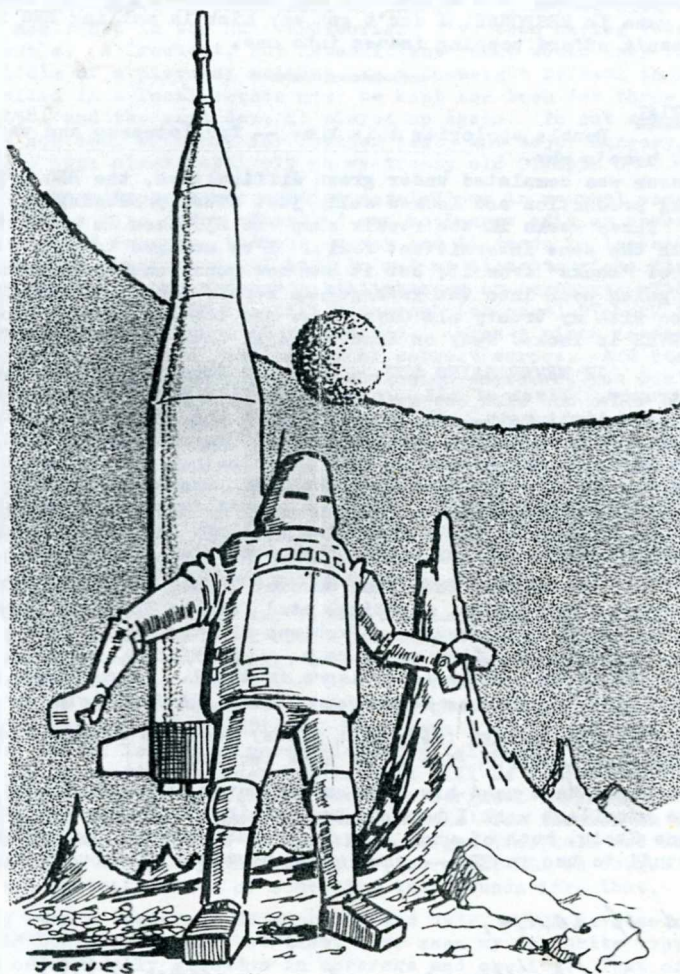


# ERG

# 105

*Quarterly*

January / 1989



IF you enjoyed this issue and would like to get the next, there are three ways

1. Write a LOC and enclose 2 second class stamps (omit stamps outside UK)
2. By trade - not for fanzines, I have enough on this side -- but I'll do a deal for magazine SF (not Analog), Aircraft Mags (Model, Military but NOT civilian flying) or old pulps. Drop me a line
3. By cash sub. Sorry but postal raises and increased printing costs mean I must charge 60p or \$1.00 per issue and pro rata. (Dollar bills please, not cheques)

A cross at the top of the page means that sadly, this must be your last issue unless you take action. A ? means "Are you interested? Let me know" The name of the game is RESPONSE, I don't get any kick in mailing ERG into a vacuum and can't afford popping issues into one.

## MINI-ERGITORIAL

Double apologies this time -- for lateness and variable typefaces .. here's why.

Last issue was completed under great difficulties, the BBC w/p began to act up during production and locked solid just after producing the last page of ERG 104. Three weeks in the repair shop and £38 less in my kitty, and it returned with the same intermittent fault. I've managed to chivvy half a dozen pages of 'Books' from it, but it has now gone completely round the bend and will be going back into the ~~REPAIR/MA~~ repair shop. Meanwhile, I'm soldiering on with my trusty old Olympia .. and the current instalment of CARRY ON JEEVES is locked away on disc, so I'll have to try and re-write it.

IT NEVER RAINS BUT ..... Our trusty Astra has also begun to be less trusty. First of all, we began to find pools of water in the seat wells after even light rain. All attempts to trace the leak-in point have proved useless. Add to this a new propensity for refusing to start at all on damp days and you can see why my hair is thinning. One other snag, not the fault of the car, is the fact that the idiot who erected our garage put it offset from the building line, so it is almost impossible to get the car in or out -- so we hope to solve all three problems by buying a new, smaller car -- probably a NOVA. Oh my aching bank account.

To bolster that bank account I need to sell off some of my books (hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines etc) and to do that, I have to get the sale lists out of the computer. Problems all the way. Please send your solutions on the back of a five pound note. Hopefully, all will be back to normal for ERG'S 30th Anniversary issue in April. Stay tuned, and if you want to buy paperbacks or hardcovers - send SAE for lists

Happy news .. MY FILM CAREER (here last issue) has been accepted and pubbed by the Scarborough Leader. Fame on my home territory!

For those who didn't read his me on the cover, it was done by Steven Fox .. whose excellent work I hope to include in this issue - along with that of Diana Stein, both of whom live in the USA and kindly sent along some fine stuff to use in ERG -- when space permits. Ta you guys.

... and of course,

*A Merry Christmas and a happy 1989  
to all ERG readers*

*Terry*

## ERGitorial

# Bits & Pieces



This time around, instead of nattering on about one particular subject, I thought I'd chat about an assortment of things -- starting with this issue of ERG. As mentioned in the Mini-ERGitorial, I've been having (and still am) computer troubles. A frequent, but intermittent fault would vary from locking up in the middle of a piece of writing, to a downright refusal to boot up at all. I called in a local repair man; he kept the Beeb for three weeks, charged me £38, and the next day, it played up again. To cut a long story short, it is now back with him for further tests and major surgery, so this issue has been done almost entirely on my trusty old Olympia SM-8.

