

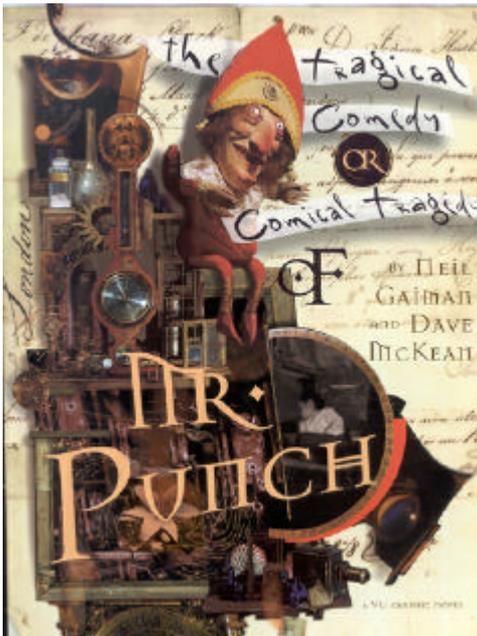


# Around The World With Mr. Punch

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## Mr. Punch, Neil Gaiman And The Fantastical Gig

by Diane Rains (alias "Professor Freshwater")



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I had been a working Punch professor for eight years when, late in 1995, I learned of the recent publication of *The Tragical Comedy Or Comical Tragedy Of Mr. Punch: A Romance*, written by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Dave McKean. The bearer of these glad tidings was my good friend, Vicky - school librarian, storyteller, puppeteer, Tuesday evening movie buddy, and Font of Information On All Things Bookly. She's also an admirer of Punch. Thus, one hopeful Tuesday we eagerly invaded Barnes & Noble, intent on scoring a copy of this intriguingly-titled work. We knew it was a graphic novel - a full-sized opus in comic book format - so off to the comics section we hurried. Alas, the book was nowhere to be seen. We were absorbed in various woe-is-me-isms, when from behind us an enigmatic voice suddenly spoke. "If you're looking for Mr. Punch, you won't find him there."

We turned and found that we'd been joined

by a tall, fourteenish young man, all dressed in black.

"No," he continued, in a conspiratorial tone. "You'll have to go to a specialty store." And he told us exactly where to find one, then disappeared amongst the shelves (somewhere in the Mystery section, I believe.)

The next sound heard was a loud thud as our jaws hit the floor, followed by a deafening swish as we picked them up again and grinned like twin Cheshire cats. "Awwright!" I cheered. "Mr. Punch is cool in middle school!!" Brownie points for Neil Gaiman.

Six months later, I finally held my own copy of the Gaiman/McKean Punch book (which Vicky had given me for my birthday). I read the first six pages, marveling at the clean, dreamlike prose and moody, off-kilter artwork, and my first thought was "This is spooky good fun." Then I read page seven: A show was in progress, and Punch threw the Baby. "He threw it off the stage," said the hand-lettered print. "It tumbled down from the stage onto the beach - and lay there, silent and bleeding." And I thought, "If Minnesota parents read this, I'll never work again." But I was hooked, and I read the book cover to cover, quickly coming back to my original opinion: "This is spooky good fun." Not to mention a brilliant evocation of the mind of a child facing skeletons in the family closet. And an impressive collection of references to Punch traditions. The man had obviously done his homework. More brownie points for Neil Gaiman.

I didn't think much about Neil Gaiman in succeeding years. I knew he wrote in the

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fantasy genre (kind of like sci fi but without aliens). I read one of his other books and liked it, but I didn't feel compelled to immediately devour all his works, as I did with Dickens and Cather and Dinesen. I mostly thought of him as the guy who wrote that spooky Punch book and helped expand Old Red Nose's popularity. So, though Gaiman had enough brownie points to earn my esteem, perhaps I was naïve about the coolness of the gig that fell in my lap in October of 2002.

Here's what happened. There was to be a convention in Minneapolis of writers and readers of fantasy. Neil Gaiman, who, though British, lives in Minneapolis, was to be a headline speaker. Whilst discussing the upcoming convention one day in his blog (online journal) he mused: wouldn't it be a nifty thing to have a real, live Punch and Judy Show at the convention? Could there, he wondered, be a real, live Punch professor living anywhere in Minnesota? (Well, yes, there could. That would be me, Professor Freshwater, living a few short miles away in St. Paul. But Neil didn't know that.) Now, it just so happens that the nephew of a good friend of mine is a fan of Neil Gaiman's, was reading Gaiman's blog, and came across this reference to a Punch show. "Aha!" says Chris to himself. "They should get Diane and Stu to perform. I'll tell Uncle Paul to call them." So he did, and Uncle Paul did, and I e-mailed Neil, presenting my credentials as a real, live Punch professor living in Minnesota. Neil's charming reply was that he was sure there must be one, because that's just the way the Universe works. He put me in touch with the convention's organizer, and that's how we came to be booked at the World Fantasy Convention 2002. (The other half of "we" is my excellent husband, musician, and bottler, Stu Janis.)

And even though I wasn't a knowledgeable Neil Gaiman fan, I did think it would be a swell gig, especially when we were invited to participate in a panel discussion with Neil. Topic: The History and Social Implications of the Punch and Judy Show. The hour-long discussion was scheduled for Saturday afternoon, and our performance for Sunday morning. It sounded like a

heap of fun.

