewhere, and offer it up to God. Our clowning is a worthy offering, whether it's specifically Christian in content or not. I'm always looking for people who want to do something in the service - or indeed at the services we have in Bognor at our "Circus Circus" International Clowns Festivals. So if you have something you would like to offer, or if you would like to do a reading, please let me know. My only gripe about the service is the behaviour of the photographers - I hope we can revert to the old system of corralling them into the side aisle. It is a church service not a photographic studio session. Meanwhile I look forward to the next Grimaldi service and hope that it is as inspiring as the last one. And I shall be thinking of Taffy too. Did you know that Taffy was dyslexic and he's been worshipping Dog from an early age?!

Roly Bain

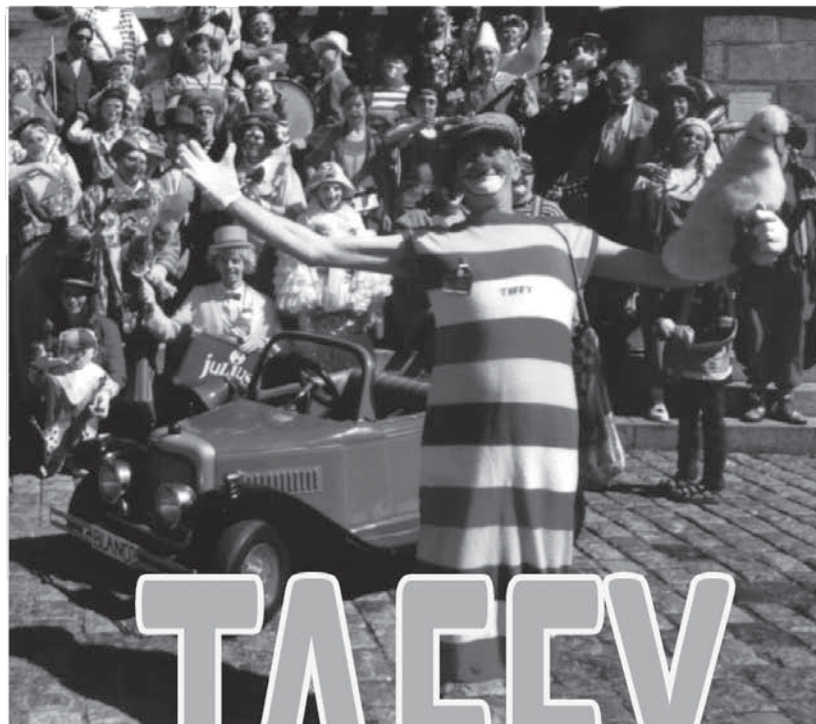


ANNUAL GRIMALDI MEMORIAL SERVICE**February 7th, 2010 (in Motley).**

Our annual Grimaldi Memorial Service, Holy Trinity Church, Beechwood Road, Dalston, East London where we honour Joseph Grimaldi, give thanks for the Gift of Laughter and remember those of our colleagues who passed away during the previous year.

Clowns should arrive from 12.00pm noon, lunch (12.00pm – 2.00pm) and a place to change are provided. The Service takes place at 3.00 p.m., followed by the traditional cutting of a Clown Cake and a Clown Show for the local children.

No registration required. If you have friends and relatives who wish to view the service, then advise them to arrive early as the church was filled to capacity last year and late arrivals were refused entry due to fire regulations.



TAFFY

*You came to us, you made us laugh
I am sure you are still making people laugh
where you are now.*

Julius from Denmark

Serious Small Thoughts.....

I'm a little confused about clowns and Christmas because we all had Christmas at the wrong time of year and Santa gave us Easter eggs!

That's all I have to say, so in the next Joey I'm going to talk to you about hats and hair and pockets. Until then, keep smiling on the outside.

Stephen "BB Bubbles" Breen

Note from Big Bubblz:

BB Bubbles hasn't gone mad! He is referring to the photo shoot we did with Santa, the Christmas tree and all the Junior Clowns for the front cover of The Joey, Winter 2008.at Circus Circus, Bognor 2008. Santa was SO kind to have come all the way down from the North Pole, just for our picture.



I think the Easter eggs were Rudolph's idea, good old Rudolph! I will let Santa know that it might not be the best idea to add the Easter Bunny into the mix. Smilez and gigglz

Bubblz

Serious Small Thoughts

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8th January to 4th February 1954.

With: Spider Austin as the Gendarme, Will Norman as the Drunk with balloon, Frankie Fossett, Olly Grey, Ken Simpson and Arthur Pedlar as Ring-boys.

It was Jerome Medrano in the late 1940s who felt that as brilliant as the French Clown & Auguste routines were, there was a lack of physical comedy in their entrees. He had the brain-wave to telegram Buster Keaton, it arrived in the nick of time since Buster was ill with frustration; the Hollywood moguls had written him off, he wouldn't/couldn't work with their comedy script-writers (as though he needed them!!) or compromise with 'sound', he'd sold the rights to his films to pay off expensive divorces etc. In Tom Dardis's book on Buster (*The Man Who Wouldn't Lie Down*), he describes his last performance in Medrano (I have the program signed by Buster in front of me, 8th Jan to 4th Feb 1954) and he describes the routine I was in. Dardis makes two mistakes: it was Jan 1954 (not '53) and the tuxedo was in immaculate condition, with a label on the sleeve, Buster was the man from the cleaners:

