

The Mesmeric Arts

These posters, paintings and drawings are a window into a weird world of the imagination. Over the last 250 years Stage Hypnosis has been presented as mystery, comedy, and a gateway to feats of super-human strength. Most of the hypnotists pictured below are long gone but these posters give us an insight into a highly unusual profession.

As I trawled through my collection of posters, handbills and old theatre programmes, I was surprised to see there were some common themes. Sketches that were once thought of as novel are often updated versions of old ideas. In fact, I was thrilled to have discovered two routines from a hundred years ago, forgotten, nearly lost forever, that I now intend resurrecting, albeit with a modern twist. Looking at some of the faces peering out at me from the past, I can't help thinking how I would love to have been able to see them perform – I'd absolutely love to be able to talk to them, especially the magician known as *The Electric Wizard* – Dr. Walford Bodie!



LE MAGNETISME ANIMAL

Importante Découverte par M^r. Mesmer, Docteur en Médecine, de la Faculté de Vienne en Autriche.

Il est prodigieux la quantité des Malades guéris par cette méthode qui consiste dans l'application d'un fluide ou agent que ce médecin dirige tantôt avec un de ses doigts, tantôt avec une Baguette de Fer qu'un autre dirige à son gré sur ceux qui recourent à lui. Il se sert aussi d'un Baquet auquel sont attachés des cordes que les malades nouent autour d'eux, et des fers recourbez qu'ils approchent du creux de l'Estomach, ou du foye, ou de la Rate, et en général de la partie du corps dans laquelle ils souffrent. Les malades sur tout les Femmes éprouvent des Convulsions ou crises qui amènent leur guérison. Nombre de personnes atteints de Paralysie, d'Hydropisie, de la Goutte, du Scorbut, de Sordité accidentelle, ont été guéris. M^r. Mesmer recommande la Gaîté et ce qui peut l'inspirer.

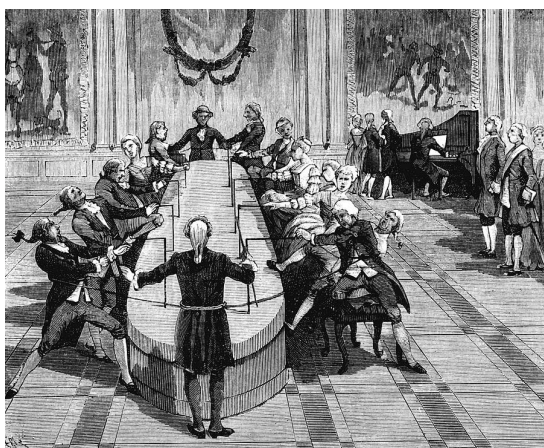
Before the first man danced with a broom on a stage in a smoke filled, candle-lit music hall, Hypnotism, or Mesmerism, had been nothing more than a curiosity, a drawing room novelty.

The medical profession had long since dismissed mesmerism as a fraud, and yet ever since the time of Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) Mesmerism, and mesmerists – have been dazzling audiences.

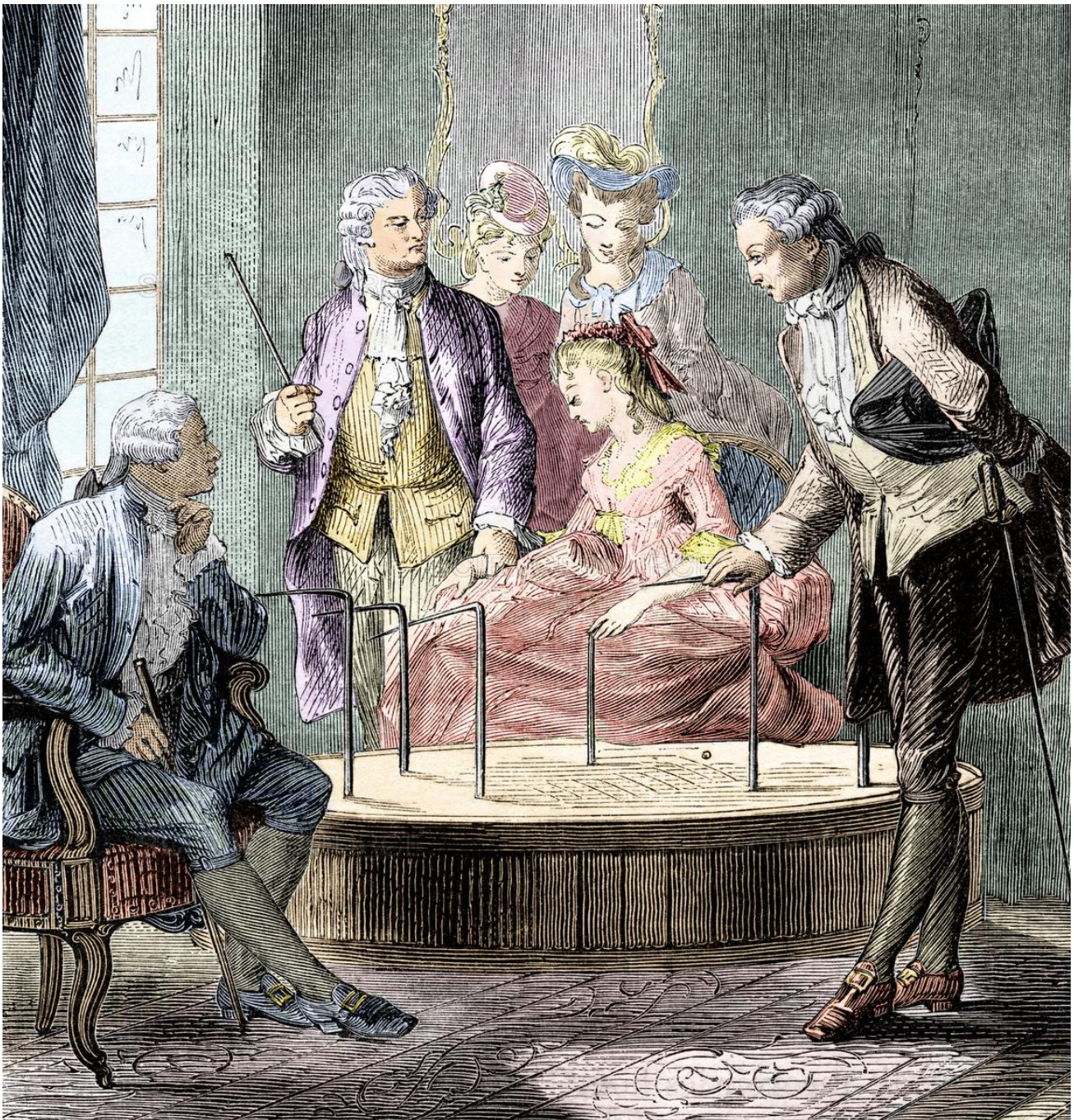
Below left: Mesmer at work, his subjects holding on to the iron rods from which the ‘animal magnetism’ flowed. *Below right:* An engraving of Franz Anton Mesmer. He believed that the secret of healing lay in the ‘Animal Magnetism’ of the universe, rather than suggestion. Dr Mesmer was not a charlatan, he just suffered from ‘confirmation bias’ – something that affects a lot a scientists.



Below: A caricature of Mesmer, and engravings of his ‘magnetised’ water baquets.



Below: A coloured engraving of a 'mesmerism' party. Note the tub and the cynical look on the face of the gentleman second left.



Imagine a world where there's no radio or television, no electronic media, no football matches, rock concerts or stand-up comedy, and where entertainment is reserved almost exclusively for the wealthy. Imagine a world where medical treatment is almost non-existent and mortality is high. And then along comes a doctor who claims to have discovered a new and amazing miracle cure, restoring the sick to health by harnessing the 'animal magnetism' of the universe, curing the incurable and restoring health to the sick.

Stories of his miracle cures would sweep through society. Such a man would be courted by the fashionable invited to even the finest houses where he would demonstrate his ability to heal even the most debilitating illnesses. Such a man would become famous... and his fame would attract the attention of wealthy society... and also jealous rivals...

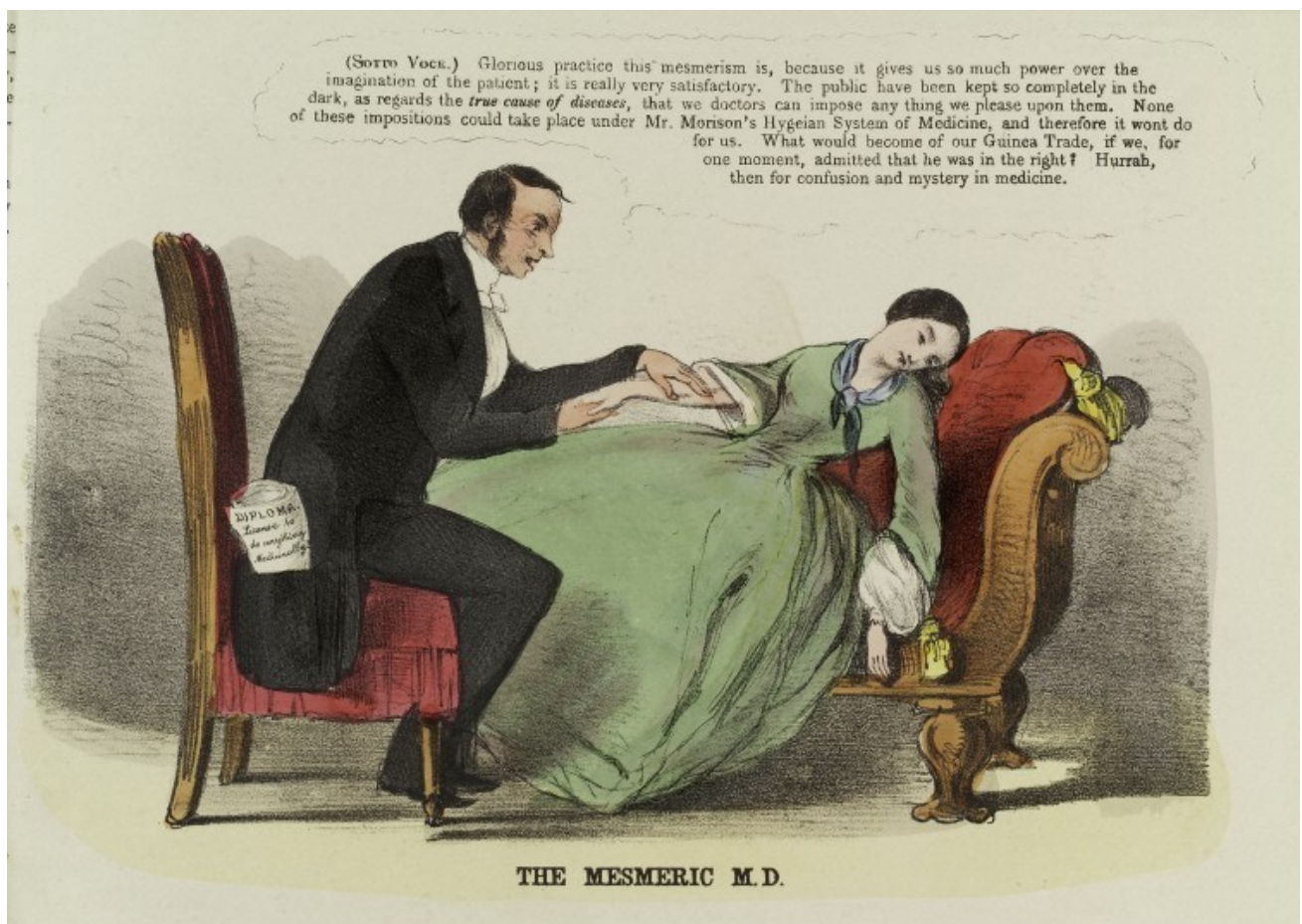
Below: Oil painting by French artist Claude-Louis Desrais, circa 1778 – 1784.
Participants are holding on to the metal rods around a large 'baquet'.



Below: An hypnotic soiree, incidental music provided by the pianist on the left of the picture. This sort of entertainment was extremely popular in the 19th century for those who could afford it. Away from the drawing room, the early Mesmerists were not only fascinated by the phenomenon, they were also struggling to come up with an adequate hypothesis to describe it. Much barking up wrong trees took place before the penny finally dropped – no animal magnetism or non-existent mesmeric fluids – just suggestion...



Below: Early hypnotherapy sessions? Everyone seems fascinated... or perhaps not...



Below centre: The mesmeric MD – the caption reads:

“Glorious practice this mesmerism is, because it gives us so much power over the imagination of the patient; it is really satisfactory. The public have been kept so completely in the dark, as regards **the true cause of diseases**, that we doctors, can impose anything we please upon them. None of these impositions could take place under Mr. Morison's Hygeian System of Medicine, and therefore it won't do for us. What would become of our Guinea Trade, if we, for one moment, admitted that he was in the right? Hurrah, then for confusion and mystery in medicine.”

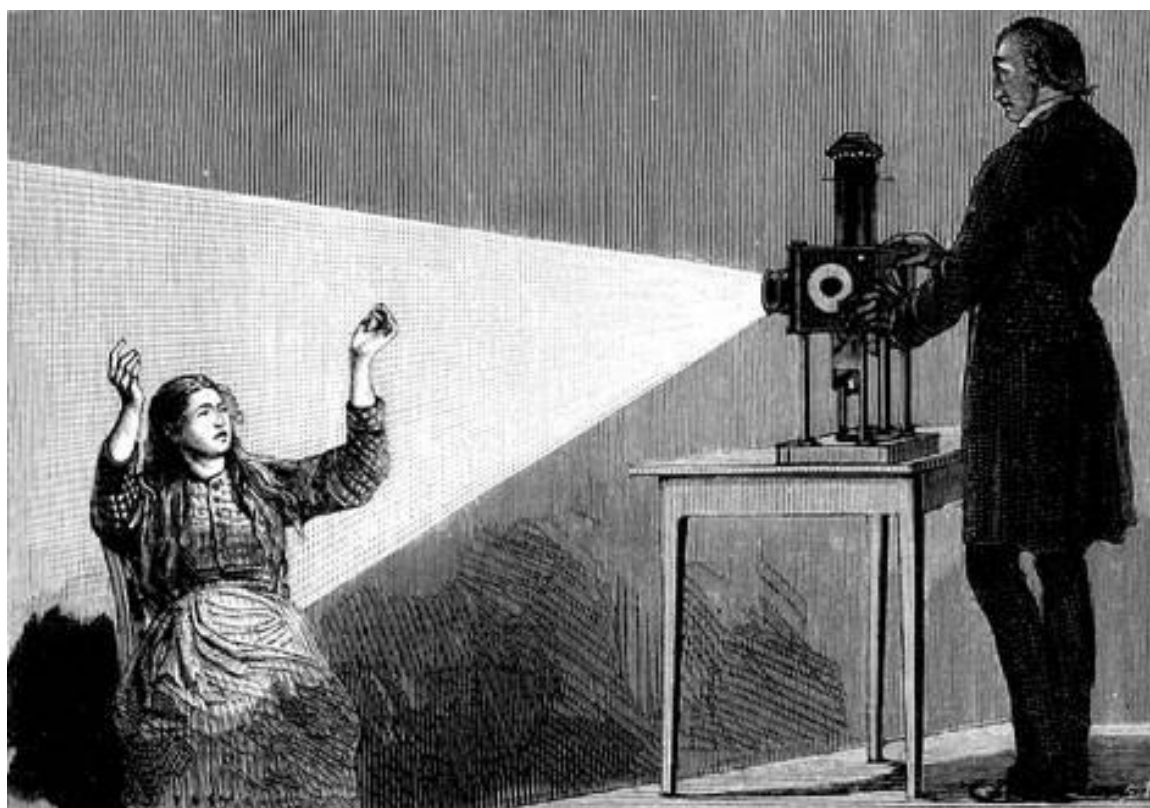
Following page: A demonstration of mesmerism in front of an audience of interested, medical doctors.



Below: Jean Martin Charcot gives a demonstration of hypnosis. A neurologist, Charcot experimented with hypnosis as a cure to hysteria.



Below: An engraving of Jean Martin Charcot treating a patient suffering from hysteria by terrifying her with the light from an electric lantern.



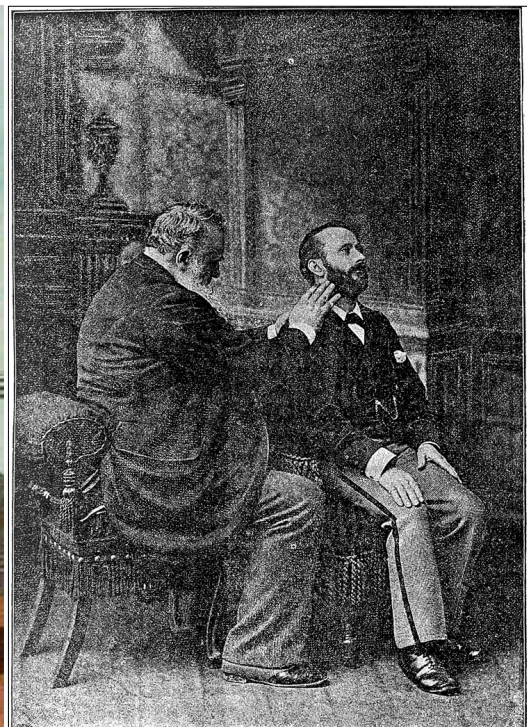
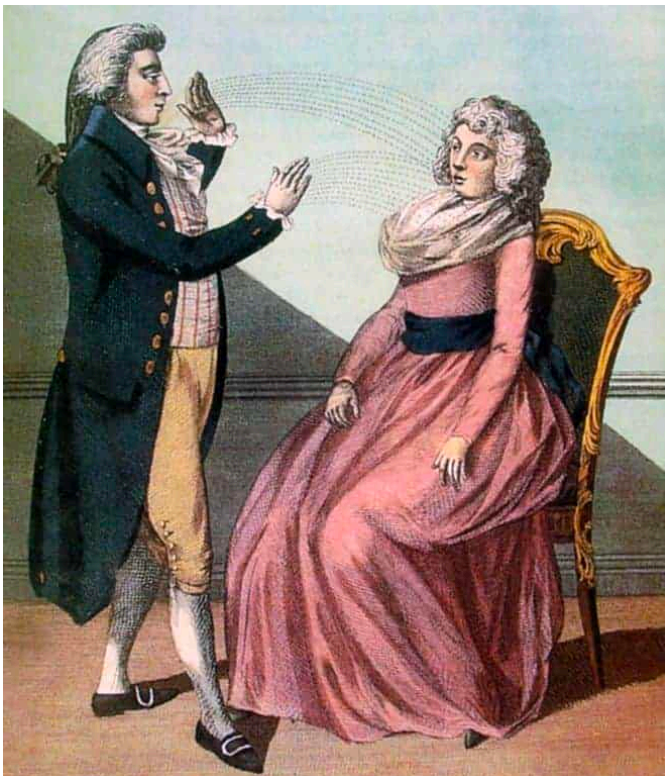


A HYPNOTIC EXPERIMENT.

Above: 'Le Magnetisme' imagined by a French artist

Below left: A coloured engraving of Franz Mesmer 'hypnotising' a patient

Below right: 'The curative magnetic pass, for toothache, neuralgia, rheumatism, etc.'



THE CURATIVE MAGNETIC PASS, FOR TOOTHACHE, NEURALGIA, RHEUMATISM, ETC.



Above: A woman is hypnotised before a group of medical students.

Below left: More 'parlour room' hypnosis...

Below right: An early example of street hypnosis? Judging by the Napoleonic fashion, I think this might be somewhere in Paris.