Now, in looking back on this experience, I think it's just as well that I didn't have much inkling of Neil Gaiman's popularity, because I really wasn't a bit stage frighty about the gig. Had I known that he is a certified Famous Person (at least, in literary circles), was on the New York Times best seller list, won the Hugo Award, and has practically a cult following among readers, might I have been nervous? Don't know. I'd like to think not. I've been acquainted with a few mildly to moderately famous people over the years. I suppose I'm mildly famous myself, in certain circles. But fame per se has never impressed me much. This may have something to do with my former career as a primate keeper at the Minnesota Zoo. No matter how Big and Important we think we are, none of us really knows the boundaries of our cage, and we're all just monkeying around. Still, when encountering someone who has earned recognition for the quality of his art, it's only natural to hope that that person will be impressed by the quality of one's own art. When Freshwater Pearls performs for our peers at puppetry festivals, we really want them to be impressed. And, yes, we really wanted Neil to like our show. We always want that, with any audience. That's the payoff, even more than the fee we charge; admiration is the real currency of performance.

But I digress. On Saturday afternoon of November 2, Stu and I were escorted by World Fantasy Con staff to our panel discussion in the plush Minneapolis Hilton, after a stop for tea and treats in the green room. A good-sized crowd filled the meeting room. Our moderator, Laura Krentz - a puppeteer and friend from our local puppetry guild - arrived, followed soon after by Neil Gaiman. Laura began by having us introduce ourselves. Neil quipped that he was qualified to be on a Punch and Judy panel mostly because he is British, but his obvious knowledge of the subject trounced that theory soundly as the hour progressed. Indeed, he revealed that he spent five years researching the history and traditions of Punch before he wrote his book. He read all of the pertinent literature, interviewed Punchmen, saw shows.



During our discussions, Laura and Stu contributed comments and thoughts here and there, but mostly they allowed the two Punch experts (Neil and me) the pleasure of a babblefest. We talked about so many things, and it was so very wonderful. Neil related the tale of what inspired him to write his Punch book. It seems that as a child he had a hunchbacked uncle. The adult Neil discovered some mystery surrounding this uncle, which got him thinking about Punch and Judy. As he told the story, (though I didn't mention it), I realized that I had a similar Punchlike relative -- a Civil War era aunt who was a hunchbacked dwarf. Funny that I'd never connected her with Punch until that moment.

We talked about the symbolism of the Punch and Judy show, of Death and Resurrection portrayed in the show, of Punch as the archetypal Fool. We dwelled on the eerie, tangible forcefulness of the Punch character. More than one of Neil's Professor-informants said that, when the Punch puppet is put on the hand, he becomes absolutely real and in control. The puppeteer is inconsequential. I went so far as to reveal that, to me, it feels like a kind of possession. When I first decided to become a puppeteer, it was as if the spirit of Punch swooped down from the ether and said, "You! I choose you to do my bidding. From now on you must drag me and my family and my

house around, and jump up and down inside it, bringing us to life in the miserable cold and the dust and the sweltering heat, while the mosquitoes bite you, and thunderstorms threaten, and your head pounds, and you think you'll drop from exhaustion. But I'll never, ever let you go. Now, what do you think about that?" And when faced with this ultimatum, all I could do was meekly reply, "Okay." (After fifteen years I'm still saying "Okay" to the little tyrant's demands. This is why, as I write, a new Papillon puppy -- She Who Will Someday Be Toby -- is standing on my lap, yapping annoyingly at phantoms that aren't there. Because a puppet Toby wasn't good enough for Punch, oh, no. He had to have a live one.)

As our hour raced by, we explored the dark side of Punch and Judy. We agreed that Punch must never become completely reformed or tamed; the show has to have some grit, some element of darkness. I pointed out that light is equally important, and that it is the skillful balancing of light and dark elements that makes this ancient folk play so unique and successful, such an oddly satisfying blend of joy and defiance. Much of Gaiman's work (which I have come to know better lately) is about how darkness and light struggle in our lives, and how we muddle through and try to make sense of it all. The same can be said of Punch and Judy's drama-comedy: darkness and light and muddling through, only they make nonsense of it all. One can see why the author was attracted.

Is Punch good for us? Neil closed the panel discussion with his favorite quote from the 1840's Mayhew interview with an anonymous Punchman: "We all ends up in the gutter." Perhaps we does, I noted, but we're having a good time down here. That evening, Stu and I had to settle a question that we'd hemmed and hawed over ever since we got the convention booking. For our performance the next morning, should we change our show and do something a little darker and more violent, closer to a traditional 19th century show? We decided, no, we wouldn't change a thing. After all, Punch and Judy's evolution in the 21st century is the biggest issue facing the Punch community today, especially in

post-9/11 America. How much must the show adapt to the sensibilities of its audience? We all grapple with that question daily. And so we felt it would be instructive for the World Fantasy Convention audience to see the balance that Professor Freshwater's Punch and Judy Show has struck between tradition and change. We thought it especially appropriate to do this, given the convention's theme: Gods and Monsters. Punch is a bit of both, isn't he? Godlike, in that he has such control of his staged, little world, such freedom to do whatever he likes. On the other hand, he has certainly perpetrated some monstrous deeds over the centuries. But, as Neil Gaiman points out in his novel, *American Gods*, even gods must evolve as times and people change, or they risk being rejected and left behind. Without worshippers, gods have no existence. Without audiences, neither do puppets.