He enters, shows the label to one of the flunkies standing by the ring entrance who points to Jean Drena, the ring-master, who is talking a lot of blither into the mike the other side of the ring. Buster sets off to deliver it. Half-way across the ring, one of us (I was part of Spider Austin's team of four clowns who Buster asked for, dressed straight in the normal Medrano ring-boy uniform) entered to clear up the various poles used in the previous 'strong-man perch act' with a girl doing acrobatics high up. On swinging the pole round it knocked the tux jacket off the hanger; Buster didn't notice this until he was about to tap the ring-master on the shoulder, so he had to retrieve it, dust it down, and set off again. This time two of us carried off the largest pole and swept Keaton off with it and the trousers fell off the hanger. This 'nonsense' went on for some time, never did he have the whole suit on the hanger. The philosophy was – he was doing his job, we were doing ours, and it was no ones' fault that the two jobs were incompatible. I was amazed how little rehearsal he gave us, he told us, "When I'm in your way, shove me out of it, NO PUSSY-FOOTING, we do it for real – I'll take the knocks". This part of the act closed when we entered with a huge grass 'carpet' which we laid over the dropped waist-coat. On looking for that garment, he realized that the bulge in the centre of the grass must be it; he puts the hanger down (with jacket and trousers on it) on the edge of the carpet and crawls underneath to retrieve it, but on emerging he discovers that we have put a telephone kiosk on top of the tux. His struggles and grunts to pull it out gets the attention of Drena who recognizes his tuxedo as the cause of the trouble. He blows his whistle to attract the two flunkies' attention and signals them to throw Buster out - they pick him up by his shoulder pads and with his feet barely touching the floor, throw him through the ring curtains. He reappears in the band-box above the entrance, trips over music stands sending the sheets over the edge, the annoyed musicians pick him up and throw him over too. He is caught by two hefty ring-hands below and thrown out again. Depending on what he'd noticed earlier, he enters by one of the side (audience) doors and if he's seen a fur coat on one of the ring-side seats (quite often there were formally dressed patrons), he'd try and hide under it with just a peep-hole to peer through. However, the move I liked is when he saw a boy sitting somewhere near a gangway - he'd lift the lad onto his knee and put his hat on his head, so when the flunkies came to get him he handed them the lad! He was then thrown out for the last time and the full ring lights came revealing a park scene:

On the grass was a park seat with a newspaper, in front of it a flower bed and to one side a chewing-gum slot machine with its glass reservoir on top showing the different coloured balls of gum. On the opposite side was the telephone kiosk. Buster enters with his stick which he places on the seat, notices the flowers, fingers his button-hole, bends down and picks a flower; then he notices a large pair of black boots and his gaze travels all the way up the gendarme standing there looking down at him; he puts the flower back in the soil and thumbs it in, the gendarme gives him a warning finger and exits. He sits down and starts to read the newspaper, to his consternation it unfolds getting larger and larger, he stands on the seat and it envelopes him and the seat topples over so he's left struggling under this huge newspaper. He tears his way out only to see the policeman looking down at him; he gathers the paper in a huge ball and looks for a trash can and not finding one gives it to the gendarme who exits angrily. For some reason, I never saw the next bit of business when a drunk enters with a balloon, so can't relate it. He sees the chewing gum, digs deep into his pocket which appears to go down to his ankles where he retrieves a coin, puts it into the machine and presses the lever but nothing happens. He grabs the top and shakes the machine, the top comes off so he starts filling his pockets with the gum balls, of course the gendarme enters, grabs him and spins him round and mimes that he is going to pick him up, break

I'm over his knee etc. Buster looks pathetic, puts his hands on his heart, points, and mimes that he has a wife, two children and a babe-in-arms, points to his mouth, shakes his head and shows his empty pockets. By this time, the gendarme is in tears and exits sniffing. As soon as he's gone he helps himself to more gum. Eleanor, his wife, enters very smartly dressed in riding costume and makes straight for the kiosk. Buster, having picked up his stick, slowly follows her across the ring. On arriving at the kiosk she opens her bag and finds she's only got paper money, turns round quickly and walks smack into Buster who closes his eyes, gives her a smacking big kiss and starts tapping with his stick as a blind man. She hurries off in confusion, Buster enters the kiosk and having found another coin, drops it on the floor and is below the window height looking for it when Eleanor returns with her coins, walks straight in on top of him, he stands up, she's on his shoulders, her head goes through the roof, her yells summon the gendarme, Buster crouches down and makes a swift exit between both their legs. The End!

Arthur "Vercoe" Pedlar

JOHN "FROSTY" COOPER

Taking on the Chairmanship of any organisation is a challenge that most will face with some degree of trepidation. More daunting the task, when your predecessor is somebody as able and charismatic as Taffy, as was the case when I took over the Chair of C.I.. His were exceptionally big shoes to fill, and I've never been sure I did so more than adequately, if that.

By the time of the transition, he and I had known each other for some 20 years, initially as brother magicians. Thus I knew that, "John! Remember I'm always on the end of a phone", was undoubtedly sincere - far more than mere words. I recall the first time I rang to consult the wise counsellor. The greeting Hello was virtually sung (well, he was Welsh!). I identified myself. The response? "Oh! Well, if I'm talking to my Chairman, I suppose I'd better sit up straight!!" I could hear the twinkle in his eye.

I can do so now as I write these words, just as you will when you read them. Likewise I hear the gentle Welsh lilt. See the warm smile, alternating with an impish grin. I feel a warmth. A sense of tranquillity. Of serenity. Ian, I thank you for your friendship. For your guidance and your support. It has been an honour to breathe the same air as you.

I miss you. x

John "Frosty" Cooper.

SHOBI DOBI

I wish I could be there. I loved/love Taffy.

It is a tradition in the USA (maybe from the circus here) for all the clowns to put one tear (in grease paint) on the side, like coming out of the corner of the left eye when we go to a funeral. Like a big tear drop.

The most amazing experience I remember having with a group of clowns was at a clown funeral. The soprano, who was singing "Amazing Grace", started to choke up because of tears and all of us clowns in the back of the church started to fill in for her -- softly singing where she left off until she gathered herself and finished, at which time we just faded out. We all did this quite spontaneously. It was chillingly amazing. It's what we clowns know how to do - support.

(((((<|:o)]|||)))))))))

That's a big clown hug from me! Shobi Dobi, the Clown

The C.I. "Circus Circus" Clowns Festival

at Butlins, Bognor Regis: 3rd - 8th March 2010

Clown Name	C.I. Mem No	CRB* Reg No	CRB Reg Date	First Name	Surname

***CRB Registration:** As in previous Circus Circus Festivals, Butlins require All Clowns and Working "Friends of C.I." to have CRB registration. See Joey for information. Does not apply to Juniors or Overseas Clown Members.

Registration Fee: Registration fee £25.00 per person (£7.50 Children under 12 years of age)

Please answer and /or tick ALL QUESTIONS where required

DAY OF ARRIVAL: Please indicate your day of arrival. Please report to the C.I. Festival Desk located in Butlins Guest Services.

