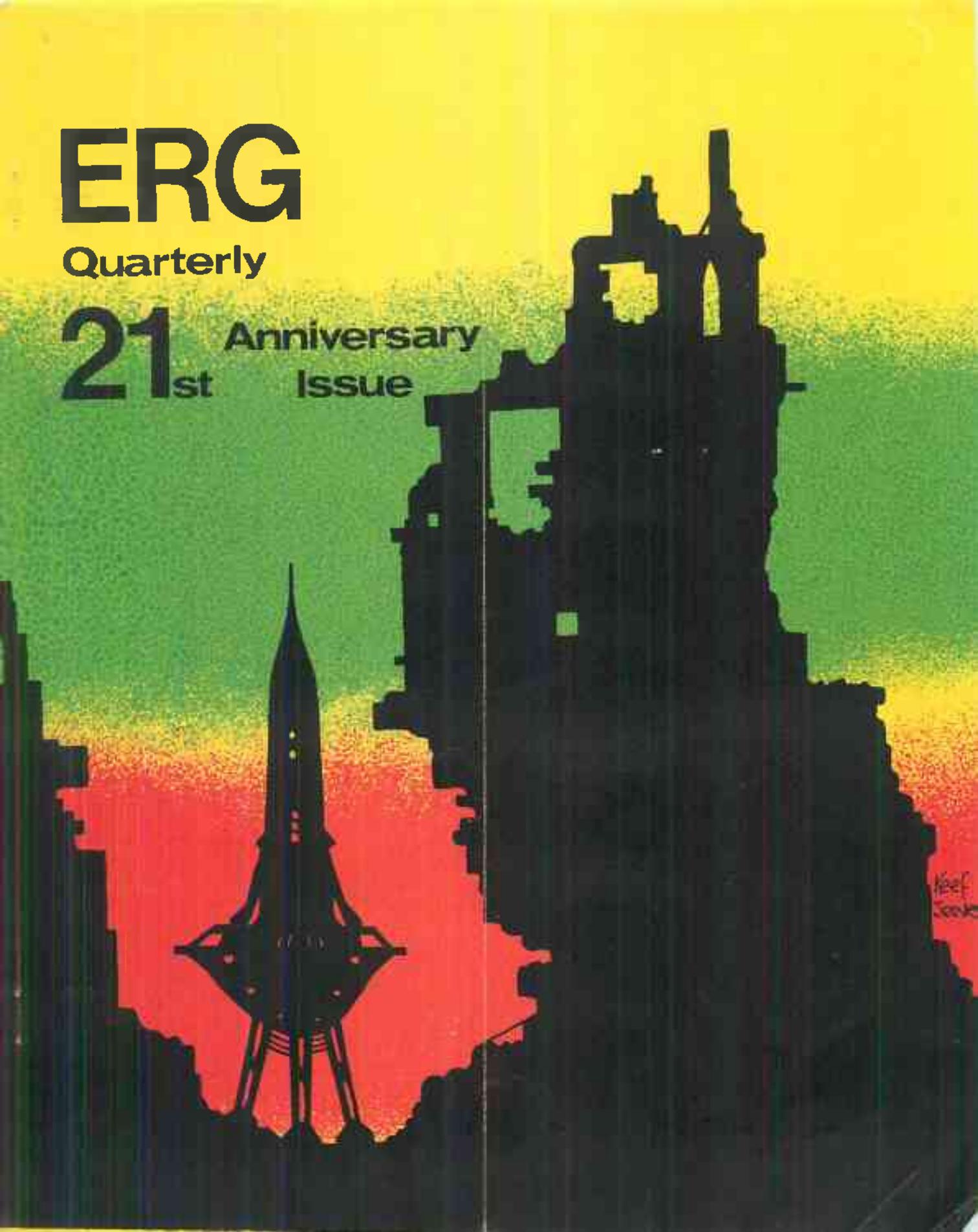


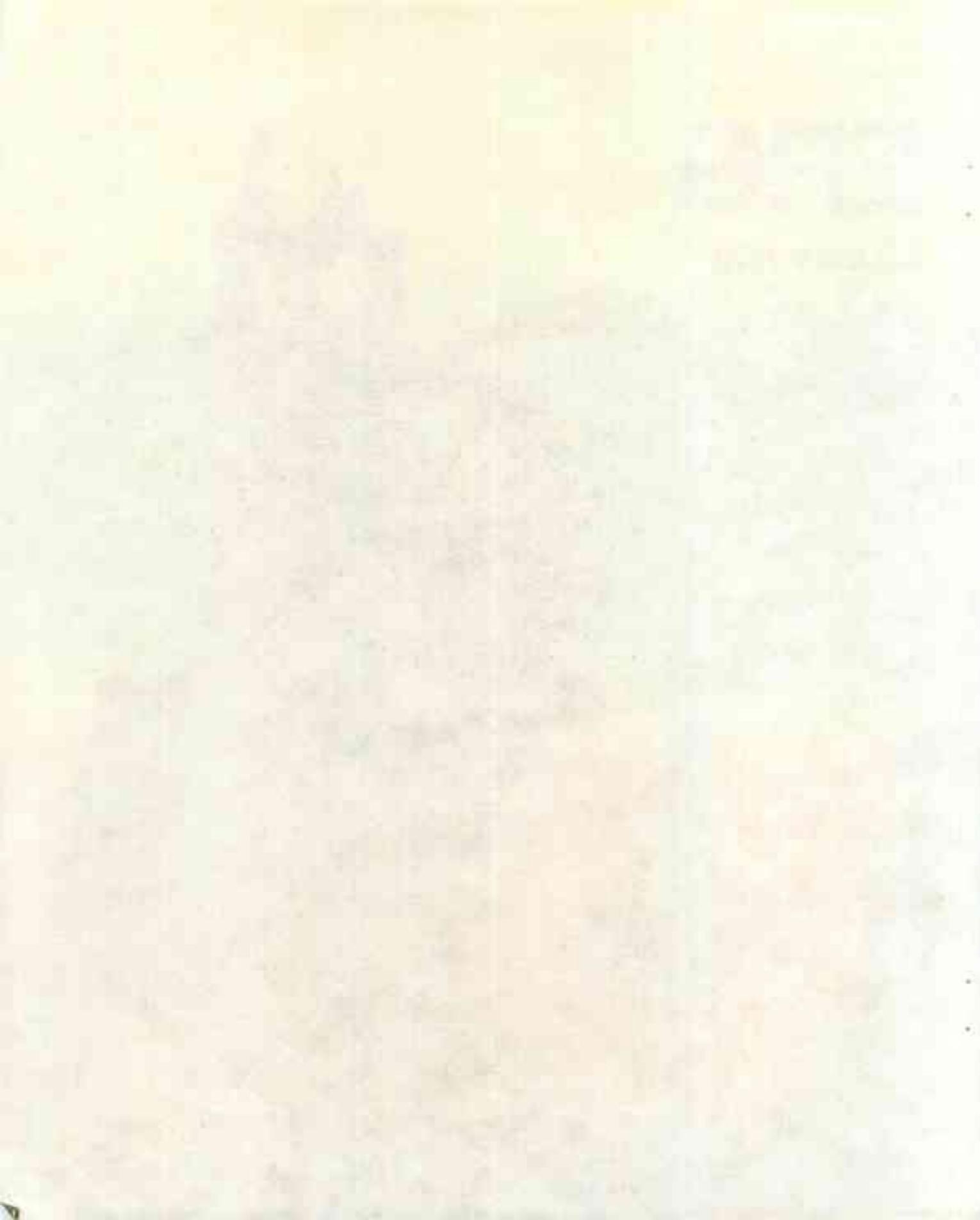
ERG

Quarterly

21st Anniversary
Issue



Keef
Cook



ERG

B. T. Jeeves,
230 Bannerdale Rd.,
Sheffield S11. 9FE.

QUARTERLY No. 70. APRIL 1980

Ph. 53791

21st ANNIVERSARY ISSUE !!!

This issue
50p or \$1.00

Subscription Rates:-

U.K. £1.00 for 3 issues
U.S.A. \$2.00 for 3 issues (please send dollar
bills, NOT cheques)

Other countries..International Money Orders...or by mutual trade
agreement...fanzines, books, magazines etc...and this can be
arranged for by Stateside readers as well.

MINI-ERGITORIAL

In 1959, when ERG first appeared, fanzines were as plentiful as meteors in SF films...and they all went in for large anniversary issues (if they survived for twelve months). However, the effort involved in gestating and giving birth to these mammoth affairs almost invariably killed off the publication on the spot.

Since my only ambition for ERG was to enjoy publishing it, (a motive which seems inexplicable to certain modern, self-styled, 'critics') I never noticed the first year sliding by..or the next, or the one after that. Tricky things these years. Before I knew it, the 20 year mark was approaching. I succumbed and put out an Annish. The ripples had hardly died away, than I realised that another year end was looming on the horizon..the big one, 21 YEARS of publication. Other fanzines have earlier first issues... but only ERG has survived with a regular quarterly schedule...I purr slightly at the thought of having set a record..you are now holding Britain's oldest regular quarterly fanzine. ...and I have a sneaking suspicion that it might also be the world's oldest regular quarterly...unless of course, you know differently.

Whole forests were decimated to bring you this issue, treat it with care. Regular servicing will ensure that it lasts for years. Avoid getting eye-tracks over the pages as this detracts from the trade-in value.