Bright and early Sunday morning, we returned to the World Fantasy Convention and performed our show for a packed room of about 100 adults and a handful of children. The audience included Neil Gaiman, Dave McKean, and some of their kids. I felt that we performed well, especially since I'd gotten a grand total of three hours sleep the night before. (My brain was still contemplating all things Punchian in the wee hours of the morning.) What sort of reaction did we get? Just one of the best audiences we've ever had! They were with us every step of the way. They delighted in the swazzling, laughed

heartily at every joke, yelled "Oh, yes you did!" with enthusiasm right on cue, cheered and had a marvelous time. Did Neil like the show? Yes, I think he did. We chatted for a bit after the performance, and I said I hoped he wasn't disappointed. It wasn't a strictly traditional, 19th century show. He said, "No, but you got all the important traditional bits in there." In his blog the next day, he called our performance "terrific." That made me feel terrifically satisfied.

After the show, Neil and Dave posed for pictures with Punch. Punch asked Neil to sign our copy of that very special graphic novel, and Neil graciously obliged. He even sketched a lovely little portrait of Punch on the cover page. Punch, rascal that he is, quipped "Oh, thank you! I'll go sell this on ebay for a lot of money!" (An empty threat; the book is planted safely in our library.) Then Neil stole a kiss from Judy and said goodbye, we chatted with fans in the audience until they eventually filtered away, and the very cool gig ended.

My final thoughts on the experience? Punch is a confection, but always a bittersweet one. If some cooks like a bit more dark chocolate in the mix, I don't mind. As long as the ingredients are authentic and skillfully combined, and the spices lively with a dash of originality, dessert will surely be tasty. Neil Gaiman has been serving up lusciously dark tales for years; his talent as a literary chef is indisputable. He's welcome in Punch and Judy's kitchen anytime.



Neil Gaiman (R) with Prof. Freshwater's Punch. Dave McKean (L) with the book. Spooky fx by accident!

# RED NOSED MISCELLANY

## EDITORIAL

Every time I sit down to compile a new issue I am amazed at the wealth of material that there is available to share. The web has - of course - made a huge difference to small groups of enthusiasts like the Punch community. Not only do search engines track down all manner of Punch-related items tucked away in corners, but they deliver a steady drip of enquirers wishing to know more about Old Red Nose.

Most importantly the web is the first port of call for the media whenever they need to ask about Mr. Punch or want a response from Profs when Mr. Punch is in the news. The Punch websites have made a noticeable impact on the level of accuracy in what is reported about him. It's gratifying to see a drop in the amount of garbled basic misinformation that journalists have been capable of in the past.

Do check out the Pathe News online archive mentioned on page 6. (American readers can think of The March of Time newsreels as a USA equivalent). There are some gems from the past now freely available to view.

And, of course, if you find any new sources of fascinating Punchiana - don't forget to share it with us. Just email [editor@punchandjudy.org](mailto:editor@punchandjudy.org)



*Brian and Alison Davey send an unusual story regarding a request they had to make a special Mr. Punch. Says Brian*

“The request was from a photographer who had been given the assignment to produce photographs for the cover of the new prospectus for Kingston University. He had decided that good old Red Nose would be an ideal subject to promote the University and to show graduates how to be “Pleased as Punch!”

After finding our website [www.puppetree.co.uk](http://www.puppetree.co.uk) he contacted us to see if we could make a Mr. Punch dressed in the University's gown, complete with mortar board. As you can see from the publication Punch was supplied, (in special costume) and Judy, (in the background with diploma in hand). Apparently Kingston University were thrilled with the result and have adopted Mr. Punch as its mascot!!!

*Your Editor is delighted to report this indication that Mr. Punch is in a post-PC phase now that the strident fundamentalist edge of the movement has been left behind in the 20th Century. (Anyway, in Europe that is). As a native of Kingston, he's particularly pleased to see Old Red Nose as a mascot of the local Uni. Rah Rah Rah!*

*Glyn Edwards*

# MAY FAYRE VIDEO

Magician, Punchman and videographer Peter Stedman made a video of the 2002 May Fayre in Covent Garden: a venerable annual event promoted by a freelance company specialising - as their name would suggest - in 'alternative arts'. A review of the video was due for inclusion in the newsletter of a British Punch and Judy society - but publication was never approved by the committee. Now it is human nature for clubs, societies - governments even - to have their squabbles, rivalries and self-interests but for a Punch and Judy organisation to cold shoulder a work celebrating Old Red Nose is pretty analagous to a patriotic organisation declining to wave its national flag.

Your Editor - a Punch and Judy activist to the core - doesn't know whether to laugh, cry or tear his remaining hair out at this dereliction of duty. The committee of the society in question - which will not be named here - has clearly lost the plot and should hang its collective head in shame.

Meanwhile this journal is pleased to print the review/table of contents in question within these pages. It was written by leading Punchman Bob Sacco.

All congratulations to Peter Stedman and his team for celebrating Mr. Punch in this way. If you want to contact him about purchasing a copy his email address is [magic@magicpete.co.uk](mailto:magic@magicpete.co.uk)

The video costs 12.00 GBP (plus 1.00 GBP P&P. UK only) It's in PAL format. For conversion to other formats - and for all other enquiries - contact Peter direct.