I/We will be arriving on (please tick) Wednesday 3rd ___ Thursday 4th ___ Friday 5th ___ Saturday 6th ___

I/We be leaving on (please tick) Sunday 7th ___ Monday 8th ___

ACCOMMODATION:

Clowns (and selected working "Friends") will be accommodated free of charge in self-catering Butlins Chalets. Two Clowns/"Friends" will share a chalet. If you wish to share with any particular clown/'friend', please arrange this in advance with your clown/'friend' and arrange to send in one registration form between you. Thank you.

Clown + Family: Please register with Bluey with this form first. When Bluey advises you of your Reference Number, you must telephone Butlin's Hotline 0870 1450040, to book in and pay for your family at the special Festival discount rate.

CONTRACT:

Clowns and Friend Members who complete this registration form and return it to Clown Bluey enter into a contract with Clowns International to fulfil our obligations with Butlins as follows:

Clowns International and the sponsors require all clowns who participate in the Festival to take part in Motley in the AI Fresco Meet and Greet Programme, Parade and Press call.

Please tick if you would like to be considered for:

I/We wish to be considered for a spot in the Clown Shows (please tick) Yes []

I/We wish to help teach children Circus / Clown Skills (please tick) Yes []

I/We wish to help on the Merchandise Stand (please tick) Yes []

I/We wish to Offer a Workshop / Lecture on Thursday (please tick) Yes []

Subject _____

I/We wish to have a critique of my/our Act on Thursday (please tick) Yes []

REGISTRATION / BOOKING FEE

Clowns International Clowns, Friends and Spouses:

Clowns @ £25.00 per member No of Clowns _____ = £ _____

C.I. Junior Clowns @ £7.50 per member No of Clowns _____ = £ _____

Working 'Friends' of Clown Members* @ £25.00 No of persons _____ = £ _____

Family members @ £25.00 for registration only No of persons _____ = £ _____

Junior Family members @ £7.50 for registration only No of persons _____ = £ _____

TOTAL £ _____

I/we enclose my/our cheque/postal order for a total of £ _____ made payable to Clowns International.

I/we agree to the conditions laid down by the Festival Organisers & C.I. Committee

Signed _____ (on behalf of those registered above)

Please complete the form and return it with your remittance a.s.a.p. to

Clown Bluey, C.I. Festival Organiser, 30 Sandpiper Close, Marchwood, Nr Southampton, Hants. SO40 4XN

Clowns International Festival
“Circus Circus” International Clowns Festival
at Bognor Regis, 3 - 8 March 2010

YES, it's nearly here again! Our WONDERFUL annual Clowns Festival in Butlins, Bognor Regis in 2010!!!

Here is your EARLY BIRD Registration Form which will save you £5 per registration for adult members and £2.50 for Juniors!

Registration Fee:

Early Bird Registration for this great fun event is £25.00 per adult member (£7.50 for registered Junior Clowns) until 31st December, after which adult member's registration will increase by £5.00 and Junior members by £2.50. So please help yourselves and the organisers by registering EARLY - thank you.

Arrival, Registration and Chalet Key Allocation:

Once again Butlins have agreed that you may arrive on Wednesday afternoon, 3rd March, in order to take advantage of the all-day Lecture and Workshop Programme scheduled to start on Thursday morning. Registration and Chalet Key allocation will take place as usual at Guests Services (situated in the building opposite the Go-Carts site).

CRB Registration:

All Clowns and working “Friends of Clowns” must provide proof of CRB Registration to take part in this Festival. Please note if you don't already have CRB, you can apply as an “assistant” clown, and as you are volunteering your services for no fee, you can apply for a non-enhanced CRB for £18.00 which will last for three months. However, we strongly advise Clowns to apply for a full enhanced CRB Registration as many Councils and Agencies are now insisting on having this so it will be an asset for you to have in your professional life. We will accept CRB's up to three years old - after three years, you will need to update by applying again. You may apply to the Benevolent Officer for help if you need financial help in this matter.

Parking and Security:

There is free parking within Butlins and 24 hour security on the Gate, but as with all car parking, we strongly advise members not to leave valuables in their cars.

Accommodation for Clowns and working “Friends”:

Clowns (and working “Friends” who volunteer and are chosen to man C.I.'s Merchandising Stand) will receive free accommodation in a self-catering Holiday Chalet (anticipated two clowns or two “Friends” or a clown and a “Friend” sharing a chalet which normally sleeps four). Chalets will be available from Wednesday lunchtime, 3rd March through to and including Sunday 7th March (the public arrive on the Friday and leave on the Monday morning). We have accommodation for up to 100 clowns (and clowns will be given first priority over family/friends).

Accommodation for Clown + Families:

If a clown intends to take his/her family, please register with Bluey first. The clown should list his/her family on the registration form. Once Bluey receives a Butlins Reference number for the Clown's accommodation booking, he will notify the clown who can then 'phone the Butlins hotline and pay the additional cost for his/her family. The Butlins telephone hotline is 0870 1450040 and quote Circus Circus Clowns Festival, that you are a clown, have already registered with Bluey, and wish to pay at the 25% off Brochure price discounted rate for your family staying in your unit.

C.I. Stands:

Please note that as Butlins have contracted the rights for Face Painting to an outside contractor, C.I. are unable to facepaint at this Festival. We will still be selling merchandise from our C.I. Stand, and we will also be able to sell balloon models from our stand if some clowns are happy to volunteer to do this for CI Funds.

A full information Sheet and Programme will be in your Spring “Joey”

Please support our Festival! Complete and send in your Registration Form to Clown Bluey TODAY! (Bluey's address is on the Registration Form)



**CLOWNS INTERNATIONAL
STANDING ORDER FORM**

1 Your Details

Your Full Name or Business Name

Your Contact Telephone Number

Bank Sort Code

Account Number being debited

Bank & Branch

2 Your Standing Order Details

Does this instruction replace another standing order instruction

Yes No

Reference number (date of birth & Membership Number)

 / / /

Recipients Name

Recipients Bank & Branch

Sort Code

Account No

(IBIN) - GB29LOYD30998700368035
(BIC) - LOYDGB21376

First Payment Amount

(if different from usual amount)

£

Date of First Payment

Usual Payment Amount

£

Usual Payment Amount in Words

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

How often do you want the payments made

Quarterly

Yearly

3 Your Authorisation

I authorise you to debit my / our account in accordance with Section 2 above.