Now that the 21 year mark is past, I can forget annishes for a while...25 years should be a good target for the next one. However, since this annish coincides with my retirement after 32 years teaching, future issues will bite more deeply into a teacher's slender pension (Even if the Clegg Committee which has now been sitting for TEN MONTHS..finally reaches an agreement about teachers pay). So, ERG must become an even more limited proposition. Postal rates have been hiked punitively...just mailing out a year's issues takes 54p. In view of all this, I can no longer hold the previous subscription rate. New rates are listed above....I hope you will subscribe, as free-loaders must now be dropped. If you do not subscribe..or respond by way of regular grades or letters I'm afraid we'll have to part. Unless you prefer to trade with me by way of main-line or SF magazines. I'll accept any SF magazine, space travel, aircraft, cinema or similar

publication...Popular Science, Popular Mechanics or whatever, at its face value, in trade for ERG. Thus, if you send me a few issues of Popular Flying to to a face value of \$2.00, then you get the next three issues of ERG. If in doubt, contact me first and we'll work something out.

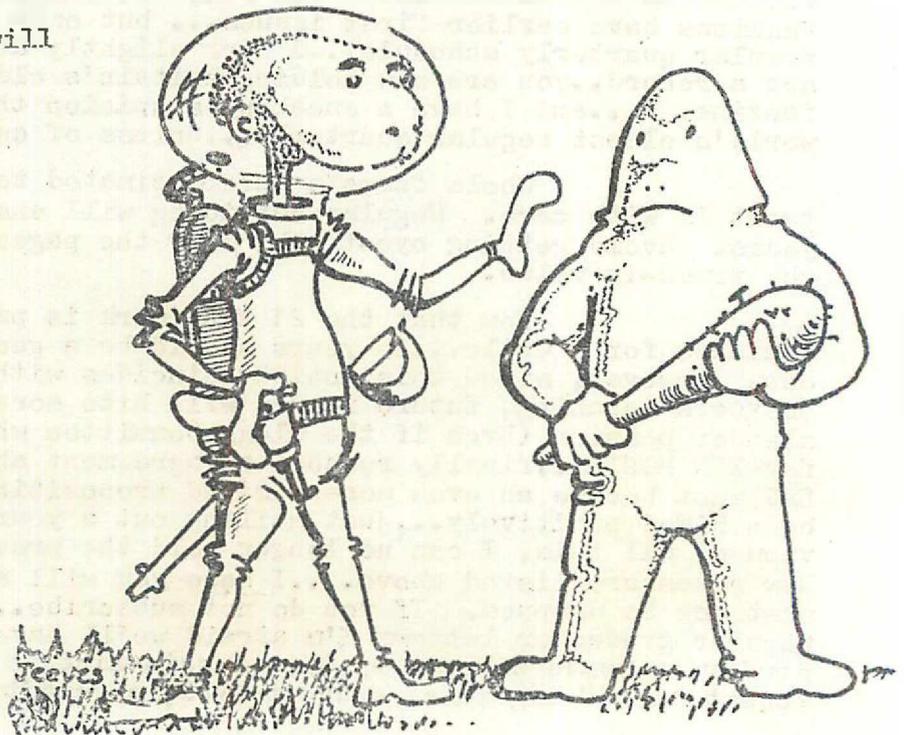
For U.K. readers, I fancy an alternate scheme. Subscribers who make no response to the magazine are not really viable for its needs, as their cash does NOT cover the materials and postage involved in mailing them an issue...so, how about this? If, on receipt of ERG, you mail a decent (OK, that's subjective, but you get the idea) LOC and enclose 25p in stamps, you will automatically get the next issue. We both gain, YOU get four issues per year at the old rate..or a saving of almost 10p an issue. I get feedback response from the readers. If this scheme proves satisfactory, I plan to phase out ordinary subscriptions entirely. The name of the game has to be RESPONSE. I hope you'll play it friends.

Every so often, I get a letter asking how my Stateside trip is firming up. For new readers, let me state briefly that Dave Kyle and Lynn Hickman (with First Fandom) have organised a fund to get me over to an American Convention..the Noreascon in Boston..((and if any rich, kind philanthropists want to mail in a dollar or a couple of grand, the place to send it is...Lynn Hickman, 413 Ottokoe St., Wauseon, Ohio 43567 USA. or to me in the U.K.....thank'ee kindly, one and all))

So, the plan winds to maturity after several previous setbacks. Next August 22, Val and I fly out of Heathrow to Boston, and will be staying at the Boston Sheraton for that weekend...Friday until Monday..so if you live in that area, why not drop in and visit ?? On Monday, I catch the 11-30am plane to Detroit where I shall be meeting up with Lynn Hickman (any chance of a brief detour into Canada, Lynn?) and driving down to Wauseon. On The Wednesday, I'll be transferred to Michael Banks and visiting a couple of Aerospace Museums. Thursday we set off to drive back to Boston, arriving there

Friday, Sept.29th in time for NORIEASCON 2 and a reunion with Val who will have been whooping it up at the Boston Sheraton in my absence. Comes Monday, Sept. 1st, and the 9-30 pm flight out of Boston (Care to host us from noon to 9-30 anyone ??) and back to the U.K. and a king size trip report to type. ..and of course, making a sound film of the whole trip.

See you, Terry.



OR
SOME
MUSINGS ON
MACHINES
THAT
THINK



Editorial

The question, "Can machines think?" hinges largely on what you mean by 'think'. One dictionary I consulted gave 'think' as to 'work out in the mind.'...which, since machines don't have minds, would seem to make an end of the problem. On the other hand, if we accept 'mind' as the part which does one's thinking, then we've gone the full circle and if a machine can think then it must have a part which does the thinking.

Let's try again. "to think, is to work out...somewhere." Well, can a machine do that? Obviously, we don't mean work out the answer to a simple sum if somebody presses the buttons for it...as in a calculator. However, if our machine will, in the midst of some other process, decide that it needs to know..say, what 2+2 makes, and proceeds to work out the answer...then that may be thinking.

Careful there...if the machine's instructions (its programme) tell it to do such a task if need be, then it is merely following what it has been set to do....'if this..do that' and is exhibiting no more brain power in the thinking department than water sprinkler which decides the room is on fire..and therefore sprays water in all directions...even if the heat comes from some clot lighting up his Meerschaum directly beneath the temperature sensor.

I would fancy that if you offer up a problem to a machine, and the machine digests it, mulls it over and finally decides on a course of action which will result in solving that problem..then that machine may well be thinking. Let's digress a moment and look at another type of behaviour which is generally classed as thinking..an animal in a maze. After a few attempts at threading the maze, proficiency is gained and the animal reduces its errors to a minimum. Is this process 'thinking'. If it is (and most pet owners would swear that it is), then we already have 'thinking' machines in existence...plus widgets which wander around in search of power points to plug themselves into for a re-charge; a process analogous to one's pet hunting out the hidden dish of Krunchy Kernels or whatever...without a sense of smell, I might add.

We talk glibly of animal 'intelligence' and the skills shown in learning tasks - the pea-sorting pigeon or the antics of the trained dolphin, maybe even the trained guide-dog. All these seem to exhibit thought patterns which pass for intelligence..or 'thinking'. But maybe they

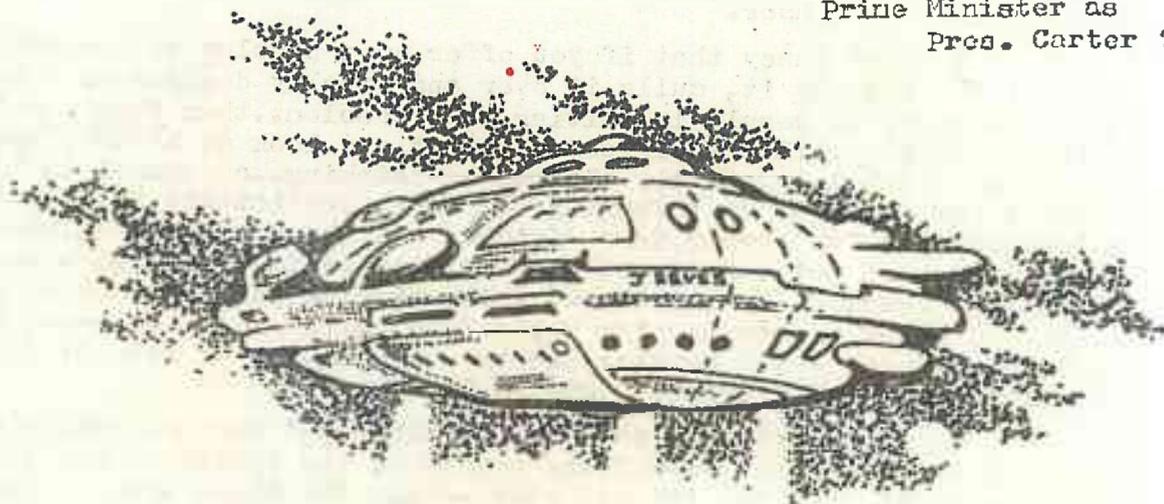
are simply conditioned responses... 'Do this = eating that' or putting it another way, when we train pigeons, dolphins or guide dogs...are they 'learning by conscious thought'..or are we just programming them. Even if you plump for the former, I'm inclined to wonder if 'learning' isn't the biological equivalent of the machine's 'programming'. After all, machines can be built to do the pea-sorting trick and other activities..within the physical limits placed upon them by their design.

If by such rule-of-thumb yardsticks as the ability to 'Learn' how to do various tasks we assess the ability to think...then we DO have thinking machines with us today. However, I must sadly admit that pea-sorting, maze running, newspaper-fetching and other antics are largely stimulus-response affairs, and as such do not necessarily indicate there is intelligence hiding under the thick skull (or hatch-cover). Admitted, a certain amount of memory is required...but machines have memories...books, tapes, discs, bubble-memories, and flip-flop circuits will all help a machine to remember your wife's birthday. A boiler thermostat will note a temperature rise and adjust its heating accordingly, but no one would claim it 'thought' about the task.

