



John O' Sullivan in bed (at the Horsham Bedding Centre) and the wonderful Margaret Seabrook, 81, who appear together in several comic sketches in the show (and more coming soon...). One is available to see on the Newsagent Provocateur website.

## Board stupid



John's most infamous billboard poster - Crawley girl gives birth to Pitbull - was sold for £80 during Saturday's Newsagent Provocateur show.

It was bought by a Horsham resident and the money will be donated to QEII School along with profits from the show.

Amusingly, in the last couple of days John has provisionally booked a date for his show at the Hawth Theatre in Crawley, and there may be a couple more shows at the Capitol in the future (watch this space...).

John also hopes to play the Theatre Royal, Brighton, as he attempts to make a name for himself in the entertainment world.

One previous attempt - as a stand-up comic a whole ten years ago - ended in failure. John's hopes are surely higher this time around...

# Funnymen pulls it off!

It's going to have been a very frustrating week for John O'Sullivan.

He'll have been doing what he normally would do - serving papers, sweets and cigarettes from one of his two shops in Horsham, but it's most probable that his mind is elsewhere.

On Saturday night, John's sold out show - Newsagent Provocateur - was an astonishing success.

Many of those in the audience were known to John, but it would still have been a surprise to see their always witty and often outrageous friend produce a show of real quality. There was nothing sympathetic about the spontaneous standing ovation at the show's conclusion.

John's problem is that he's now 'Horsham famous'. As people strutted out towards town on Saturday night recalling their favourite bits, comparing John favourably to Harry Hill or noting the Benny Hill influences, few considered one vital factor: How will he take the

next step? Was anyone 'important' watching?

We now have an individual with talent, who warrants wider exposure (and not just the secretive appearance on Come Dine With Me, which he's told absolutely nobody in Horsham about!) and he's selling Mars bars behind a till.

Let's hope that this chapter of John O'Sullivan's life has many pages, but if it is to be cut short, he will always have the memory of a great night on stage.

The show started with an almost Benny Hill-like video sketch, which showcases John's trademark - the facial expressions and comical glances to the camera.

It starts with John in bed with an elderly woman (played by Margaret Seabrook), and he then attempts to reach over her to grab the car keys. It pans out to reveal he's in a bed at Horsham Bedding Centre.

He makes it into the parking lot, and tries the keys on all the cars without success, before a



## Review: Newsagent Provocateur Capitol Theatre - 20th February

mobility scooter appears on frame. The last scene is of him driving away.

Of course, it sounds ridiculous. The sort of 'ooh matron' humour shown on Saturday night television in the 70s, but there is usually something darker about John's sketches that makes it very much post-watershed - in this instance it's a surprising expletive from 81-year-old Margaret.

In one of his other sketches, John has the gall to spoof the

'Kill Your Speed, Not a Child' advert, and in another one of his female stooges is depicted as a porn watching crack addict.

Most expected the humour to be near the knuckle, but while anyone reading this might understandably take the moral high ground, it was funny!

It was undoubtedly the video sketches, constructed with great skill by James Adair, that stole the show, but there are

other strings to John's bow.

He staged a quiz show, which we can't name but it was a slight variation on 'The Price is Right' and involved members of the audience guessing which chocolate bar they were eating.

Of course, it was made out to appear that it was poo.

It was the kind of quiz show that Roger Mellie might have conjured up in the pages of adult comic Viz, or Vic and Bob might indulge in at the end of a Shooting Stars episode, and typical of John's silliness.

This was highlighted again in a video clip featuring Edwina Currie, in which John spends several minutes breaking into the star's home to take back Easter eggs she has apparently stolen from him.

It ends with Edwina throwing eggs at John as he runs down the garden path.

As well as sending up others, he's happy to poke fun at himself, joking about the sky high prices in his stores ("46p - not in my shop it isn't!")

It is a credit to John's highly

developed wit, clearly shaped from a wide range of influences from the slapstick of Benny Hill, Frankie Howard or Dick Emery, to the darker comedy of the likes of Peter Cook, that the show was able to seamlessly weave its way between silly and serious.

But he doesn't deserve all of the credit. He has the most wonderful support from his "stooges" most notably Denise Read, who must have great confidence in John for all that she went through, but was always in on the joke and never the butt of it.

We won't pretend it was all perfect. It may have been funny, but at times the show was a mess - audio and visual out of synch like a badly dubbed Chinese king-Fu flick, a few mis-timed gags and during John's stand-up stints he is too quick to fall back on gay innuendo - but this can go down as nothing other than an overwhelming success.

We just hope it didn't go unnoticed.



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