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OR

Whatsit = No. One

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A CRINGBINDER PUBLICATION.

Introducing me to OMPA, various odd thoughts and remeniscences, maybe an idea or so, and a general chatter.

Now you think of a title to cover that!.

kencheslin.

When I was a baby I was very young indeed, as a matter of fact I was so surprised at being born at all that it took me all of two years befor I could speak, and the shock left me weak and helpless for years.

Actually I'm always amazed when I read about people who can remember way back to their babyhood, I can't clearly remember anything that happened before the age of, perhaps, four. Even after the age of four my memories are merely spasmodic...for instance I can for some reason remember the surprise, and the feeling that something really BIG had happened when we entered the year 1944, but I've never been able to figure out just why I was so surprised, or just what I thought was supposed to happen in 1944.

Maybe that was the year my younger sister and I drank the bottle of cider, I have a vauge memory of standing on wobbly feet and insisting to my dumbfounded, and somewhat amused parents, that we drank it "because it was nice".

My family, I remember went out of their way to be nice to the soldiers, (and airmen), who were stationed near our town during the war, possibly because my elder brother was doing his bit at the time, and probably, well, they just wanted to be nice and friendly.

Many a serviceman had tea with us in those days, I distinctly remember a RAF sergeant and two coloured American soldiers, (all of us kids loved the "Yanks", "got any gum chum" became a part of, um, our national heritige, so to speak).

What we liked, about the Americans that is, was that they were so polite, with their 'sirs' and 'ma'm's', I suppose the Americans stick in my mind more readily than the others because they were different from the other adults I'd become accustomed to.

Flash back....it has suddenly come back to me how we got to this place, Stourbridge, when we should have been living in Birmingham

I can't remember very much but it happened one night that the Jerries were going on a bit bad, (poor old Granny got her house bombed around her ears twice about then), and after the raid there was a violent thunderstorm....now Jerries my mother could bear with, she'd been in Brum through '39, '40, '41, & '42....but she just don't like lightning...the first thing she knew she was on a 'bus, she had no idea where it was going, and trundling off into the night.

Eventually of course the bus came to the end of its run, and Ma found herself, with me just about 4 or 5, and carrying my younger sister, standing in the rain in some place she'd never even heard of.

Vauge memories I have of being in a police station, my ~~ma~~ther was nothing if not direct, and of being led somewhere or other by a large policeman, (strictly speaking of course he may have been a very small policeman, but as I wasn't very tall myself at the time....).

Dad, of course, was rather surprised when he got home to find that he was short of half a family. I think the police must have 'phoned him to tell him where we were tho'.

I can't remember much about that time. We didn't have Dad with us except for some week ends, his job with the Ministry of Supply made it necessary that he live in Birmingham...I have no idea where my other brother and sister were, with relatives in Brum I suppose, we have hundreds of relatives in Brum.

And so we came to live in Stourbridge, to think that but for a trick of fate I would now be a Brummie, or if Mom had jumped on any other bus we might have landed up in..well Ludlow 30 miles away, or Coventry over the other side of Birmingham some 18 miles, or north, or south, or anywhere..

The best laid plans of mice and men...etc., (...and that the story of how Hitler sent me to Stourbridge...."). We couldn't have been living, or staying, in the cop shop, or the Church Hall place that I remember so faintly. (I wonder if those things there really were Table Tennis tables?). very long.

The next thing I remember we were living in a flat on the edge of the town we'd found, Stourbridge.

Here my little sister had a rather painful experience, tho' it was not without its funny side, somehow, I have no idea how, she went and sat in the firegrate, the fire being alight at the time she got up rather more swiftly than she sat down, I don't remember laughing, or even being consoling.. I think my main feeling was one of, well detached curiosity, sort of, "hum, hummm, now I wonder how she did that or.. I wonder why she sat there"...

My elder sister and brother I have little or no memories of at this time... when we moved into the flat in the town proper I seem to remember that big brother came home on leave.. I'm sure he had a rifle with him, although I here that soldiers were not allowed to carry their weapons home on leave, it may be that I only imagined it, to my young mind a soldier and a "gun" being inseperable.... come to think of it I do remember him a little time before that, it was in the cellar of our house in Brum during a raid, I remember a great crashing and bashing, the lights waxed and waned furiously, and big brother was lying across my young sister and myself after all the noise had died away, no, not fell, flung himself,.. perhaps this was before he was called up, I remember so little, he may have been too young at that time.

Now where was I?. ah, the Americans in Stourbridge. I rather think I started school sometime before 1944, lets see... hmm, in 1944 I'd be 7, 7!, Egad. (or 6?) anyway, I must have been at school,...

I remember we used to have gas drill at school and, for some reason I'd not had an adult mask, I felt rather foolish during drills putting on one of those red Micky-Mouse masks with the ridiculous protuding tounge.