Your signature (s)

This request is addressed to the bank which holds my / our account

Date

CLOWN INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

I wish to / I wish not to: rejoin Clowns International Membership No/s: _____

Clown Name/s: _____ Name/s: _____

Print Address: (Only required if Address has changed during 2008)

Tel: _____ Mobile: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____ Web: _____

Subscription Rates: (Please tick which membership applies)

Full Clown Member: **£38.00** [] Overseas Clowns/Friends of Clowns : **£38.00** []

*Provisional Clown: **£38.00** [] Junior Clowns: **£11.50** []

Senior Clown over 65yrs: (UK only): **£21.50** [] Friend of Clowns (UK only): **£21.50** []

*I am presently a "Provisional" Member but wish to apply to be upgraded to Full Membership []

Have you obtained **CRB** (Criminal Records Bureau) For UK Clowns only

Registration YES [] NO [] If Yes: CRB No: _____ Date Issued: _____

Clowns International can help, by putting you in touch with a company that does CRB for C.I.
Contact Membership Officer for details.

I wish to pay my membership by Standing Order . []

(Please note a years subs to be paid by cash/cheque/postal Order – payable to Clowns International prior to standing order commencing.
Standing orders should be set up so that by end of December of previous subs year all subs for following year are paid)

(Please complete the Standing Order form and take it to your Bank – Please do not send to C.I. but inform membership officer of commencement date)

I enclose my Membership Subscription for £ _____ (cheques made payable to Clowns International.)

Overseas Clowns please send STERLING Money Order/Bank Draft or by postal order payable to CLOWNS INTERNATIONAL.

OR

I wish to pay by Credit Card. [] Type of Card (Please tick): Visa [] MasterCard []

Please add £2.00 to your subscription if paying by Credit Card

Card Number:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry Date: _____ **CVV:** _____

Name on Card: _____ **Signature:** _____



Santa Claus brings poor Rudolph to the vet. He says to the vet, "Doctor, please do something for my Rudolph. His nose won't light up." The vet walks out of the room and returns with a pet carrier. He places the pet carrier next to the reindeer, opens it and out steps a cat. The cat walks around the reindeer and sniffs it. The cat then walks back into the carrier. The animal doctor takes it out of the room and returns. He hands Santa Claus the bill. Santa gasps, "£350! You didn't do anything for my Rudolph and you're charging me £350?" The vet shrugged and replied, "That's the usual charge. £50 for the office visit and £300 for the CAT SCAN."

The Blonde Xmas Diet:

A blonde is terribly overweight and wants to lose weight before Christmas, so her doctor puts her on a diet. "I want you to eat regularly for 2 days, then skip a day, and repeat this procedure for 2 weeks. The next time I see you, you'll have lost at least 5 pounds." When the blonde returned, she shocked the doctor by losing nearly 20 pounds. "Why, that's amazing!" the doctor said, "Did you follow my instructions?" The blonde nodded, "I'll tell you though, I thought I was going to drop dead that 3rd day." "From hunger, you mean?", asked the doctor." "No, from all that skipping."

Christmas, Italian Style:

Twas the night before Christmas,
Da whole house was mella,
Not a creature was stirrin',
Cuz I had a gun unda da pilla.

When up on da roof
I heard somethin' pound,
I sprung to da window,
To scream, "YO! Keep it down!"

When what to my
Wanderin' eyes should appear,
But da Don of all elfs,
And eight friggin' reindeer!

Wit' slicked back black hair,
And a silk red suit,
don Christopher wuz here,
And he brought da loot!

Wit' a slap to dare snouts,
And a yank on dare manes,
He cursed and he shouted,
And he called dem by name.

"Yo Tony, Yo Frankie,
Yo Vinny, Yo Vito,
Ay Joey, Ay Paulie,
Ay Pepe, Ay Guido!"

As I drew out my gun
And hid by da bed,
He flew troo da winda
And slapped me 'side da head.

"What da hell you doin'
Pullin' a gun on da Don?"

Now all you're gettin' is coal,
You friggin' moron!"

Den pointin' a fat finga
Right unda my nose,
He twisted his pinky ring,
And up da chimney he rose.

He sprang to his sleigh,
Obscenities screamin',
Away dey all flew,
Before he troo dem a beatin'.

Den I heard him yell out,
What I did least expect,
"Merry Friggin' Christmas to all,
And yous better show some respect!"

Why does Father Christmas like to work in
the garden?

Because he likes to hoe, hoe, hoe !

Why is a cat on a beach like Christmas?
Because they both have "Sandy claws"!

What does Father Christmas call his
money?
Iced lolly!

What's Father Christmas called when he
takes a rest while delivering presents?
Santa pause!

Problems with Costuming Children - Kyle Peron

magic4u02@aol.com

<http://www.kyleandkellymagic.com>

If you are a children's performer, chances are at some point you have used hats or costuming in some way to dress up your helper. There are many great routines based on this idea used for entertaining children. But what happens if you have a child on stage who just does not want to wear the hat or take part in assisting you by wearing the costume? It is a tough situation to find yourself in, but here are some ideas which may be of help.



I have had this problem happen in the past and I came up with a great solution that started as just a way of saving the routine but ended up with the audience in hysterics. It saved the routine and then some.

The first thing I do for any costumed routine is try and select a person from the audience ahead of time before the show even starts. I may look for an older kid or a child I feel will interact and cooperate well with me. However, if you have a child on stage and find that they do not want to wear the hat or costume and they keep throwing it off etc., then I immediately switch gears into my plan B approach.

I do not want to send the child back to their seat as it sends the wrong message to the audience and can hurt the child's feelings. I also do not want to leave the child up there without any interaction with them. So what I do is simply switch it around and poke fun at myself.

I will say something like, "Ok Timmy, for this next hat I need your help. I have a choice for you to help make the magic happen. Either YOU (said in funny voice) can wear the hat ORRRRR (and I start making an embarrassed face look) you can have me wear the hat. But I would look really, really silly wearing a hat like this so think carefully."