Using a steam typer makes writing more tedious in several ways. First off, when I make a typo (very often), I can no longer edit on screen, but have to use 'Liquid Paper' - tedious, messy and it tends to leave a blur. Secondly, and more frustrating, I have to get my thoughts right first time. With a computer one can re-arrange words, phrases or sentences with no bother at all. It is even possible to shift paragraph (or page) 97 back to an earlier part of the manuscript if so desired. When a piece is finished, it is dead easy to go back and 'polish' it or correct errors. And best of all, if you want a nice new clean copy for submission anywhere, you don't have to type the whole thing out again - just call up the file and order a print. Oh yes, and it gives you the word count as well. Practical note, back there at the start of this paragraph I ran two words together 'more tedious', if I were working on the computer, I could now go back and insert a space .. and of course call for justified margins, heavier print, italics, enlarged, Pica or Elite typestyles. As for illustrations, well, having finished a piece I can then estimate how much illustration space I can give it -- and adjust the margins to leave that gap in the printed text. I can't wait to get my boon companion back in working order, using it is sheer JOY - and I mean that.

Long time readers of ERG may recall my piece MORONIC MENACE in No. 79. It dealt with the possibility of electronically tagging criminals in order to keep track of what they were doing, or at least, where they were doing it. Much recent publicity has been given to its arrival in England in the form of a wrist tag which must be inserted into a telephone-connected machine in reply to a call from the probation officer. What wasn't explained, was what happens if the tagged person is not in possession of a telephone, or if one is out of order. Niggling apart, I wonder how long it will be before progress moves to the point mentioned in my article -- first to surgical implants for the tags and then to using them as 'identification symbols' for the man in the street. A handy interim stage might be to tag the hooligan (football and lager louts) in that way. Who knows, by the year 2000, we might ALL be tagged for our own good, care and protection --- or something that sounds like that.

Having been a reader of SF since around 1932, and a devotee of good old ASTOUNDING/ANALOG for all of that time, I've seen my favourite tippie go up, down .. and occasionally sideways in coverage and quality. That of course is a very subjective comment, so please don't take my next comments as being the laws of the jolly old Medes and Persians. Agree or disagree as you will.



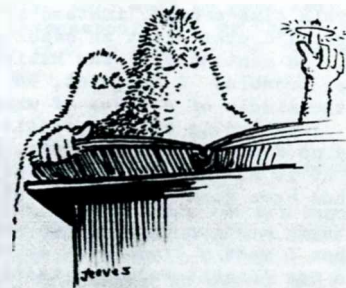
First the stories. In the very early days, we had several standard themes. Space travel (discovering new worlds or fighting pirates), time travel, dimensional travel, robots or some new invention/discovery. Almost all were in the adventure mode wherein the hero struggled again the odds or his invention, before winning out. Came the A-bomb and we were deluged by a stream of down-beat yarns of mutated humans struggling against barbarism. The next step came with ESP powers and SF began to take on some of the aspects of Fantasy. Then, almost imperceptibly, came 'real-world' SF. We had tales of astronauts facing technical problems in space, Mack Reynolds pushed his political theories down our throats in a series of 'Cold War' yarns and Rick Raphael looked at future policing, water shortages and other social problems. The floodgates opened and we were in the era of 'MESSAGE SF'. To hell with an interesting story, if the author could thump his tub for minorities, blacks, Puerto Rican, ghetto dweller, whale, dolphin or otherworld species doubling as one of these, then said tub was loudly thumped. ...and it still is. These themes are now the staple fare of many a yarn, but without any real story to carry them along. How often have you read such a plotless piece and said to yourself, "What a load of old cobbles" or words of similar import?

Let me hasten to say that I'm not against such tales IF they are made interesting, and not done too often, but surely modern authors should be able to improve on this. Writing standards are far higher than in the old days, so why can't the plot levels also be higher?

Which brings me to the artwork. For some thirty or forty years, SF illustrators have produced superb artwork which set the scene for the story without giving the plot away. Names like Schneckman, Cartier, Brown, Preas, Paul and Dold come to mind. Nowadays, we have more technically accomplished artists working on gagazines with much more tolerant printing systems than the old pulp mags could offer - and what do we get? FACES! Flip through your old Analogs for the last year and you'll find that almost half of the 'artwork' uses faces of the characters, or perhaps 'head and shoulder views of two of 'em. Gone are the wide-ranging scenes of alien planets, space vistas or endless machinery doing its fascinating nut. No, we get FACES .. done tastefully in all shades of printing tones from snow-white to almost impenetrable black. If anyone out there is listening, how about showing Messrs Lakey, Di Fate, Steadman, Crist, and their ilk, a stack of old pulp mags in the hope of widening their artistic horizons.

Speaking of new horizons, it seems a good time to make a few comments on my own new horizon here in Scarborough having been here for more than a year. Naturally, having lived in Sheffield for nigh on sixty years, bar five and a half in the RMP, I had some misgivings about moving. I loved the city, its people, and its general cleanliness -- although I had to laugh at the rubbish cluttered centre with its numerous signs saying 'THIS IS A LITTER FREE ZONE' -- if the road signs on the approaches saying 'THIS IS A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE' are no more effective, then hard luck mates. I also loved our house there, its large garden with apples trees, pear trees, cherry trees, raspberry, strawberry, gooseberry plants and bushes, its greenhouse, pool, fountain and woodland behind. Access to the beauties of Derbyshire was but ten minute drive away.