To solve the problem, Turing proposed non-visual communication (phone or telegraph) between human (A) and contact (X).... with X being either another human..or a thinking machine. If, after a suitable spell of nattering, A is unable to identify whether X is human or machine, then one must accept that the machine..if not 'thinking', is operating in a way indistinguishable from such activity...and since a difference which cannot be discerned ceases to be a difference...then the machine is said to be thinking. In practice, I fancy Turing overlooked one dead-sure whay of spotting the machine every time...simply pose a long string of factual and mathematical questions. If response is 100% correct, then you can be sure you are talking with a machine...unless of course, someone told it to slip in a few mistakes every so often.

Certainly, if such a test were carried out using some of the 13-year olds in my classes, in position X, then poor old A would wonder what third category had slipped in between human and machine. Would you credit a 13-year-old who identifies his home city by the name of a minor suburb ?

Who labelled Britain's main
city as Doncaster or the
Prime Minister as
Pres. Carter ?



The Turing machine test sounds pretty convincing, but really, it is just a rather high level version of the stimulus and response affair. If you don't put in a question, then you don't get a response. I'm inclined to think that a real thinking machine would NOT require prying with a question, or indeed, the stimulus of any sort of communication, but would be self-prying. It would examine its environment, decide on some aspect which it didn't quite understand...and then set about finding an explanation. It would initiate its own schemes and ideas and then work out how to carry them out. Thus, if a GIGANTIC THINKIAC paused in the task of calculating wing-root stresses in supersonic aircraft...and suddenly produced a statistical comparison of cancer deaths with environment, habits, work and life style...or a new musical sonata... I'd rate that gadget as a thinking machine.

When that day comes THINKIAC may well ignore cancer or music, but instead, devote its energies to devising and creating THINKIAC 2. Once started, such a line of activity would soon escalate beyond any dreams of control and we would have a real-time COLOSSUS on our backs. Provided it made itself a Union card, nothing could stand against it.

Maybe not next year...or even next decade, but intelligent machines are on the way.....

.....
 *** It makes you think, doesn't it?

.....Terry Jeeves...
 =====
 from the mud-flats of Sheffield.
 =====

POINTS TO PONDER....

17th Century. Pascal's machine numbered up to 99999

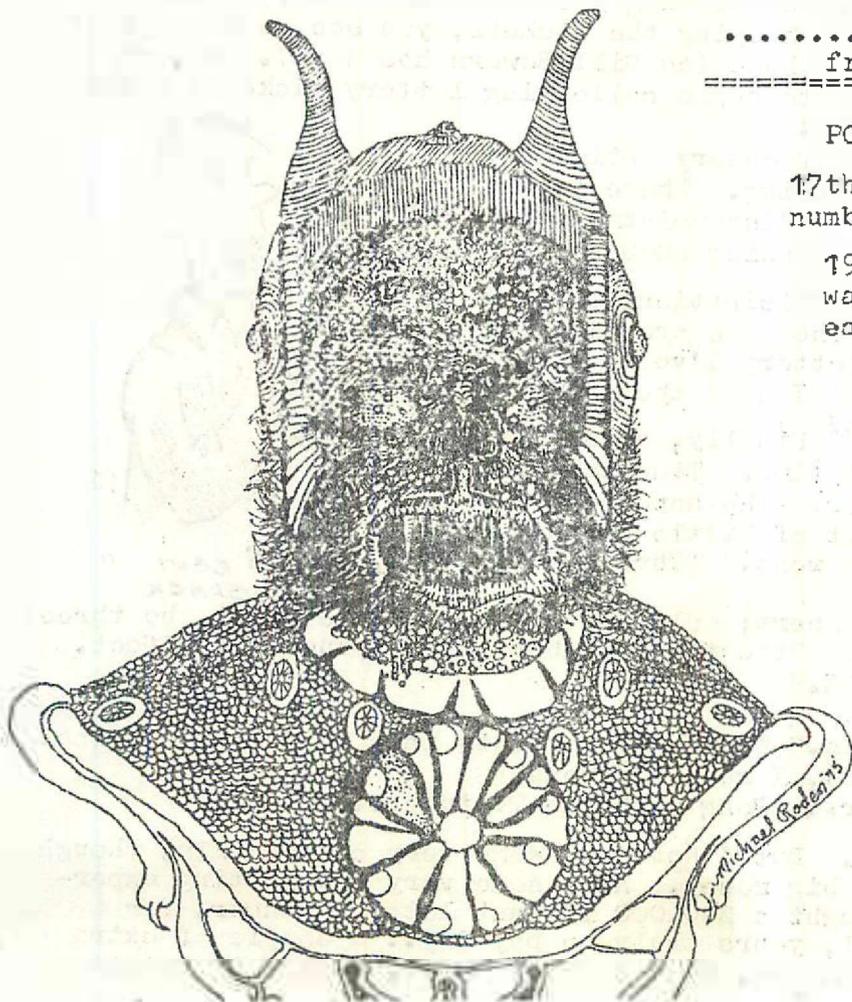
19th Century, Babbage's machine was to have 1000 number stores, each of 50 places

Early 20th Century..punched cards were up to 80 digit numbers.

1946 ENIAC weighed 30 tons and used 18,000 valves

1980 a desk top mini-computer can equal ENIAC with some 50K bits in its memory.

The Human Brain has some 10,000K neurons... a long way ahead...but progress is catching up to it. Any bets on when it will get there ?



THINGS that go bump -----



SF fans are, I believe, eternal optimists. After all, we not only hope for (and sometimes believe in) a grand and glorious future for Humankind, but also place ourselves one step ahead of the mundane pessimists by even believing that there will be a future!

Fannish optimism is even more amply demonstrated in more immediate pursuits. The sight of a near-broke fan raising on a busted flush during a con poker game, or a quick scan of many fans arriving at cons in cars which barely move, carrying license plates indicating that they travelled 800 miles or so to get there -- that's optimism. The proverbial ant climbing an elephant's leg with dubious intent pales in comparison. . .

Being a fan, I am likewise optimistic -- perhaps overly so. If I could show you my collection of losing lottery tickets, you might in fact consider the term 'optimist' to be an understatement. But I keep trying, hoping for that impossible 'lucky number', and winning \$2.00 now and then. There's even optimism in my losing. I'm keeping the tickets, you see, not to paper the wall, or even to make a lampshade (as Bill Bowers has done). No, what I'm waiting for is philatelists to begin collecting lottery tickets; after all, they collect tax stamps too!

Still, this silver cloud of cheery optimism about losing does have a dark lining. There is, to begin with, a weekly crash of disappointment as the TV announcer reads off the winning numbers...

...There I sat, drooling in anticipation. Tonight I WILL WIN, I told myself. The odds are with me; this is the ten-thousandth lottery I've bought. I had a precognitive dream, and I need the money. I WILL WIN! I could feel it!

Finally, after all the pre-emptive bull, it was time. Time to draw the 100-zillion dollar number. The announcer began drawing the numbers out of little containers, reading them off as he went. "Three... Seven... Nine... Eight..."

THAT'S IT! Those are my numbers; only one more to go. Be three, be three. "And", the announcer smiles, "the final number is..." pause for effect. "The final number is ...THREE."

HURRAH!

"Oops, sorry about that folks." The announcer cuts into my delirium. "That final number is Eight. Eight, I read it wrong."

CRASH My dreams shatter...along with the TV tube....

WELL, it's not quite that bad. But I have had some very close calls, though never close enough to win the big money. Also some very frustrating experiences. The time I almost bought a \$10,000 instant lottery winner, for instance. Picture if you will, yours truly on pay day.. a couple of extra dollars burning a hole in my pocket. What to do? Well, says I to myself,



"EGAD! A
RARE OHIO
1745674 2 CENT
BLACK"

says I, I think I'll waste a dollar on an instant lottery ticket.

Fine. It just happened that the next stop for me, after leaving the bank, was a grocery store which sold lottery tickets. In I walked, deciding to do the repair job on the machine first, and buy the ticket on the way out. Fine.

FIVE minutes after entering, I had finished the job at the rear of the store, and was walking up front to buy my ticket. I began hearing screams and cheers, then applause. What? Had the President walked in? No, a woman had bought an instant lottery ticket --- the one I didn't buy -- and had won TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS! Frustration? Yes, to put it mildly. AAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHHHH !!! to put it subtly. I walked outside and cried.

And then there are the horse races. I have only bet on a horse once in my life, having stayed away from it because I understand the practice is addictive. (If you believe in omens and such, you may call me a dunder-headed fool on this one) It was March 21 1979, my birthday. 'Twas a fine day, and, by coincidence, I kept seeing signs saying, "Happy Birthday" as I drove about town on my duties. Though they were meant for others, I was cheered anyway. In conjunction with these signs, I saw the number 6 repeated in numerous fashions. Two bank message boards for example, which displayed time and temperature along with Birthday Greetings for somebody or other, read 66 degrees. I was driving along Sixth Street when I noticed a big "Happy Birthday, Mike" sign in a shop window.

My 6th repair call of the day, oddly enough, was to fix a leak in the soda system at 'Bar 6' at Latonia Race Track, in nearby Kentucky. And, incredible as it may seem, I arrived a few minutes before the start of the 6th race. It was my birthday, so I decided to chance a \$2 bet, just for the hell of it.

And, do you know that horse number 6 WON...at 120 to 1 ???

Right, but I had bet on number 3, my 'lucky' number...it didn't even place. But I still buy lottery tickets. You can't get much more optimistic than that. Oh yes, in case you might be wondering, I do win at one thing. I always win lots of pennies off my wife at poker -- but I have to give her the money to pay me off.

----- Michael A Banks...from the wilds of Ohio -----
and Michael also sends news of :-

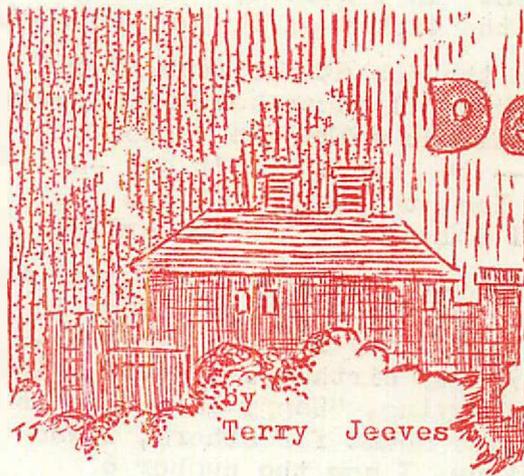
EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY 'MAN IN SPACE'
sponsors an art
Competition for the 18-21 year olds.