Below: September 1894 in Tuzer, Upper Hungary... Ella Salamon, is hypnotised by the Austrian hypnotist-healer Franz Neukomm in an attempt to cure her nervous ailment.

Salamon goes into convulsions and dies when Neukomm asks her to give clairvoyant information about the health of a distant patient (his brother). The post mortem found that she had died of heart failure, and Neukomm was [wrongly] convicted of manslaughter.

Neukomm was subsequently cleared since it was believed death could occur at any time – it was just a terrible coincidence.

This was the first recorded death to happen under hypnosis.



DEPOSÉ
1885

LA VIE POPULAIRE

LA VIE POPULAIRE
PARAIT DEUX FOIS PAR SEMAINE
LE JEUDI ET LE DIMANCHE
ÉDITÉ PAR M. LEBLANC, 123, RUE D'ENGHEN, 123

DIRECTION :
123, RUE D'ENGHEN, 123

ABONNEMENTS : Paris et dép. 4 m. 50 c. — 12 m. 40 c.
Etranger postale. • 11 fr. — • 20 fr.
On s'abonne sans frais dans tous les bureaux de poste

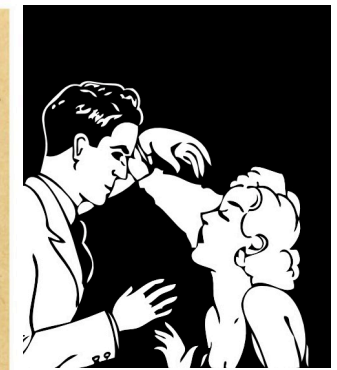
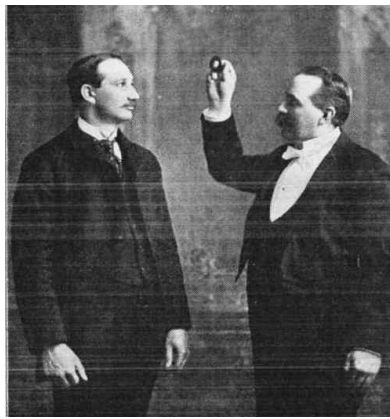
SOMMAIRE : I. Histoire de la société : Un souvenir bien lointain, par A. Erlant. — II. La chanson du soldat à mort, par A. Valabrega. — III. Rome, par A. Fauré. — IV. Le droit de péta. — V. Jean Mercier, par Jules Claretie. — VI. Bachel, par Alfred Assolant. — VII. Froufrou jeune et Bachel aîné, par Alphonse Daudet. — VIII. Bon-Anci, par Guy de Maupassant.



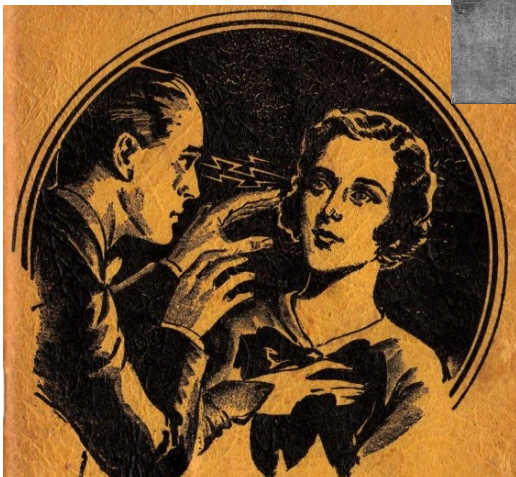
JEAN MORRIS. — Demain, tu n'entends rien? ... Demain, à 10 heures précises!...

Above: A hypnotist in France gets front page on the 4th October 1885 cover of 'The Popular Life.'

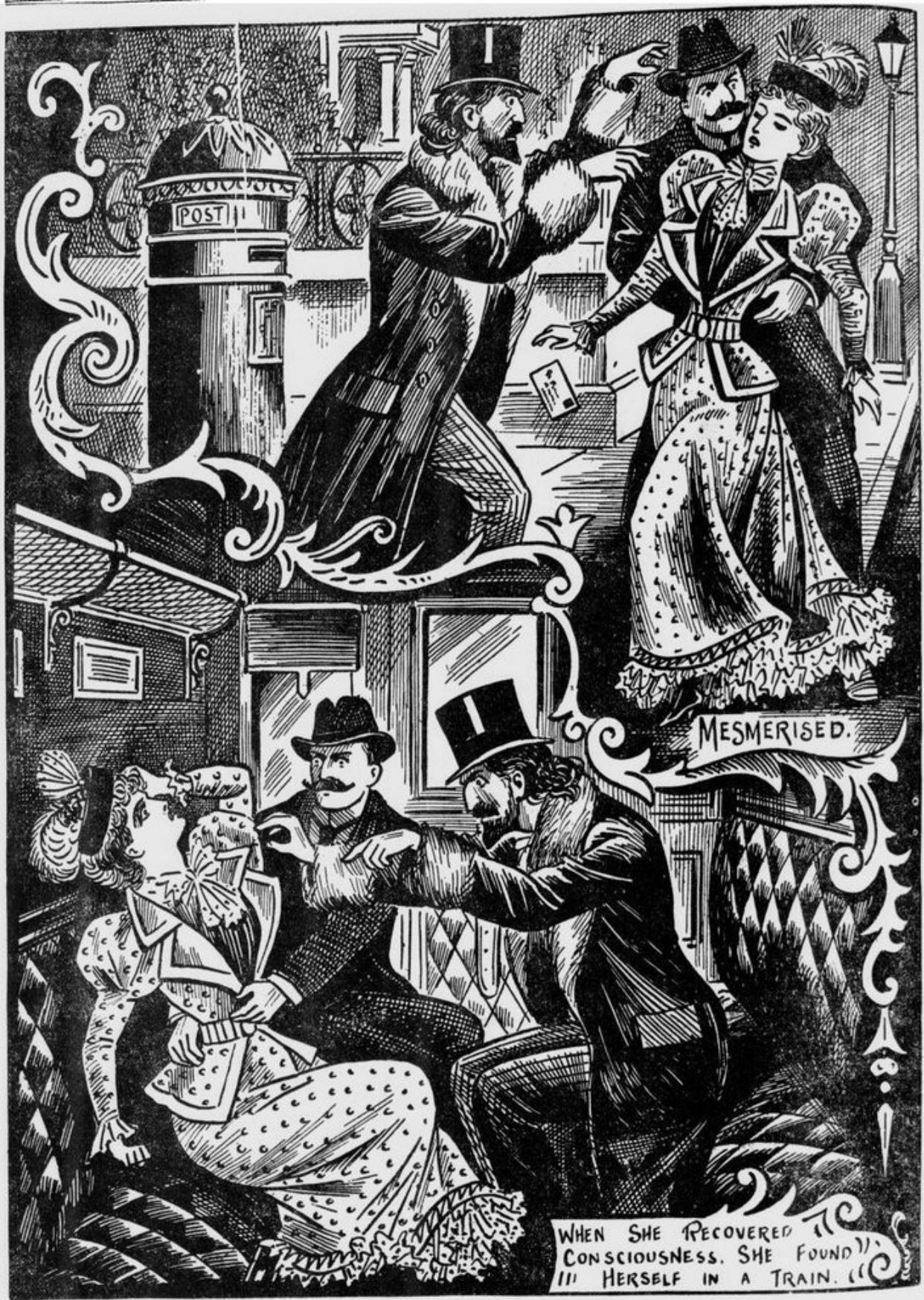
Below: The public perception of hypnosis summed up in just four words:
'Look into my eyes...'



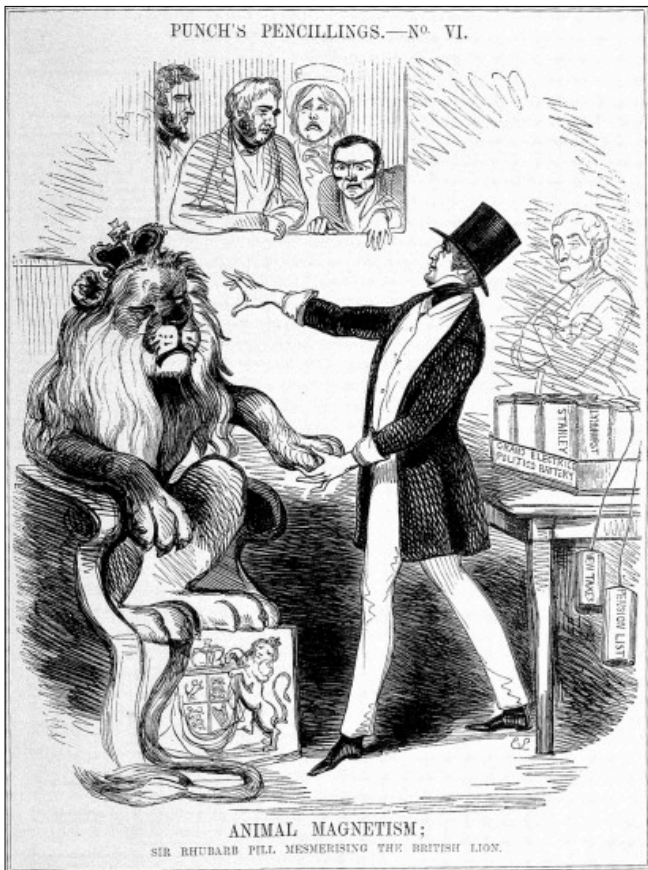
Do You Realize The
POWER
that Hypnotism will Give You!



And if all that wasn't bad enough...



EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF HYPNOTISM AND ABDUCTION.
ROMANTIC ADVENTURE OF A YOUNG LADY.

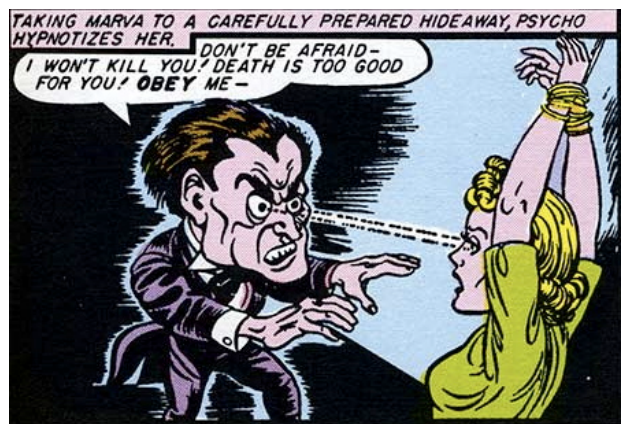


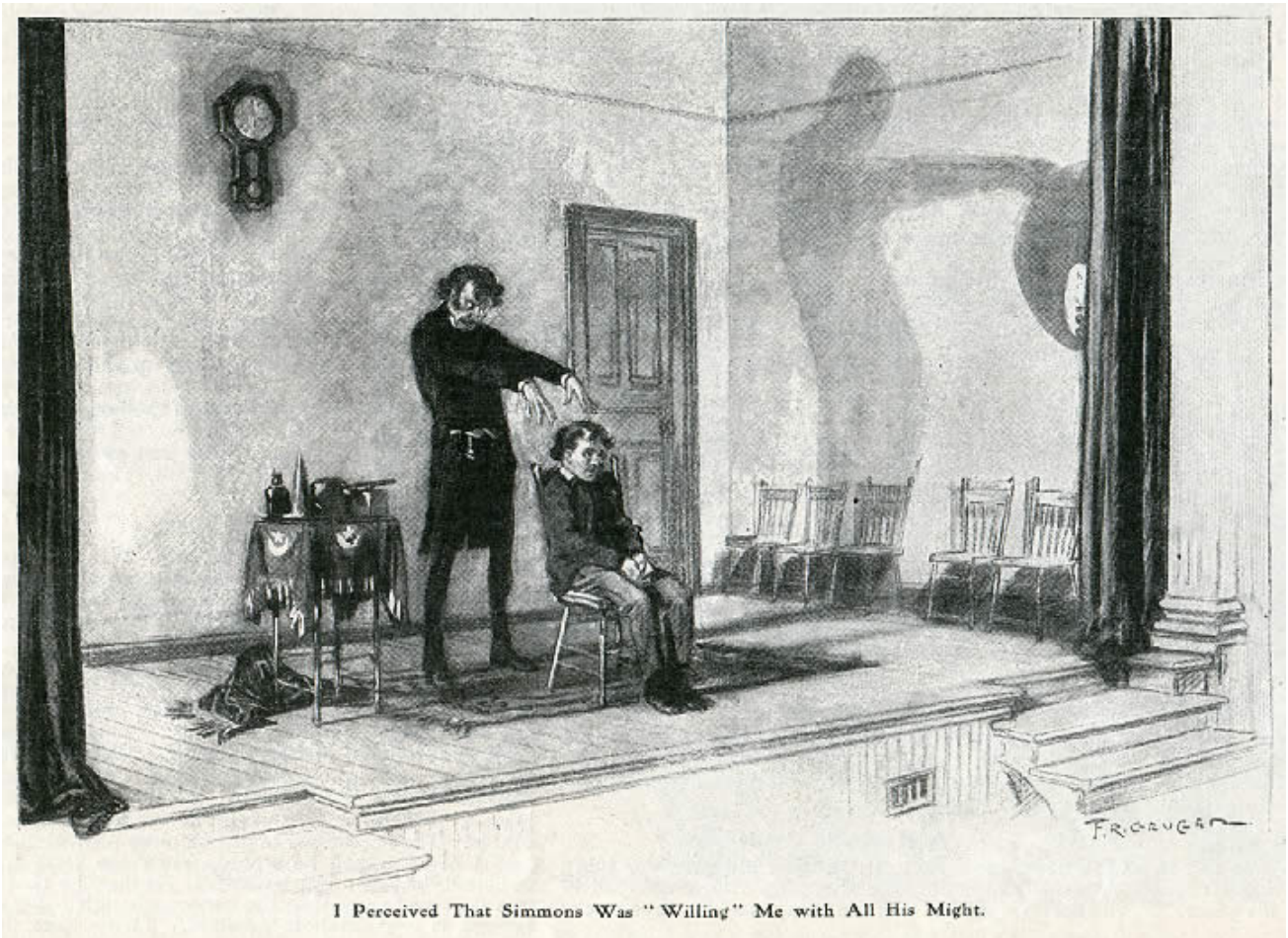
Above left: In Punch magazine – A satire of Mesmer's Animal Magnetism

Above right: The power of Magnetism as imagined by a French cartoonist

Below left: More French cartoonery

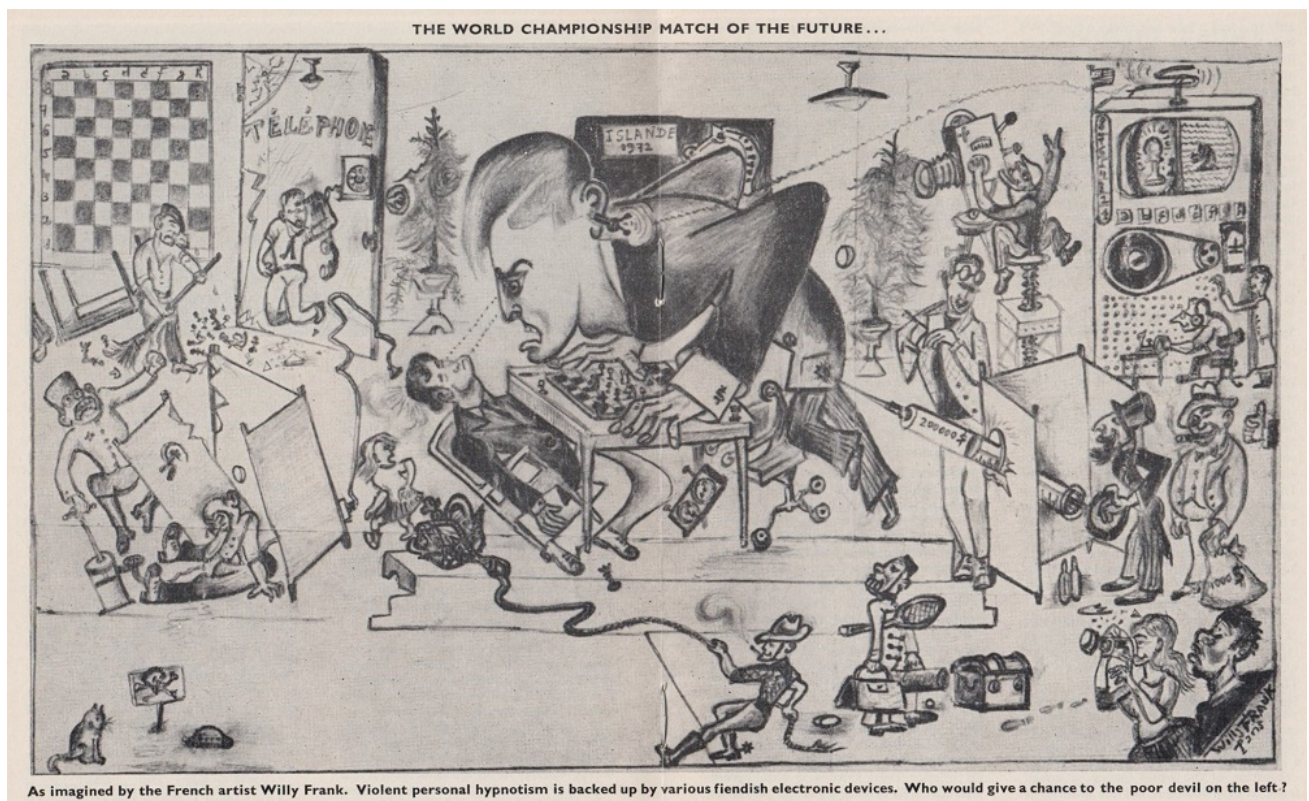
Below right: Everyone's nightmare – the evil hypnotist at work...





Above: A rather satirical look at hypnotism: "I Perceived That Simmons Was "Willing" Me With All His Might."

Below: The power of hypnosis as imagined by French cartoonist Will Frank

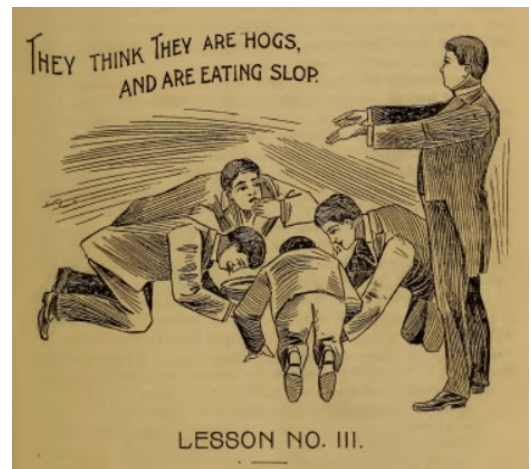




Above: 'A Hypnotised Tea Party' and a collection of hypnotic 'stunts'.

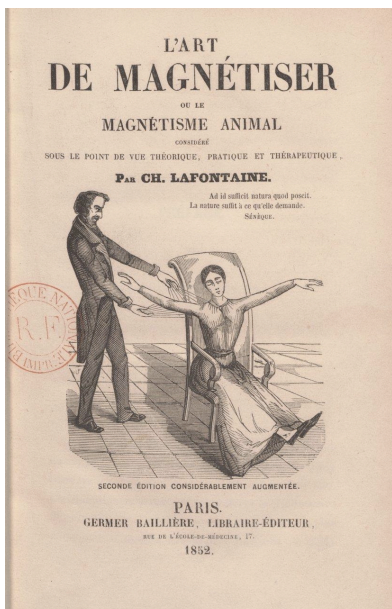
Below left: Unless the woman was suffering from a fear of extremely dangerous big cats, in reality a very reasonable fear, then this is likely to be just another Victorian fantasy.