Peter Stedman has produced a video of the 27th Annual Covent Garden May Fayre and Puppet Festival, which took place on 12th May 2002. The camerawork and editing are both very professionally executed as are the interviews and commentary by PJP Member Alix Booth of Party Puppets. The video is attractively boxed with a short history of the event on the back and I quote: 'Sights and sounds of the day with the Procession, Church Service, Interviews, Maypole Spectacular, Punch Shows and Professors plus all the bustle of the day. The producers hope this general view of this most exciting occasion will give you a true flavour and, if you were there, bring back many happy memories.' In my opinion they

have exceeded their own expectations. This is a joyful and colourful video that captures the quintessence of this great annual event and every enthusiast will wish to have it in their collection. My congratulations to all involved in its production. Here is a brief synopsis of the contents

\* Alix Booth opens with pertinent commentary from the gateway to St Paul's Church Gardens. Seven a.m. and Peter Stedman really captures the early morning atmosphere as various pros and stall holders start setting up: Bryan Clarke with grandson, Prof Panic, Paul Jackson, Glan Magor, Alix Booth, Junior Prof Sebastian Goffin. Geoff Felix and Mel Myland in conversation over

a vent head discovered on one of the stalls.

\* Peter Charlton, Chairman of the British Puppet & Model Theatre Guild, setting out the Guild's stall -talks about the Guild's history, membership and activities. Peter performs with three of his jig-dolls including a comical kangaroo.

\* Prof Glan Magor, Methodist minister from Bridport, tells how he got into performing Punch & Judy. Shows a stretchneck puppet and talks of how he makes all his own figures. His Punch will be ending his sermon today, usually Punch begins it. Glan with Mrs Magor and collie dog, Bella. He reveals how he taught his previous dog, Bonny, to do mathematical sums and card tricks.

\* Prof Panic, an ex traveller, dems for Alix the devils sticks he makes from recycled materials.

\* Alfie Howard, Town Crier of Lambeth, explains how he embroidered his magnificent coat himself, the coat-of-arms alone taking 300 hours to complete. Aged 90, he still covers half the long

processional route. Has visited 49 different countries and met many of the royal family and other celebrities.

\*The Superior Brass Band and Town Crier lead the procession through the gates, which are flanked by two giant walking figures of Punch & Judy. Pearly King and Queen of Lambeth seen. Leslie Press gives the toast to Punch's 340th Birthday at Punch's commemorative plaque under the portico of the St Paul's.

\* The procession arrives back in the church - the Rev Mark Oakley conducts the service - children's choir singing. Leslie Press reads the lesson. Glan Magor delivers the sermon with Punch up in the pulpit. service concludes with all with puppets in front of the altar singing: 'I am the Lord of the Dance...'

\* Back outside, the May Fayre is declared officially open - Punch & Judy shows in full swing - shots of various stalls - Lost Marbles String Band performs on the Church steps ?-some lovely interviews by Alix of children with candid remarks about the Punch shows.

\* Prof Peter Maggs interviewed,

now has a permanent pitch in Bournemouth - from a very long line of Punch profs, his family were travelling showmen from Cornwall.

\* Liz Weston, Alternative Arts, talks of the May Fayre's 27 year history.

\* A sequence from Prof Goffin's show. He's aged 10 and talks honestly of some of the problems he encountered. No swazzling yet, but he has a very fine pair of Punch and Judy figures. (Must be Bryan Clarke's carving.) More interviews with children. John Styles seen at his stall talking to a prospective customer.

\* Lovely filming of Donna Maria's Maypole Spectacular. Another new Punch Prof interviewed, from Kingston, but I didn't get the name. Parts of his show seen.

\* Alix lets some children handle her puppets. An excerpt from her show and a walkaround with a Billy Goat puppet. Video closes with an extensive list of entertainers and credits.

## Archive Film

*"Welcome to the world's first digital news archive."* says the home page *"Now you are here you can preview items from the entire 3500 hour British Pathe Film Archive which covers news, sport, social history and entertainment from 1896 to 1970."* And what a treasure trove it is too including - naturally - archive Punch and Judy items. There's a brief clip of the 1962 Covent Garden 'Tercentenary' Celebrations, the 50th anniversary (in 1939) of beach performances in Margate by Prof Charlie Smith, clips from Australia, and Germany - even a clip promised soon of a Punch and Judy show in 1919 which is the oldest such moving image yet to be located.

What's more you can download low quality footage of all these for free. Take a time travelling trip to [www.britishpathe.com](http://www.britishpathe.com) and have your nostalgia buds blown to smithereens!

# ARCHIVE FRONT COVER



# AROUND THE WORLD WITH MR. PUNCH

THE JOURNAL OF THE WORLD WIDE FRIENDS OF PUNCH AND JUDY

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## PUNCH IN OZ

BY RICHARD BRADSHAW

*Richard is a leading Australian puppeteer and a fan of Mr. Punch. As a keen puppet historian he is also the main authority on Old Red Nose in the Antipodes.*

**G**eorge Speaight's book *Punch and Judy* shows on p. 92 a copy of a print with the caption: "Toby in a Punch and Judy show at Melbourne, Australia, c. 1853". George Speaight has told me that the print comes from a cutting which has the date 1867 pencilled on it. A poem by one Christabel R. Coleridge accompanied the print, and told of the nostalgic thoughts of England aroused by this Punch which prompted the adults watching to fill the showman's hat with money. It was claimed the poem was based on "A true incident in Melbourne life about fourteen years ago" which would put it about 1853, the earliest Punch and Judy I've yet come across in Australia.