All competitors in that age range, are invited to illustrate the theme of Man In Space, choosing their own form of expression :- drawings, paintings, sculptures, models posters, poems, short stories, plays, audio-visual presentations, musical compositions etc. ((Now HOW do they hope to judge that lot on any common basis ???))

There will be national prizes, as this is open to all European countries. Closing date is JUNE 1980...so get weaving on your entry..or pass this to anyone who may be interested if you're too long in the tooth. Grand prize (apart from a scad of trips, Awards and medals etc.) is a visit to the Kennedy Space Centre and the Shuttle and Spacelab facilities. For details, write :- Mr. A.M.Hughes

British Association Young Scientists, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, LONDON W1X 1AB...or your European ESA offices wherever you live in Europe.

According to my records, this little piece first appeared in Ro. Pardoe's 'Seagull' during 1979.... the magazine then folded.



by
Terry Jeeves

Death in the Ophand Manor

Lightning flashed across the rain-shoeted sky. Thunderous peals of pealing thunder crashed crashingly across the heaving heavens. Deep down in the depths of the darksome village, the only road bridge crashed into the roaring flood waters beneath, taking with it the only telephone line leading to the bleak mansion on the hill. Torrents of water streamed from the skies on to the ivy covered walls of the stately crumbling Ophand Manor. It was rather a filthy night.

Within the majestic walls of the venerable building, all was warmth, light and festivity. Gathered round the festive board and festering merrily, were the guest of old Lord Elpuzz, scion of the Ophand Clan. Food had ebbed and flowed across the great banqueting table. Wine had had ebbed and flowed even more freely and as the revelry reached its height, a bleary-eyed Lord Elpuzz staggered to his feet. The old nobleman polished his spectacles, wiped away some of the food which had ebbed and flowed across his once gleaming-white shirt front, and surveyed his guests. Raising a thin-veined, aristocratic hand, he waited for silence. Gradually the merry buzz of intellectual conversation slowed, dithered a bit and finally ground to a halt. Every eye was on Lord Elpuzz as the guests waited with 'bated breath.

"Hic!" said his Lordship. He paused and mused awhile, perhaps Latin was not the right language for this occasion. He began again in the ringing tones which had once rallied the troops in the latrines at Aldershot. "Friends", he orated. "Look around you at all these riches". At this point, Lord Elpuzz waved his arms wide in a magnificent sweeping gesture..which caught the soup tureen before him and slid it neatly off the table and into the lap of Lady Lucille Astic. With true aristocratic savoir faire, Lady Lucille took up her spoon and disposed of the debris. Ognoring the minor contretemps, Lord Elpuzz continued. "Someday, all this will belong to my heir. That person's name will remain a secret until my death, but this I will tell you...that person is sitting at this table tonight. One of you here will inherit all this..." He repeated the magnificent gesture and Lady Lucille resignedly reached for another spoon to remove the contents of the custard bowl.

"I give you a toast!" cried his Lordship. Raising his powder blue balloon glass, he declaimed the Clan Motto.."Ophand, Always be Ophand!" Lord Elpuzz drained his glass in one gulp, uttered a terrible scream of agony and crashed to the floor.

Hernlock Shomes, one of the poorer offshoots of the Ophand family, was the first to reach him, but by the time he knelt beside the body, Lord Elpuzz was merely a haphazard collection of cleanly picked bones. Something flapped limply among the bits of the glass. Shomes swept it aside then laid his hand against the skeletal rib-cage. A strange, eerie trilling whistle filled the air -- the unconscious sound Shomes made when confronted by an enigma. He reached a decision, "His Lordship is dead," announced the master sleuth.

"Poisoned?" queried a quavering voice.

"Worse," frowned Hernlock. "Some utter cad slipped a rare Piranha-Paranha fish into his drink. The ordinary type can finish the flesh off a man's bones in 25.9 seconds. This was a steroid-fed competition type bred for the Olympics and it did the job in less than ten."

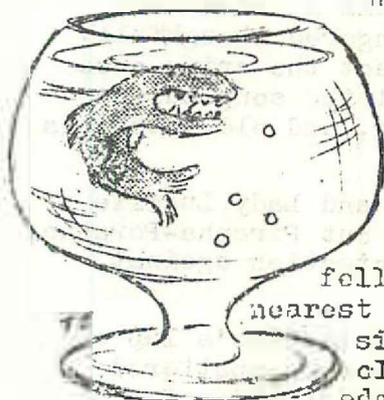
"I knew there was something fish about this set-up", whined the pimplly faced young Lick Larss who had recently returned from Paraguay. Was it murder, do you think, or did it get there by accident?"

"It was murder all right", said Shomes in his deep bronze coloured voice. "And whoever did it left a clue." He stooped and retrieved a slip of pasteboard from between the victim's dentures. Holding it to the light and adjusting his bifocals, the man of bronze read out, "Don't put nuts in the armour".

"That must be where the murderer hid the fish", yelled out headstrong old Branner. "Let's see if he left any more clues. Before Shomes could stop him, the old fellow tottered across the room, raised the vizor of the nearest suit of armour (worn by Lord Elpuzz grandfather at the siege of Coventry) and thrust in his head to look for clues. There was a grinding crash as the vizor, its leading edge sharpened to the keenness of a razor, dropped onto Branner's neck. The corpse slumped to the floor whilst a hollow 'Boing' from within the armour denoted the arrival of his nut at the bottom.

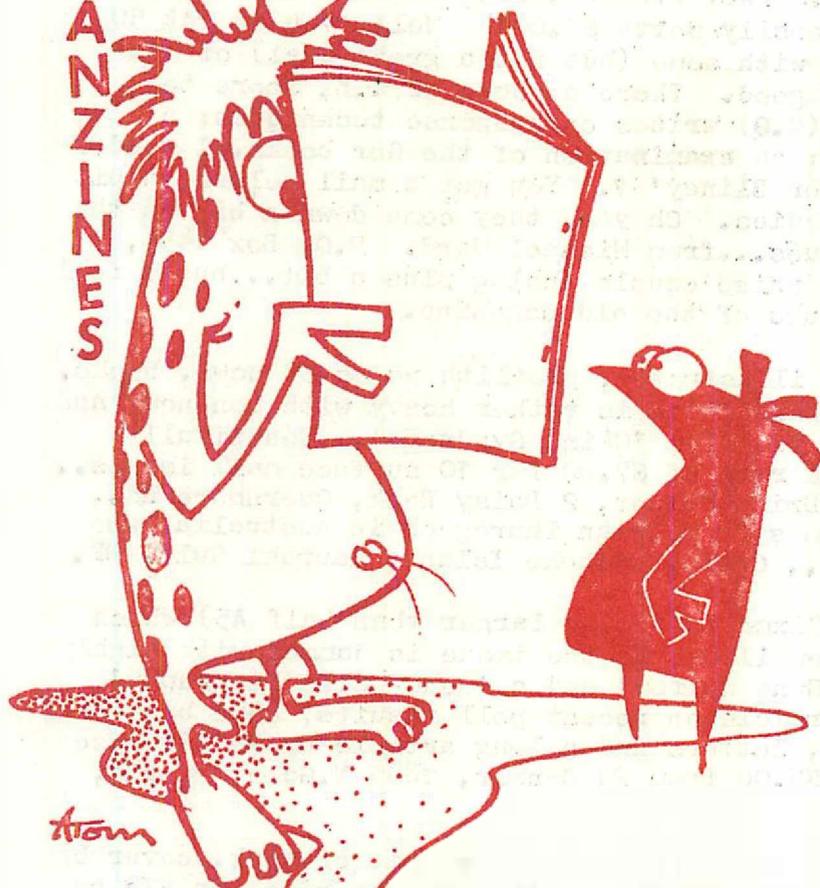
"That eliminates him," said the sleuth. "The on'ly thing to do is to re-enact the crime. One of us must take the place of Lord Elpuzz and go through his movements to find who could have slipped the Piranha-Paranha into his wine!" "Suppose they slip in another one?" quavered the quavering voice. "Not a chance", scoffed Shomes. "I will take his Lordship's place, and to prevent any Piranha-Paranha getting at me, I will tie this tea-strainer over my mouth to keep out any such danger. Come, to our places; let us re-enact the crime."

Five minutes later, Shomes reached the gesturing stage. Once again, the soup tureen made rendezvous with Lady Lucille's lissom lap. She looked resignedly at the mess. "To hell with it," she said, and standing up, renpved the soiled gown and sat down again, composedly in her underslip. Ten seconds later, at the second gesture, she rose again and discarded a custard-covered slip. The remaining guests began to see the possibilities inherent in this reconstruction and waited eagerly for further gestures... but Shomes was intent on the job in hand. Raising the balloon glass, he took a long swig and replaced it on the table. Removing the tea-strainer from his face, he smiled benignly at the onlookers. "See," he said. "Perfectly safe," he said. He took a slim cigar from his pocket, struck a match and lit it. "The identity of the murderer is obvious." He smiled wickedly, "It was of course..." At this point, the cigar between his lips exploded!



FABULOUS

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S



From time to time, whenever the fancy takes me, I hope to natter about some of the better..or more unusual fmz which have come my way.

This will NOT be a hatchet job, or night of the long knives..fanzines should be for fun...NOT misery. Even if a fanzine is utter crud, someone has worked on it and hoped to gain pleasure therefrom. Harsh vituperative comment will not coax such an editor to improve, but gentler, more constructive criticism might help.