Below right: Pages from what appears to be a stage hypnosis training manual. Lesson No. III is demeaning while Lesson No. XV is downright dangerous.



Below left: Steamship magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt is being ‘mesmerised’ by Victoria Claflin Woodhull and her sister Tennessee Claflin. They gave him spiritualist and other ‘services’ in return for funding their NYC stockbrokers’ firm and their newspaper.

Below right: The old ‘knife through the arm’ trick, a favourite of magicians. The image may have been shocking in its day, but it’s just an illusion, available from any good magic shop.



Above left: **Lafontaine** the French Mesmerist thrilled and amazed audiences on both sides of the channel. This frontispiece is from 1852. I’d pay big money for a copy of this! Lafontaine toured England in the mid 19th century.

Above centre: 1857... around the time of the Crimean War, the French were still experimenting with ‘Magnetism’, the term first used by Mesmer, erroneously. The word ‘Hypnosis’ would not be invented for another half century. This poster advertised **Monsieur E. Allix** who had obviously spotted a gap in the market and set about exploiting it. Anyone speak French?

Above right: By the end of the 19th century, Mesmerism was popular on both sides of the Atlantic, as we can see from this 1885 playbill announcing the **Aitken & Watson Mesmeric Co’s** visit to Attleboro, Massachusetts. Travelling magician mesmerism and hypnotism shows were popular in 19th and early 20th century America – until the Bible thumpers decided they were a threat to their own brand of eyes-closed mass hypnosis scam.

Miss Annie De Montford – working the music hall circuit between 1871 and 1882 with a very reasonable ticket price of two shillings. Obviously a massive star in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, Miss De Montford (almost certainly a stage name) is sticking to what works – as evidenced by her pictorial pot-pourri of stock in trade hypnotic gags.

Evan 57

MUSIC HALL.
BARNSTAPLE.
FOR FOUR NIGHTS ONLY.
WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY, AUG. 16TH, 17TH & 18TH SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2ND, & 3RD.
MISS ANNIE

DE MONTFORD

ANNIE DE MONTFORD
MISTRESS OF MESMERISM
IN HER
MESMERIC SEANCES

THE WONDER OF THE AGE

For full particulars and Opinions of the English and American Press, read "THE DAILY MESMERIST."
ADMISSION—First Seats, 2s.; Second Seats, 1s.; Back Seats, 6d.
DOORS OPEN AT HALF-PAST SEVEN, TO COMMENCE AT EIGHT.

OXFORD HALL, ILFRACOMBE.

MIND GOVERNS THE WORLD

MISS ANNIE
DE MONTFORD

THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL
STAR

FOR TWO NIGHTS ONLY,
MONDAY & TUESDAY, AUGUST 29 & 30.
Admission:—First Seats, 2s.; Second Seats, 1s.; Back Seats, 6d.

TO-NIGHT Evan 1781

ANNIE DE MONTFORD

The acknowledged and undisputed Star
MESMERIST
Second to None
in her
Wonderful Manipulations
in Mesmerism.

If you like Novelty, GO!
Mystery upon Mystery!
If you would be Puzzled,
Go!
Wonder succeeding
Wonder!
No End of Laughter!

None should fail to see Miss Annie
DE MONTFORD, who surpasses every rival having gained public esteem M
E verywhere—over ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES, and AMERICA. The most highl
Y M AGNETIC and MESMERIC influence is possessed by Miss DE MONTFORD. All confes
S O n every hand, that this is the most intellectual and amusing ENTERTAINMEN
T N ow travelling, and so ALL CLASSES OF PEOPLE are invited to se E
T he greatest PHENOMENON OF THE AGE. GROTESQUE actions and COMEDY; superio
R F UN and SPORT of the most innocent kind. The most surprising of modern Geni
I O ften imitated but never equalled. Thus, upon this night, all should g O
D ight early and see this lady, whose amusing, studied, and imprompt U
D iversions have ensured to her in every town the most COMPLETE SUCCES

ADMISSION—
Reserved Seats (Numbered), 3s. First, 2s. Second, 1s. Back, 6d.
Tickets at HARRISON'S Music Warehouse, Colmore Row,
DOORS OPEN AT 7-30, COMMENCE AT 8 PROMPT.

Regie & Co. Printing Works—W. Jacobson & Co. Vauxhall-st., Birmingham.
Music Hall, Barnstaple, Devon, Sep. 1881.

Below: **THERESES** – now there’s a name to conjure with! Unusual and dramatic names were very popular with hypnotists in the first half of the last century. Astonishment and mystery are the themes captured by the artist on this poster.

I’m not quite sure what Thereses is actually doing here, unless it’s something along the lines of “you are now a banana” but the outstretched hands are a dead giveaway.

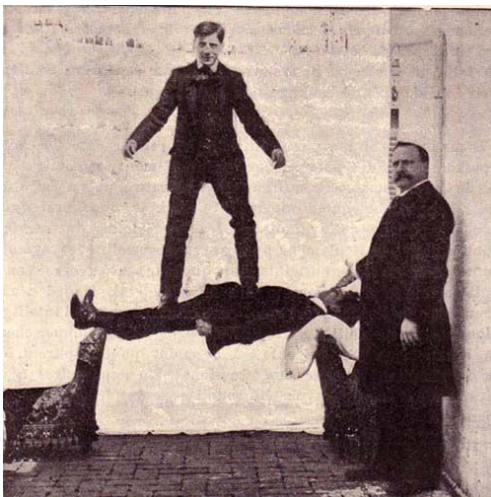
If music were needed in the act, the hypnotists of yesteryear would need musicians – this chap has engaged the services of a small orchestra.



For nearly two centuries, body catalepsy – also known as ‘the human bridge’ – has been part of the stock-in-trade of hypnotism shows. At least the gentleman *above right* has the sense to use padded chairs.



The potentially deadly stunt is now banned in Britain, and rightly so and for obvious reasons, although some pub hypnotists still do it!



Two examples of past attempts, although the trick was often faked.



Above: Fake. Even without the sledgehammer, it would be absolutely impossible to support the weight of a block of stone. Most likely there is a plank of wood under the body and the block is probably made from plaster of Paris – a lightweight and brittle material often used in ‘feats of strength.’

Below: A genuine catalepsy attended by witnesses.





Tiny eighteen-year-old Marina Gulley of Town Hill, Swansea, had one chair put under her head and another under her heels, and her body was rendered so stiff by hypnosis that she could carry two twelve-stone men on her unsupported middle.

Two Twelve-Stone Men Turn a Seven Stone Girl Into a Serviceable Bench

Her name is Marina Gulley, from Town Hill, Swansea. She is supported only at the shoulders and the heels. Yet Casson and Jack Lister can sit plank. After the show she said she felt no aches or pains.

Above: Peter Casson and his manager, Jack Lister sit on a woman at a show in Swansea. This is not faked, but it does put an unacceptable strain on the unsuspecting subject.

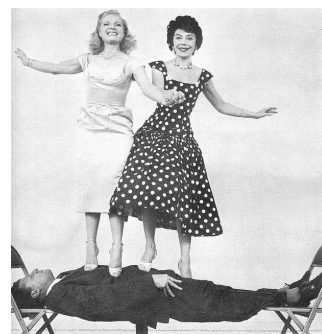
Below left: Hypnotist 'Ruane' demonstrates his superior skills by placing a woman across two metal chairs. Note the chair on the right is placed under the shoulders, thus ensuring at least a modicum of safety.

Below right: No thought for safety is given here and I suspect that a lot of people who took part in the stunt suffered pain the following day.



EYES HAVE IT—Hypnotist Ruane, center, demonstrates power of his art, with help of his wife, Nadine, and assistant John Hathaway. Subject under

hypnosis is Mrs. Cindy Munsinger. Ruane says hypnosis can cure variety of ills, including ulcers, and help people lead a relaxed and happy life.



The precise details of **Mr. & Mrs. Herbert L. Flint's** hypnotism act are probably lost forever, but I think you can see how it was all meant to pan out. The reverse gender role play is something that has always guaranteed mirth. I'm sure audiences at the time found *The Flint's Hypnotic Skirt Dance* outrageous and hysterically funny. Men dressed as women... it must have brought the house down!



Herbert L. Flint's career stretched from around 1890 to 1915. Like many vaudeville acts at the time, Flint worked his family into the show. In this rare poster from 1896, he is pictured with his daughter, Marina, and Ada St. Claire, a vocalist whom Flint allegedly hypnotised while she was singing... so full marks for originality there!

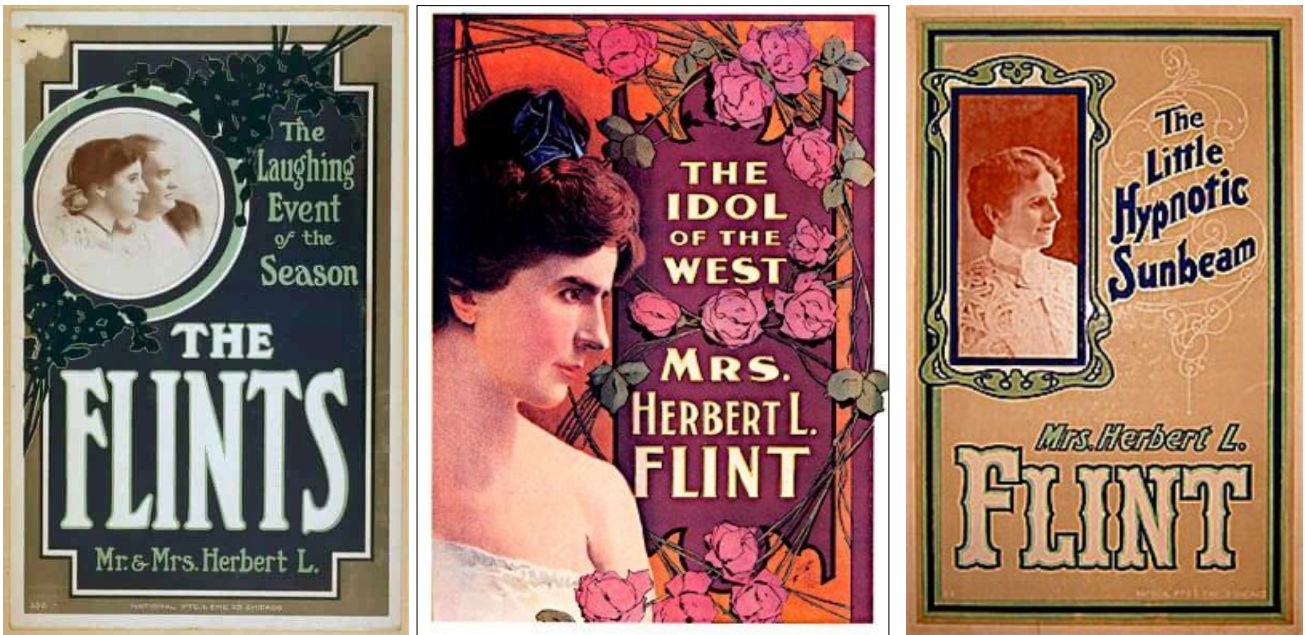
Billed only as Mrs. Flint, his wife was a key part of the act, and was always billed as wearing the newest fashions or the most gorgeous costumes, something that would have been a huge draw for audience of the time. Some of Flint's competitors accused him of using 'horses' – plants in the audience to ensure a good performance

The shows often featured Herbert's own wife or daughter as 'the human bridge.' Herbert would then invite audience members onto the stage to break cement blocks placed on the women's bodies with a sledgehammer, or invite people to stand on the long-suffering Mrs Flint.

Unfortunately, Mr Flint also treated his family the same off-stage as on – both daughter and second wife eventually left the act to escape his mistreatment.

Flint sold books on mastering hypnotism, claiming the reader would be able to lose weight and rid themselves of bad habits, rather like a certain modern day ex-stage hypnotist who claims he can make you thin and cure all your mental health issues with a CD.

Retiring to Cleveland, Ohio, Flint continued to sell his books by mail order. He never achieved long-term wealth or any great success and ended up penniless.



Below left: breaking a piece of rock, or a paving slab on someone's chest was something I remember seeing when I was very young.

Below right: the Flint family demonstrate the effectiveness of hypnosis on Mrs. Flint. This stunt is undoubtedly faked (there is a plank of wood under the long suffering Mrs. Flint) but audiences would have been thrilled by it. I think these photographs were taken in the 1890's or early 1900's when the music halls were still going strong. What dates it is the dress but especially Mr. Flint's Piccadilly weepers.



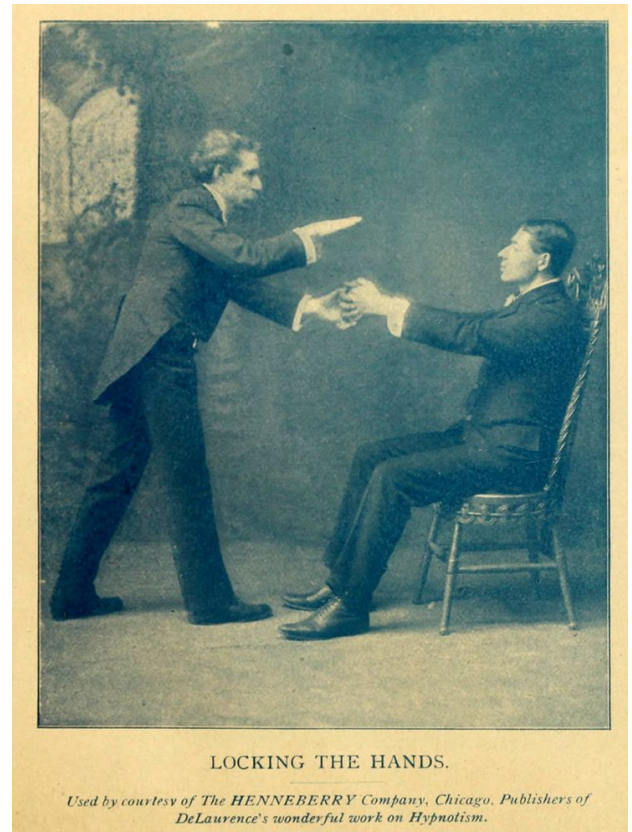
HEAVY CATALEPSY AS GIVEN WITH MARINA FLINT.



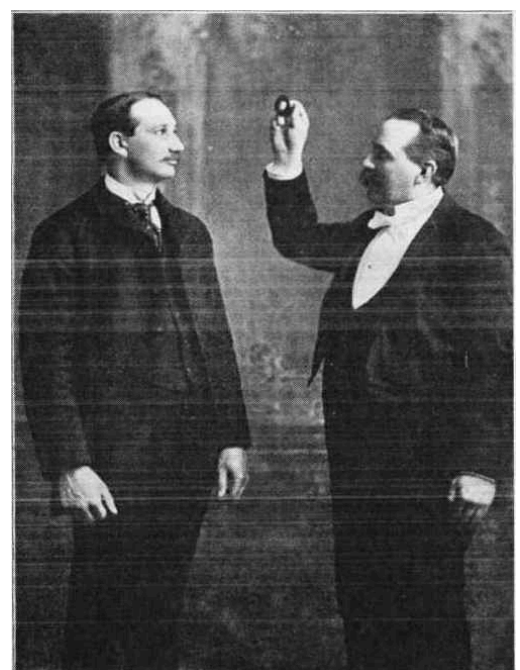
ROCK BREAKING TEST ON MARINA FLINT.

Below right: A single page from a poster or flyer, or perhaps a theatre playbill – again, the ‘human bridge’ taken to excess, although in reality this is not physically possible. ‘Volunteers for Cuba’ was probably a skit on a political crisis of the time. It reminds me of an old music hall joke act called *The MacDougall Brothers* – the joke is that they are all different nationalities and one is a woman. I can see it being hysterically funny at the time.

Below right: An old and fun trick where the hypnotist ‘locks’ the hands of a willing volunteer together – something I have done many times, until it stopped being funny.



Below left: A souvenir photograph of your session?
Below right: ...now watch very carefully...



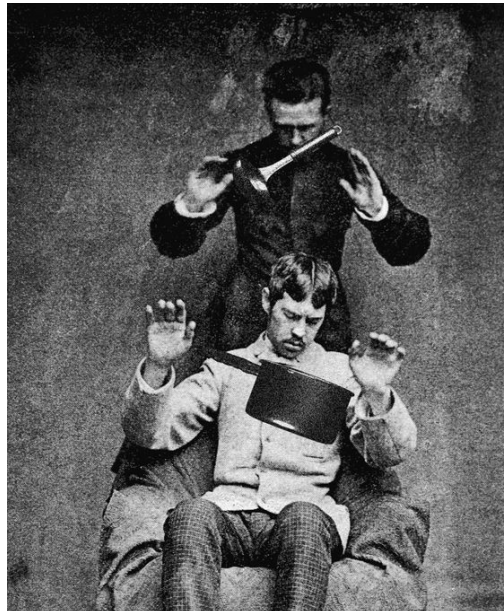
Below left: Inserting a surgical needle into the arm of a volunteer, a stunt repeated in the 1940s and 1950s by Peter Casson.

Below centre: Not quite sure what is going on here, but it looks like some kind of musical instrument skit. How little things have changed...

Below right: the same hypnotist puts the 'fluence' on a woman. There are a lot of images in which male hypnotists hypnotise female subjects, in fact it's a regular and disturbing trend.



SUGGESTED ANÆSTHESIA—Hat Pins Through the Arm.



SLEEP INDUCED BY MESMERIC PASSES.

Below left: A young woman is hypnotised to believe she is Mademoiselle Patti, a famous singing star of the time, and she is singing before the King.

Below right: The subject with the broom believes he is Col. Roosevelt hunting mountain lions, while the other thinks he is Col. Bryan out fishing. I wonder if he caught anything?

I can see that bringing the house down in its day. No, really... I can!



The hypnotist has impressed it upon the subject with the broom that he is Col. Roosevelt hunting mountain lions. The other subject thinks he is Col. Bryan out fishing.



Above: An unknown hypnotist poses for the camera with four subjects, probably taken around the end of the 19th century.

Below: This photograph looks as if it's posed in a photographer's studio.





DENTAL OPERATION PERFORMED UNDER
SUGGESTED ANÆSTHESIA.

Above: A fascinated audience witnesses dentistry carried out on a hypnotised patient.

Below: Sleeping beauties – 1913.

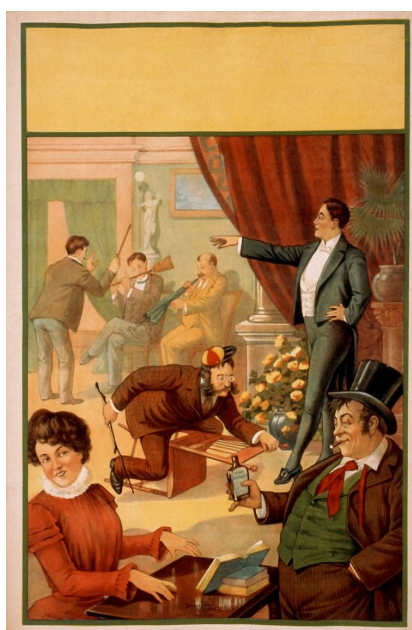


Below: These five posters by the same artist and the distinctly art deco style points to the 1920's.

What is interesting is that not very much has changed in the last nearly 100 years. We see subjects playing imaginary musical instruments, riding a 'horse,' conducting an imaginary orchestra and so on.