The kid will ALWAYS tell me to wear it. I then continue by saying, "ME!? You want me to wear the hat? Well OK but I better take a vote from the audience. Who wants me to wear this really silly hat? Oh wow a lot of you do. OK no problem, I will wear the hat but you have to promise me, no laughing or giggling when I put it on, no matter what? Promise?" (Of course the kids are all just going to laugh and giggle their heads off as the hat goes on my own head.)

This just works really great and I get a wonderful reaction from the kids. It saves you from a really awkward situation and you still get to interact with the child on stage. If done well, the audience will not notice any difference and assume that it was all a part of your original idea all along.

Try it out and I assure you that you will have fun with it and it may save you from situations like this. It is just one simple way of getting out of a potentially awkward problem.

As always, I encourage you, the readers, to let me know your thoughts. So if you have any thoughts on my articles or suggestions or comments, please feel free to e-mail me directly at magic4u02@aol.com. I would love to hear from you.

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RICO

Farewell Taffy.....

'See You on The Other Side'...in 'The Great Big Circus Tent in the Sky'!

Your Act - Quieten an Audience, Lead them into Laughter, Then Filled their Lungs with 'The Breath of Life' – Providing them with 'The Energy to Scream & Shout'

An Experience 'Many of Us Will Never Forget'...

Those of You, who are Brave Enough...Will, continue on in 'Taffy's Simplistic Style'...

Keeping This Tradition Alive.....

ARTHUR "VERCOE" PEDLAR

Taffy was a gentleman who was easy to love and admire, his unassuming manner hid a strong faith and a firm resolve which 'rubbed off' on all who met him, especially children who delighted in his clown skills and super sense of the ridiculous. Those who had the privilege of knowing him won't forget him. Arthur Pedlar.



SUSI ODDBALL

Taffy

There are rainbows in the sky
 You will be the gold at the end of it
 Lighting up the world as one of nature's treasures
 With your colourful antics
 As Taffy, you being an ironic combination of
 sunshine and tears
 The sunshine is life
 The tears are laughter
 Taffy you will always be a treasure
 Never mind the weather

by Susi Oddball

LEIGH "SPOTTY"
WILLIAMS

Hi, I did not know Taffy personally, but would like to say he will be a great loss to the world of clowns having read about him in the JOEY. Spotty the Clown.

Taffy was the first clown I knew when I first participated in C.I. activities. As a man and as clown, he reached me deeply and I learned a lot from him even though we only met a few times. We are proud to have an Alan Pell organ which he gave me the last time we met. Interestingly, the week before he died, I worked for a week with the organ and I thought about him every day.

Thanks Taffy, you will always be alive in my memory.

João Ferreira - Pezinho [Portugese Azores]

CHRIS "L.O." STONE

Eulogy for Taffy

My good words about this man can be very short. He was a good man and what better eulogy could anyone have.

I was always impressed by that goodness and know that it came about through life experiences, some of which we discussed in conversational moments, which I remember as I write this, with fond memory.

When he was Chairman, his quiet dignity enhanced Clowns International and we were lucky to have him. He always tried to enhance the status of "clown" and his co-sponsorship, with myself, of the Slapstick Award was a good example of his efforts.

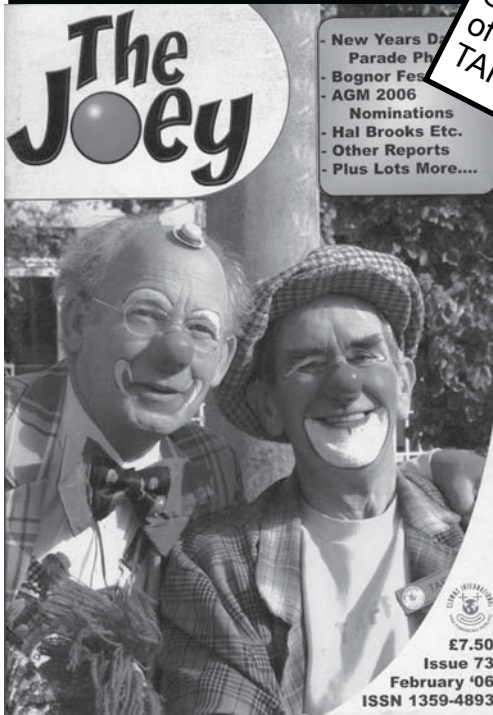
My sincere condolences go to his family at this time

Farewell Taffy I shall miss you

Chris "LO" Stone

RON "TOTO" JOHNSON

My thoughts and prayers go out to all who loved him....



KATH ELLIS
So sad such a great guy and supporter
of the young and up and coming RIP
TAFFY xx

Stevie D

Taffy was always a gentleman even with his dry wit. It was always a pleasure to sit and talk with him and he will be missed by many.

ERIK-JACK HARRIS

Oh Taffy, he was good, bless him!

CAROLINE "BUBBLZ"AINSLIE

I only had a proper chat with him once - we sat next to each other in the pub for several hours at a get-together. What a lovely man! I could see why everyone was so fond of him. I never saw him perform which, clearly, was a great loss on my part. Rest in laughter, lovely Taffy

BLUEY "CLOWN BLUEY" BRATTLE

He was a smashing guy and one of the best Clowns International Chairmen we ever had - I was honoured to be his friend, colleague and his Secretary whilst he held that post. I shall never forget 'Taffy's Tits' and 'Bluey's Bums' at Expo 98 - one of my highlights. Taffy often popped over with Tom Fun to my place and we'd shoot out to a New Forest pub for an OAP Lunch. He'll be sadly missed by all of us.

by MONTY WELLS.

Arnold Mulchrome cupped his ear with his white gloved hand and leaned forward towards the young boy.

"What was that you said you would like for Christmas?"

The eleven year old slowly inserted a finger and thumb into his mouth and extracted a dripping, walnut sized, wad of chewing gum. He slowly wiped his mouth with the cuff of his anorak and, in a voice that could be heard on the other side of the store's toy department, yelled.

"I SAID A MOUNTIN BIKE. You def or sumfing?"