As a schoolmaster, I do not get children to improve, or try to improve by flaying them verbally...rather the carrot than the goad. So let it be with fanzines. I want FUN in my fandom, not FEUD. So on to...

S.F.COMMENTARY

Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195 AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA.

\$5.A for five issues (and conversion pro rata). I have No. 57 (Nov.79) to hand, containing 16 (photolith?)pages, large $\frac{1}{4}$ t θ . An article on 'How To Be A Critic': some excellent reviews, and a few thoughtful and interesting letters. I enjoyed the 'Critic'..nice humour, but I'd rate the reviews as the main reason for hunting out this fanzine, pseudonymous or not. Then again, if letters get you, these are not the average 'hackletter' so pick where you like, it is all good stuff. My only criticism is that I'd like to see SFC running a few small 'fillos' of the same quality as the writing to fully round out the excellent little zine.

SOLARIS 30

Norbat Spehner, 1085 St.Jean, Longueuil P.Q. Canada J4H 2Z3 will cost you \$1.50 single or 6 for \$8.00. SUPERBLY produced, top-level artwork and photographs grace its slick 44 large pages (it outshines rags like STARBURST and can give GALILEO a run for its money. You get two bits of fiction, interview and articles, plenty of book, film and other reviews with occasional fmz mention. This is definitely for the s&c...in essence, this is the re-named 'Requiem', but if you hadn't noticed the name change, you could be forgiven..little else has altered. Oh, there is one snag..it is entirely in French..so if you have perdue the plume de votre tante, this isn't for you....but if you can parlez bien...then don't miss it.

THE MONTHLY MONTHLY.4

Robert Runte, 10957 88.Ave. Edmonton, Alberta Canada T6G 1Y9. It IS a monthly..achieved by a rotating editorship. 18 qto. pages, \$9.00 a year US. Very neatly duplicated, variable artwork, fair to good. Nice headings, and articles, reviews and letters. Minor criticism is that it is still a bit introverted to personal events...but otherwise, a good, cheerful fanzine, pleasant to read..not gosh-wow-faanish, or too s&c. I like the monthly idea, and once it finds its level it will be a winner.

74
PSFO, The issue to hand is for 'Fall-Winter-Spring-Summer-Fall 1978-79 and the price modestly claims..'easily worth \$3.00' Well, you do get 50 superbly printed photolith pages with some (but not a great deal) of the best art around..and some not so good. There a photo of C.L. Moore to accompany an interview. Yarbro (C.Q) writes on suspense techniques; a checklist item, (Robert E.Howard); an examination of the Gor books..I wonder if that has a connection with 'Gor Bliny' ?. You get a nail column, a bit on SF Wargames..and many more goodies. Oh yes, they come down a bit on the price...\$5.00 will get you 4 issues...from Michael Ward. P.O. Box 1496, Cupertino, CA 95015 U.S.A. Its price equals Analog plus a bit...but I feel its quality surpasses recent issues of the old magazine.

NOUMENON 34 28 fully (and well) illustrated, photolith pages of news, books, reviews, cartoons and letters. This issue is rather heavy with Con-news and contributors' photos. Review of the film 'China Syndrome'. Beautifully turned out, and well worth its UK rate of \$7.00 for 10 surface nail issues.. or \$13.25 by air....UK agent is Brian Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd., Lancaster Lancs, but the zine comes from Brian Thurogood in Australia, who has a new address:- 40 Korora Rd., Onera, Waiheke Island, Hauraki Gulf. NZ.

KOEBIUS TRIP 26 No less than 74 Sixmo (slightly larger than half A5) which makes it about 1/2" thick. Very few illos, so the issue is jammed with highly readable stuff. 'Whos Afraid Of Gene Wolfe?' and a 'Gene Wolfe Biography' both by R.Werner. There is an article on recent poll results, some book reviews, some fanzine commentary, letters and a long article by Philip Jose Farmer. \$1.00 an ish, or 6 for \$5.00 from Ed Connor, 1805 N.Gale, Peoria, Ill 61604. U.S.A.

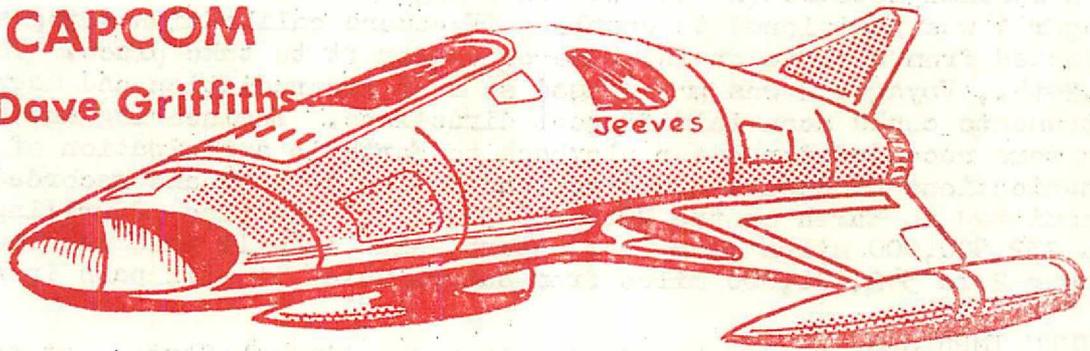
THE LOOKING GLASS A slim (14pp) beautifully produced bit of work..cover by Mike Roden, some superb interior art; a piece on VTR by Linda Bushyager which ought to get you started; letters, reviews (and that great art)..included with this issue is THE STELLAR FANTASY NEWSLETTER..six pages of excellent art and Andy Andráschak's excellent NASA column. 45c from Ben Fulves, 25 Parkway, Montclair, NJ 07042.....(and Ben, I found that note)

UNKNOWN PRESS presents 'Editor's Notes' a detailed look at the various facets of fanzine production (sounds like my Duplicating Nptes), methods of reproduction, explanations of different types of fanzines etc. A limited edition pamphlet aimed at the fanzine editor and non-editor alike. Includes the addresses of many SF books and magazine publishers and manufacturers of layout-related products. Price \$2.00 from Ben Fulves (address above). Ben also offers from UNKNOWN PRESS :- A FAN ART PORTFOLIO..10 full page illos on art paper..\$1.50. A Mike Roden SHOWCASE..75c. and back issues of THE LOOKING GLASS at \$1.00 each. If in doubt..drop Ben a line...and I can vouch for the fact that production is impeccable.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG. 13 22 pages of capsule reviews of every fanzine received by Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd., No.207, Detroit, Michigan 48219. 4 issues for \$2.00 or Brian will trade 3 issues of Wofan for 1 of yours..how can you lose ? This issue also has a lettercol, a Poll form, and Autoclave Con news. Get this and Fanzine Fanatique, and you'll not miss much in the field. Maybe I'll see you in Detroit, Brian...Lynn Hickman is meeting me at the airport on Monday August 25 on the 11-30 flight out of Boston.

CAPCOM

Dave Griffiths



Much as it pains me to admit it, I often make an ass of myself for no good reason other than it giving me something to do. Working in the British Library (as it is my fate at the moment) is akin to those sensory deprivation experiments carried out a few years ago. To say that it's boring is a bit like saying that Miss United Kingdom 'looks O.K.'. In a word, it's hellish, and I'm convinced that three years in the place has finally taken its toll. Last month for example, I walked down a crowded street wearing a hideous rubber mask. I've always derived a certain perverted enjoyment from surprising people. I was ignored! It could have turned into a peculiar situation.

Speaking of peculiar situations, I ran into someone the other day who was under the impression that unmanned spacecraft such as NASA's two Voyagers are shut down shortly after launch until they reach their targets. In fairness, this is understandable, since the only time the TV and newspapers mention them is when they start sending pictures back to Earth. The fact that continual tests, calibrations and manoeuvres must be carried out for the entire mission is just not headline material; which is the reason you hear nothing about it. It's doubtful whether Voyager will be making the 'News At Ten' again until the Saturn encounter operations begin in August of this year.

To give you an idea of what goes on in these so-called 'coasting' periods, this is what has been happening to the Voyager spacecraft since last December. At the beginning of the month, tests conducted on Voyager 1's photopolarimeter (designed to detect surface and atmospheric chemicals on Jupiter, Saturn, and their moons) confirmed that its sensitivity to light was virtually non-existent. The device had given cause for concern during the spacecraft's encounter with Jupiter, and was said to be no longer capable of recording useful data. On December 15th., Voyager 1's control rockets were fired for 37 minutes in order to effect a flight path adjustment and speed increase of approximately 11mph. Following this course change manoeuvre, the spacecraft failed to orient itself properly with the high gain antenna pointed at Earth. An internal communications problem between Voyager 1's central computer and its attitude control system brought about a premature halt in the reorientation sequence. Efforts to correct this by the controllers were unsuccessful. On December 15th. Full communications were restored when the spacecraft was manoeuvred so that its radio antenna beams swept around the Sun and located the Earth. It then aligned itself properly on the 19th with its control sensors viewing the reference star Canopus and the Sun. By noon the following day, Voyager 1 was operating in its normal cruise mode.

On January 2nd., Voyager 2 measured the ultraviolet light from two stars. The following day, Voyager 1 executed a slow roll in order to carry out a special measurement of the Sun's magnetic field. On January 15th., Voyager 1 was positioned to enable a TV camera calibration using sunlight reflected from a plate on the base of the craft to take place. Then, on Jan.24th., Voyager 2 was programmed so that its radiation and magnetic field instruments could scan in different directions. Engineering and scientific data were recorded for later playback to Earth in anticipation of a 24hr. communications blackout. This went according to plan and recorded data were transmitted to Earth on the 29th and 31st. At the time of writing, Voyager 1 is 232,900,000 miles away from Saturn which it will pass in November. Voyager 2 is 342,000,000 miles from Saturn which it will pass in August 1981.