Hypnotic Fun Maker Duncan MacKnight obviously decided on a re-brand and became simply Duncan. He is portrayed, formally attired in white tie and tails, in each frame as puppet master, arms outstretched in a pose seemingly popular with hypnotists for no good reason.

In second image, two men can be seen 'flirting' on the couch in the background, while in the third, a male subject tries on women's clothes – always a winner!



Below left: **Sylvain A. LEE**, 'in his wonderful hypnotic performances' surrounds himself with the tools of his trade – routines that his audiences would have recognised. Obviously a man for stunts, the image at bottom left shows a subject suspended between two chairs about to have a concrete block smashed with a sledge hammer.

You could get away with that sort of thing in those days and no doubt the stunt was popular with audiences, but I'd like to see you get that one past the licensing committee today!

Bottom right, Lee is performing the well known publicity stunt of being buried alive for a week, a trick recently resurrected by David Blaine, amongst others.



Below: Stiff competition from **BARNUM THE HYPNOTIST** – almost certainly not his real name – opts for a traditional collage of hypnotic stunts.

From top left: a man is fishing for something, we know not what, an impossible version of *The Human Bridge*, a man proposes to another gent - his advances spurned, two imaginary orchestras play in time to the music, a man seems to be riding an imaginary horse.

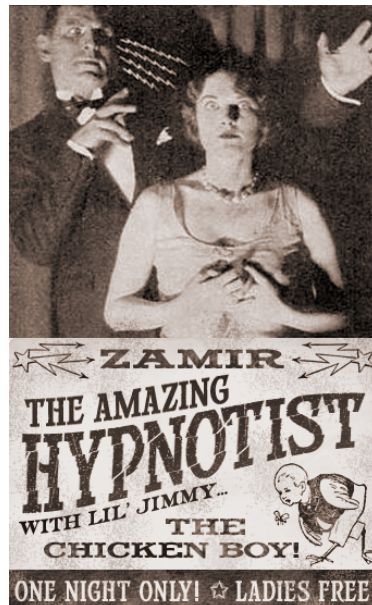


Below, from left to right: Zamir **the Amazing Hypnotist** goes for the rays coming out of the eyes routine, but I suspect most people would be going because they wanted to see the chicken boy. I know I would! I'm wondering if Lil' Jimmy was perhaps a 'hypnotised' stooge, part of the act, taken on tour to guarantee laughs? Even the French seem to have got in on the act. Well, to be fair, I suppose it all started over there.

The Hypnotist as mystic. Looks like Nadia was **Handy Bandy**'s full time subject and the pair probably toured together at a time when that sort of fakery was normal, probably as a music hall speciality double act. Love the outfit dear, but *again* with the hands! I wonder if his friends called him Randy Bandy?

Displays of superhuman strength were once the hypnotist's 'convincer' although it is highly unlikely that the stunt depicted in the poster was ever performed without a deal of trickery.

In this instance, the hypnotist, **Nicola**, presents '*The Sleeping Miracle of Strength*', However, the poster suggests to me an elaborate illusion rather than true hypnosis. The 'hypnotist' and his star subject were in all likelihood related (husband and wife double acts were a popular staple in the music hall) and the feat comes complete with hypnotic outstretched arms (why *do* they do that?) Maybe it's to make sure everyone gasps in amazement at the right moment.

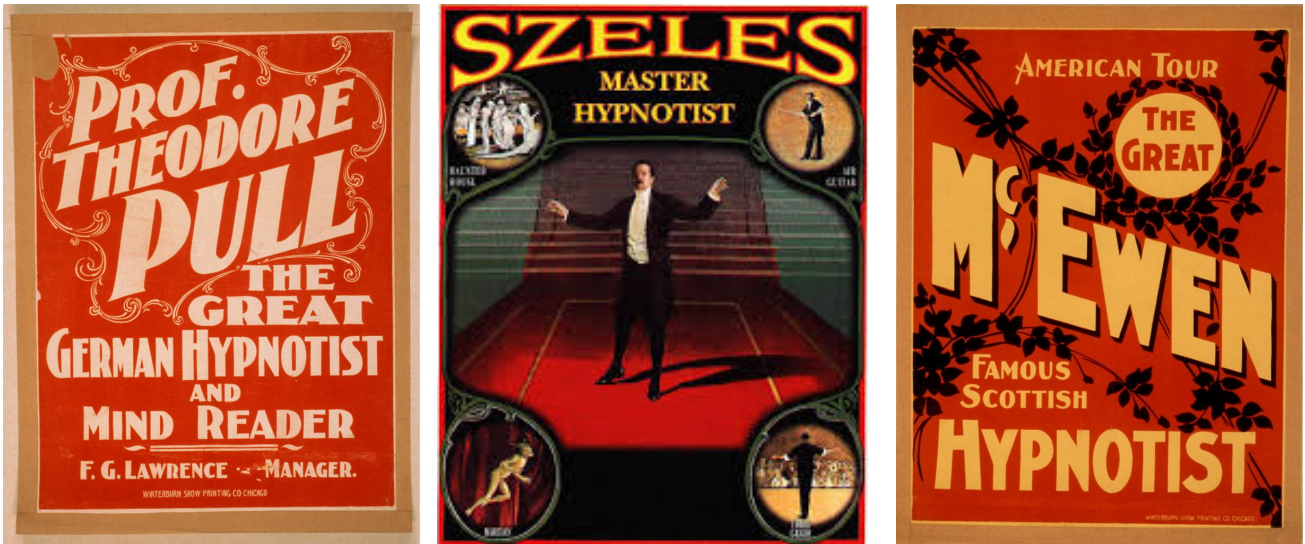


Left: **Alurtus** (real name Albert M. Randolph) and his subject and wife [coincidentally] Arzullia. For reasons best known to himself, he passed on the Alurtus name to his younger brother James Randolph while he carried on under the name of A. M. Curl.

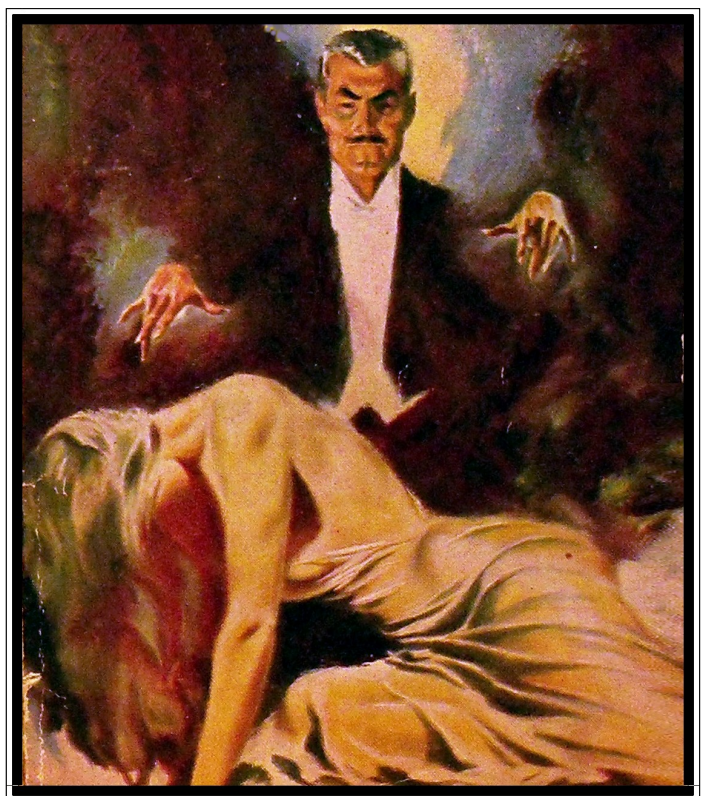
Below, from left to right: Prof. **Theodore PULL**, the Greatest German Hypnotist (before Hitler came along) varied his act with some Mind Reading, again, not unlike a certain Mentalist of the modern era.

SZELES is a name to be reckoned with in the U.S. His poster is a perfect homage to the earlier says of stage hypnotism, showing him centre stage, again portrayed by the artist as demon puppet master, arms in the air like the conductor of an orchestra of the surreal, while four hypnotic scenes play out around him.

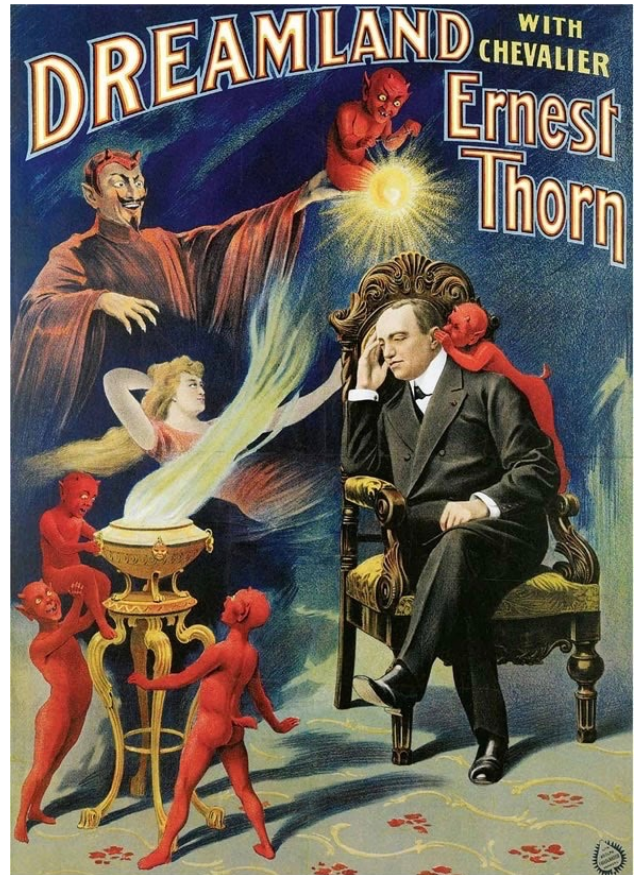
The **Great McEwen** on the other hand, seems confident enough to rely on the mere mention of his name to draw a crowd.



Below, left to right: **Kellar**, also a magician and a mind-reader, has gone for the diabolical in a big way. As has the unnamed hypnotist in the next rather striking portrait.



The Great McEwen, the great Scottish Hypnotist is still flogging the human bridge as his 'unique' selling point. **'Chevalier' Ernest Thorn** poses as his own subject in Dreamland, ably assisted by some mischievous friends.



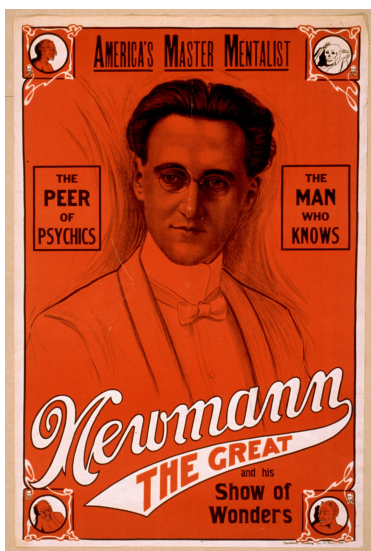
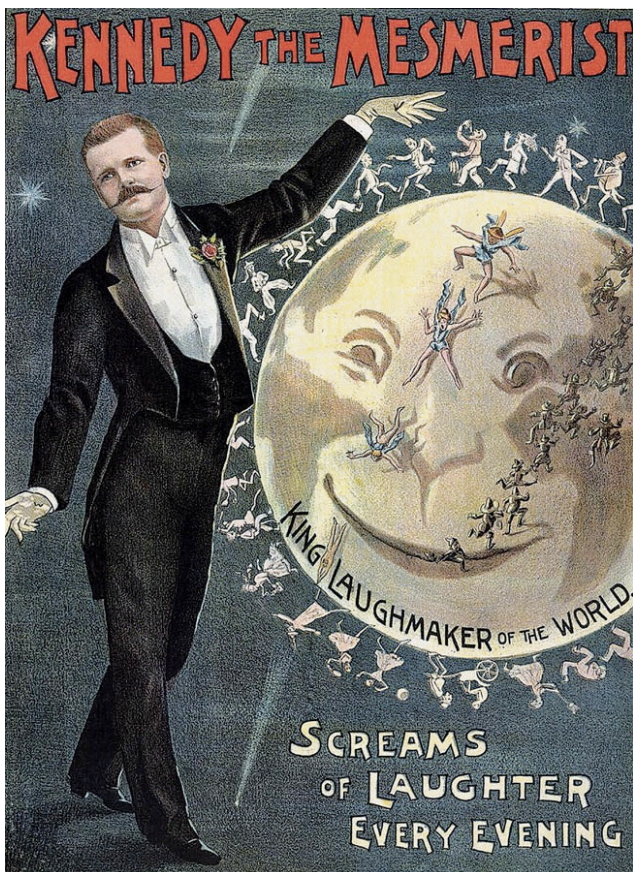
Below: The Dayton Show – sleeping damsel and mischievous imp, reminiscent of the fairytale Sleeping Beauty. I wonder how this would play in today's PC age?



Below left: By the 1930's Hypnosis Acts had become very popular. '**KENNEDY THE MESMERIST**' promises "Screams of Laughter Every Evening" – not unlike today's more modern Mesmerists.

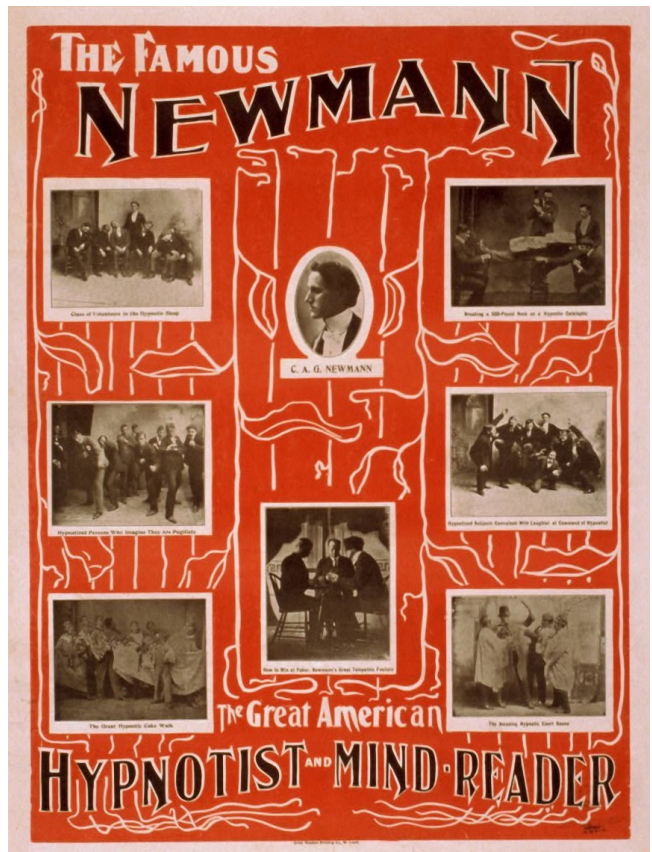
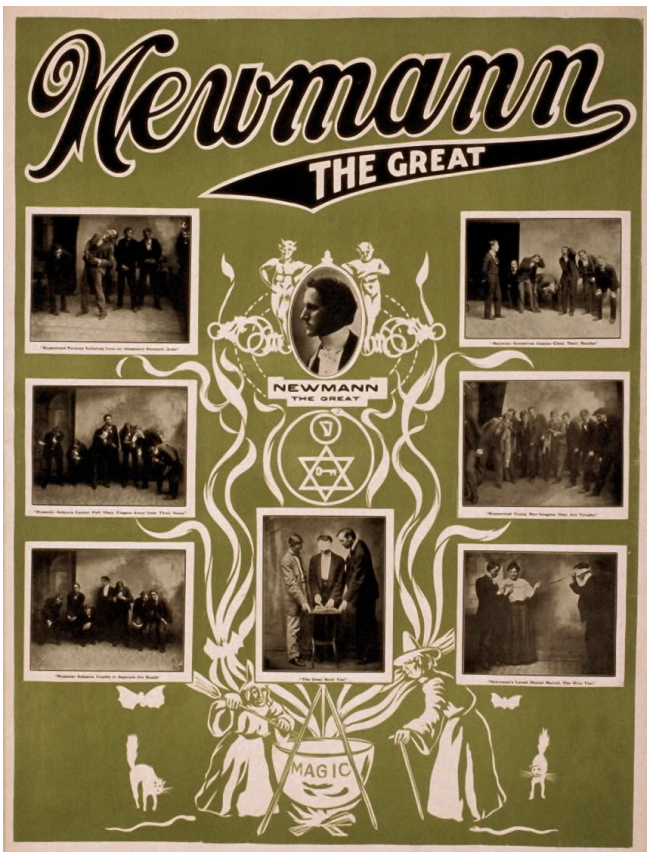
Below right: Bored? Then why not visit the **EGYPTIAN HALL**, England's Home of Mystery, to witness 'the most original Startling Mystery EVER presented to the public? Looks like it's a mix of magic and hypnotism. Just as today, portrait vignettes play a part and more important, hypnotists often included mind-reading, magic and mentalism to make their shit acts a bit more interesting.

Despite any advances in the understanding of hypnosis and the mechanisms behind it, the public remained woefully ignorant about its true nature.



Following Page:

Newman the Great tempts his audience with photographs of what they are likely to see if they toddle along to his show. There's a lot of this use of 'vignettes' in hypnosis artwork. Not sure what to make of the photograph at bottom left of poster number 1, but it was obviously taken somewhere in Lancashire.



Dr. Walford Bodie is without doubt the greatest and most famous hypnotist who ever lived! Between 1900 and 1906 he was the highest paid entertainer in the world!



For more than four decades, from 1896 to 1939, Dr. Walford Bodie M.D. ruled the roost in the UK. Originally from Scotland, he claimed the MD stood for *Merry Devil*. An electrician by trade, Bodie's approach was to mix entertainment with medical science, hence his claims of bloodless surgery (otherwise known as hypnosis) and spectacular stunts involving electricity, all of which would probably be illegal now. His main claim to fame was his immaculately waxed moustache.