Then we moved to Scarborough. The house is smaller (a two bedroomed dormer bungalow, but I have been able to floor over the loft (a walk-in one) and crammed it with bookshelves. The garage is larger than Bannockdale, so I've fitted in a ten foot wide workbench and a sawbench. The garden is smaller than Ghu, but whereas I had to construct four terraces in Sheffield,



here in Scarborough, our garden is one long gentle slope. I can cut ALL the grass using only one extension power lead on the Flymo, whereas before I had to employ two Roverpoint leads, and couldn't reach the far end even then. Val has taken over much of that chore since my operations, so she blesses the lack of steps, terraces and hard work involved. The old place took several hours to do, this one can be done under an hour.

Views are superb, to one side we can see the sea about two miles away. Down the hill are the roofs of the local village, Scalby and then in a wide sweep are the moors and edge of the Dalby Forest. If we walk to the end of our road, two minutes sees us in open country, three more and we're at Throxenby Mere and the start of beautiful woodland. Only a few miles away is the hamlet of Hackness where the local Post Office bears a board saying... R.L.HUBBARD..PROPRIETOR Honest! Admittedly, R.L.H turns out to be a little old lady behind a barricade of stationery, sweets, corn plaster and other essentials to modern living, but it IS R.L.Hubbard .. good job the initials are reversed.

Scarborough itself is a five minute drive and its centre is much more compact than Sheffield's three-mile linear shopping strip. Even so, we seem to have a much wider range of shops, theatres and activities. Monday I play snooker at the Conservative Club, Tuesday is Writer's Circle night, (just behind the station), Wednesday I usually attend Church with Val (no, I'm not a convert) which rotates between Scarborough, Filey and Bridlington. Thursday lunchtime, we have fish and chips at Wackers then attend the classical music concerts in the library. Since coming here, social horizons have widened as well as the topographical ones. We've met two successive Mayoresses, been film 'extras', and I've given a couple of talks and had a write up in the local paper.

If we ever tire of Scarborough (most unlikely, as we love being here), we have many local or near local places to visit, Robin Hood's Bay with its quaint cottages and smuggling history. Whitby with its sheltered harbour and fascinating town. The Minster towns of Beverley and York are close, and about the only fly in our ointment is the annual LOMBARD RALLY.. we get LUMBERED BY RALLY when that happens, as they hold it on the forest roads just two or three miles from here. Oh it isn't the actual racing that lumbers us, no, it's the idiots who attend. They watch their heroes belt round the private roads in highly dangerous power slides, then they run to their own cars to drive along the narrow public lanes to get home in time for Constipation Street or whatever. Being idiots, they try to emulate the Rally Men, but on highways used by lesser mortals. Believe me, it is MOST disconcerting to come to a hairpin bend, slow to a gentle ten MPH to negotiate it, then to be suddenly faced with an almost out of control vehicle screeching round the bend on your side of the road. From our point of view, there isn't a welcome in the rallies.



Turning to other matters, next issue, APRIL 1989 marks ERG's THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY !!! Nope, unless Reader's Digest send that umpty-thousand pounds they keep telling me about, it won't be a bigger-than-usual issue (Unless you all offer to pay £1.00 a copy ??) Meanwhile, what sort of articles would you like to see therein. My hobby/interests are:- SF, drawing, painting, photography, making cine films, tape recording, model-making, aircraft popular science, cosmology, technology, crosswords, maths, indexing and so on. I am NOT interested in pop 'music', rabid plugging of ANY political party, ism, creed, cult or pressure group. S&S fantasy and TV are also out.

Otherwise, I'd welcome suggestions as to what sort of thing you'd like to see in ERG. Don't be shy, whilst writing your LOC (and you will write one won't you?), add in a word or two of suggestion.

Until next time ... all the best,

*Harry*





## SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Life as a Wireless Mechanic was not all beer and skittles - in fact, we had NO skittles and only three bottles of beer A MONTH ..if the supplies arrived.

Chief activity was doing one's nut in trying to sort out the pile

of electronic snaggery to which Liberators were prone. To refresh your memory, each B-24 carried:- ONE Bendix Radio Compass Unit and two remote control boxes as well as a roof-mounted loop aerial. TWO Command transmitters plus their THREE Receivers and a modulator unit. ONE Liaison transmitter with its receiver, spare tuning units and a trailing aerial winch. ONE main intercom amplifier and TEN station boxes each with its own 2-valve amplifier and sockets for both MAP and US pluggery. Almost every one of these gadgets boasted its own clip-in motor generator for supplying H.T. Stir these with the Highly Derogatory Order Of The Irremovable Digit operated by sundry aircrew members and something was SURE to go awry. Murphy's law was strict, if anything could go wrong.. it would .. and did.

It wasn't just the fault-finding which caused frustration at times. The immutable laws of the Air Ministry as operated by Store Bashers didn't help. I recall removing a duff modulator unit from a Lib, carting it back to the Wireless section and spending forty minutes tracking down a faulty condenser (capacitors they call 'em nowadays). I unsoldered the thing, carted it round to Stores and asked for a replacement. "Oh we don't carry spares for repair work, the whole unit has to go back to an M.U." Muttering words which mum never taught me, I re-soldered the useless component back into its lair in a densely packed chassis before seeing it vanish into the Limbo of Stores.