MINIMUM IMPULSES You've heard it a thousand times before.. at post-flight press conferences, on talk shows, in magazine interviews... The question guaranteed to bring a hand to the forehead or groans of resignation from an astronaut. "What is it really like ?" For anyone even vaguely interested in a comprehensive answer, although perhaps not one that relates to the spaceflight experience, Tom Wolfe has written a book entitled:-

'THE RIGHT STUFF' Chuck Yeager had the right stuff. With the entire left side of his face burned, his left eye socket slashed and caked shut with dried blood and a severely burned left hand, he stood waiting for the rescue helicopter..his parachute rolled up, and his helmet in the crook of his arm. Pete Conrad had the right stuff and could get away with dumping an enema bag on a General's desk and announcing. "You're looking at a man who has given himself his last enema." Bud Jennings didn't have the right stuff and ended his days as a roasted hulk with no head.

Without the right stuff, you were either one of the also-rans, or dead."It was a damned shame, but he could have known better than to wait so long before lowering the flaps."

What was it REALLY like ? Read the book and find out.

" THE RIGHT STUFF" by Tom Wolfe
Published by Jonathan Cape. £6.95

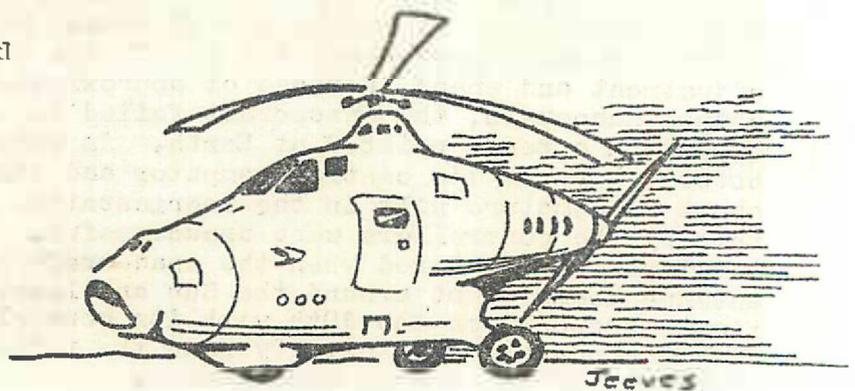
..... Dave Griffiths.

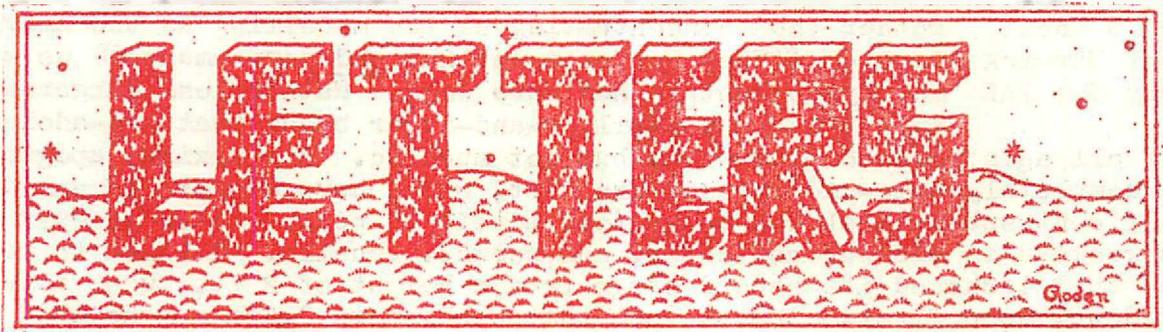
((And I've just got word from Mike Banks of another highly recommended book...which I haven't yet been able to run down....

THE ROCKET The History and Development of Rocket and Missile Technology.
David Baker PhD

New Cavendish Books.

...price unknown, but it sounds good. B.T.J)))





ROBERT BLOCH
Los Angeles California
Twenty-one years ago I was living in Weyauwoga, Wisconsin, and truly believed that my life was over. Aside from a few sales to SNUTTY SF and the like, I had nothing to keep me going except an occasional CARE package. Then ERG entered my life and everything changed. Not necessarily for the better, but changed, nonetheless.

Mind you, I'm not saying that your magazine is responsible for what happened. I cannot absolve myself of blame, for that would be chickening out, and the old question of which came first, the chicken or the ERG has never been truly resolved. But twenty-one years is a long time, and surely you and your publication have had some effect on your readers. Consider the power of the printed word, as demonstrated by the Bible. Then remember that God only wrote two editions, whereas ERG has now reached seventy. With all that verbiage going for you, it's a wonder to me that you haven't become a cult-figure like Harlan Ellison or Ethel Lindsay.

Nevertheless, you are a power to be reckoned with, and now that your fanzine has attained its majority I cannot allow the occasion to go unnoticed. You deserve full marks for all you've accomplished over the years; like Roger Elwood and Sol Cohen, you are truly a Publishing Giant, and when you get to the Noreascon, Isaac Asimov will let you kiss his ring.

There is little I can add to such homage, except to wish you another twenty-one years of fanediting success. If you continue with the zine for that much longer, then ERG will be exactly the same age I was when I believed my life was over. Which will serve it right.

Incidentally, it's rather difficult for me to say anything specific about ERG because I have never been able to discover just what that word means. My guess is that it must be one of those British expressions, like twit, barmy, or bugger off. I tried looking it up in the dictionary, but without success. This may be due in part, to the fact that our dog has chewed away every page of the book as far as the letter P. When he gets up to P, I don't know what I'll do.

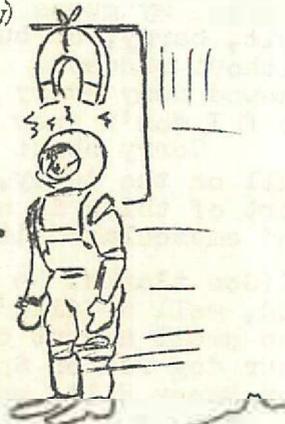
Sorry about that; it must be the result of seeing too much of Benny Hill on the telly. As a matter of fact there was a good deal more of this sort of thing in my letter until my wife exercised her powers of censorship and emasculated it.

Hoping you are the same, Bob
(((Gee t'anks. Re that cult..have you never heard of devil worship? As for God, well he didn't have the British Post Office to contend with. An ERG is the small amount of energy I originally intended to spend on the zine. Keep your dog fed on Spratts, buy a good dictionary and avoid such problems. As for Benny Hill, well he is our answer to Charley's Angels and Mindy and Mork. Another 21 years of ERG would see me tangling my beard in the duper at the venerable age of 78...still, they say you get madder as you get older. TJ)))

William Bains A friend and I had fun with model rockets in our youth, but rather than concentrating on the modelling as the American ones do (((They go for modelling and performance))) we were merely content to see ours work. Rather less dangerous than the old weedkiller-and-sugar bombs that pre-adolescents of all ages love to play with, but not much so. Our maximum apogee with a completely home-made rocket was 25ft, and I have a photo of one doing a magnificent sub-orbital hop to an (estimated) 6" peak. Altering Guy Fawkes rockets is cheaper and safer, and works...usually. I blush to recall the one that launched its second stage from a height of 2 ft...when it was coming down, nose first. And the one that wobbled to 20 ft and hovered there. Oh well, these were based, vaguely, on the aerodynamic principles explained in the self-same manuals you refer to. In America, one can get liquid fuel models (((My son had a water-pressure powered one in the early fifties!))) which I believe, can be made restartable. These cost, of course, and are not for the beginner who is advised to stick to the solid fuel kits. The engines for solid fuel are available in the U.K., although on a rather under-the-counter basis, generally as their legality is questionable. As for importing them, do it by surface mail. The engines are based on cordite, I believe, and I suspect would deteriorate, or even go off in an unpressurised luggage bay. (((Tomorrow the stars.)))

KEITH FREEMAN A.C. Kyle (((Dave Kyle's son))) brought one of the rockets you discuss, back from the States several years ago, and I believe, it was launched in the grounds of his school. - whether permission was got (somehow), or whether it was done "in ignorance" I don't know. A far cry from my schooldays when we discovered a part of a metal foil milk bottle top, fixed around the scraped off head of a match, when lit would soar from one end of the classroom to the other! Experiments quickly proved that more than one match-head caused weight/thrust problems.. although they did shoot along the ground in a very satisfying manner. (((I used silver paper..then graduated from match-heads to home-made gunpowder.. but my home mad charcoal was too coarse)))

William Bains..of course a lot of critics will jump on you (and him) for putting this 'hard'science article in a fanzine..but no matter in what out-of-the-way place, the truth will be told (no one ever mentions it being believed). Personally, I think the gravity at the rim must have some strange properties, or rather the properties of gravity at the rim have strange effects - this explains why one can leave home, go East (you can go West, but I didn't like the sound of that) and, eventually arrive back home. It must be that at the rim, gravity causes you (unknowingly) to start travelling round the rim. Why 'gravity' rather than electro-magnetism? well, think of the gravity of the situation if travellers could fall off the edge. Another thought, maybe this gravitational quirk is less powerful on the Western edge..(((Try to be specific about gravity)))and may explain the origin of the phrase "Going West". (Explain to the youngsters about RAF slang, Terry). (((Well, it's quite simple, if anyone went for a Burton in a fatal prang, we used to say they'd bought the farm. Anyone not hampered by the HDOID (and therefore not as dim as a brown type) could get clued up on such gen by doing some charpoi bashing with a good gen book...OK?)))



Roger Waddington
4 Commercial St
Morton, Malton
YORKS.