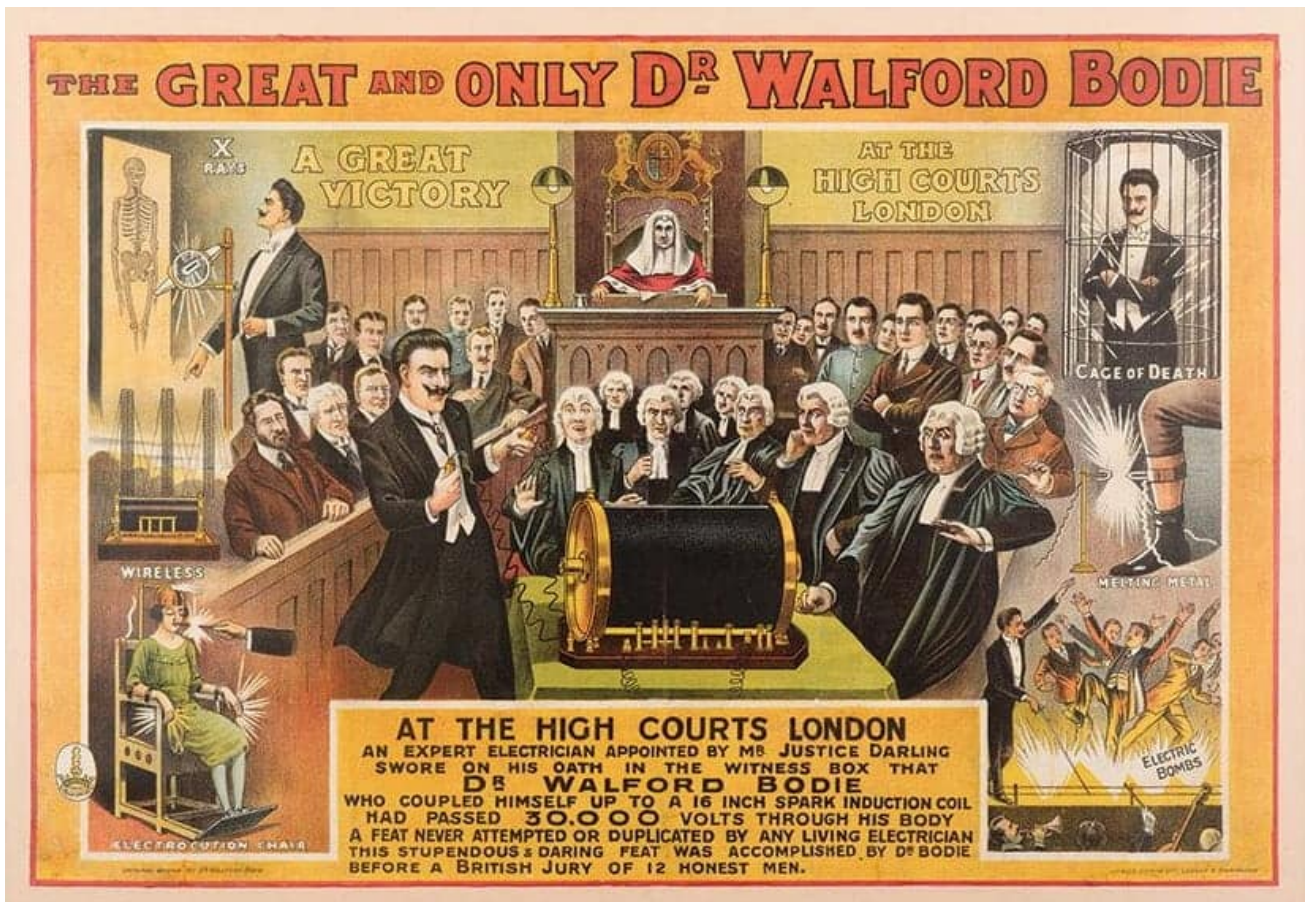
His other claim to fame was to be the cause the medical student riots in Glasgow and London – the students were outraged at his use of the adjunct M.D. He was a megastar in the 1890's to the late 1930's, attracting huge audiences and performing sell-out three month seasons in London. Bodie was for a while Britain's highest paid entertainer.

I suspect Peter Casson was inspired by him because he [Casson] mentioned him to me several times. Casson would have been a young man at the time and was certain to have been lucky enough to see Bodie in action.

It was almost certainly Bodie who was responsible for the creation of the modern one-man hypnosis show, indeed, he was the inventor of many of today's stock in trade gags. He died in 1939 after completing a long run in Blackpool, leaving the way clear for another expert in mass hypnosis and who would dominate the headlines for the next six years, Austria's very own Adolf Schicklgruber.

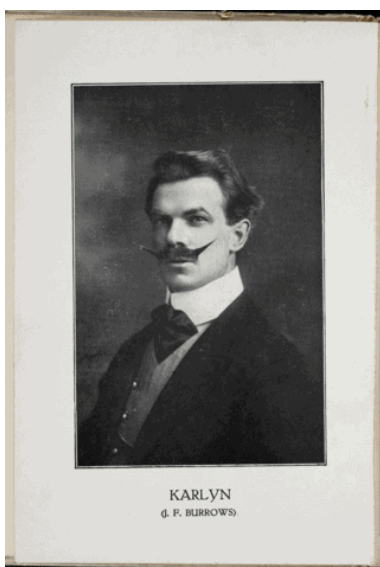
Bodie's life is a fascinating tragi-comic story – you can read more by reading *The Electric Wizard* available from this website, www.newtonhypnosis.com

Honestly – it's a fascinating story! The poster below celebrates his libel victory in the High Court. I think we are unlikely to ever see his like again.



I really would like to have had the opportunity of meeting and having a talk with him! He is quoted as saying *"I've got a living to make, to put it plainly; there's more money in shocking and terrifying than in edifying."*

So true... and what secrets would be uncovered!



Left: Thieving is nothing new when it comes to stage hypnotists. The great Karlyn seems to have ripped off Walford Bodie's persona. A hundred years later, nothing's changed.

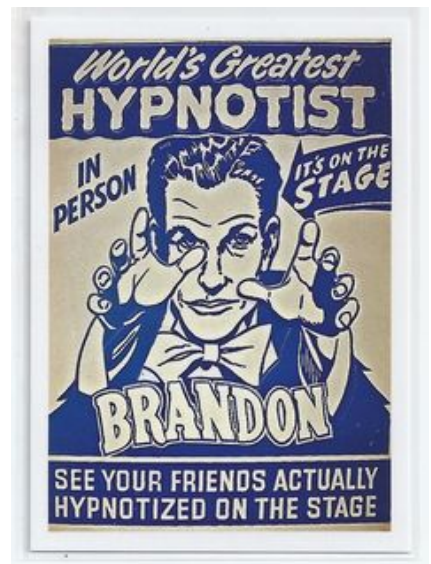
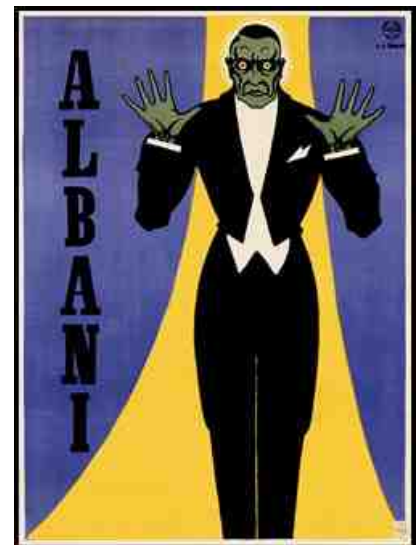
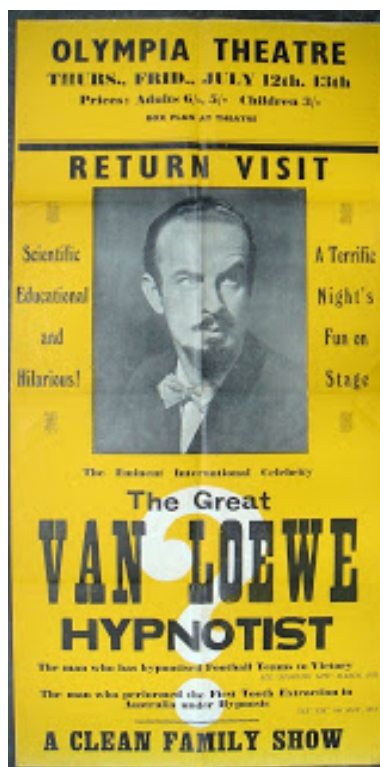
The **Great Morton**, the World's Greatest Living Hypnotist (aren't they all?) Scientific, Educational, and of course Hilariously Funny. And long dead.

Spooky or what?! The Great (they always start with *'the great'* something or other) **Albani**. Originally from Switzerland and whose proper name was Alban-Jean Goldschmitt played in Paris and Berlin in the 1920's and 30's but his gigs were abruptly cancelled due to a lack of interest brought about by the outbreak of World War Two. The artwork is stark, minimalist and typical of the time.

Starey-eyed **Van Loewe**'s return visit to the Olympia Theatre – Scientific, Educational and Hilarious, *and* a Clean Family Show – I think for performances in Australia – a hot bed of stage hypnosis in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's. He's gone for the power stare, but creepy was probably what sold well back then.

Dantalion just about sums up what most people think of hypnotists. He'd never get away with that today because it's completely unacceptable. Note the little devils on each shoulder – we'll be seeing more of those later!

BRANDON, the World's Greatest Hypnotist (I've never heard of him) has hit on the one selling point that really works – seeing your friends actually hypnotised! True... it's always a lot more fun when there's someone you know up there. That's the only reason he's here. Great use of the hands. Why *do* they insist on doing that?



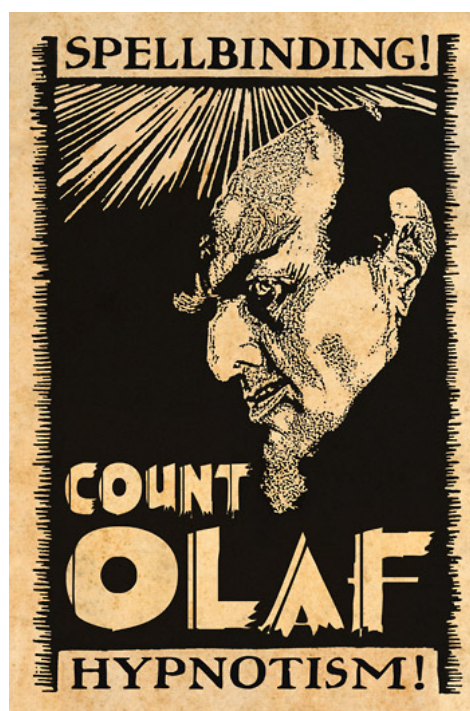
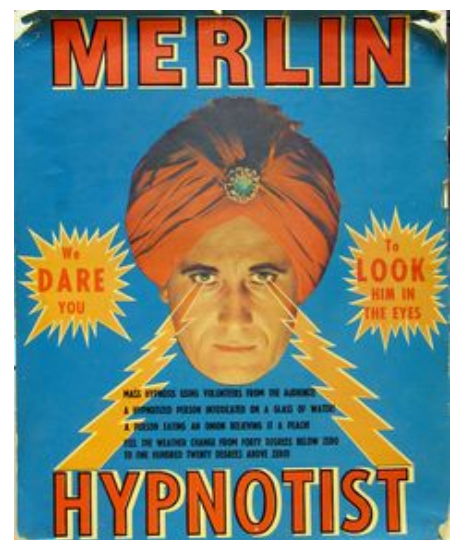
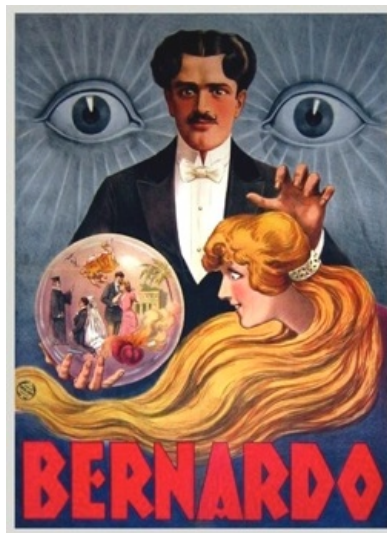
Below, from left to right: **Albani** is taking no prisoners with this, his other poster, but he's made the basic mistake of printing his name in tiny, tiny letters that no one will see.

Bernardo Zoldak has gone for white tie and staring eyes, a beautiful blonde assistant and an hypnotic 'vignette' in a crystal ball. The staring eyes routine had already been done to death by the time he started doing his act, but his name is prominent.

Merlin on the other hand, has gone for both eyes and name in large letters, but failed with the turban. As if...!

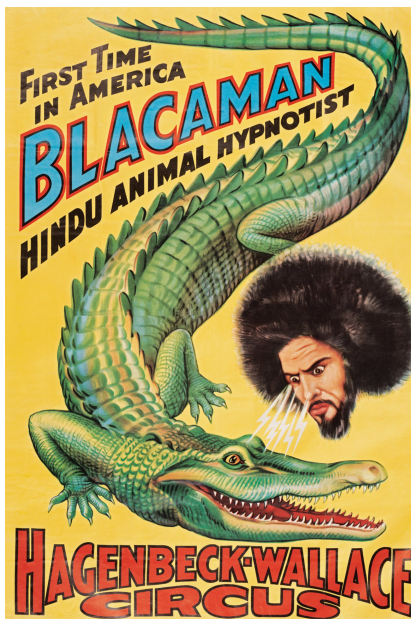
'Profesor' **Dilmer** has gone for a Cyclops inspired single eye and the tag line, which, according to Google translate means 'the fools on the 5th floor' – possibly a reference to mental illness. This looks like more of a freak show also starring 'Gregorio' and 'Venancio' and I'll bet a fiver that it crosses today's boundaries of political correctness, and rightly so. I doubt this is the sort of thing I would want to have seen.

As for the spellbinding **Count Olaf**, it's unlikely he ever pulled much of a crowd. But then, stranger things have happened – and there are stranger hypnotists operating today!

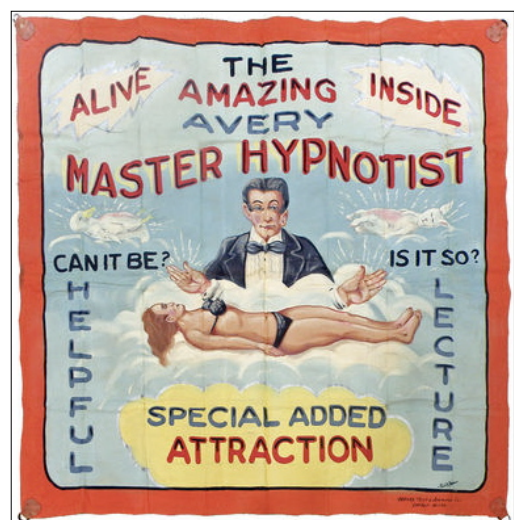


Below: **Blacaman** is a circus act, pretending he can hypnotise a crocodile – obviously not possible, he just understands that crocodiles prefer to remain still unless antagonised.

The Long-awaited, Sensational and incomparable **Escalante** in 1957.



Below: The Great **Rhamantus** was not a real person but a poster designed as part of a film set. Europe's fastest hypnotist, **Vandermeide**, was also Europe's slowest to embrace colour photography, while **The Amazing Avery**, Master Hypnotist, has possibly the worst poster I have ever seen.



After the end of the Second World War, Stage hypnotism started to go through a renaissance, especially in the United States where dozens of 'hypnotism acts' sprang up, most notably in California.

As in the pre-war years, hypnotists would move from town to town generating audiences in a couple of days. Some made money by running hypnosis and hypnotherapy training courses.

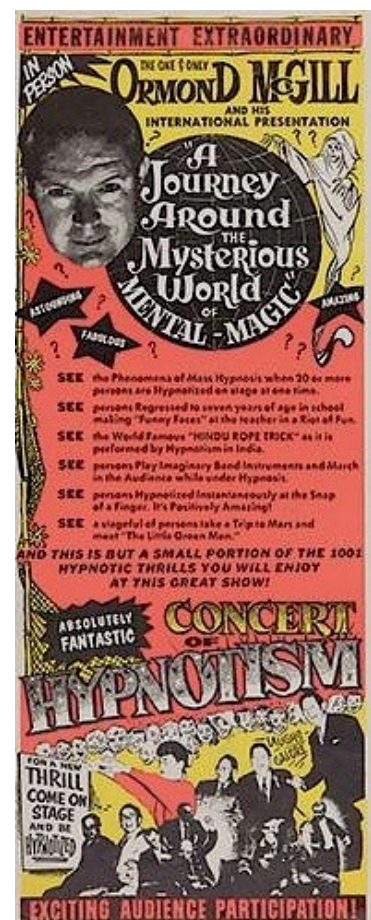
Probably the most famous of these was **Ormond McGill**.



Ormond McGill, the doyen of American hypnotism and with more than 50 years in the business, crams his posters with much information. *HYP-A-POPPIN?* A poor play on words, but doubtless the Americans thought it was brilliant!

ENTERTAINMENT EXTRAORDINARY – IN PERSON – The One and Only **Ormond McGill** and his International Presentation ‘A Journey Around the Mysterious World of Mental Magic – an Absolutely Fantastic Concert of Hypnotism!’

SEE the Phenomena of Mass Hypnosis when 20 or more persons are Hypnotised on stage at one time. SEE persons Regressed to seven years of age in school making “funny faces” at the teacher... SEE the World Famous ‘HINDU ROPE TRICK’ as it is performed by Mysticism in India. SEE persons Play imaginaryBand instruments and March in the Audience while under Hypnosis. SEE persons Hypnotized Instantaneously at the Snap of a Finger. It’s Positively Amazing! SEE a stageful of persons take a Trip to Mars and meet “The Little Green Men.” AND THIS IS BUT A SMALL PORTION OF THE 1001 HYPNOTIC THRILLS YOU WILL ENJOY AT THE GREAT SHOW! FOR A NEW THRILL COME ON STAGE AND BE HYPNOTIZED! EXCITING AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION! So just like any third rate pub hypnotist in the 21st century...



In fact Ormond McGill became one of the most famous hypnotists and hypnosis trainers in America.

Left: McGill’s alter-ego **Dr. Zomb**.

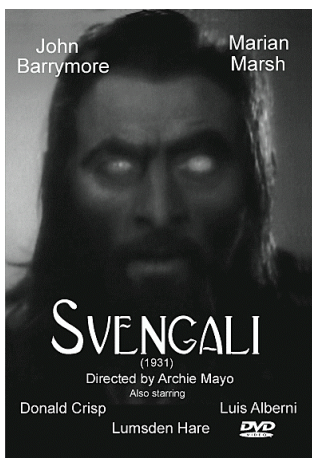
In George Du Maurier's 1895 novel *Trilby*, **Svengali** hypnotises, seduces, dominates, and exploits Trilby, a young English girl, and turns her into a successful and famous singer. But she is entirely dependent on his skills.

When the book was published, it became an immediate best seller, in large part due to its dark mix of mystery and inferred sexual exploitation. It caused a sensation at the time and people read it in secret and it's another reason why people are so distrustful of hypnotists even today.

Below: Two posters advertising a theatrical production of *Trilby* and two book covers, the first with 119 illustrations by the author, George du Maurier, two of which are shown here.



Below: Three screenshots from the original *Svengali* film starring John Barrymore, Hildegarde Neff as Trilby and British character actor Donald Wolfitt as Svengali.



The advent of silent pictures was the death knell for the music hall and with it, stage hypnosis, and the new celluloid hypnotists however took on a more macabre form.

Lon Chaney played just about every make-believe villain there was – Frankenstein, Dracula, the Wolf-Man... and the Hypnotist.

It was this kind of portrayal of hypnosis in the early movies that again manipulated the public's perception of hypnotists – and especially of stage hypnosis.

Before Hollywood got its hands on hypnosis, the stage hypnotist had been just like any other magician – amazing, thrilling, astounding, astonishing, and trusted.

The silents changed all that. Stage hypnosis has borne the brunt of that stigma ever since.

On a lighter note, Hypnosis was also, though only occasionally, the subject for film comedy, as the poster below shows. But this trend was the exception rather than the rule. Film makers realised there was more money in the darker side of hypnosis.