Arnold drew back quickly almost dislodging the snowy white false beard that hid the look of disgust on his face. The two women standing at the entrance to 'Santa's Grotto', obviously the boy's mother and grandmother, burst into immoderate laughter at their kid's retort.

"A mountain bike eh?" said Arnold, trying to regain his genial attitude with the obnoxious little tyke. *"I can't promisebut, if you're a good boy....."*

"Tell 'im your Nan's bought one for 'im to bring you at Chrissmuss," the older woman cackled, and then to Arnold, *"Can I sit on your lap Santa?"*

"As much as I'd like that," he lied, *"I'm afraid it's not allowed."* He compounded his reply by standing up, thereby removing any sittable lap.

"There you are," he said handing the lad a small package. *"Merry Christmas."*

The child snatched the packet and the trio walked away discussing the merits of MacDonald's or Burger King. Arnold knew that the package he had given the boy only contained a few crayons and a small colouring book, meant for children under five. He should have received a small buzzing, flashing key ring with an attached compass and whistle. "But," thought Arnold, "he no more believed in Father Christmas than he believed in going to school. Serve him right." Such power! He smoothed down the scarlet, fur trimmed coat, eased the wide black patent leather belt that encircled his corpulent waist and sat down on a big armchair. He looked around. The store's display people had done a good job this year, turning the little-used alcove in the corner of the toy department into 'Santa's Fairy Grotto'. Realistic icicles. Frosted Christmas tree. Hundreds of twinkling snowflakes and a large footstool, disguised as a mound of snow, for his visitors to sit on. That was what was missing at the moment. Visitors. It was O.K. at weekends and it would be better when the schools broke up.

"Hello there. Come on in." A boy and girl, both about eight, cautiously entered the grotto followed by a smiling mum. The boy held out two tickets.

"Come to see Santa have you? Sit down and make yourself comfortable." Arnold indicated the footstool. They had barely sat down before the little lad, his glasses slightly askew, pointed an accusing finger at Arnold.

"Last year you pinched one of our Christmas chocolates!"

Arnold was caught unawares for a split second then a scenario flashed through his mind. The kid's mother had probably bought some rather special chocolates for Christmas and answered her children's pleas with "No you can't have them 'til Christmas Day". After they were tucked up for the night on Christmas Eve their father had, most likely, unconsciously helped himself to one before being admonished by his wife "I told the children they were for Christmas!" and Dad, replacing the lid, had replied "Tell 'em Father Christmas took it."



Something like that, but there was a barely perceptible pause between the admonishment and Arnold's

"Wasn't me. It was Rudolph. If I hadn't caught him at it he would have had the lot! Now let me see. I am trying to remember your names....."

"I'm Elliot." the boy said "an' this is my sister Wendy."

"Of course it is. I remember now. Twins aren't you?" They both nodded. "Thought I recognised you although you've both grown up a bit and," he looked at Elliot, "you've got new glasses and Wendy, you've had your hair cut since last year." The siblings looked at each other in amazement, then Elliot looked quizzically at Arnold.

"Ow did you know that?"

"I know everything." You don't spoil the magic by saying "Educated guess" even if the kid knew what an educated guess was

"Now did you like the things I brought you last Christmas?" The children nodded affirmative in unison. "What *did* I bring you?" Wendy looked at her mother. Elliot stuck a finger in the corner of his mouth, frowned and looked heavenwards then admitted.

"I can't remember."

"*Can't remember??!*" said Santa in mock indignation. "After all the trouble I went to, to fetch you all those ... I don't know..... Well anyway what would you like this year?" Both the children handed him a crumpled letter written in a neat childish hand. Arnold glanced at them briefly, "Hmmm...I can't promise remember. Last year I promised a little girl a doll's house. I put it on my sleigh on Christmas Eve and what do you think happened?" Wendy sat open mouthed and Elliot shook his head. Arnold was on a roll, he accompanied his narrative with actions. "We were going along above the motorway. We were going fast because Rudolph and the other reindeer..." Arnold counted them on his fingers "Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen and Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen, had all had extra carrots. That makes them go fast and when we got to Spaghetti Junction, Rudolph did a sharp right and the little girl's doll's house fell off the sleigh. Splash. Right in the middle of the Manchester Ship Canal and, for all I know, it's still there. Anyway the little girl never got her doll's house. She was most upset and she blamed *me!* Wasn't my fault was it?" The children shook their heads in agreement. Arnold indicated the absent culprit with a jerk of his thumb over his right shoulder. "Rudolph!...." The children nodded their agreement. He glanced at the crumpled notes again "I'll see what I can do. One thing I will promise you and that is surprises! You'll get things in your stocking you never even thought of." The two children squirmed with anticipation.

"We'll leave you a mince pie." whispered Wendy.

"Will it be home made?" Wendy looked enquiringly at her mother who nodded. "Good," said Arnold, "I love homemade mince pies. I'm not fussy but I don't like those from the Pound Shop. They're all pie and no mince. Give me indigestion they do." He winked at the smiling Mum, handed Elliot a wrapped, flashing, buzzing key ring and Wendy would discover she had a cut-out doll-dressing book linked to the latest kids T.V. series.

As the happy little group walked away, waving to him, he called, "Merry Christmas, I'll see you Christmas Eve, but you won't see me!"

It was almost an hour before Arnold had company again. Two young ladies entered the grotto, one proffered a ticket, and then he understood that they were mother and daughter. The girl was probably fourteen or fifteen, much too old to believe in Santa Claus in this day and age. Arnold was nonplussed for a moment. They weren't being silly or trying to ridicule him. Then he realised that, although this young lady knew there was no such person as Father Christmas, she *wanted* there to be and he, Arnold, was the next best thing.

"Sit down my dear," he indicated the footstool. "What's your name?" No guessing games here. She sank demurely onto the seat and said soft clear voice.

"Chloe."

"Hmm... Nice name." He leaned toward her on the arm of his chair and said confidently, "Er.. No school today?"

She looked down at her clasped fingers. "No. I had to go to the hospital for a check up."

Arnold drew back as though he had peeped behind a curtain and seen something he shouldn't. "Oh... Nothing serious I hope?"

"No," the mother interjected. "They say everything should be fine from now on."