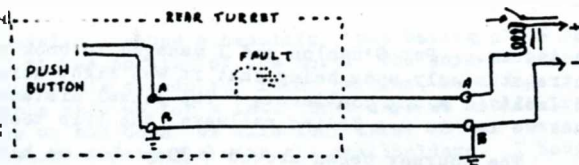
Servicing on a work bench was tough enough, but imagine carrying it out in the restricted confines of a Liberator whose metal skin was heated to some 130° by the Bengal sun. One particular fault kept driving us round the bend. Time after time, one Lib would return from ops with the complaint, "Intercom faulty, keeps cutting out." Once on the ground, the system worked perfectly. Once the plane flew again, back came the fault .. until one day, it stayed. The intercom remained inoperative. Gleelessly, we descended on it and starting at the tail (a bad guess) we began to work our way through the junction boxes, taking off the faulty wire and testing through. After a long time, I finally squeezed into the navigator's cubby via the nose-wheel. This was the last junction box before the rear turret. Tiredly, I removed its cover .. and there lay the cause of all our troubles. Someone had been drilling the aluminium and had carelessly allowed a bit of swarf to fall inside the box. Vibration when airborne caused it to short out two contacts and previously, the bump of landing had jarred it clear. One small item causing one big problem.



On another occasion .. again, an intercom fault, this time somewhere inside the confines of the rear gun turret had already driven three mechanics crazy. The cause of the fault was simple .. repairing it wasn't. Let me explain that American aircraft had (still have??) a strange system of having switches in the negative side of a gadget. This meant that apparatus was at high voltage whether or not the switch was closed. If you look at my little diagram on the next page, you will see that the intercom button in the rear turret connected a relay line to earth, thus making the relay close. In our

problem, a short (shown dotted in the diagram) caused the to be permanently closed.

The obvious repair was to replace the faulty wire A-A, but this ran somewhere INSIDE the naughty bits which made the turret revolve. Problem, how to put things right without calling in a Coles crane and driving fitters and armourers crazy by asking for the turret to be removed. The Jeeves lateral thinking came through and the fault was put right in ten minutes. See if you can solve the poser before reading on ... Given up, or solved it? Well I reasoned that A-A is shorting to earth .. which is where wire B-B is connected at both ends. Simply swap them over and the fact that the new B-B will now have a third earth connection won't make any difference. It worked, and the Lib got into the air on time.



Another little difficulty arose in the distance separating the flight dispersal from the main W/T Section. If you were lucky, you hitched a lift on a passing wagon. If not, you walked - only two miles, but across near jungle and in boiling heat. It was on one such ramble that I came across a trail of black ants, each about 1" long. The trail led into a small hole in the post-monsoon, dried mud. Being a nosy type, I hunted up a bit of stick and prodded away at the hole. Imagine my surprise when I dug out a half eaten frog, then imagine even greater surprise when a further prod released a live frog which went hopping away shaking off ants. I reckon I saved that one from being eaten alive, but the RSPCA never sent me a medal.

Occasionally, work slackened off and we were able to pursue other activities such as having 'make the longest skid' contest, using the American bicycles which we had (two for the section). If you have never ridden one, be warned. They tend to have hub brakes connected to the chain drive. To brake, you simply back pedal. This can be disastrous to someone used to the British freewheel system, but after a few prangs, we mastered its use and had great skidding fun on the dust road -- until the tyres blew out. Good old Biggy also demonstrated (unsuccessfully) his theory that one could time the engine revs of the three-tonner and slip it into first gear without using the clutch. He never managed it, but did flatten the battery in the attempts.

There was also our version of darts -- played with 12" screwdrivers flung at a target painted on a door. We got quite adept at throwing the things so that they made one rotation before thunking into the wood with a resounding crash. That little game had to be discontinued because the row was driving crazy the instrument bashers next door.

There was one other unmentionable pastime which was guaranteed to start a row -- the so-called 'home leave' scheme whereby airmen (if lucky) could be transported home for a month's leave. This sounds admirable .. until you read the small print on the notice. You weren't eligible if you had been overseas longer than two years. Imagine what that did to the morale of those of us with three years Indian Service....especially as all calls to reduce the period of overseas service were met by the bland statement -- "We can't spare the transport". No transport? Yet here was a scheme which shifted personnel BOTH ways, not just back to England. We long-termers had to sit and watch friends go home who had only been out in India for eighteen months, whilst we worked slowly towards our four year target.

Leave was possible however -- not to Blighty of course, but there were other places -- if you could wangle your way around a 'Catch 22' situation. To go on leave, you had to prove you had a place to go to. This meant contacting a hotel or leave centre, making a booking and THEN try and get leave for that period. To make a booking, you needed to know when you could get leave .. to get leave you had to know when and where you had a booking. As a result, I had been in India for a couple of years before I finally beat

the system. Pat O'Hanlon and I managed to book ten days at Naini Tal leave centre, the only snag being that it was right across the other side of India and India is a big continent. The actual distance was about 1200 miles, but since we had to use Indian railways, the trip took about two days.

The journey began around 6-30am when we hitched a lift down to Karaghpur on the ration waggon. If you look on the map, you'll find this is about 100 miles SW of Calcutta. Eventually, a Calcutta-bound train arrived and took us to the filthiest city I have ever seen (bar Manchester). Having a few hours to wait, we grabbed a rickshaw and headed off down Chowringhee to the Casanova Club where we sat and imbibed soothing potions until around ten pm, whereupon, we rickshawed back to the station, fought our way through teeming hordes of bearers, beggars, travellers and arguing officials, to our compartment on the train. No 'Frontier Mail' this, no beds either, just a hard seat two feet wide and made of hardwood... and my home for the next two days. We pulled out of Calcutta around 11pm and slept sporadically on the benches. Sometime the next morning we crossed over the Ganges river at Benares and saw all the Indians at their ablutions by the water. Early evening got us to Lucknow where for some reason (maybe to wind up the engine's spring), there was a wait of four hours. We caught a rickshaw into the town and tried the local cinema. After a few drinks in the bar, Pat and I took seats near the back. Twenty minutes into the film, a bearer came around to see if we wanted more hooch -- we did and repeated the process throughout the show. By the time we got back to the train, things were a trifle hazy, but that night I slept like a baby.