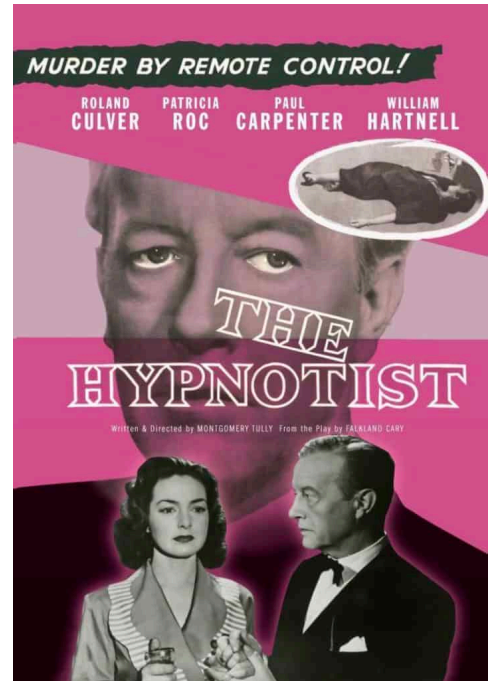
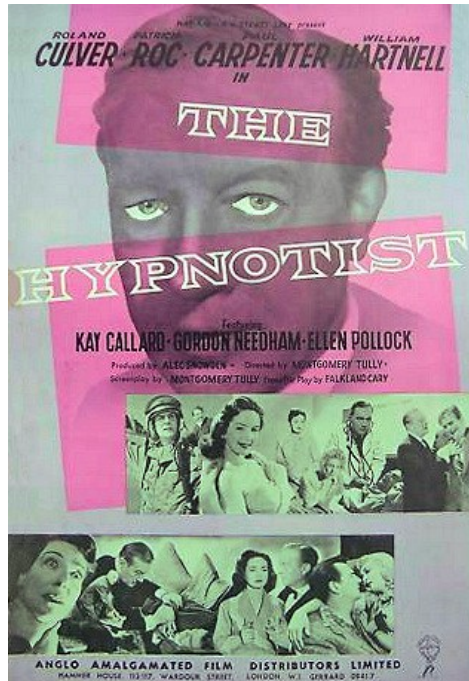
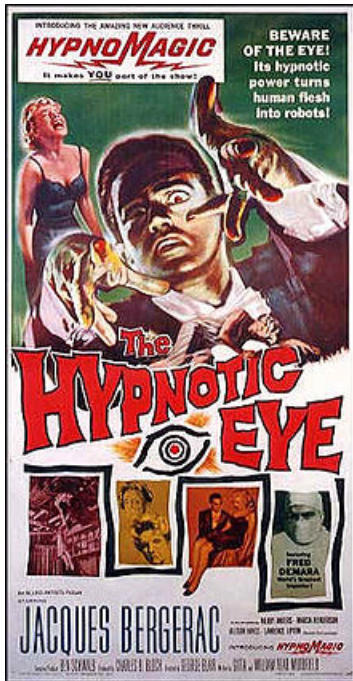


Below: Murder and Hypnotism would prove to be a popular plot line in early Hollywood. Movie makers were quick to exploit the darker side of hypnosis in NIGHTMARE, starring the great actor Edward G. Robinson. As on the stage, movie producers also saw the comedy potential in hypnosis, although I'd love to see If Mack Sennett's 'HYPNOTISED' would pass the political correctness test today! Somehow I doubt it would.



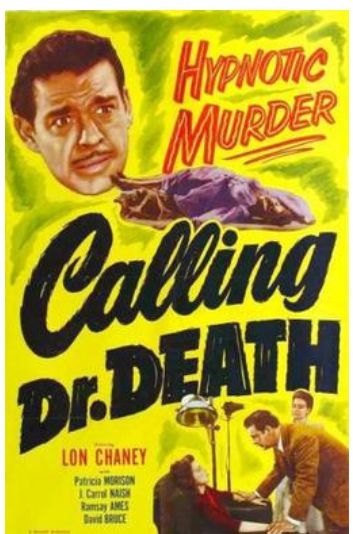
By the 1950's, hypnotism became a plot-line for who-done-it murder mysteries... and turning humans into automatons.

Below left: *The Hypnotic Eye!* Its hypnotic power turns human flesh into robots! Still stuck in Svengali mode! Below centre, below right: Two poster advertising the same film – 1957 – also starring William Hartnell who played the very first Dr Who.



Hypno-Vista was a real experiment where cinema goers were given a session of hypnosis at the start of the film – a pre-cursor to ‘Sensurround’ perhaps? Perhaps unsurprisingly, the experiment was a failure, and for obvious reasons and has not been repeated. Nonetheless, movie producers’ love affair with hypnosis and murder was repeated.

The Search for Bridey Murphy was based on a real-life regression hypnosis session. Bridey Murphy was allegedly able to recall in astonishing detail her past life in 18th century Ireland. The story has been debunked many times since, but no reason not to make a film about it!

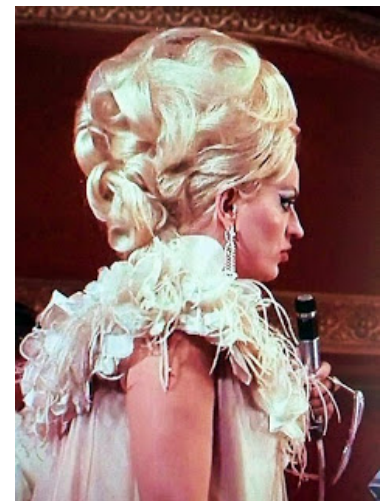
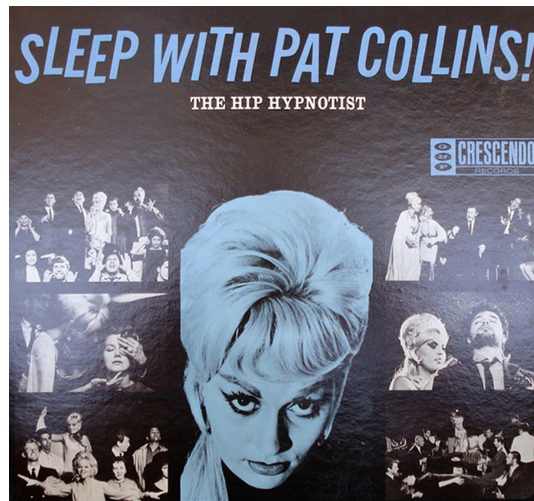


No history of stage hypnosis would be complete without the legendary **Pat Collins**.

Born in Detroit, Pat Collins spent most of her childhood in orphanages and foster homes but ended up as America's most famous hypnotist.

She owned – and performed in – her own nightclub on Sunset Strip, Hollywood. She made guest appearances on *The Lucille Ball Show* (at the time, America's top sitcom) as well as all the top US talk shows. Lucille Ball, Steve Allen, Jill St. John, Lloyd Bridges, Robert Wagner, Ed Begley Sr. and other stars were among her close friends.

Collins died at her home in San Bernadino, California, on May 31 1997 aged 62 after a long illness.



By the 1960s, hypnosis had begun to be accepted as a bona-fide therapy.

Below: The typical pose of the 'masterful' hypnotist. Henry Blythe hypnotises his 17-year-old daughter, Sally at their home in Torquay, Devon, Jan. 15, 1960, before taking her out for a driving lesson. On her car, Sally displays a large sign reading 'Caution: Hypnotised L driver,' something guaranteed to instil confidence in other road users!

Look out Hypnodog...! It's Hypnocat! Actually it's Hypno-persian-cat, and actual hypnotist Arthur Newman is doing the actual hypnosis. The subject is merely staring into the cat's eyes as a focus of attention. And Dr Franz Polgar reminds us that subjects can be made to feel warm with the use of hypnotic suggestion, an age-old hypnotic trick.



Teaching hypnosis has always been a sideline for hypnotists. The fact is, it's more difficult than it looks – rather like learning to play the violin by reading an instruction manual. But that doesn't stop people selling training courses and promising instant results.


Today, these courses are more likely peddled on the Internet – instant inductions, covert hypnosis and the such like. The reality of the situation is that they don't work.

**STARTLING SECRETS TEACH YOU
DISGUISED HYPNOSIS**

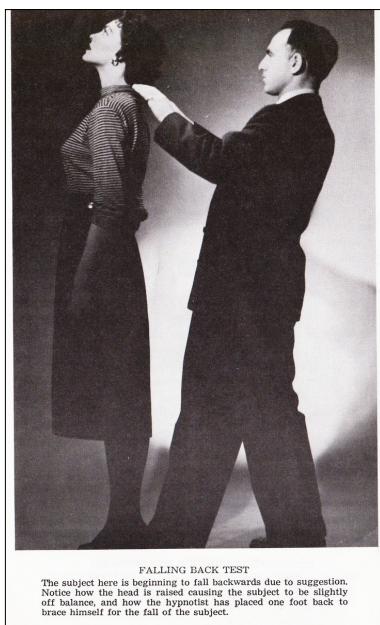
CAUSE TRANCE WITHOUT SUBJECTS KNOWING!

Revealing manuscript tells jealously guarded secret techniques used to cause the "Indirect Trance". Read how subjects are hypnotized without their knowledge. Learn amazing shortcuts that make hypnosis fast and easy. Discover the safe "fake nerve pressure" technique...the "falling back" test and many others. Read how the author hypnotizes a roomful of people without their knowledge — using a common household cooking ingredient. This is so dramatic and effective it is worth the low price of the book alone. But that's not all, order now and get these **FREE EXTRAS**: The fun packed book "Entertaining with Hypnosis" and a clever Hypnotic "Trance-Fer" chart. This exclusive aid helps you cause the "Indirect Trance". All come to you in a plain wrapper **10 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE** **\$1.98**

ALLIED-AIDS, Dept. D-136, 95 Madison Ave., N.Y.C. 16



Below: an interesting technique for hypnotherapists, but totally impractical and unacceptable today. At least not without a chaperone. And demonstrating the effect of hypnosis by stubbing out a cigarette on a woman's tongue was never a good idea.

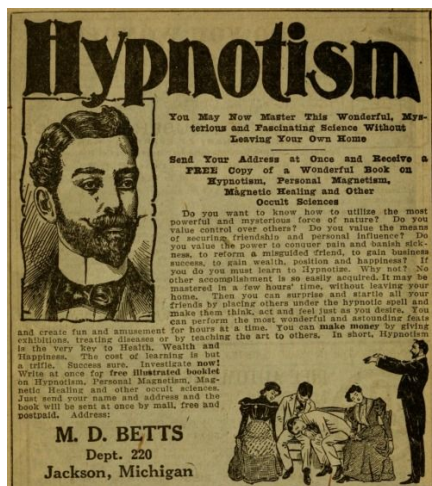
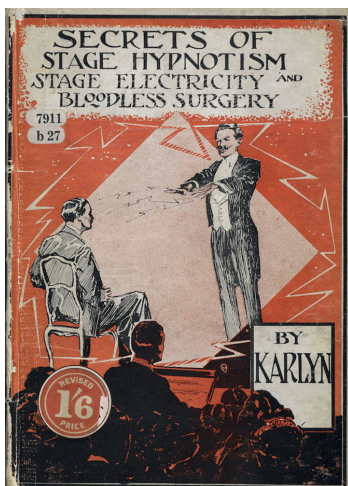


FALLING BACK TEST
The subject here is beginning to fall backwards due to suggestion. Notice how the head is raised causing the subject to be slightly off balance, and how the hypnotist has placed one foot back to brace himself for the fall of the subject.



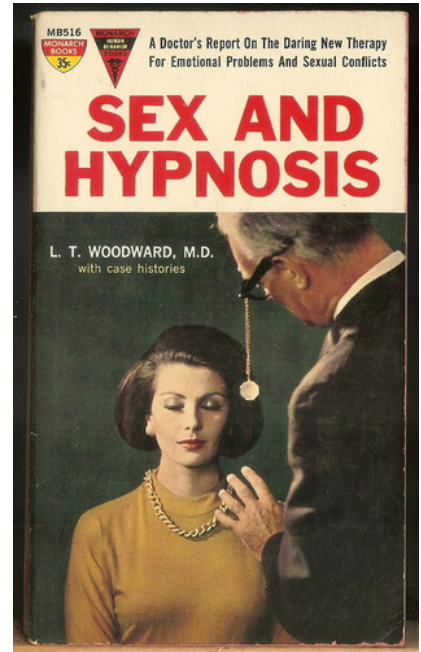
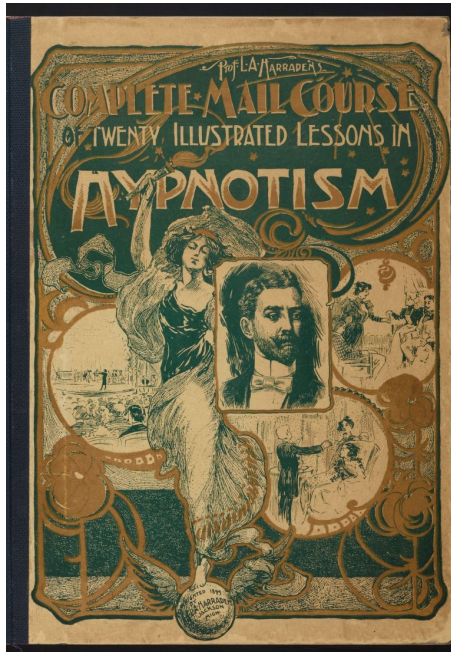
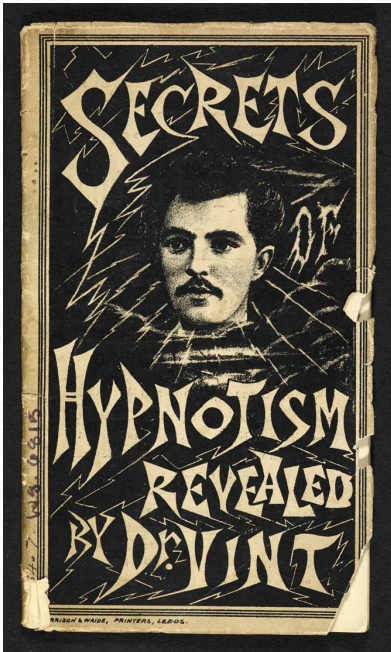
STROKING FOREHEAD TECHNIQUE
This is an excellent method of inducing hypnosis. As the hands are drawn over the subject's forehead, it is suggested that she will fall into a deep state of hypnosis. This procedure has a pleasant physiological effect on the subject.

Below: **Karlyn's** Secrets of Stage Hypnotism Stage Electricity and Bloodless Surgery will have been of interest to anyone who had followed the career of Dr. Walford Bodie and is one of hundreds of books written on stage hypnosis in the last hundred and thirty years. Trying to learn the skills needed is akin to claiming you can swim because you read a book about swimming – the first time in the water, you drown. So... just like stage hypnosis!

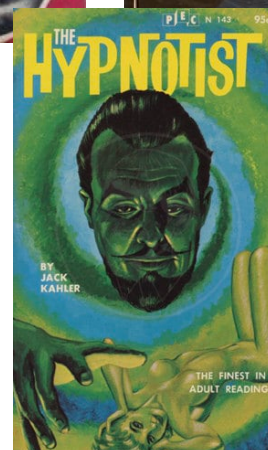
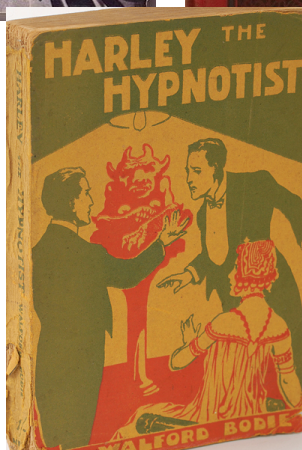
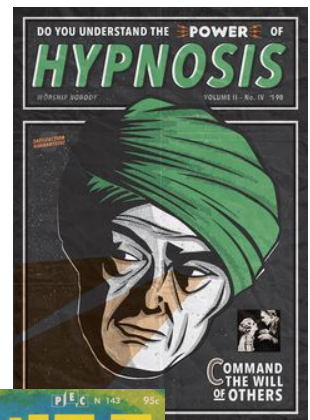
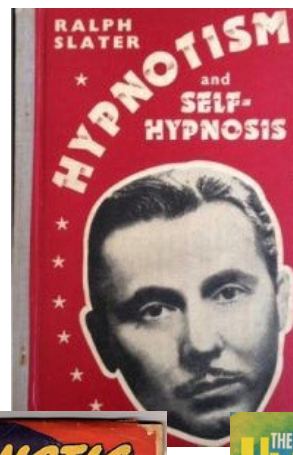
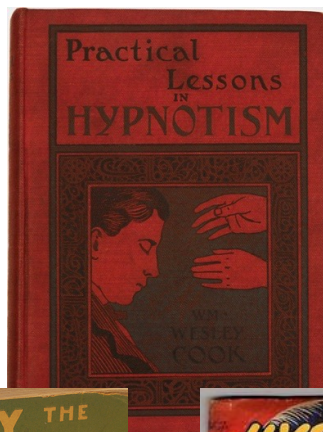
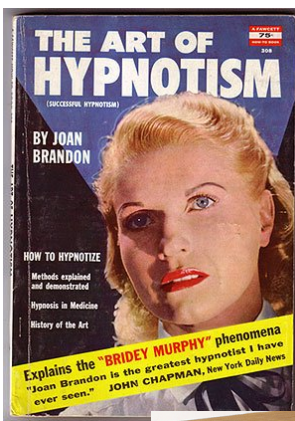


Books on hypnosis are a niche market, but they do sell to the curious, and of course, sex always sells.

Following page: Living (or by now, long dead) proof that those who can't do it, teach it. 'Secrets of Hypnotism Revealed', by the mysteriously named **Dr. Vint** and **Prof. L. A. Harradem's** 'Complete Mail Course of Twenty Illustrated Lessons in Hypnotism'.



Below: Practical lessons in hypnotism by Welsey Cook would be an interesting read, just to see how far things have changed in the last 80 years. Harley the Hypnotist was Dr. Walford Bodie's novel about hypnotist turned detective... Hypnotic Death by Paul Valdez is about a murder committed under hypnosis, thereby fuelling public mistrust of hypnotism. The Power of Hypnosis (author unknown) promises to teach its readers how to "Command the will of Others"... Ralph Slater is an interesting story... an American, he came to England in 1948 and performed at Earls Court. It was after one of these performances that a young woman could not be brought out of hypnosis but eventually recovered. The incident led to questions in Parliament, and inevitably to the 1952 Hypnotism Act.



Below: There have always been the parasites – failed hypnotists, but able to make a few dollars by selling the so called ‘secrets’ of hypnosis.

The ‘HYPNO-COIN’ is surely a *must* for anyone who wants to hypnotise! Although these advertisements are from the 1950s and early 1960s, there are plenty of modern day examples on the Internet offering secrets of ‘rapid’ or ‘instant’ inductions – all rubbish.

Would you send off your hard earned money for a set of books/DVDs entitled ‘Learn how to Fly a Plane?’ Without having actual flying instruction?

NOW-AMAZINGLY POWERFUL NEW AIDS HELP YOU HYPNOTIZE IN MINUTES!

HYPNOTISM RECORD
FASCINATING ECHO-CHAMBER BACKGROUND & FREE EYE-FIXATION DISCS. Use to help HYPNOTIZE SELF & OTHERS!

ACTUALLY HYPNOTIZE WITH THESE AIDS OR YOUR MONEY BACK!

SPECIAL!
Limited Offer
ACT NOW!!!
SAVE 20%
Reg. Price — \$4.95
SPECIAL! \$3.95

FREE!
DISCUSSED HYPNOSIS
MYSYRING TESTING KIT
HYPNO-COIN Vibrating Lens
Electronic HYPNOTISM MACHINE
HANDBOOK of SELF-HYPNOSIS

ORIENTAL HYPNOTISM
OF T. H. HUNT

HYPNO-COIN
NEW - POCKET SIZE INVENTION HELPS HYPNOTIZE IN MINUTES
IT MUST WORK FOR YOU OR MONEY BACK!

Hold the HYPNO-COIN in front of the person you want to hypnotize. Then, gently vibrate the plastic lens. This sets the hypnotic pattern into a whirling motion. A motion that is so fascinating, it captures and rivets your subject's eyes to the "Hypno-Coin".