While there is doubt about the exact year of Punch in Melbourne, we can have no doubt on one early appearance of Punch in Sydney. This was reported in *Varieties of Vice-Regal Life* (Vol.I) by Sir William Thomas Denison (London: Longmans,



*IS THIS THE EARLIEST SIGHTING OF MR. PUNCH DOWN UNDER?  
A STREET SCENE IN MELBOURNE AROUND 1853  
(REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF GEORGE SPEAIGHT)*

Green, 1870). When Sir William Denison was Governor of New South Wales his wife wrote in her journal for 27 November, 1855 about a visit they made to the North Shore of Sydney. As the coach of the vice-regal party drove back towards the ferry they noticed a group of children watching something in a doorway. Suddenly the Governor shouted "There's Punch! By the Lord Harry, there's Punch!". He was so delighted to find a Punch in Sydney that he arranged for the show to come to Government House. In her entry for 4 December, Lady Denison reports that Punch had performed there

for a group of invited children a day or so earlier and comments that "This certainly must be a terrible country, where even Punch is unknown to children." She adds that the showman had left England in August and had been working in Sydney less than a month. In 1869-70 Robert Heller gave performances in Melbourne (and later in Sydney) which included marionettes and Punch and Judy. Robert Heller, whose real name was W.H. Palmer, was a famous magician and pianist who spent much of his life in the U.S.A. and was especially known for his mind reading act. He was born in Canterbury, England in

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1830, the son of an organist at the cathedral, and died in Philadelphia in 1878. Charles Waller in *Magical Nights at the Theatre* (Melbourne: Gerald Taylor, 1980) tells how Heller's brother, A. C. Palmer, who became a lawyer in Australia, had come to live in Victoria in 1853 and died there in 1912 aged 80. In *Robert Heller, His Doings*, published in 1975, Heller claimed to have performed the first Punch and Judy Shows in Australia, India and China. There is a photo of Robert Heller with his puppets of Punch and Judy on page 77 of Ricky Jay's book *Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women* (London: Guild Publishing, 1987).

In June 1871 the Westen Company arrived in Sydney after a four months' overland trip from Victoria and began presenting "entertainments" which included Punch and Judy. From a newspaper report the show opened with Punch and Judy singing and dancing to *Love among the Roses*. Apparently two babies were thrown from the window before Judy was killed. Punch now encountered Jim Crow, a Chinaman, and a London clown before Toby, a real terrier, made his appearance. Punch fought with Tom Sayers (*Who he? Ed.*) over the ownership of Toby and after that met, and disposed of in turn, the ghost of Judy, the Doctor, the Policeman, the Beadle, the Judge and lastly Jack Ketch. Finally the "Gentleman in Black" took Punch below. Later

in the entertainment the dog who had appeared as Toby performed various tricks. For some years Westen, claiming to be the only Punch and Judy "in the

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***"from a newspaper report the show opened with Punch and Judy singing and dancing to Love among the Roses"***

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colonies", performed at the Agricultural Exhibitions in Sydney and as late as 1885 Professor Westen was performing in the Exhibition Building, Melbourne with marionettes, performing dogs and Punch and Judy.

My research on Punch is far from complete, but in the same year, 1885, there were at least two other showmen around: Pro-

fessor Brinkley based in Melbourne and Professor Gleeson based in Sydney. In 1900 there was a Prof. Freeman in Sydney and also a Professor Blair who claimed to be "the only genuine show in Sydney". I have seen a photo of Prof. Blair standing in front of his booth in a private garden in Sydney, a dapper figure in his striped blazer and straw boater. There was also a Prof. Beckford in Sydney in the early 1900's □

*This concludes Part One of Richard Bradshaw's two part article on the history of Punch in Australia. In the Summer issue the story continues with an intriguing tale of the old cork hatted swagman who claimed to recognise some puppets in a shop window!*

Why reprint pages from the first ever issue? Well, there are several reasons. One is to answer an emailed query about the history of Punch in Australia. A second - given that the readership has changed significantly between the snailmail and online versions of the journal - is to give new subscribers the opportunity to read this fascinating historical account. And thirdly it marks a trial attempt at putting pages from back issues online.

There are issues of file size - as well as legibility - involved here, but if these very first two pages of *Around The World With Mr Punch* make the transition successfully, then it will mark the start of putting all the back issues online as an archive.

Reader feedback will be very helpful! Does it work OK on your PC or MAC? Your answers will help determine whether the project is practical. Please do let me know at [editor@punchandjudy.org](mailto:editor@punchandjudy.org) Glyn Edwards

# PUNCH IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

***“Punch is rather an old inhabitant in our midst, and we may look upon him as a rare relic of the rough fun of our forefathers.”*** Words written in 1895 - and we wonder what the author would have said had he known they would be just as applicable over a century later. The rest of the author's words are below in an article reprinted from the website [www.victorianlondon.org](http://www.victorianlondon.org) which is highly recommended for lovers of Victorian social history. The illustrations on this page are from [www.oldwoodtoys.com](http://www.oldwoodtoys.com) and show American Punch, Judy, Policeman and Monkey figures from the 1870s.

PUNCH may very well be considered one of our London characters. So well known is Punch, that the sight of the two men, one carrying the show and the other the drum and pipes, passing through the streets, is quite enough to draw after them a group of curious little folk, all on the tip-toe of excitement, wondering when and where the men will stop and pitch the show. Just a very little way down a by-turning in one of the principal streets, is a favourite spot for setting down the show.

