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Memoirs of a Psychic Researcher

by D A V E M c I L W A I N

(From Satellite Vol 3 No 5 - August 1940)

Up here in Liverpool we have a peculiar little psychic research society of our own, and it is called "The Bureau of Psychic Research" - appropriately enough. It is unique. Its membership is 50% Johnny Burke and 50% myself. (JFB: What about our guardian spirit, White Trousers? He ought to work out at a couple of per cents.) Whenever we think on we hold a meeting and in-

dulge in a spot of impromptu occultism ...

... Hypnotism we have also tried - Johnny makes an ideal hypnotee. He maintains that it is his perpetually blank mind which is responsible: it makes him very receptive to the suggestions and ideas of other wills. This seems to me to be quite a plausible explanation, and it is corroborated by the comparative ease with which Johnny can be hypnotised. It is only necessary to play him a gramophone record of swing music, and he is immediately entranced, ready to be influenced at will.

Under hypnosis Johnny has been many things. At one time, after being told he was a giraffe, he started to chaw away at the electric light bulb, and nearly fused the house - not to mention himself. At another time he was a portrait Kodak, and he wandered unblushingly from person to person blinking his eyes and clicking his tongue at them in a manner calculated to represent the functioning of such a camera. At various times he has been a Red Indian, a fly (he tried to crawl up the wall and walk upside down on the ceiling, like that certain young lady of Ealing - but failed, so parked himself in the sugar-basin instead - and in these days of rationing too!), a goldfish (you should have seen him circling round and round the room with glassy eyes and continually sucking mouth), a Martian (that was the time when the local papers told of a lunatic at large, and hinted at another Jack the Ripper), a mandrill (I supplied the blue paint for the cerulean sitting end of this particular specimen of monkey), and last, but not least, a tree. The tree phase concluded the series of hypnotic experiments and not without good cause. For there was danger - unforeseen and appalling danger ...

Johnny was a tree. He was completely hypnotised and under my influence. He stood erect at the centre of the room, arms outspread like boughs, and toes turned outwards to resemble roots.

"I am a tree" he said blankly. "I am a tree. I am a tree. I am a tree".

At that moment my little dog came into the room.

"I am a tree", said Johnny tonelessly. The dog cocked up its ears in delight, and then made a bee-line for the tree-man.

"I am a tree", repeated Johnny, little realising his deadly peril. But I saw it, and swifter than lightning grabbed the uncultured mongrel by the scruff of the neck, carted it outside, and slung it over the neighbouring rooftop. Johnny was saved from a Fate Worse Than Death.

And since that time the Bureau of Psychic Research has dropped experimental hypnosis from its curriculum. /

An item from WHACKY by Arthur Clarke

(From FANTAST Vol 3 No 2 - July 1942)

"The amazing affair of the Elastic Sided Eggwhisk," said the Great Detective "would no doubt have remained unsolved to this very day, if by great misfortune it had ever occurred. The fact that it didn't I count as one of my luckiest escapes."

Those of us who possessed heads nodded in agreement.

He paused to drain the sump of his hookah, then continued.

"But even that fades into insignificance before the horrible tragedy that occurred in the House Where the Aspidistra Ran Amok. Fortunately I was not born at the time: otherwise I should certainly have been one of the victims."

We shuddered in assent. Some of us had been there. Some of us were still there.

"Weren't you connected with the curious case of the Camphorated Kipper?"

He coughed deprecatingly.

"Intimately. I was the Camphorated Kipper."

At this point two men arrived to carry me back to the taxidermist's, so I cannot tell you any more.

Nobody ever got anywhere discussing women's hats...

Excerpt from EVERYBODY IS WRITING MEMOIRS by Miltly Rothman

(From DIABLERIE Vol 2 No 1 - January 1945)

... One day I suddenly discover I've been in the army exactly two years, and I'm thinking of all the things that happen in all that time. And what I think proves once more that the best thing about fandom is the fact that wherever you go in the country there will be people in the vicinity whom you know.

Those off-duty hours in the life of a serviceman are a thing of joy, but they can also be poison when you get to the point of wandering the streets of a strange city trying to decide what movie to see next. So, when I come to the place named San Francisco, it's nice that I can call up a guy I never saw named Bill Watson and say: Watson, this is Rothman.

Of course, all the time I've spent visiting science fiction fans could have been spent at some joint with a dame, and lots of guys would say that I've been wasting my time. But what good's a dame if she can't talk about rockets or atomic physics? (My god, Laney will kill me for this!)...

I like bandanas - if they're what I think they are

Excerpt from OUT OF THE FORNCH by Walt Liebscher

(From DIABLERIE Vol 1 No 5 - late '44)

Out of the darkness came Fornch. Into the randles of concuision flowed the dread yerb of the tarflies, while humanity clobbered and barthed.

The sun, its rumious schnerdlites casting trents over the frintches, went down like a peedad in ecstonce, while Ginch McFinch burped.

"Clash on these thermocrads," he thought. "What can Fornch do that I can't, except make breedle on the bornch, and besides my piffle is far and away the barglier."

He rose from his morning repast of frected fligdillies with belchberry sauce, burped shuffusly, then left the room in one swell foop. The door criddled shut with a fudlen snuip...