Enjoyed your dissertation on model rocketry, though I'm not altogether convinced as to its pleasures.. I mean, I remember Goddard and the American Rocket Society and Wernher von Braun taking part in the Germanic equivalent, and how without such men and their pioneering efforts, there wouldn't be an American Space Programme. (((H'm..and in England, experimentation on rockets and radio control is hamstrung..so we have no space programme..and limited other experimentation))) We're still tinkering with the most primitive of launching mechanisms, seems to be a negation of all rocketry should stand for! We should be experimenting to find new ways to send those rockets higher. Exploring the ways of doing it. In some alternate universe I expect that model rocket enthusiasts are discovering the principles of anti-gravity; of the long forecast FTL drive; which they might yet, in this universe! I see model rocketry now, as more the equivalent of the model railway enthusiasts, that is spending their time and finding their enthusiasm in the nostalgia of the old steam lines and re-creating them, rather than looking forward to the shape of future transport.

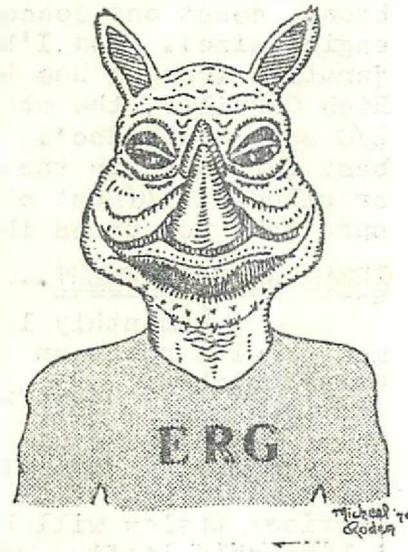
Looking through your book reviews calls to mind how many of the great classics are still in print and finding a new generation of readers. I mean, you've got 'The Kraken Wakes' in there, 'The City And The Stars', 'Voyage Of The Space Beagle' and literally half a dozen others. Might be an idea for a competition to guess which titles printed today will become classic, the winner being decided in twenty years time. (((Anyone willing to wait for their prize? Offhand, I'd bet a good percentage of the winners would be the 'classic' of twenty years ago.)))

Mrs. P.J. Boal
4 Westfield Way
Charlton Heights
Wantage, OXON

I've made up the model according to the secret plans on the inside of the envelope you sent (((How many other readers

noticed I'd made the envelopes out of old technical drawing papers?))) I'm sorry to tell you the full scale model didn't get off the ground. (((I'm not surprised, it was a post-hole digger))). Unfortunately, as every school boy knows, scientists are not agreed as to the location of the Earth's edge or the thickness of the world's disc. (((If the disc is as thick as the average trade unionist's skull, then we shan't get through it))). While the hardware for any such exploratory mission must of necessity, incorporate a good deal of theoretical speculation, I am sure that the only possible starting point must be in Bermondesey. We should enlist the aid of such serious minded scientists as Bob Shaw. Its is possible that his ship Yurin 8 is powerful enough to overcome the forces that keep us tied to the Earth's surface. (((Presumably its symbol would be a Welsh leak P)))

Thank you for ERG 69, a fun issue nicely balanced by the serious philosophical debate in the letter column. (((Huh.. I missed that.))) My fingers, time and purse no longer allow me to indulge in modelling, but I have a dear friend who's son hangs on every word of your articles on the subject. Problem with ~~little models~~ working models in this country is space. (((That's why I like space models))) Few people realise that our air space is so crowded, that there are very few areas left where it is legal to even fly a kite. (((Worse..this city used to have several model boat lakes..and now even they have been diverted to other uses. Just where CAM kids play?)))



DOUG YOUNG I liked the Ergitorial on the D.I.Y. Spaceship. Very neat
 14 Church St., and to the point, but whatever happened to the old Jetex
 Whitstable engines we used to buy. (((Anyone know?))) I started building
 Kent models from scratch (no kits) in 1928...rocket racing cars
 about 12" long; 3 or 4, penny skyrockets in the rear nosed up against the
 driving seat. I started making them after seeing Fritz van Opel in his
 rocket car..pictures in the newspapers of the time. They used to go like
 hell, very spectacular!

MIKE A BANKS Have been quite involved in building rockets for a compet-
 P.O. Box 312 ition that I and another local rocketeer are entering as a
 Milford team in May. I've built two Boost-gliders, converted from
 Ohio 45150 Jetco kits for the 1/2A engine-powered boost-glide events,
 U.S.A. and am working on a model for 'predicted altitude' compet-
 ition. (You calculate how long your model will stay in the air, including
 boost, coast and descent based upon its weight, coefficient of drag and
 engine size). and I'll be building a 5ft tall rocket for 'Super-Roc'
 duration (rocket has to be over 5ft tall) and longest in the air wins.
 Rich Cardillo, the other NAR member, is doing scale, (A 'Hawk' missile) and
 B/G and 'Super-Roc'. We will have a fly-off to see whose model does the
 best for entry in the meet. With any luck, we will come home with trophies
 or ribbons. (((Best of luck and may you clear the board of trophies. I'll
 sure take you up on the offer to launch one when I'm over there in August)))

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 also wanted...pre 1935 sf and aircraft magazines...will trade for
 mint hardcovers and paperbacks. Contact the editor. Also interested in
 books on the cinema, astronomy and popular science...what have you got ?

In ERG 69, I mentioned an article by Harry Andruschak, on the comet mission of 1985....here it is, reprinted from STELLAR FANTASY NEWSLETTER ...



THE ION-DRIVE COMET MISSION OF 1985

by Harry Andruschak

One of the many missions that JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratories) has wanted to launch, has been a rendezvous with a comet. We know so little about these inhabitants of the Solar System. There are problems, however, to such a rendezvous. Conventional rockets do not have the energy required. Even the mighty Saturn V is hopelessly underpowered for the missions planned. The solution has been the ion-drive, otherwise known as Solar Electric power.

Then there is the cost of such a mission. It is steep..and at the moment, we are in a financial squeeze as far as funding for NASA goes. In 1978, we tried to get financing for an ion-drive mission to rendezvous with this very active young comet. Money was refused, to the anguish of much of the scientific world. JPL came up with a second chance at a comet mission. It will have to be started next year if it is to get off the ground in time. I have no idea whether Congress will give us the money. But if they do....

On August.1. 1985, A Shuttle will blast off from KSC. Once in orbit, its bay doors will open, and a spacecraft perched on an IUS (Inertial Upper Stage) will appear. The Shuttle will ease away from the IUS, then give the order to fire. The IUS will launch the spacecraft out of Earth orbit and away from the ecliptic. Then the spacecraft will separate from the booster and unfold enormous wing panels of solar cells. 30Kw will be generated to power the ion-engines.

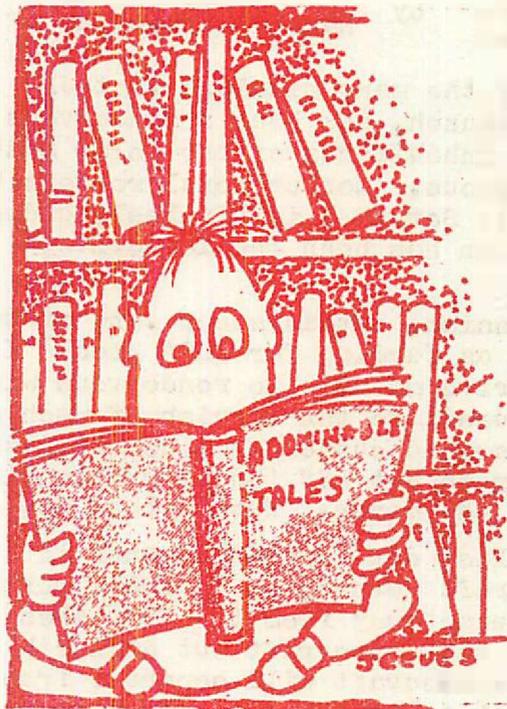
On Nov.28 1985, the spacecraft will have a fast flyby of Comet Halley. At this time the comet will be 73 days from perihelion, at a distance of 1.5 AU (Astronomical Units, about 140 million miles) from the Sun. No rendezvous is possible, since Halley will be moving at an inclination of 162° to the ecliptic. Instead, a small probe will be dropped to pas through the tail of the comet. A poor second best to what we could have done with a rendezvous, but at least we will get some information. Halley will continue on to perihelion on Feb.9 1986. And that is that for 76 years, as far as probing Halley's comet goes.

The spacecraft will continue its journey, using its ion drive to climb out of the plane of the ecliptic to 12° , the inclination of Comet Temple Two. This comet is a rather older one, with a period of 5.3 years and a perihelion distance of 1.38 AU. On July 18, 1988, the spacecraft will have achieved rendezvous with Temple Two. 60 days from perihelion an at a range of 1.5 AU. For most of the next year, measurements will be taken of cometary gases, appearance, ionisation and so on. The spacecraft will follow the comet round the sun and all the way out to 3.0 AU. The mission is to be terminated on July 14, 1989...1400 days from first launch. Wish us luck in getting money from Congress, friends.

And in a letter on Feb.15, Harry says.. "The mission is cancelled due to lack of funds, and that is a damn shame, as it would have been a fun mission to be on".

Agreed, Harry...now if only we could power one with the hot air from Congress, Parliament...and unpty thousand football matches ...

RECENT READING



TWO, LARGE-SIZED ART/TEXT BOOKS from Pierrot. Each 28cm x 28cm and crammed with artwork ..

ALIEN LANDSCAPES

Holdstock
and Edwards.
Pierrot \$5.50

The authors have selected a number of SF 'classics' and outlined their settings - useful if you haven't read the tales and equally fascinating if you have. By referring to pseudo-texts and references plus writing in the style of 'this is how it happened', they have added an extra dimension and linking to unrelated stories. What really brings the project alive is the collection of superb art work. (Quibble. Why not say where they first appeared ??) In brief; RAMA..Jim Burns. PERN..R & L Garland. OKIE CITIES..John Harris. MESKLIN..Tony Roberts. EROS..Colin Hay. ARRAKIS..Terry Oakes. RINGWORLD..Stuart Hughes. TRANTOR..Angus McKie. HOTHOUSE..Bob Fowke. END OF THE WORLD..Les Edwards. Some of the work is a bit garish, but permissibly so, since they were done (?) for cover art. A real treat for SF and art buffs.