At such a spot there may often be seen a little crowd of children gathering almost before the show has been pitched, or the man has had time to get within the curtain. For, although he does not intend you shall know it, the showman is inside, hidden away from sight by the long green baize curtain that falls around. The little ones, watching the lively movements of the figures, and hearing the

curious talk, and of course seeing no other man than the one outside who is busy with his drum and pipes, innocently imagine that the figures are speaking. There are some preparations to be made by the showman; so, while they are going on, the man with the drum suspended from his shoulders, and the row of pipes stuck just within the folds of his scarf, tries to swell the crowd by blowing a tune on the pipes, keeping up a r u b - a - d u b - d u b accompaniment on the drum. There is not much music in the noise this musician is creating, but the well-known strains from the pipes soon draw the people around, anxiously awaiting the appearance of Punch, and curious to see his merry performances.

People of all sorts gather round. Little ones in the care of bigger brothers and sisters are lifted up in their arms, or on their shoulders, so that they may see PUNCH. Shoeless, hatless, and perhaps homeless boys and girls, who spend most of their time roaming the streets, squeeze in to have one piece of merriment, and laugh at the comical figures. The errand boy at sight of Punch's funny face forgets his business, and, putting his basket down, settles himself comfortably to have a spell of enjoyment. Nor does any one seem too old to watch the show. The old lady with her market-basket on her arm is as well pleased as any juvenile, and even the busy man of business must stop a moment on the outskirts of the crowd and enjoy the mirth of this merry exhibition.

Punch seems to have made his first appearance in

England more than two hundred years ago; for we find that in 1666-7 an Italian puppet-player set up his booth at Charing Cross, and paid a small rental to the overseers of the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. If we look in their books under that date, we shall see four entries of various sums 'received of Punchinello, ye Italian popet player, for his booth at Charing Cross.' So that Master Punch is rather an old inhabitant in our midst, and we may look upon him as a rare relic of the rough fun of our forefathers.

*Uncle Jonathan, Walks in and Around London, 1895 (3 ed.)*



# col l e c t a b i l i a n e w s



If you collect Punchiana you'll appreciate the above Royal Doulton piece 'The Punch and Judy Man' designed by David B. Biggs and sold between 1964 and 1969. You'll also appreciate news of **The Puppet Fair and Auction** - a forthcoming event being organised by Ray DaSilva on behalf of *Puppeteers UK*, the new umbrella organisation of UK puppetry societies. Your Editor has seen a preview of the catalogue in progress and can report a cornucopia of Punch & Judy figures, booths, miscellaneous Punchiana including framed pictures, postcards, money boxes, lantern slides, pottery, ornaments, advertising novelties and much more. The catalogue will go online in a few weeks at [www.puppetauction.co.uk](http://www.puppetauction.co.uk) and although the Autumn event is a traditional - not online - auction there will be a facility for people unable to attend in person on Nov 1st to submit postal bids.

Meanwhile Punch bibliophiles may enjoy the supplement with this issue containing details of all the Punch books available at [www.puppetbooks.co.uk](http://www.puppetbooks.co.uk) If there's not anything there to tickle your fancy I'll swallow my swizzle.

## toby's tail piece



Prof. Pulson - who performs by the pier at Southwold, Suffolk, UK - has had his show delightfully captured by local watercolourist Mary Gundry. The image is reproduced on the front of a blank greetings card that will be of interest to Profs. Mary Gundry's website is [www.gardengallery.co.uk](http://www.gardengallery.co.uk).

# *bookworm supplement*

A full list of Punch books currently available from [www.puppetbooks.co.uk](http://www.puppetbooks.co.uk)

ADAMS, A & LEACH, R: *The World of Punch and Judy*. 1978. 40p. 30 b/w illustrations. Brief history, studies of the puppet characters with snippets from scripts, Punchmen, Bottlers etc. slight fading of cover, ow gd. £8.00

ALEXANDER, J: *The Frame File: The Punch & Judy Playhouse*. 1997. This 58 page A4 collection contains designs for a dozen booths and is also a handbook of ideas, gadgets, gimmicks and fittings welcomed by experienced performer. The author avoids the use of wing-nuts which he hates vehemently. There are indoor and outdoor frames, a triangular booth, suitcase theatres and a walk-about. Important for anyone building a hand puppet stage. This copy has several loose pages where punched holes are too close to edge, but it is complete at low price £3.50

ALEXANDER, J.: *The Frame File: The Punch & Judy Playhouse NEW* 1997 This 58 page A4 collection contains designs for a dozen booths and is also a handbood of ideas, gadgets, gimmicks and fittings welcomed by experienced performer. The author avoids the use of wingnuts which he hates vehemently. There are indoor and outdoor frames, a triangular booth, suitcase theatres and a walk-about. Important for anyone building a hand puppet stage. gd. £9.75

ANON: *Punch & Judy's Children's Annual (1934)* Published George Newnes. 128 pages. Illustrated heavy board covers, cloth spine. Comic cartoon-strip stories of Punch, Judy and Toby. Printed in green, blue and black throughout. Excellent illustrations. (you may have seen some of these in "Around the World with Mr Punch". Considering age, this is in good condition, the back of cover shows signs of rubbing, inscription in front dated 1936. ow gd. £35.00

ASTRA, A & SACCO, B: *Punch & Judy Fellowship Newsletter 1986 to 1997* Issues nr 1 to nr 70 of journal published by The Punch & Judy Fellowship. A complete run of original copies. All sorts of news, views and miscellaneous notes on Punch & Judy. Varies from 2 to 12 pages per issue. In good condition. £25.00

BAKER, F: *Playing With Punch 1944*. A New Play, accompanied by Mr Payne Collier's transcription of Immortal "Drama of Punch and Judy; a Fantastic Essay on Mr. Punch and the Theatre; an account of his trip to Scotland and the Orcades, and Several Historical Notes." 135p. A few illustrations. A good copy with bookplate on flyleaf £8.00