Around mid-day, we reached Kathgodam where we had to change to the narrower gauge 'Hoot and Toot' line. Well, its real name was the 'Oudh and Tirhut Railway', but with mini-trains, what else could you call it? That got us to Bareilly by around three pm and an overloaded coach groaned its way up the torturous twenty miles of hairpin road to Naini Tal, two and a half days after we had left Salbani.

If they ever remake Lost Horizon for the third (?) time, they ought to set it in Naini Tal as Shangri La. After miles of dusty road, you swing round a curve between two masses of rock, and there before you is the long lake nestling between lesser mountains which wander off into the distance and eventually become the Himalayas. There is a road along one side of the lake, but no cars are allowed past the entrance gate, so it is always peaceful. The other side of the lake is only accessible by boat, and there, on a tiny bit of rock, dwells a hermit who for the sheer hell of it, occasionally rings one or two of the bells strung above his head. Our leave home was about a third of the way along the road and overlooked the lake from its wide (and comfy) verandah. At the far end of the lake was the Maidan where one could stroll or ride a horse. From there a narrow alley led through Talli Tal bazaar - a cluster of shops selling trinkets, silks and beautiful Indian craftware of all exotic kinds. To one side of the Maidan was a small cinema cum dance hall. As was to be expected, common rankers had to be back in uniform by 6pm so the girls could pick out the officers without any trouble.



Written like that, Naini Tal sound a beautiful, but boring place to spend a ten day leave, but it was nothing of the sort. The joys of being away from 6-30 Reveille, cookhouse crowds and food, parades, heat and Salbani's flat dustless plain made up for a lot. Some days we would hire rowing boats and have races up and down the mile-long lake. Other times we would stroll through the bazaar and haggle with the stallholders. I bought a lovely bolt of silk there and mailed it home. On another occasion, we climbed laboriously to the top of one of the mountains and were surprised to find a native there selling lovely brass and enamel ware. I fancied a beautifully decorated (map of India) cigarette case and bought it after beating him down from 18 rupees to 12 (about 18/- (90p to you)). I still have it though the colours have faded and I no longer smoke.

Once -- and only once, I went for a swim. It was a hot sunny day, the water looked inviting and there was a raft about twenty feet out. That distance was a piece of cake underwater, so I took a deep breath and dived in. 'Whooooah!' The water was icy, it came from melting snows. My deep breath vanished immediately, I struggled to the surface and floundered to the raft. After half an hour drying out (and warming up) in the sun, I finally plucked up the courage to lower myself back into the water and make the swim back to land.

Another once and never again experience was horse riding. We hired a couple of hacks and a guide and set off up a mountain trail to Cheena Peak. Although up until then, I'd only ridden seaside ponies in my childhood, I managed OK once we had trotted across the Maidan and began the ascent at a more stately pace. The trail was narrow and precipitous, but my mount had a bit of left hand side. It kept bumping gently sideways into the sheer cliff edge rising on my left. This suited me fine, as the other side of the path dropped away in an equally sheer drop. Logic might have warned me of what was to come, but I never applied it, so on we went and finally rounded a final curve to reach a small plateau. The view was MAGNIFICENT. Range after range of ever larger mountains marched away into the distance. Way off towards the horizon was a most peculiarly shaped cloudbank. Misty at its base, but jagged at the top. It took a moment for me to realise I was looking at the Himalayas rising above the clouds .. Nanda Devi at nearly 26,000 feet being the one towering to the right. We stopped and gazed for a while, then it was time to descend.

This was where things got decidedly hairy. My horse still had its left hand side ... but now, instead of bumping against the cliff wall, it began sidling along the very edge of the sheer drop on the other side of the trail... as fast as I managed to steer it away, it would veer back again to give me an excellent view of lots of nothing. Since that experience, I have avoided horses like the plague.

Evenings were a bit more peaceful. Naini Tal was some 7,000 feet above sea level and temperatures dropped with the sun's descent. Changing into uniform was compulsory, but we found that khaki drill wasn't warm enough, so we wore our RAF blue. Since Naini was anored by Army types, this could have proved awkward. Wearing khaki, there was little to distinguish RAF from Army in the daytime, but we stood out like sore thumbs at night. Naturally, there were 'incidents' but I never got into one. Instead, I just enjoyed the odd film (Danny Kay in 'Wonderman' was one of 'em I think. The dances were not too bad, but as mentioned earlier, the girls all wanted officer escorts, so the few who would dance with the commoners were in great demand.

We both enjoyed the stay at Naini, so much that we repeated the dose as soon as we were able to scrounge another spot of leave. The second stay being a sort of celebration to mark my completing three years in India.



ERGitorial interjections are either in italics or, when the Beeb broke down, hidden inside triple parentheses (((Thuswise, see??)))

Now read on .. and hopefully be stirred to comment.