About this time too we, that is my friends, my young sister and I, used to go on great safaris to the park... all of a mile.. and come back loaded with "windfalls", fruit, mostly apples that the wind (heh, heh, supposedly the wind) had knocked from the trees of the gardens bordering the park. On one particular occasion I remember that my sister had also, somehow, aquired a magnificent red tulip, and on the way home an American soldier, a giant he seemed, (a very rich giant) stopped us and offered to buy the tulip, ghod knows why, (could it possibly have been.. could it.. could... we possible have looked 'cute'?). .. anyway after a steady increase in price my sister parted with the tulip, (now I think of it probably intended for Ma) and was in possession of a magnificent 5/-.... I wonder what on earth that bloke wanted the tulip for?. Probably being kind? who knows, perhaps he had kids of his own. I hope he got out of the war in one piece, he seemed a very decent chap.

Quiet down in the ranks, if Monty can write his war memoirs then so can I.

Fairs fair though, I should be writing some sort of intro from a fannish angle... like where, when, how, I found out about fandom.

Like many, or perhaps that should be 'most'?, fans I was happy reading S/F for years before I ever suspected that such a thing as fandom existed. In fact, I'd exhausted the local library, discovered magazine S/F, (I spent many a happy hour browsing in the local markets at the second-hand bookstalls), I'd finished my National Service, subbed to all the current S/F mags.. all this before I had any idea that there was such a thing, (as fandom).

I suppose, though I do not recall it, that I must have come across some mention of fandom, fanclubs, fanzine and fen in some of the magazines I read.. it just couldn't have made any impression on me. A pity because I've heard of a club in Birmingham, and one in Bridgenorth, that are now dead and gone... ah, now I know what the phrase 'a misspent youth' means... ie; - no fanning... sigh.

It was an advert in "NEW WORLDS" that did it. I had my months NW come one day and there was a half-page advert of the Brumcon... (if it had been anywhere but Birmingham, so near at hand, I wonder would I now be classing myself as a fan... have discovered fandom?) anyway, impelled by curiosity rather than anything else, I showed the advert to a couple of mates, Pete and Mike, and somehow we all decided to go along. So, letters to Bob Richardson, encouraging replies, arrangements.. and we went.

The Brumcon did it. I had no idea that such people could exist...I spoke,neofishly to be sure,the same language.

That was that...soon I did that which neofans do sooner rather than later..I got the urge to publish a fanzine...ahem..well,thats what it was supposed to be...'a poor thing,but mine own'..which hasn't changed overmuch in a couple of yours,and 5,(perhaps by now,6.),issues, the repro has waxed and waned,so has the material,but tho' I can't really say I've published anything really great,at least I've published a comparitively small amount of crud.

I've enjoyed fandom up to now,and intend to go on enjoying it for a long time to come,I hope. I've met some good people,the kind of people I like,and I hope I'll meet more...all in all,although since my first neofish days I've become a little dissillusioned with fandom,(how could anything possibly live up to a neos dreaams?) I like fandom and the people called fans.

STAGE TWO

well,I've kicked around a few odd memories of my youth,and a few note on how I got to be a fan. The next thing I'd like to write about is a little idea I've been turning over in my mind since I found out I was no.10 on the OMPA waiting list....its this.

(I hesitate to write now I've got this far,bear with me please,as I attempt,somewhat awkwardly,to set my thoughts to,er stencil.).

I would like to offer,to those of you,and only to those of you,who are the OMPA waiting list with me,an oportunity to write material for a magazine to be circulate to OMPAns and OMPA wlisters only. This is not just some idea of mine to get material for a zine,I make the offer to publish in this manner for reasons which I'm hazy about myself...at least it is an opportunity for those wlisters who can't put out their own OMPA directed zine to make yourselves known in OMPA before you get in. I would not,supposing that in the middle of doing a wl zine, use your material in any way that could be construed as fulfilling my own OMPA requirements should I suddenly find I'm in OMPA proper....and if any wlisters should want to take over the zine after my 'elevation' that would be fine by me..or,if you prefer it I could still pub the zine,not on my own behalf,but on the behalf of wl OMPAns.

Material,if any,sent to me with the idea of being included in my own OMPAazine would be plainly marked in some way that it is for my OMPAazine and not for the wl thing.

If any of you wlisters are interested I'd be pleased if you could let me know...the sooner you do,(and the idea meets with your approval,the sooner the first wl combozine gets published.

If any of you OMPAns proper wish to remark on the idea,either for or agianst I'd be pleased to hear you opinions,and,just to make sure no-one will be annoyed if I should publish your views,(although at the moment I have no clear intentions of doing so),I would appreciate it if you would mark your letter in some way so as to tell me wether or not you would mind the printing it,or parts of it.