BRADY, E: *Punch & Judy Show 1951* 2ndhand Ten page quarto reproduced typescript in decorated orange soft cover. Contains booth construction, script (American) and tips. Obviously written for magical entertainers looking for an added attraction. There are punched holes for a binder, ow gd. £6.50

BYROM, M: *Punch in the Italian Puppet Theatre*. 1983. NEW Hard-bound with 229 pages and 20 photos. Research into the roots of Mr. Punch. A detailed study of Pulcinella with translated texts of 'The Thirty Three Misfortunes of Pulcinella' (marionette play), and 'Beo of Berto'. Appendix lists marionette plays which include Pulcinella Complete with bibliography. This book was published at £18.00, a special purchase enables it to be offered at: £5.55

COLLIER J: *Punch & Judy 2002 NEW* A handsome facsimile of the 1828 2nd edition containing important historic material not in the 1st edition. This reproduction is beautifully made with 141 pages, 5" by 8", printed in black and white on good quality paper which does good justice to the Cruikshank illustrations. It looks and feels good in a marbled hard-bound cover making it an attractive present for anyone interested in the history of Mr Punch. £14.50

COLLIER, J P: *Punch and Judy*. 1993. NEW Reprint of an early 20th-century version of Payne Collier/Piccini script of 1828, with the Cruikshank illustrations. 56 A5 pages, introduction and added

flavour with advertisements from early Gamage catalogues. £4.95

DE HEMPSEY, S: Practical Punch and Judy. 1992. NEW A 27 page reprint of a series of articles originally published in a magician's magazine in 1953. This is a development of the author's previous book. The play script is similar but different, (aren't they all?) and there are some novelty routine additions. 27 pages 21 drawings. £4.75

EDWARDS, G: Successful Punch and Judy. 2000 NEW An up-to-date approach to understanding and presenting Punch and Judy at the same time respecting the tradition. This 136 page handbook draws on the author's 40 years performing experience and his many courses teaching the skills involved. How to put a show together, speak with Punch's voice, perform tested routines, and make the puppets and stage. There is a complete contemporary script, a brief history of the show and a particularly good insight into Punch's character and how to get in tune with it. This has become the standard work on the theory and practice of the Punch and Judy Show. £9.95

EDWARDS, G et al: Mr Punch's Progress. 1987. 24 page illustrated booklet with dozen essays by the Professors of the Punch and Judy College. Busking, Barking and Bottling. Who's who in Punch and Judy, Collecting Punch, Carving. 'Judy punches back' and more. Bookplate inside cover as new. £2.25

EDWARDS, G et al: Mr. Punch's Progress. 1987. NEW 24 page illustrated booklet with a dozen short essays by the Professors of the Punch and Judy College. Busking, Barking and Bottling. Who's who in Punch and Judy, Collecting Punch, Carving. 'Judy Punches Back' and more. £3.00

FRASER, P: Punch and Judy. 1970, 1st edition 120p. Construction of figures and operating notes, Piccini/Collier text and some very good drawings of figures based on those of Cruikshank. Gd in dw. £12.50

FRASER, P.: Punch and Judy: The Script, the Characters and their Construction 2001 NEW A reprint of a popular book. Peter Fraser's work features a series of exemplary drawings of all the traditional characters of the Punch and Judy Show, including the less well known: Scaramouch, Toby, Pretty Polly, Hector the Horse, Blind Man, Jack Ketch the Hangman and The Devil. Detailed instructions of various methods of their construction include: modelling and casting, carving head, painting, hands, costume patterns. Also reproduced here is the classic text as first recorded by John Payne Collier in 1828, the primary reference for succeeding generations of showmen. £9.95

FYLEMAN, R: Punch & Judy. 1944. 40p. 16 colour plates and b/w woodcuts by H Weissenborn. Abridged Collier script. A worn copy with thumbmarks, and sl foxing on end papers. £6.00

GREEN, T: Puppets With Punch. nd. NEW 40 page quarto. This one carries on where 'Professional Punch' leaves off. Another dozen illustrated novelty routines, including Splin Win the Chinese Magician Plate Spinner, Sammy Seal, Boxing Kangaroo, Lollipops, and Witchy Whoops, and more. £9.50

GREEN, T: Professional Punch. nd. NEW 47 pages. Many drawings and photos. A dozen tested novelty routines plus many tips and ideas for Punch and Judy workers wishing to embellish the traditional story. Including: baby routines, skeleton in the dustbin, bull-fight, sausage counting, balloons and Sappy dragon. £9.50

HARRIS, A: Punch and Judy. 1970. NEW 47page script with music, in six episodes and several interludes, for six or seven human actors. Based on traditional Punch and Judy plays, it includes a hanging sequence - which makes one wonder if this is more acceptable with humans than with puppets. £5.50

HAWKESWORTH, E: Puppet Shows to Make. 1972. Intended for children's party entertainers. Includes Punch and Judy with low-level booth, details of making and performing "Mr Punch and the Haunted Valley". Construction of theatre and figures for 'Living Marionettes' ie Humanettes, and also finger puppets. Shadows and basic marionettes. 92 pages. Hardbound, ex lib label and stamps. £3.00

HOL, C: Punch and His Friends 1994 Children's picture book with designs based on fabric collage. A set

of 'Punch' figures decide to escape from being sold to a nasty man. They get lost, and guess what, they are found by Bill and Gypsy who put on a show. £3.00