Bestest,

Terry

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KING'S RD STM, WALLSEND ON TYNE

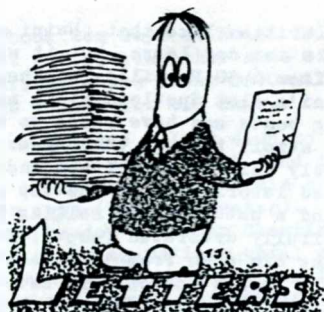
The cover reminded me of the scene in Star Wars where Obi-Wan-Kenobi produced a laser sword - well drawn. Oh, a subject not touched in your series about monsters, mad scientists etc. What about weapons in SF? Although they seem to be mostly rayguns with not a hint of how they work - though in Ellern's new Lensman series, the first described lasers in some detail. I had thought of weapons, but apart from digging 'em all out, I suspected I'd get a lot of flack for talking about them -- as I once did with an article on Space War - still, I'll think about it +0

MICHAEL CLARKE, 18 WENDOVER WAY, WELLING, KENT, DA16 3BN

Re Ethel's letter. I think BLAKE'S 7 was the only series I've ever watched with any attention, finding it about on a Planet Stories level. My own feeling was that somewhere along the line - author, director, actors - wanted a py rise, so the BBC having heard about STAR TREK, were grimly determined that this lot weren't going to come back - so zzzzap! 'Flying Wings' rang a tiny bell, which I tracked down to a 1962 Fawcett Book THE MYSTERY OF OTHER WORLDS REVEALED. A glorious hodgepodge of astronomy, space travel and all. An article on flying saucers showed a twin-engined plane with rounded 'D' shape body, two very small swept-back wings and a couple of tail fins - photocopy enclosed. It looks real enough though your guess is as good as mine why it's undercarriage was down at that altitude. Not a retractable u/c that's why. I kicketh myself, as I have a copy of MDOHR and never thought to look there. Many thanks for photocopy though -- and would you believe, two days after mailing out ERG 104, I got a COMPLETE BOOK on Northrop 'Wings' from Alan White in the USA - VERY good man. +0

ERIC BENTOLIFFE 17 Riverside Cresc. Holmes Chapel, CHES CW4 7NR

Your review of 'LIGHT YEARS' by Gary Kinder on page 23; it is entirely possible he could have encountered some travellers from the Pleiades who had only travelled for four hours...there is, you see, a small collection of mountains named 'Les Pleiades' up above Vevey and Montreux (Lake Geneva area) but they would have more likely made the trip by railway than by flying saucer. I'm sure that piece of useless information will enthrall all your readers, if not Gary Kinder. ((I've heard of Les Dawson and Les Beans, but not Les Pleiades. Next time you get up that way, have a look for a range called 'Centaurus' and that will solve a few more saucer visitations))) Liked the Steven Fox cover on ERG .. mind you, for absolute authenticity he should have put some lamps in that futuristic light-fitting he drew. ((I gather the fittings radiate invisible rays.)))



ROGER WADSWORTH 4 Commercial St, Norton, Malton, Nth. Yorkshire YO17 9ES

One thing you have to remember about modern pop music is that nobody listens to it anyway, so you don't really need words... well, for the early '60s it was music to 'dance' to, so the words were never that important; and in these late '80s, pop music is nothing more than something to listen to while you watch the video. Of course, there are times when pop fans feel the urge for something more, music with words as well; which is why those sixties hits keep coming back and are just as popular this time round. Certainly, I doubt these eighties hits will be anywhere as nostalgic.

((I agree mate. We attended a Dinner Dance last week and whilst my generation (born in the 20s) learned complicated dances, and the sixties had their energetic and not easy 'twist', today people simply stand and wriggle to the music. Learn a dance, don't be stupid, that's WORK. We had a perk though .. the band played a rumba, nobody got up until Val and I took the floor. This happened a couple more times and at the interval, the 2nd GOH (the 1st GOH was Lord somebody or other) made a point of coming over to say 'Thank you' to us for getting the dancing going. That was Sir Michael Thingummy, the local MP. Ah Fame. As for modern 'mu-sick' well I fancy it stems from a fear of silence. Nearly every shop has a 1000 watt player belting out the rubbish.)) Actually, for all that I try to be in tune with the present and open to the future, I had a nasty shock the other night; I was thinking back and realised that my memory banks included one of Woolworths when it had counters and soled their biscuits from glass-topped tins. ((Glam 'tins' ?? I recall when they only sold items for 3d or 6d)))

KEN LAKE, 115 Marchouse Ave. LONDON E17 8AY ((In addition to getting a letter into the same edition of the Sunday Times as myself, Ken also wrote a long and mirthful LOC. Sadly I can't run it all here..but have a sample))

Was most intrigued to read of you lounging reading on your charpoy (a native paid to remain on hands and knees for hours while colonialist airmen used him for a sofa) while tying chapattis to your feet (for the ants and termites to persuade them to eat the athlete's foot fungus from between your toes). My, life in India must have been one long holiday; I remember once shaking out my clothes before donning them and finding three unpaid bills, four dogends and a forgotten girlfriend nestling in them - Amazing what you can find when you take the trouble.