Now, proceed to give your hypnotic suggestions and commands. Get this amazing hypnotic aid complete with a FREE revealing booklet of secrets and instructions. It tells you what to say and do, how to command and re-hypnotize with the snap of a finger, how to thrill and amaze them with hypnotic stunts, feats of strength and memory, etc. Get the COIN. Booklet and large illustrated catalog for only \$1.00 ppd. Sent in a plain wrapper. Money back if not delighted!

Sorry no C.O.D.s Send to:
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Enclosed \$1.00 Send Hypno-Coin

Free!
Booklet of revealing secrets & instructions and large illustrated catalog with order!

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HOW TO HYPNOTIZE

IT'S EASY TO HYPNOTIZE...
when you know how!

FREE! **HYPNO-COIN**
NEW - POCKET SIZE INVENTION HELPS HYPNOTIZE IN MINUTES

FREE!

THIS BOOK IS FREE! The Flint's Lessons in Hypnotism is almost certainly no more than a taster to attract potential fee-paying students to the Flint's College of Hypnotism.

In the 21st century, stage hypnosis training has become a way to earn a quick buck for stage hypnotists who are struggling to even make a living. What they don't tell their potential students is that it's hugely more difficult than it looks, and most will fail.

In the vast United States there are maybe half a dozen or so hypnotists who make more than six figures. In the UK, less than three stage hypnotists are making more than £20,000 a year... the three of us at the top are doing very well.

As for the NEW DISCOVERY IN HYPNOTISM, at \$1.98, it's overpriced.

THIS BOOK IS FREE!

FLINT'S LESSONS IN HYPNOTISM

FLINT'S COLLEGE OF HYPNOTISM CLEVELAND, OHIO, U.S.A.

The above illustration is reproduced from the cover page of Flint's marvelous book. Ten thousand of these books will be given away absolutely free in order to advertise his college. You can have a copy while the present edition lasts. It tells how to cure diseases and bad habits; how to win and hold the love and affection of others; how to succeed in business and social affairs. The Book has pleased thousands and is yours for the mere asking. Write today for a free copy. A postcard will bring it. Address, **Herbert L. Flint, Dept. 504-A, Cleveland, Ohio.**

NEW DISCOVERY IN HYPNOTISM
shows how to hypnotize in 30 seconds!

Yes, an amazing new method has been developed to bring an quick, easy induction of the hypnotic trance. Now, for the first time, you too can benefit from this recent discovery in hypnotic induction.

QUICK RESULTS
Want to hypnotize your friends? Your club members? **HOW TO HYPNOTIZE** is a remarkable primer that shows you just how to master the latest improved induction methods. The author, a widely experienced hypnotist and consultant, gives you the exact positions to take, the precise pharmacology, all the steps necessary to hypnotize even the most difficult subjects.

EXCLUSIVELY in How to HYPNOTIZE

ENTIRELY NEW METHOD SHOWS YOU STEP BY STEP

Until recently the process of hypnotic induction was largely based on trial and error methods which succeeded mainly with subjects who were highly susceptible to hypnosis in the first place. The truth is that these highly susceptible subjects need no special methods. That is why amateur and beginning hypnotists have so often been disappointed in their attempts at hypnotic induction. Now, however, recent scientific research has developed ENTIRELY NEW METHODS that are not only safe, free to teach, but results last quick and easy to achieve! For the first time, these new methods are presented in **HOW TO HYPNOTIZE** in language that you can easily and successfully follow on the very first reading.

This book — which has been acclaimed by doctors and psychologists — is guaranteed to give you all the secrets how necessary to induce the trance state in others. It not only explains the latest discoveries on hypnotic induction, but it shows step by step, scene by scene, exactly how to bring on deeper states and how to maintain the trance, use suggestions and effectively without any danger whatsoever. You are even given alternative methods, so that you can actually choose the one that suits you best.

USED BY DOCTORS
The book that is being used by doctors and my clients to learn hypnotic induction is now available to you

\$1.98
FOR ONLY

Photographically illustrated in 12 color illustrations plus 16 in black and white. 128 pages. 5 1/2" x 8 1/2".

FREE 10-DAY OFFER
FREE 10-day examination of this book is offered to you if you mail us a coupon today. If not delighted, simply return it within 10 days for a full refund of the purchase price.

FREE 10-DAY OFFER
Mail Coupon Today

Send \$1.98 for your copy of **HOW TO HYPNOTIZE** in plain wrapper. Money back if not delighted!

Send C.O.D. (I'll pay within 10 days) or by check or money order.

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ADDRESS _____
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Brand New! Just Published!

SEX AND HYPNOSIS
by L. T. WOODWARD, M.D.
FASCINATING! FACTUAL! INTIMATE!

READ THE REVEALING CASE HISTORIES about: A frigid, frustrated woman who is now able to respond to her husband's embraces! A once-practicing homosexual who is now happily married and a father! A desperate, impotent man, now amazingly restored to his full sexual power! A young wife who had her baby painlessly but fully conscious and without anaesthetic! These are some of the people whose intimate stories are told in this book. . . People whose emotional frustrations and physical sufferings were relieved by the amazing new science of medical hypnosis—which brought them normal sexual satisfaction when every other treatment failed. Send only **\$2.00**

WILSHIRE BOOK CO. MANUAL 1433
5880 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28, Calif.

Below: Resident for many years but hidden from public view, the **Great Franquin** resided backstage at the Opera House, Palmerston North, New Zealand. I played there over forty times in the 1980's and early 1990's and took this picture myself.

Franquin was a stage name and a contraction of his real name – Frank Quinn. A New Zealander by birth, Franquin embarked upon several tours of America and was a household name in the 1950's and 1960's in both New Zealand and Australia. He eventually retired to the year round sunshine of the Gold Coast.



Peter Casson was a master of the postural sway rapid induction. I saw Peter Casson at the *Talk of the North* in Manchester in 1980 where he thoroughly impressed me with his technique, which was very, very smooth – on that night at least, faultless in fact.

By then he was in his sixties and you could see the forty years of experience coming into play. His pompous controlling nature and bullying personality however won him few friends.

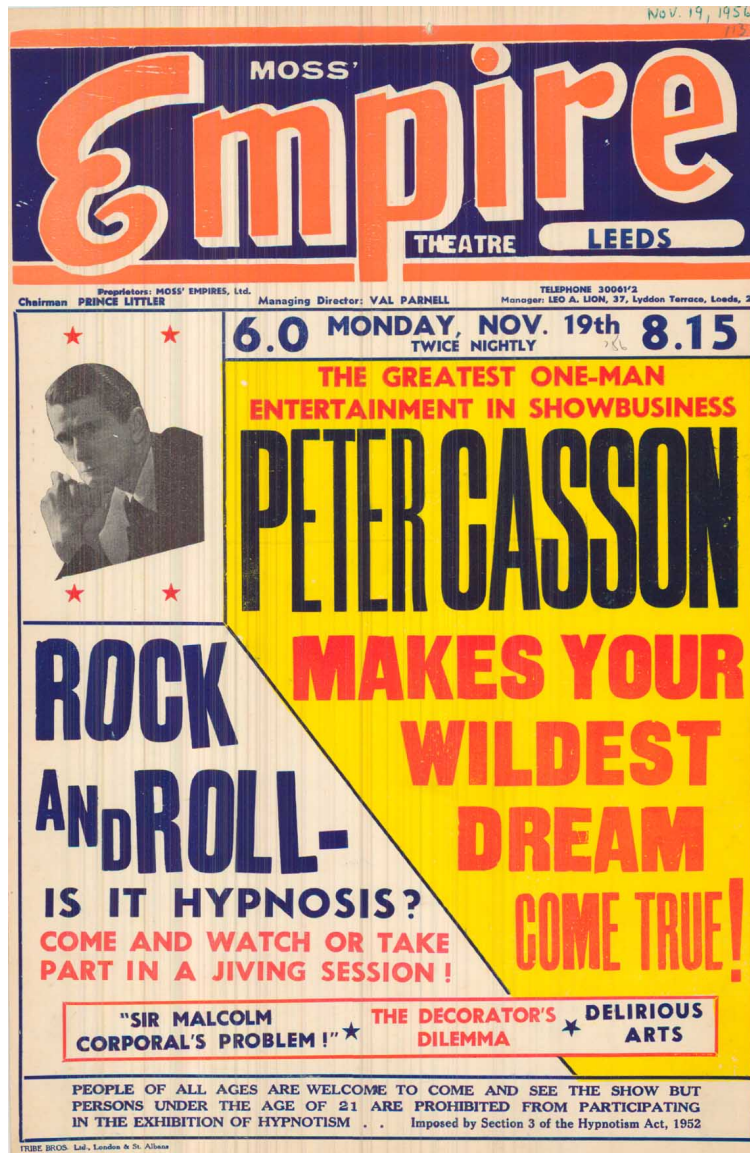
Peter Casson founded the *Federation of Ethical Stage Hypnotists* (FESH) in 1978, ostensibly to protect both stage hypnotism and the welfare of the general public, but by then he had well and truly lost the plot. He used FESH as his own private instrument to wage war on other hypnotists (including your's truly.)

Casson passed away in 1995, mourned by no one of note.

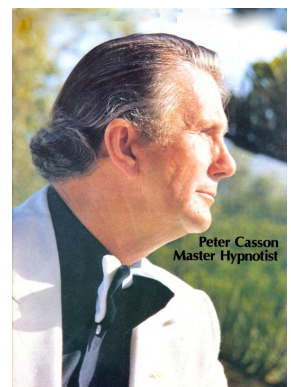
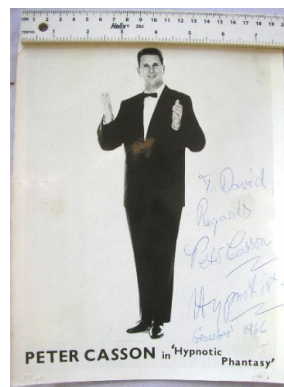
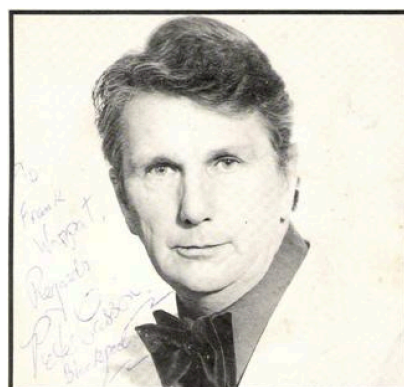
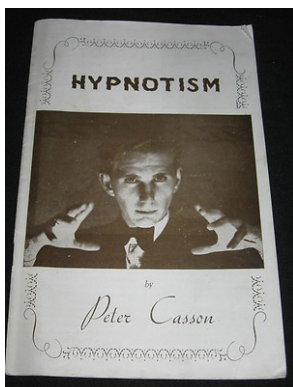
To see him in action in his Harley Street Office, please go to

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/hypnotism-1>

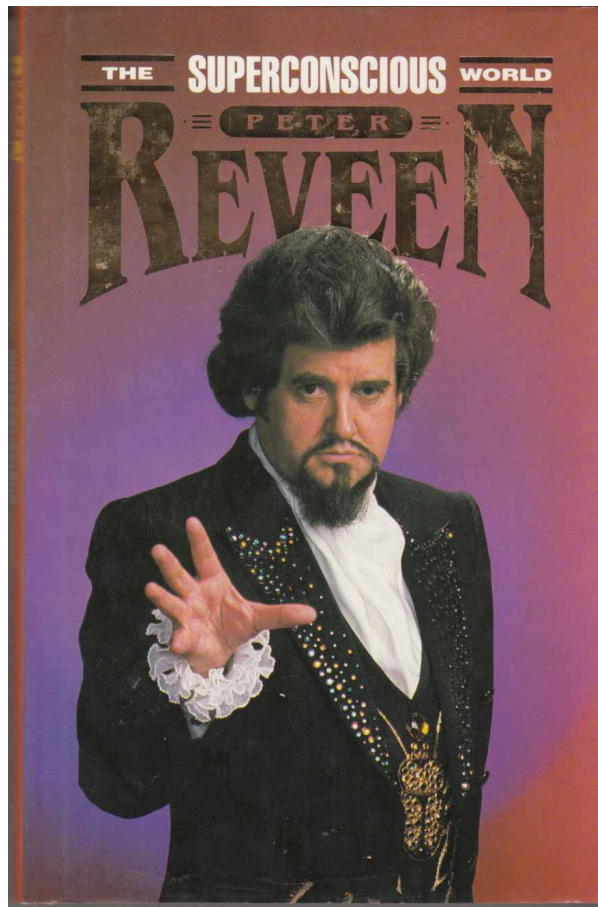
The poster, dated 1956, and like so many of the others, tells its own story. I'd love to know what 'Sir Malcolm Corporal's Problem!' was, or the precise nature of 'the Decorator's Dilemma.' The Empire Theatre is now the Grand Theatre in Leeds. After the War, Casson sold out on the Moss Empire circuit doing shows twice nightly.



Below: Peter Casson in his early career in the 1940s and in the 1980s. He really was one of the greats and his career spanned nearly 50 years, but who would have thought he was only 10 inches high?



Two posters advertising **Peter Reveen – ‘The Impossibilist’** – another Australian who achieved huge fame and fortune across Canada in the 1960’s and 70’s, ditched the word *hypnosis* altogether and rebranded it *The Superconscious Experience* to get around the anti stage hypnotism law in Canada.



Despite the hype, he was one of the worst hypnotists I have ever seen. Only Gordon Delavar was worse, but he was clinically mad and had an excuse. Reveen’s entourage consisted of his whole family – his wife, sons and daughters-in-law were all part of the act, which, despite the avalanche of advance publicity turned out to be an overblown faux spectacular that offered absolutely nothing of any substance whatsoever. I saw him at the Edinburgh Playhouse in 1981 at the start of his UK tour, which was peremptorily cancelled after the disastrous Edinburgh run.

A huge crowd were herded on and off the stage by Reveen’s family, who quietly moved chairs around the stage like a team of ghostly feng shui consultants and shepherded errant subjects in a surreal ballet, complete with the kind of exaggerated arm gymnastics favoured by amateur magician’s assistants, showing off their glorious matching chiffon evening gowns. I experienced a brief moment of excitement when it suddenly occurred to me we might have missed the point – that Reveen’s performance was an intended satire: at any moment, the audience would get the joke. But no such luck.

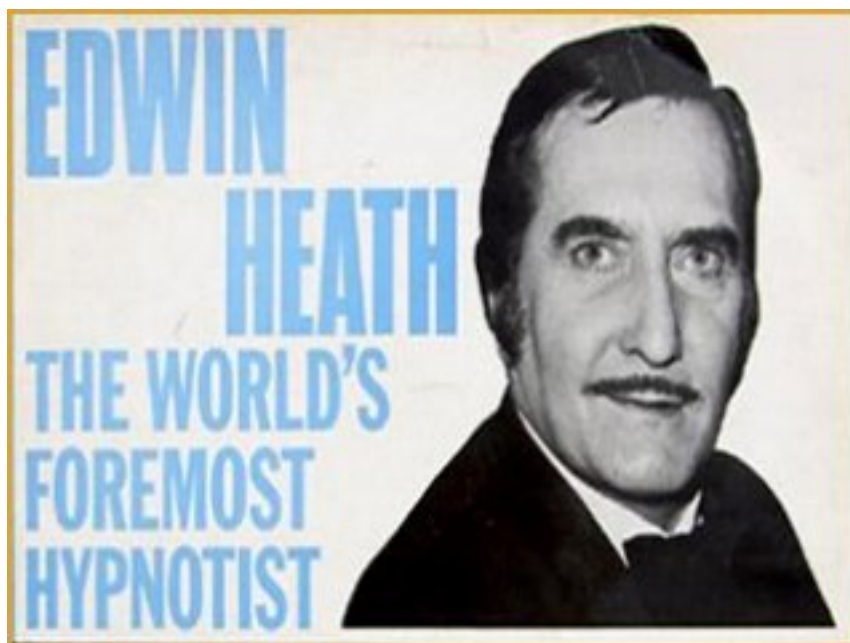
Reveen regaled us with tales of his glorious career, fabulous achievements and his blissfully happy marriage and then bored us to the point of despair by telling us about his children’s fabulous achievements and their blissfully happy marriages.

To my astonishment and completely out of the blue, he gave me a mention on stage – “I’m not like that controversial guy from Liverpool” he protested, for no apparent reason.

Yep, that was me! I was having one of my spats with Peter Casson at the time and it had attracted a great deal of attention in the newspapers. For reasons known only to himself, the great Reveen seized the moment to educate anyone who was still listening about the ethics of the profession. Then came the longest selection process and induction in history, designed to send the audience to sleep as well as the subjects, who by this time were being bored into submission.

Finally, Reveen announced the interval, during which half the audience fled the theatre. Reveen reappeared in the second half in a vivid red sequined tuxedo and finally did some routines, the funniest of which was telling the subjects they were on the Titanic and about to drown. The kindest thing that could be said about the show was that it was excessively schmaltzy. A tosser of the very highest order, as is self-evident from his poster. Eventually relocating to Las Vegas, he became magician Lance Burton's full time manager.

Edwin Heath (*below*) was the last of the Gentlemen Hypnotists. I met him in Scarborough in 1980 when he was performing at the Opera House. Terribly, terribly, terribly nice chap. One of the old school, he was a true gentleman – charming, polite, but hopelessly stuck in the 1950s.

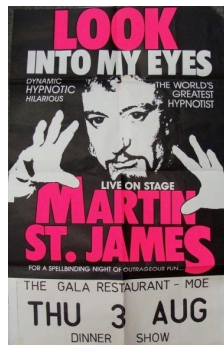


Into the New Era...

Below: The diminutive **Martin St. James**, also from Australian. In 1980 I saw him live at the Batley Varieties, one of the great cabaret clubs in the UK, all of which are now closed, and met him briefly in Sydney when I first performed there in 1981... and found him rather odd... terribly irritating manner of talking up to you.

For reasons unfathomable, he always insisted on being photographed with his hands in the air in demonic hypnotic pose. At Batley, a woman came up to him after his one hour cabaret to have her picture taken with him. As the camera came up, so did Martin's hands in the manner illustrated. Really quite strange. Based his career on doing sinister Al Jolson impersonations.

Martin St. James has contributed generously to the world's population. He has 20 (yes, 20) children by several different women, only three of whom he was married to.



I regret I cannot find a poster of **Robert Halpern**. If anyone has one, I would be grateful if you could please email it to me. Halpern went for bright orange day-glow posters, easily seen from a distance. He understood the basic principle of advertising – WHAT, WHEN, WHERE.



Halpern was, from 1976, a household name in Scotland, mainly playing the Glasgow Pavilion Theatre and the Caley Picture House in Edinburgh. In one three month season (1980) in Glasgow, Halpern's share of the profits came to more than £300,000 – that's over £1million in today's money! His long running show at the Pavilion had the most amazing opening of any hypnotist show. It also had the most memorable finale, worthy of the great Walford Bodie, the curtain at the back of the stage parted, revealing a gallows from which Halpern 'hanged' himself at the end of every show. Dramatic – even shocking – it drew the crowds in their tens of thousands.

However, he was habitually late for shows and often kept his audiences waiting for up to an hour and a half. A flamboyant character, his life was often on display in the Scottish newspapers and not always for the right reasons. There were rumours of gambling debts and massive tax arrears. Around the early 1990's, he disappeared from the radar, enigmatic to the end. If he is still alive he would be in his early seventies (in 2017). I did manage to find a photograph of him, taken, I believe, in 1985 with his pet Bengal tiger, then a cub.

Robert Halpern was the last of a breed. Iain Gordon, then manager of the Pavilion, said he was worth every penny of the £25,000 a week he was paid.

Below left: a rather grainy picture of him on stage at the 1,500 seat Pavilion Theatre.