HOOPER, E: Hallo Mr. Punch. 1977. NEW 36 pages. A good all-rounder with a practical script and suggestions for an alternative programme. Also design for making booth on 'lazy tongs' principle. £9.50

JOHN, D: St George & the Dragon, Punch & Judy. 1966. 96 pages, scripts of both. Puffin paperback with pleasing illustrations. Soft cover showing wear, signature inside cover ow gd. £3.50

KRASKA, E: Toys and Tales from Grandmother's Attic. 1979. 80p quarto landscape. A beautifully produced book with many b/w and col illustrations. Many references to puppets, shadows, Punch & Judy etc. Instructions and patterns for making. Hardbound, small tear in dw ow gd. £8.50

LEACH, R: Punch & Judy Show: History, Tradition & Meaning 1985. 192 pages, 145 b/w photos. A significant work, includes interesting and sometimes controversial suggestions about social, political and psychological interpretations. Extensive bibliography. Spine of dw faded ow gd. £27.50

MARIS, R: The Punch & Judy Book. 1987. 24 pages interleaved with vertical half-pages which give a clever and amusing "animated" display. Hardbound, as new. £8.50

MAYHEW, H.: London Labour and the London Poor (Vol III) 1968 NEW Part of a four-volume publication, this 440 page book contains, amongst others, the interviews with the Punch and Judy Man. It is an unabridged facsimile reprint of the original 1861 publication and contains the illustration and the complete Dominion of Fancy Punch & Judy script. There are also interviews with the Fantoccini Man, the Exhibitor of Mechanical Figures, Peep Shows, the Chinese Shades, the Penny Profile Cutter, and 60 other diverse street exhibitors musicians and performers. of the time. £10.45

MYERS, D: The Last Days of Mr.Punch. 1971. 92 pages. 16 illustrations mostly Cruikshank. Mr.P's autobiography. Recollections of long life, including days in prison, raise timely questions about violence. Some fiction and fancy. gd in protected dw. £14.00

STEAD, P: Mr Punch. 1950. 165p. 9 b/w pates. A history of Punch & Judy with tidied up Mayhew Punch script. The Dominion of Fancy. gd. £15.00

TAYLOR, V: Reminiscences of a Showman. 1971. 116p. 4 plates and fp. dw. Amusing earthy, colourful adventures of magician/Punch & Judy showman. Gd in nicely illustrated dw. £6.50

TEARLE, P: Punch and Judy Puppets. nd. Dryad booklet #148. 12p. Felt patterns for Punch, Judy, Baby, Policeman and Sambo. gd. £3.50

WEATHERLY, F: Punch & Judy & Some of Their Friends. 1989. 46 page reprint of 1887 children's picture book. 40 coloured illustrations much crisper than in the original. Hardbound, Inscription on front end paper ow gd with dw. £9.40

WILTSHIRE, N: A Helping of Punch. 1984. NEW A 44 page illustrated book with six novelty routines for extending Punch and Judy show repertoire. Includes Christmas and birthday party items. £7.00

WOODENSCONCE P: The Wonderful Drama of Punch and Judy 2001 NEW. Published in association with The Punch and Judy Fellowship, this 1854 text has been reprinted for the first time complete with the original verses and preface and the 25 illustrations by 'The Owl'. "The best example of the English tradition of Punch and Judy" - Michael Byrom, 1972. "In many ways this is the best script of the show ever written" - George Speaight, 1955. 34 pages with decorated card cover. £4.95

WOODENSCONCE, Papernose: The Wonderful Drama of Punch & Judy (1919) This is the Nelson edition which omitted the silly rhymes. There are 25 illustrations by 'The Owl' (two in colour). The script has been acclaimed by historians and performers alike as the best of the recorded 19th century scripts. The book concludes with six pages of unrelated sketches and rhymes. Card cover worn, hinges repaired, contents all good. £15.00

Punch, or the London Charivari VARIOUS

1879

Bound copy of weekly magazine for whole year 300 page plus 20page almanac for 1880 bound in. Cartoon illustrations on each page, mostly political and social. Hardbound cover dirty and worn. Gd considering age. Note it is heavy so ask for postage quote if you wish.

£9.50

Punch Library VARIOUS

nd

Two small hardbound volumes, 192 pages each., 'Mr Punch in the Hunting Field', and 'Mr Punch in Wig and Gown'. These contain many cartoons and brief articles where we find Mr P hobnobbing with artists, musicians and theatricals, on both sides when it comes to banning hunting, and making fun of judges and barristers. They are in good condition. Will sell separately at £4 each or together at:

£10.00

Chatterbox Annual VARIOUS

1911

The only claims this item has to be here is a nice coloured picture on the front showing Punch, Joey and collapsed Policeman, a full page illustration of an article 'Punchinnello Escapes' concerning a prisoner who escapes under pretence of giving a performance, and a fullpage colour plate from which cover picture was extracted, but now showing booth, musician with Pan-pipes and drum. 412 pages, many illustrated tales. Hardbound, good although hinges worn, and bookplate on end paper.

£12.50

The Topper & Sparky Book VARIOUS

1981

90 page coloured cartoon book. The only P&J refs are front cover illustration with audience enjoying Judy bashing Punch during show in progress, except for terrible boy who delights in squirting his girlfriend with water pistol. The back cover shows the denouement. Audience is now enjoying the girl bashing the boy and the showman unable to compete grimaces from booth. Hardbound as new.

£1.50

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