I haven't had much trouble with snakes, beetles or indeed centipedes whether 8-inch or larger (or smaller, oddly enough) in Walthamstow, but have you tried corasing the road recently? ((What with, a pen?)) Drivers have metamorphosed into killer elephants, but taking a kukri to one rarely rarely seems to do much good - bumpers blunt the fine edge of the tool. ((Go for the drivers, they're softer)))

TED HUGHES 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield Manchester M25 6ER

COJ was amusing as usual. Don't know how you ever got used to the insects in India. People find it hard to believe when you talk about beetles as big as your fist. One ship I served in, the officer supervising unloading under floodlights at night in Rangoon had to wear balaclava, gloves and tuck his long trousers into his socks before going out on deck. Ugh! You could hear 'em crunch under your feet as you walked along. This quarter's instalment of W&W on flying wings didn't excite me as much as your previous disclosures. Wings, I can take. It's the flying bath-chairs and pump-up aeroplanes that I like. ((How about the inflatables in this issue then?))

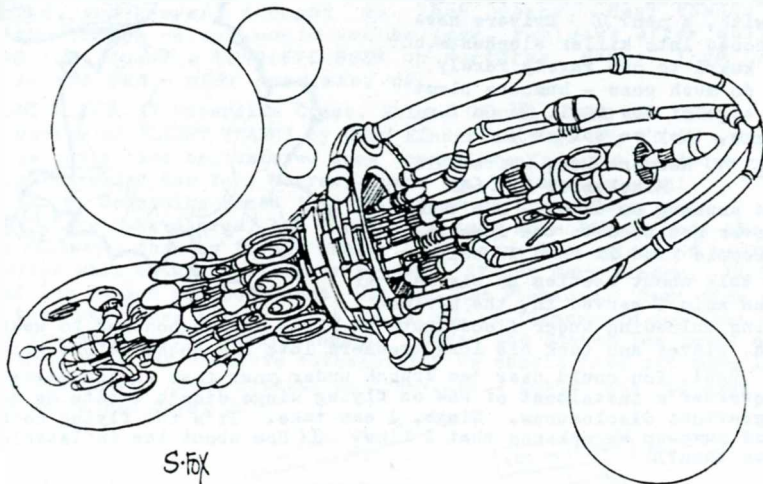
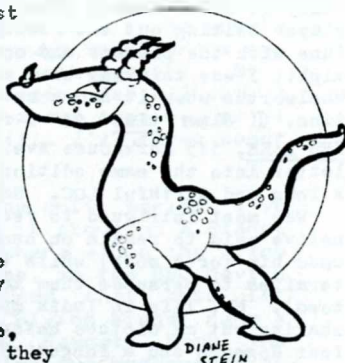


PETER SMITH 16 Treata Walk, Woking, SURREY GU21 4XF

I find modern pop unlistenable to, I used to think this was because fashions had changed so much since I was young that my musical ear was now anachronistic. However, after much diligent anthropological research of modern man, I now realise modern pop seems unlistenable because it is unlistenable. It's not music to be listened to but something to obscure the silence, aural wallpaper to conceal the blankness (((Between the listener's ears?))) With the spread of walkmen one's freedom from this crud is being reduced. (((I don't know, at least you don't have to listen to someone lost in walkmanland -- but I bet there's an increase in the number of people getting knocked down whilst under the influence of walkmen

ROY HILL 8 Lansdown Rd., Canterbury, KENT CT1 3JP

Thanks for the back issues, having read ERG 82 I am now writing what may be the most delayed LOC in history. In your DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE you review many cartoon characters and say the most surrealistically imaginative of them all was KRAZY KAT. I agree, I met KRAZY KAT in the PENGUIN BOOK OF COMICS just a few weeks before reading your comments and out of all the characters in the book, his was the one that wormed its way into my mind. The stories were always triangular between KAT, IgnatzMouse and Offisa Pup, with Ignatz hurling bricks at KAT and KAT taking this as a form of affection whilst Pup represented authority. It probably does not sound much to anyone who has not read it, but with the settings changing violently from frame to frame, and with dialogue like.. "Insupportable nonentity - I love to hate him", it can jumble mundane thoughts. Apparently the cartoonist, George Harrison, once refused a pay rise on the grounds he was not worth any more, and when he died after 35 years of Krazy Kating, they let the strip die with him because it was so idiosyncratic. (((Ah memories. I wish someone would bring out a book of Krazy Kat and Stover cartoons. However, if anyone wants a copy of DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE, I still have some left at £2.50 a copy including postage)))



13  
This story was written as my entry in Scarborough Writer's Circle 40th. Anniversary Competition for a 500 word story with the title FORTY YEARS ON. Happily, it took second prize. Here then is...

#### FORTY YEARS ON

Henry Grimes, biochemist, was a genius, millionaire and a monomaniac. Barely had he graduated, than his genius devised an infallible, one tablet, oral contraceptive for men or women. This made him a millionaire. At which point, his monomania took over. For the rest of his life Grimes searched diligently for the deadly factor in the human make up which causes ageing and eventual death. Numerous blind alleys and fascinating lines of research were followed until at last he discovered the right track to his goal. It would take time, but success was certain. Given another forty years, he knew he could isolate the killer cell, neutralise it and become immortal.

There was just one little snag. Grimes was now seventy years old, so how could he gain such a glittering prize?

The monomania struck again. He studied Occultism, Black Magic and Satanism. He learned the right spells, drew a pentacle and called up the Devil. Beelzebub proved to be a crusty old fellow in a scarlet robe, slightly deaf and wearing bifocals, but Grimes wasn't giving up at this stage, he came straight to the point.

"I'm seventy years old and I want another forty years," he said.

"Speak up, don't mumble," grumbled the Evil One.

"I said I want another forty years," gritted Henry.

"Granted," cackled the Devil. "In exchange, for your immortal soul, claimable on your death." He eyed Henry's wrinkled features and added, "and that shouldn't be too far away."