Arnold looked up and saw Mum was holding both hands up with her fingers crossed. He realised that it was likely this young girl had been in and out of hospital quite a bit in her young life, including a few Christmases

Hey! That is good news " Santa applauded. Y' know what..? I think... No I know ... everything is going to be OK..... So what are you going to do this Christmas, anything nice?"

"We are going to stay at my Grandma's. Mummy, Daddy and me."

"Is your Grandma a good cook?" The girl smiled and nodded "Hmm Good..... and what would you like for Christmas?"

Chloe studied her knuckles for a while as if summoning up the courage to say something that may sound silly, then she blurted out.

"I would like everybody to have the Christmas spirit. Can you do that Santa?"

Arnold leaned back in his ornate armchair, spread his arms and shrugged his shoulders.

"Sorry Chloe / can't do it, that's down to you." The girl looked puzzled. "Look, if you should ring your Grandma and say: 'What would you rather have? Me staying with you at Christmas or five thousand pounds?' What would she pick? You, of course. That's the Christmas spirit. Love between people and you've got plenty of it."

"We'll have to go Dear," said the mother. "We've a train to catch."

She smiled at Arnold. He patted Chloe on the shoulder. He didn't embarrass her by offering one of his cheap gifts. He had given her the present she wanted. Reassurance. "Don't forget to come and see me next year.... and every year!"

"Supposing you're not here?"

"While there are people like you, there will always be a Father Christmas."

He watched as they left the grotto. At the doorway Chloe paused, turned and blew him a kiss.

Arnold looked at his watch. Another hour to go. It wasn't a bad old job really. Could be a bit boring at times but there was certainly job satisfaction. What other job let you mete out justice, be a dream weaver, story teller, sort of councillor and amateur philosopher?.... and it was a few bob for Christmas.

Arnold leaned over and picked up a large book. On its garish cover was the title 'Favourite Fairy Tales'. He eased his bottom into a more comfortable position, adjusted his small gold rimmed spectacles and opened the book, between the pages was a copy of The Racing Post. Santa settled down to study the runners and riders for the next day's race meeting at Plumpton.

The Legend of 'The Fairy On Top of the Christmas Tree'

Santa was very cross. It was Christmas Eve and NOTHING was going right. Mrs Claus had burned all the cookies. The elves were complaining about not getting paid for the overtime they had put in while making the toys. The reindeer had been drinking all afternoon and were dead drunk. To make matters worse, they had taken the sleigh out for a spin earlier in the day and had crashed it into a tree.

Santa was furious. "I can't believe it! I've got to deliver millions of presents all over the world in just a few hours- all of my reindeer are drunk, the elves are on strike and I don't even have a Christmas tree! I sent that stupid Little Angel out HOURS ago to find a tree and he isn't even back yet! What am I going to do?"

Just then, the Little Angel opened the front door and stepped in from the snowy night, dragging a Christmas tree. He says, "Yo, fat man! Where do you want me to stick the tree this year?"

And thus the tradition of angels atop the Christmas trees came to pass.....

The Blonde Xmas Joke:

Two funny blondes travelled 2 hours from town and walked deep into the woods searching for a Christmas tree. They had thought of every little detail planning this trip and they were both warmly dressed from head to toe carrying their saw, hatchet and a rope to drag the Christmas tree back to the car. The two blondes were so determined to find the perfect Christmas that they searched for hours, slugging through knee-deep snow, blistering wind and never got distracted once!

Finally, five hours had passed and the sun was beginning to set, so one blonde turned to the other blonde and said, "I GIVE UP! I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE! There are hundreds of beautiful Christmas trees all around us. Let's just cut one down whether it's decorated or not!!"

Some Signs You Purchased a Lousy Xmas Tree:

1. Two feet tall, forty feet wide
2. Salesman's opening line: "You're not a cop, are you?"
3. It looks suspiciously like a broom handle with a lot of coat hangers
4. While you sleep, it gets drunk and takes the family caravan for a joyride.
5. Rabbis have better Christmas trees than yours.
6. It constantly brags about its "trunk size"

Star Wars Xmas:

Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker were having one of their little father and son chats... light sabers drawn and sparks flying. Vader pinned Luke against a bulkhead and glared into his face, "I know what you're getting for Christmas, Luke," he said, "Ohhh, yes! I know!" Luke fought himself free and jumped to a higher platform just out of Vader's reach, "How do you know!?" Luke yelled at him, "How do you know what I'm getting for Christmas!?" Darth Vader shot Luke an icy glare, "The force is with me... I felt your presents."



The World Famous Clowns International Egg Collection

Since the mid 1940's when founder member, Stan Butt, started recording the faces of members on eggs, Clowns International have continued to encourage members to have their make-up recorded on china pot eggs to be added to the unique collection. The collection is housed in the clowns museum/exhibition at Wookey Hole in Somerset.



Our very talented egg artist produces 'eggcellent' works of art, the eggs are not just a record of the clowns facial make-up, but an actual portraiture in miniature.

Have you had your egg added to the collection yet? Once you have ordered an egg for the museum you may order an additional egg for yourself, which will be posted directly to you. Art can never be rushed but we endeavour to ensure that your eggs are finished within one month of receiving your order.

Please cut out, or photocopy the order form below and forward to: The Membership Secretary, David 'Conk' Vaughan, 193 Shard End Crescent, Shard End, Birmingham, B34 7RE, England.

Please send good quality photographs (10" x 8" preferred) plus samples of costume material and sufficient wig hair to cover the egg, otherwise the artist can not guarantee to reproduce an exact copy

Clown Name: _____ Membership No: _____

Address: _____

Egg for Clowns International Collection Qty _____ @ £10.00 = £10.00 (or Vouchure) Additional Egg(s) for clown: Qty _____ @ £15.00 = Plus Postage and Packing UK @ £2.50 =

Overseas @ £5.00 =

All cheques, money orders, bank drafts, euro cheques must be in sterling and made payable to; Clowns International or you may complete the credit card details below.

I wish to pay by Visa / Mastercard (please delete as appropriate). Card No: _____

Exp Date: ____ / ____ Name on card: _____ CVV No _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I understand that to obtain personal egg(s) I must have purchased an egg for the Clowns International Collection. My signature indicates that I understand and agree to all the above conditions.