There was a bloke on our TV a few nights ago,about July18th,and this bod was talking about a certain tribe of Indians,on a reservation in,(I think) Ontario Province. There are only a few thousand of them left now,what with some wandering away to 'civilisation' and the compartitively low birth rate....(it seems too that an Indian does not get Canadian citizenship until he leaves the reservation...I can't remember everything that was said but I think thats an accurate recall)

The Indians don't much like the paleface,and their idea of life,as reflected in the attitude of the TV interviewer,is repugnant to any decent,civilised person.

They are content to have enough to eat,a roof over their heads,and air to breath...they have no desire to 'progress',wealth is scorned, the tribe holds eveything,the individual has only the clothes he stands up in...they plant enough grain,raise enough meat to keep them fed,they sell very little,if any,they wish only to live in

peace, they will not destroy trees, or break more ground than they need, or dig for ore... the last time one of these Indians gave another Indian an order the moon was made of green cheese... yet they are happy, they live well tho' not richly... I guess they're pretty happy without 'progress'..... but I suppose they can't last out much longer.

One of my pet hates, and I have many, because I LIKE to hate things..like bad films, politions, soppy books, vicious people, etc., It keeps me amused and busy... anyway, as I was saying, one of my pet hates is TV. Not that I dislike everything on TV, or that I even dislike a particular programme as much as I might say I do, you see, I sort of get carried away and start making the most sweeping generalisations, I tend to feel stupid TV items are a personal affront to me, and get all livid and horrible.

The One-eyed Monster, the Square-eyed Monster, the Goggle Box, I'd call it, (well, when I get madder than usual) the Brain Snatcher.

Not that there aren't some fairly decent programmes on too, I mean, I ought to be fair... I like, for relaxation, Popeye, Foo Foo, and a lot of the westerns.. the crime things, on the whole, are pretty useless because I find you can spot the crook, and the whole plot after the first few minutes in most cases... this I suppose is inevitable when you know that in 9999999 out of 1000000 cases, (perhaps an exaggeration, I admit) the plot must be that crime does not pay.

The quiz programmes, that is, most of the quiz programmes, I like because I enjoy sitting in front of the telly, all smug and self satisfied, and reflecting how dim the contestants are, having correctly answered the question myself... of course I get peeved when I'm wrong.. serves me right.

A programme of this type which is not so easy is one called, I think, Pencil & Paper, which includes an IQ type contest between two teams of four. This niggles me sometimes because I seldom do as well as the teams. Oh, I can get more or less correct answers, but not so fast as the team people do.

Then there is this BBC thing called, I think, TONIGHT. This is always interesting, often amusing, and sort of tounge-in-the-cheek serious too.

Candid Camera I find extremely embarrassing, I can't for the life of me imagine how people can be as silly as the people caught by the cameras for this programme are. Some of the ploys are very ingenious, that's true, but most of them are transparant, and the TV type who carries out the hoaxes, Johnathon Routh, is not very good, he fumbles magnificent opportunities, and is generally very unconvincing.

What I really shudder to think about is, if the items that are presented on the programme are of such a horrible type, gererally speaking, then what horrors are aborted before they are ever shown?.

I saw a pretty cruddy film the other week too, on purpose I admit... IT, The Terror From Beyond Space... (I believe I have read a "review" of this somewhere previously) ..beyond space... ah, that really gets me... another thing is that this dirty great monster thing wanders around to space ship, a ver luxurious space ship, for nearly all the film... it takes them this long to figure that if they were to let all the air out of the ship it might make things a bit difficult for IT... it does, but only after most of the crew has been slaughtered.

My favourite character was a bloke who got trapped by the thing, he broke his ankle and had to hide between a couple of great lumps of machinery, this bloke kept the monster at bay with a welding torch, very convincingly, for hours.

Strangely enough, this chap was a near double for our own Bob Richardson... you been making pro-films off the sly Bob?.

The monster, as is usual, was rather unconvincing, he strolled around and bellowed and generally made a nuisance of himself but he wrinkled... and his painted teeth looked just like painted teeth... which didn't sit too well with the plot because he was supposed to absorb all oxygen and moisture, not eat people. And the supposed Martian landscape looked more like a mockup of a Moon or Mercury landscape, the horizon was much too near and the space ship was much too large for the modle Mars.

4

There does seem to be a tenancy, a trend, towards sericon fanzines of late, of course being a fan for only a few years for all I know there have been trends before..in fact I'd say that I'm pretty sure there have been trends before, some being towards the serious, some towards more fannishness but it still dosen't stop me worrying where willi it all end..and so on.

Not that I think it likely that, if an all serious fandom resulted, (I can't see that happening) that there would be no eventual swing back. I guess its just that I'm slightly more inclined to be fannish than sericon, and I don't like being looked upon as being "one of those fannish morons". -Indeed, I would insist, as I suspect most fans will, that the fannish element is essential to our fandom, unless we want to get all hide-bound and condesending.