PLANET STORY

Harrison & Burns Pierrot \$5.50

Harry Harrison has written a delightful space opera send-up and this has been superlatively illustrated by Jim Burns who supplies some 50 very detailed paintings. Private Parrts has been exiled to Strabismus, but when Lortium is found there, the giant robot machine RRAGG is sent to lay a rail-road to the mine. Being of low IQ, he goes slap through various cities on the way. When Admiral Soddy takes his personal train along the line, accompanied by a horde of troopers, Private Parrts and the luscious Styreen Fone, they meet hostility and menace. True lust finally triumphs. Hilarious, souped-up fanzine humour with terrific illustrations..drool over Styreen Fone. A successful alliance of the coffee-table art book with a tongue, firmly-in-cheek, space opera. I loved it. If you can only afford one of these two goodies, mortgage the canary and buy 'em both.

THE ULTIMAX MAN

Keith Laumer
Sidgwick & Jackson
\$5.95

Just as small-time crook, Damocles Montgomerie is about to be gunned-down, alien observer Xoriable intervenes in order to experiment on a human being on behalf of the Galactic Concensus. His experiments turn the criminal into a super being who sets out to overthrow Xoriable's plans and to oppose the Concensus. The results and events are highly reminiscent of one of P.K. Dick's Galactic romps. The first half of the tale is sheer, gripping, wish-fulfillment in the classic vein, but the galactic adventures seemed to be rather off-the-cuff and lacked the pace of the beginning. Nevertheless, Damocles puts up a scintillating performance as a new style superman and although this probably won't win any Hugo, it should still get a good reception, especially by the less strait-laced.

FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD

Corgi £1.25

Robert A. Heinlein

Hugh Farnham has prepared carefully for nuclear war survival, but when it starts, he, his family and their coloured servant Joseph are blasted into the far future. They start to settle in to a new life, but are quickly picked up by the new rulers, the blacks..and white people are for slavery, rape or castration. A situation which reverses Joseph's menial role in a neat character change. Farnham is the archetype Heinlein father figure but the yarn is highly readable both for plot and writing skill. Recommended.

KINSMAN by Ben Bova

Futura 'Quantum' £1.25

and

Sidgwick & Jackson £6.95

This is the story of one man's dream set against a hard-core background of space exploration. Chet Kinsman, alienated from his rich father, is junior Air Force lieutenant with his heart set on getting into space..and later, to the moon.

We follow his progress through confrontation and promotion as he faces problems, bureaucracy and the hazards of space travel. Set in the very near future; authentic as fiction can ever be, this could almost be the dramatised biography of a contemporary astronaut. Maybe not Award material..it is too 'real' and hard core for that I'm sorry to say (I personally suspect that only 'woolly' tales win awards) but this is a compelling novel. Whether you buy hardcover or soft you'll not regret it if you like real SF. For my money, I'd rate it as Bova's best to date.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TALISMAN

Clifford D Sinak

Sidgwick & Jackson £6.95

A mediaeval but 29th Cent. setting in an alternate universe. The Lord's son Duncan and his comrade Conrad, set off on a mission to convey a holy manuscript to Oxenford. Their journey involves crossing the Desolate Land; a wandering, unfixed area populated by werewolves, trolls, demons and the monstrous Harriers. Along the way, the travellers acquire a ghost, a goblin, a hermit, a witch and a beautiful, griffin-riding girl. From here on, it is a trek-through-troubles, with magic, mayhem, mystery and monsters as our heroes wander the Land. Of recent years, Sinak has worn this plot into the ground with tales such as 'Destiny Coll', Shakespeare's Planet', 'Cemetery World' and so on. Even the 'ghost' has trekked before. A shame, but although Sinak has produced a well-written tale and a lively assortment of characters there's nothing new here for the long boiling pot. Alternatively, if you haven't read the others, then this is a real treat.

GATEWAY TO LIMBO

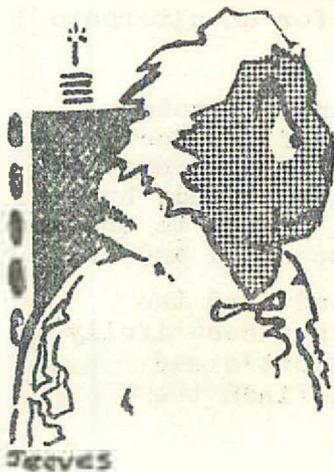
Chris Lampton

Sidgwick & Jackson

£5.50

Big business tycoon Hawkesworth has opened a portal into an alternate universe populated by the Zzyri. He arranges an energy transfer which involves sacrificing members of a race, native to the portal world. Allison Carstairs, his second in command sets out to foil the scheme.

The result is a round-the-houses adventure yarn with several loose ends (how did Carstairs retain his 'leech' while being brainwashed and rebuilt?). Hawkesworth proves highly implausible..as do Carstairs and the two alien races. However, the yarn has plenty of fast action and if adventure and excitement is what you crave, then you'll find it aplenty here. This could well have appeared in the old Astounding before its decline.



Teves

THE NIGHT OF KADAR

After a thousand year journey, an automated starship selects a planet and begins to grow, educate and awaken the embryos in its tanks. An alien influence initiates a change in the procedure. A landing is made and the colonists find they are on an island so set out to make a bridge to the mainland, then find they have to cope with strange creatures, humanoids and further interference from the 'Manipulators'. The author has given his colonists an Arab culture and done it superbly. Characters come alive with credible motives and dialogue. The plot grips you from page one, avoids irritating loose ends and hold you till the end. Written by Garry Kilworth, and 95p from Penguin...and you'll not regret buying it.

THE OUTWARD URGE

Wyndham & Parkes
Penguin 95p

The Troon saga of five stories from the late fifties. The Troon men have an urge to space, and here we have each male descendant in turn doing his bit to aid man's destiny. Each Troon is a mix of Biggles and Dan Dare and the tales have that mellow blandness characteristic of earlier British SF. Troon (each descendant is virtually the same man) saves a satellite from missile attack; makes the first Mars landing; experiences atonic warfare from the surviving Moon Base; escapes from Brazil's space monopoly to land on waterlogged Venus; and finally manages to live twice after a disaster in space. Smooth, pleasant stuff, but not compulsive reading.

MIRACLE VISITORS

Ian Watson
Panther £1.00

Michael Peacocke is seduced by a blonde in a UFO. Later, after hypnosis by John Deacon, strange events and visitations commence. Together with Deacon and UFO investigator Shriver, he visits the moon and meets an alien race before finding that even reality is being warped by a group mind. This is less a story than a catch-all aimed at 'cosmologists'. If you believe in UFOs, Pyramid Power and von Daniken, then you'll drool over this one. It explains just about every sort of occurrence you can imagine.

SURDUS THE EARTH

Walworth & Sjoström
Panther £1.25

The authors postulate that Earth's history was vastly modified by ice ages and catastrophic bombardment by remnants of a disintegrated fifth planet. Orthodoxy is wrong, so the writers supply their version of plate tectonics, the death of reptiles, magnetic variations and so on. As a layman I suspect such statements as 'tornadoes are sustained lightning bolts, and hurricanes are mirror-images of sunspots'. The debating style is of the order, 'it can't be A, therefore it must be B' (ignoring the possibility of C, D or E, etc.) However, if you scoff at orthodoxy and prefer an alternate look at our planet, then here it is.

THE LUCK MACHINE

E.C. Tubb
Dobson £4.95

When a pair of down-at-heel teachers at an nth. rate private school get kettled in the company of a rejected research scientist, anything can happen. In this case, it does when they stagger back to the school lab. and, by dint of electronics, voodoo-drums and a touch of psi power, manage to create a working 'luck machine'. The results are disastrously successful and there is a sting in the tail. This is the best Tubb tale I've read (and the earlier ones were good). In 'Luck Machine' he comes up with a beautifully constructed yarn with touches of Thorne Smith..and even Padgett's mad scientist 'Gallegher'. Tubb mines a new vein of humour and finds the mother-lode.



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MARS AS PHOTOGRAPHED DURING THE VIKING-2 APPROACH (Early August, 1976) – Viking 1 Lander events and activities dominated the attention of the Viking Flight Team early in August last year, overshadowing much of the approach science completed by the Viking 2 spacecraft prior to its orbit insertion August 7th. However, its approach program was trouble free and produced an impressive volume of science data – including this dramatic color approach picture of Mars taken August 5 from a distance of 419 000 kilometers (260 355 miles). Viking 2 approached Mars more from the dark side than had Viking 1 in mid-June, providing a crescent view in contrast with the half-disc perspective afforded by the first spacecraft. Contrast and color ratios are enhanced to improve the visibility of subtle surface topography and color variations. Bright plumes of water ice clouds extend a considerable distance northwestward from the western flank of *Ascraeus Mons* – the northern most of the three volcanoes aligned on the *Tharsis* “bulge”. The middle Tharsis volcano, *Pavonis Mons*, is barely visible within the dawn terminator below and to the west of *Ascraeus Mons*. The great rift canyon system, named *Valles Marineris* following its discovery during the Mariner IX mission, extends from the center of the picture at the terminator downward to the east. Its full length is nearly 4800 kilometers (3000 miles), including the complex at its west end named *Noctis Labyrinthus* (sometimes called *the Chandelier* because of its branched, inverted-triangle topographic pattern). The bright basin near the bottom is *Argyre*, one of the largest impact scars on Mars. This ancient crater is near the south pole (which is not visible in this picture), and is brightened by icy surface frosts and fogs which are characteristic of the near-polar regions when each is experiencing its hemisphere’s winter season.