Below right: with pet Bengal tiger, then a cub.

Following page: **Some of my own posters.** Each follows the tradition of using 'characters' from the performance. The yellow poster was designed by Annie Miller and is an unmistakable reference to Monty Python. The second poster is by renowned artist and cartoonist Russ Tudor and is in the style of *VIZ* magazine. The last was something I cobbled together myself. With modern social media, my posters and leaflets are now more likely to be distributed by email.

You can see **More Andrew Newton Posters** at

<https://newtonhypnosis.com/andrew-newton-posters/>

ANDREW NEWTON
Unique Comedy Show

WORLD FAMOUS
HYPNOTIST

"Fantastic Family Entertainment"
Las Vegas Review Journal

"Funny and immensely popular"
The Independent

"Helpless with laughter"
The People

"Horribly funny"
The Times

Suitable for all ages

HYPNOTIST
ANDREW NEWTON

CHRISTCHURCH
JAMES HAY

SATURDAY 16 MAY
8.00PM

\$40, \$25

"A Totally Great Night Out!!!"

Unique Comedy Show

ANDREW NEWTON

THE WORLD'S NUMBER 1
HYPNOTIST

"FANTASTIC FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT"
Las Vegas Review Journal

"FUNNY AND IMMENSELY POPULAR"
The Independent

"HELPLESS WITH LAUGHTER"
The People

"HORRIBLY FUNNY"
The Times

See over for dates and venues

HYPNOTIST
ANDREW NEWTON

Leeds City Varieties - Saturday 30 March

"Newton's mischievous love of the absurd makes this a side-splitting laughter show not to be missed!"

0113 243 0808 www.cityvarieties.co.uk

ANDREW NEWTON

THE WORLD'S NO.1
HYPNOTIC
LAUGHTER SHOW
18 SUCCESSFUL SIDE-SPLITTING YEARS

ANDREW NEWTON
LIVE!
in New Zealand

WORLD FAMOUS **HYPNOTIST**
ANDREW NEWTON

LEEDS CITY VARIETIES
SATURDAY 14 MARCH 8.00

www.cityvarieties.co.uk 0113 243 0808

WORLD FAMOUS **HYPNOTIST**
ANDREW NEWTON

NEW ZEALAND - 2020

HYPNOTIST
ANDREW NEWTON

An evening of mischief, absurdity
& side-splitting laughter!
Suitable for all ages

Hawkins Theatre - Papakura
Friday 11 May - 8.00pm - \$20

\$10 of every ticket goes to local good causes

HYPNOTIST
ANDREW NEWTON

...all new spectacular show...

LIVERPOOL EMPIRE THEATRE
SUNDAY 23RD NOVEMBER - 7.00PM
ONE NIGHT ONLY! ALL SEATS £14.95

Ken Webster is one of Britain's most successful and well-known stage hypnotists. He appears every year for 30 weeks at the Horseshoe at Blackpool's world famous Pleasure Beach. The season starts at Easter and runs through to the end of the Blackpool Illuminations in mid November. His show is overtly risqué and often close to the line, but Ken draws the crowds year after year at a time when the traditional English Summer Season show is now a distant memory. Including some mentalism in the act when stage hypnosis was going through a short burst of unpopularity in the UK, Ken held it together by sheer force of personality and originality, something of a rarity in stage hypnosis. His posters, a selection of which appear below, tell the whole story. Ken will celebrate 30 years of shows at the Horseshoe at Blackpool Pleasure Beach in 2018, making it the longest running stage hypnosis show in the world.

THE FUNNIEST COMEDY HYPNOTIST OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE!
KEN WEBSTER
HYPNOTIST
 XXX RATED SHOW OVER 18'S ONLY NO REFUNDS IF OFFENDED
 EVERY SATURDAY from 26th March until 12th November
 @ 8.30pm in the HORSESHOE, BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH
 www.blackpoolpleasurebeach.com www.kenwebster.co.uk
 Box Office telephone: 0871 222 9090

"THIS WILL BE THE FUNNIEST NIGHT OF YOUR LIFE"
KEN WEBSTER
MENTALIST HYPNOTIST
 KEN WEBSTER'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY SHOW
 CELEBRATING 25 YEARS AT BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH
 3 HOURS OF PURE COMEDY GOLD
 DERREN BROWN MEETS CHUBBY BROWN!
 PAUL MCKENNA MEETS KEVIN LEONARD!
 OUTRAGEOUS, FUNNY, OVER THE TOP WITH WEBSTER'S OWN UNIQUE BRAND OF HUMOUR. See your friends as you have never seen them before!
 EVERY SATURDAY from 30th March until 9th November
 @ 8.30pm in the HORSESHOE
 BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: 0871 222 9090

"YOU WILL LAUGH UNTIL YOUR SIDES ACHE"
KEN WEBSTER
MENTALIST HYPNOTIST
 "THE MAN WHO PUT MENTALISM INTO MENTALISM!"
 DERREN BROWN MEETS CHUBBY BROWN!
 FRANKIE BOYLE MEETS PAUL MCKENNA!
 EVERY SATURDAY from 7th April until 3rd November
 @ 8.30pm in the HORSESHOE, Pleasure Beach Resort Blackpool
 BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: 0871 222 9090

YOU WILL LAUGH UNTIL YOUR SIDES ACHE
KEN WEBSTER
Mentalist HYPNOTIST
 EVERY SATURDAY FROM 4th APRIL UNTIL 7th NOVEMBER
 @ 8.00PM IN THE HORSESHOE, BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH
 BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: 0871 222 9090
 www.blackpoolpleasurebeach.com www.kenwebster.co.uk

KEN WEBSTER
Outrageous Comedy HYPNOTIST
 This is Ken's 20th year in the HORSESHOE!
 THE WORLDS ONLY TOTALLY INTERACTIVE HYPNOSIS SHOW WITH TEN FOOT SCREENS
 EVERY SATURDAY from April 19th until November 1st at 8.30 in the HORSESHOE SHOWBAR, Pleasure Beach Blackpool
 BANK HOLIDAY SPECIALS
 Saturday 12th March, Sunday 13th March, Saturday 14th April, Sunday 15th April, Saturday 19th May, Sunday 20th May, Saturday 23rd August, Sunday 24th August
 A LAUGH FROM START TO FINISH! THIS TYPE OF COMEDY HURTS YOUR SIDES!
 THIS IS THE FUNNIEST SHOW IN TOWN, BRAND NEW!
 dates...
 April special:
 Sat 10th @ 8.00 clock in the Horseshoe
 Sun 11th @ 8.00 clock in the Horseshoe
 Sat 17th @ 8.00 clock in the Horseshoe
 May special:
 Sat 1st @ 8.00 clock in the Horseshoe
 Sun 2nd @ 8.00 clock in the Horseshoe
 Sun 30th @ 8.00 clock in the Paradise Rooms
 www.kenwebster.co.uk

KEN WEBSTER
Outrageous Comedy HYPNOTIST
 ADULT SHOW IF EARLY OFFENDED
 3 HOURS OF PURE COMEDY HYPNOSIS
 EVERY SATURDAY FROM APRIL 19TH UNTIL NOVEMBER 8TH @ 8 PM
 HORSESHOE SHOWBAR, BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH
 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE BOX OFFICE 0871 222 9090
 www.blackpoolpleasurebeach.com

"YOU WILL LAUGH UNTIL YOUR SIDES ACHE"
KEN WEBSTER
MENTALIST HYPNOTIST
 "The man who put mentalism into mentalism!"
 "Why aren't you on TV?"
 ROBBIE WILLIAMS
 "Come on Channel 4 give Webster his own show!"
 GARRY BUSHELL (The Sun)
 DERREN BROWN MEETS CHUBBY BROWN!
 EVERY SATURDAY FROM 4th APRIL UNTIL 7th NOVEMBER
 @ 8.00PM IN THE HORSESHOE, BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH
 BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: 0871 222 9090
 www.blackpoolpleasurebeach.com www.kenwebster.co.uk

Pavilion Theatre Cromer
Friday 9th March @ 7.30
 Box Office: 01263 512495 Tickets £15
 www.cromer-pier.com www.kenwebster.co.uk

PLEASURE BEACH
18 OVER 18 ONLY
 IF EASILY OFFENDED PLEASE STAY AWAY
 WWW.BLACKPOOLPLEASUREBEACH.COM
 BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE 0871 222 9090

WWW.KENWEBSTER.CO.UK

Below left: Peter **Powers** is the modern face of entertainment hypnotism. Originally from Bolton in the UK, Peter made it big in Australia, securing two TV series and several one-off TV specials. He can occasionally be seen in Scotland at the Pavilion Theatre in Glasgow, Robert Halpern's old haunt. He remains one of a very small and select group in that his originality and inventiveness has been the engine of his success. Despite his mischievous stage persona, he is a private and very kind and generous man – and he's probably also the best entertainment hypnotist in the world.

PETER POWERS
HYPNOTIST

"...the best in the business!"

MESMERISED

FASCINATING FRIDAYS It's the Fun Family Night Out ... for all ages.

SPELLBINDING SATURDAYS It's the Mesmerising show of the week ... where most things go!

MESMERIC MIDNIGHT MADNESS Every Saturday ... be more than Mesmerised! *It's strictly for the over 18's.*

FRIDAYS 19th, 26th February & 4th March 2016 at 7.30pm. All seats £13. Family Ticket (Min 2 people) - £8 per person.

SATURDAYS 20th, 27th February & 5th March 2016 at 7.30pm. All seats £14.

'MIDNIGHT MADNESS' Saturdays 20th, 27th February & 5th March 2016. All seats £16.50. Strictly over 18's.

Box Office: 0141 332 1846 • Party Bookings: 0141 333 1791
Book Online : www.paviliontheatre.co.uk (over 18)

PAVILION Theatre Glasgow
121 Renfield Street, Glasgow G2 3AX

Facebook Twitter YouTube

Below right: Apologies – I’m stumped by this poster – all I can say is that it seems to involve two hypnotists and it’s taking place somewhere in Indonesia. But the poster caught my eye because it’s more professionally designed than most stage hypnotist posters today – and that’s a fact!



Below: Americans **Beth Bovaird** and **Paul Irving**. An hypnotic double act. She's the hypnotist and he's the stand-up comedian, doubtless adding to the mirth with witty asides. A modern husband and wife duo? What drew my attention to the poster is the totally up to date raw image – the sexually provocative female, the leather jacket clad street stand up magician/comedian, and the corrugated graffiti adorned backdrop. This is urban hypnosis. Or maybe not. Look! No hands!



Marc Savard is currently America's top stage hypnotist and can be seen at the V Theatre, Planet Hollywood, Las Vegas.

Marc Savard is living proof that to be successful, you have to have it running in your veins. Having seen clips of other American hypnotists on You Tube (and British ones too) I can tell you that Savard towers above the rest of the crowd – and that's why he deservedly occupies the top spot in America. He is without doubt one of the top 4 in the world today.

It's all about personality and the natural ability to entertain – something that can't be taught, or even understood by those who haven't got it – it's a rare gift. Walford Bodie had it, Robert Halpern had it, Peter Powers and Ken Webster have it. The poster says it all – visually striking, the message is unmistakable.



Below: Everyone's getting in on the act!! Over the last twenty years, largely as a result of television, and of course the internet, the fad of stage hypnosis has spread like a virus over the planet. It's everywhere you go, like McDonalds. *Again* with the hands! The poster promises an amazing and fun filled laughter show for all the family, offers a side line in curing ailments as well as an opportunity to learn hypnosis. Probably.

Below right: Paul McKenna's artwork – as inspiring and original as his stage show – and missing an apostrophe.



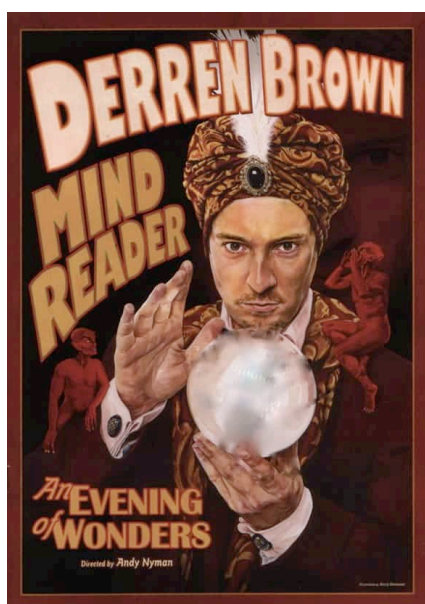
Below: Is this the future of Stage Hypnosis? **The Harlequin Hypnosis Show**, devised by Hypnotist **Rob Hadley** employs six hypnotists who work closely with volunteers from the audience. There are moving sets and props and sumptuous costumes, all of which form an integral part of a flowing narrative. It's totally unlike any hypnosis show ever seen and it's certainly the best poster of the lot! Let's hope that's an indication of things to come.



The Hypnotist – (2012) Swedish crime thriller film directed by Lasse Hallström, based on the book by Lars Kepler.



The Great Hypnotist – (2014) is the first major Chinese film to deal with the subject, and again it's a dark thriller with a twist in the tail. It is available with English subtitles.



Although not strictly a hypnotist, **Derren Brown** does use rapid hypnosis in some of his live shows, in particular in his last major tour *Miracle*.

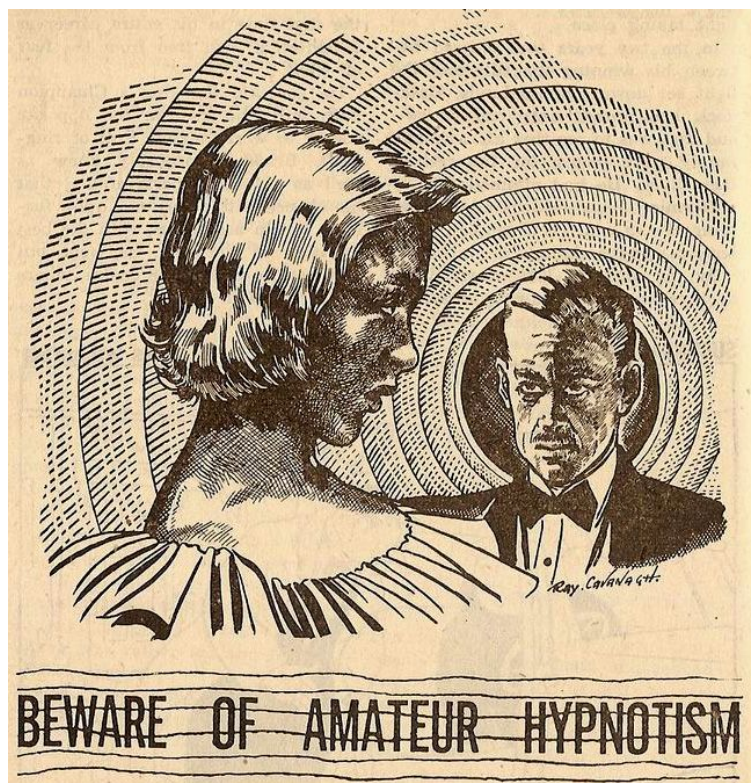
A highly polished performer who has left most of his contemporaries standing, in this poster he has adopted some unconsciously recognisable conceits of the vintage hypnotist – the turban with amulet, the iconic hand gesture, the little devils sat on his shoulders and the portrait presented as drawing – the whole ensemble a tasteful homage to performers of days long gone.

Wait a minute... What's he doing here? Haven't we seen this before? This is **Ty Reveen**, Peter Reveen's son, carrying on the family tradition of dressing up in silly clothes. And using other people's artwork... and reminding everyone who his dad is.



Below: Some bizarre warning about hypnosis, and sadly rather typical of the public misunderstanding of hypnosis. The worst offenders are extreme religious Christian groups who regard hypnosis as the work of the devil.

For example, the Christian Scientists are virulently against hypnosis, even as a therapy, mainly because their founder, Mary Baker Eddy, took lessons from a stage hypnotist who taught her how to start her own religion, which she did, using the same techniques. Many American, 'Christian' evangelist preachers such as Benny Hinn, use hypnosis in their 'ministries' to effect short-term 'cures' on stage and to make \$120 million dollars a year from trusting, but gullible, audiences.

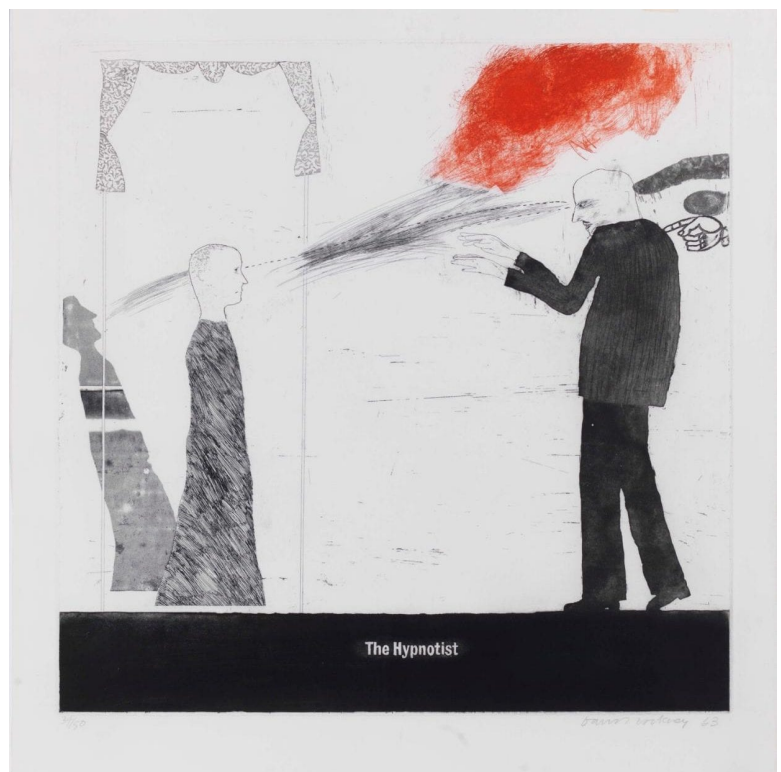


Below centre: Is this an early Dr. Phil show??? The still shot is actually from the 70s TV sitcom, Sanford & Son, starring comedian Redd Foxx, here the mesmerised subject.



Below left: A more up to date art deco version of the old ‘hypnotic eyes’ routine.

Below right: Although looking as if it has been drawn by a twelve year-old, overpaid artist David Hockney has added his rather unoriginal view of ‘The Hypnotist.’



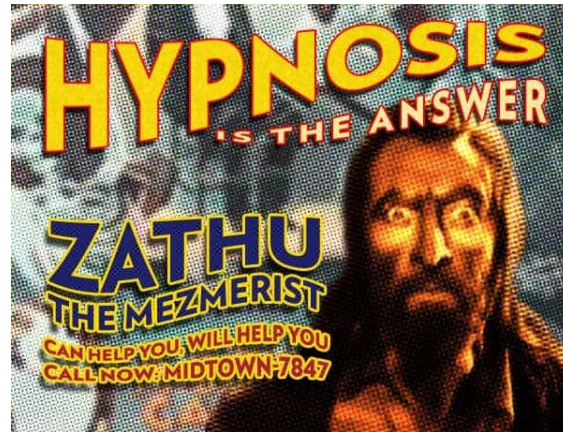
What?!? Everyone's trying to get in on the act!!!



Stop it now Martin, you're just making it look silly! And get down from that tree!



Almost finally... would you go for a private session with this guy?



...and NEVER try this at home!



To find out more about Stage Hypnosis, go to www.newtonhypnosis.com
and download the eBook *Inside Stage Hypnosis*