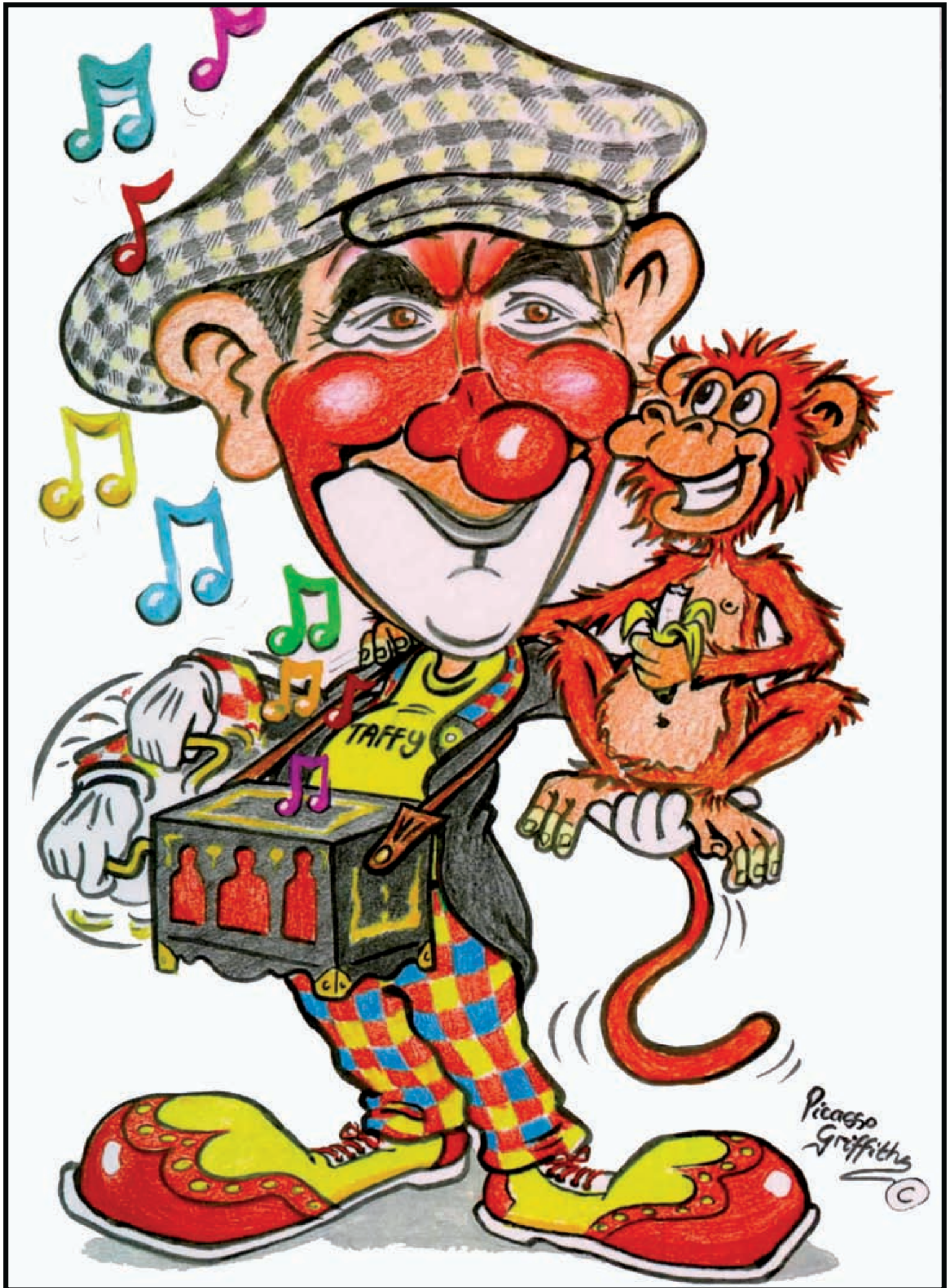
Life President
Ron Moody

<p>Chairperson Gordon 'Rainbow' Sharpe Tel: 07977412328 chairman@clowns-international.com</p> <p>Special Responsibilities Festival and Social Events Sub Committee Bluey 'Clown Bluey' Brattle Tel: 07889600620</p>	<p>Vice Chairperson Ian 'Gingernutt' Thom Tel: 02083104376 vicechairman@clowns-international.com</p> <p>Special Responsibilities - Liaison Officer The Clowns' Gallery Ltd Bluey 'Clown Bluey' Brattle (chairperson)</p> <p>The Clowns' Benevolent Fund Ltd – Chris 'L.O.' Stone (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Secretary Antony 'Bluebottle' Eldridge Tel: 0870 128 4335 secretary@clowns-international.com</p> <p>Special Responsibilities Public Relations Officer Sub Committee Martyn 'EEK' Cooper Tel: 0127623337 mobile 07857036056</p> <p>Mathew 'Mattie' Faint Tel: 02076080312</p>	<p>Membership Secretary David 'Conk' Vaughan Tel: 01217487862 membershipsecretary@clowns-international.com</p> <p>Special Responsibilities Website Administrator Sub Committee Stephen 'Stevie D' Davies Tel: 0151 678 2994</p>
<p>Treasurer Christine 'Anco' Fincham Tel: 01442 652384 treasurer@clowns-international.com</p> <p>Special Responsibilities Commercial</p> <p>Benevolent Officer Roly 'Roly' Bain Tel: 01454616593 roly@rolybain.co.uk</p>	<p>Co-opted with Special Responsibilities Joey Co-ordinator & Webmaster Stephen 'Stevie D' Davies Tel: 0151 678 2994 joeycoordinator@clowns-international.com webmaster@clowns-international.com</p> <p>Sub Committee Caroline 'Bubblz' Ainslie editor@clowns-international.com Tel: 07963827376</p>
	<p>Clowns' Museum and Archive Manager Mathew 'Mattie' Faint Tel: 02076080312</p>

TREASURER REQUIRED

Our Treasurer, Chris "Anco" Fincham, has indicated to the committee that she will not be standing at the next AGM.

The committee is therefore looking for someone to take over. If you feel you could take on this responsible position as Treasurer for C.I. then please let our Secretary know and submit your nomination form (on page 25) by January 1st 2010.



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