I would suggest that a fannish type, of a couple of years fanning, who says words to the effect of "fans are slans" is actually poking fun at himself, fandom, and the world in general.

While some, not all I agree, sericon fans who would never dream of saying "fans are slans" nevertheless in their secret selves cherish the though that, "I'm different, I think." and generally feel themselves to be very fine fellows indeed. Its not sericonness that I'm against, no, there are some very good serious slanted zines around, I dislike the sort of fanzine/fan which accepts seriousness, in itself, as being a measure of value.

Perhaps a slightly inaccurate example of the sort of attitude I mean is this...In the hey-day of the Christian church scholars, many of them men of great learning, and some of intelligence, would discourse at length on the number of angels that could comfortably accomodate themselves on the point of a pin. This was a serious enough undertaking to them...but somehow it strikes me as rather futile.

I suggest that there is not a great deal of difference between the theologists mentioned above and those people who know a number of scientific sounding words, and a smattering of science or philosophy, and who thereupon consider that what they have to say about science, or the world, or the universe and its workings in general, to be valuable or who engage in sericon talk & writing merely because they feel that the mere fact that they are being serious in some way makes them more virtuous.

I further suggest that serious disscussion is highly enjoyable & stimulating, if you are really interested in what you are on about, but that it lacks value if you say something serious type just for the sake of appearing serious minded.

Enough! Enough!. lets see what else I can think up to write about....now I had a note around somewhere...ah, here it is.

Headed.. 'Some speculations on the influence that right-handedness has had on our way of thinking'...which is a preetty impressive title for a little thing I happened to think of a little while ago...that is, Why are the majority of us right-handed? is it perhaps a case of the motor nerves, the part of the brain which controls the hands, is situated on the right of the brain, (are the hands actually controlled from the right of the brain? I don't know, perhaps someone else will); anyway, I wonder if, had we been predoninantly left handed would we have called the left-hand 'right'?, and how would this have affected us..for instance in deciding on which side of the road we drive?...or instead of saying "thats right" (meaning, thats correct) would we now be saying, 'thats left'...or would the designation in politics be changed, our present Leftists being called the Right wing and vice versa? or 'birth left' instead of birthright? or what.

I don't know if you'll find it interesting, it is really a rather fruitless speculation...but..well, I am rather interested myself.



He says that he can die happy, now that his name was printed next to Willis' in the "we-also-heard-from" col.

This has been WHATSIT no;1.

from, Ken M P Cheslin,
18, New Farm Road,
Stourbridge,
Worcestershire,
England.

a sort of fanzine, or APAzine,
intended to be circulated to
OMPA members, OMPA waiting
listers, and one or two other
people.

A CRINGBINDER PUBLICATION.



"Shelly eh, I know the
b.....d. He'll be in the
Glass-house for the next
21 days....

such is life..

the illos on this page are
by George Metzger, and were
cut electronically.

The front cover I traced
from a mundane-zine and cut
myself.

I hope it comes out OK.

The Drill instructor was
drilling a new batch of National
Service conscripts. Having had a
heavy night before, he was in a
foul temper.

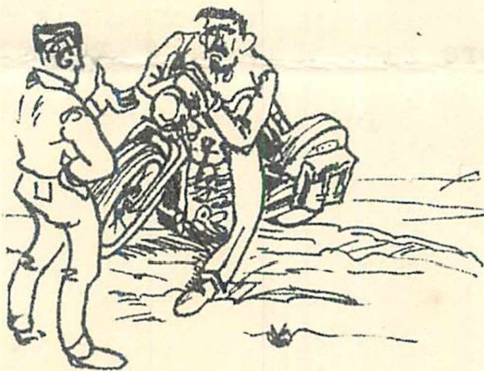
He marched them across the
parade ground, along the parade
ground, up it, down it, across it,
about turn, left turn, right turn,
and so on. At the end of an hour
the DI shouted 'HALT!'

There was a deathly hush,
broken suddenly when a small voice
from the rear ranks was heard to
say, "Oh, what a sweet thing is Death"

The DI blew his top, he went
rapidly from pale to a blushing
red, and swelled visibly. When he
at last found his voice he
shreiked "Who said that!!"

The same small voice from the
back row was heard again, "Shelly",
it whispered.

The DI grinned manevolently,



All home produced, altho' my no.2 niece, Carole, aged 11, will
be helping me with the collation.... (I also get her to read
MADs and similar perversions, I'll make fans out of all my younger
relatives yet).

I have just tried getting her to make a statement, re;-
fandom, fanzines, MAD, S/F, school,but she declines, Ah, well,
about time I packed up and got this thing run off.

yo's

Ken.. (& Carole).

VDWO

10/5/61



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