Reaching inside his robe, the Devil withdrew a sand-filled timer which he inverted before placing on the table between them. "Once the sand has all flowed through, your wish will be granted and your soul forfeit."

Grimes gave a malicious grin.

"Just one thing you might like to know," he gloated, eyeing the fast diminishing pile of sand in the upper half of the glass.

"You'll never collect my soul because by the time my extra forty years are up, I'll have become immortal." He rubbed his hands gleefully as the last grains began to slither through the timer.

"An extra forty YEARS?" gasped Satan. "Forty YEARS and you planned to fool me by becoming immortal." He gave a laugh and added. "This is the first time I've been glad to be a trifle deaf..."

The final particle of sand dropped noisily into the lower glass and the Devil's bargain was sealed. Multiple sounds flooded in on Henry, he heard grass growing, flies walking and clouds bumping. Above the sudden cacophony of sound, he heard the Devil's last words.

"....I thought you said you wanted an extra forty EARS!!

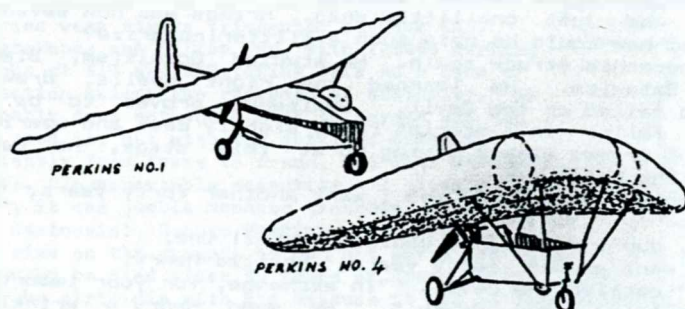
THE END



## BLOWING UP AIRCRAFT

Sorry to disappoint any would-be terrorists among the readers, but this instalment of W&W is about inflatable aircraft - yes, flying machines that were pumped up like balloons. At which point, I'd better repeat that these, and ALL other machines I have described in earlier instalments of 'Weird and Wonderful', have actually existed. They are NOT some form of hoax.

I gather the original idea behind these particular weirdies was that they would prove useful for clandestine, 'behind the lines' operations, possibly by guerilla forces and the like - apart from being low speed flyers, they were the only flying machines that could hit something -- and bounce! Moreover, as one of their pilots said later, punctures were no problem as, "one hardly ever comes across nails and broken glass up there".



The Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough was the site of the testing of several early models. On the 7th of March, 1956, Designer Dan Perkins, R.A.E. Research Head, made his first flight in his first inflatable creation - the Perkins No.1. This weighed 167lbs and for transport, was deflated, rolled into a bundle, 14" in diameter and 4'3" long. The 6hp engine packed into a 16" cube. (This engine had previously been used to power a full-size model of an Auster light plane - of which I can find no other details, save that it 'made only short hops'.) The aircraft was inflated in 25 minutes by using a domestic vacuum cleaner! The two-seater cabin was an air-inflated slab suspended from a delta-wing, wheels were made of plywood, the front one using a deck quoit for a tyre, and the engine and elevator controls were operated by pull strings. The low power engine could only just lift one man.

Perkins got it airborne at 23mph, rising to a height of 4 feet - twice what he considered safe. He later made several flights of up to 20 feet altitude, then made a crash landing which merely bounced his aircraft and left it undamaged. Eventually, it achieved 700 feet and 58 mph. Several models were tried, the Perkins No.4 had its pilot sitting in a hole in the delta wing, whilst the airscrew was made of foamed polystyrene covered by varnished typing paper. Flights under tow were made in Cardington's giant airship hangar. One of the problems encountered was expansion of the air-filled wings as the aircraft

rose into less dense air. This was overcome by leakage valves, whilst a windmill operated blower restored pressure when descending.

About a year later, a more sophisticated inflatable with a 60hp engine was tested at Cardington by pilot David Masters. Designed by Marcel Lobelle, ex-Fairey Chief Designer the machine was officially called 'The M.L. Utility', but unofficially referred to as 'Dumbo' or 'The Durex Delta' - and later, was christened 'Loopy'. Its official description was 'Inflatable Wing Army Reconnaissance Vehicle'. Various sizes of delta wing designs were tried - using such exotic names as Gadfly, Blofly, and Mayfly.

Flying performance left something to be desired, 'It was necessary to hold the stick fully back, then after an interval, the nose would suddenly rise for no apparent reason'. Pilots had to treat the aircraft gingerly and flying in cloud or turbulence was out. The second model crashed into a tree and sustained a puncture, though the pilot was unhurt. It was at this point that helicopter development rendered the idea obsolete.

In 1957, the Goodyear Corporation of America also played with inflatable aircraft.

Their entry took the form of a two-seater called 'The Inflatobird'. Details are scarce, but it seems that only the wing was inflated. The fuselage had a one wheel undercarriage and outrigger skids

were fitted at the wingtips. Apart from its pylon-mounted engine, the machine closely resembled a training glider.

## REFERENCES:

FARNBOROUGH - The Story of R.A.E. Reginald Turner and Arthur Reed Hale.1980  
AVIATION The Story Of Flight Bill Gunston Cathay Books.1983

ADDENDUM Only three days after I mailed out ERG 104 with the article on Flying Wings, a parcel arrived from that Very Good Man, Alan White of San Jacinto, CA. It contained complete photocopies (some 60 pages) of NORTHROP FLYING WINGS by Ed. T Maloney. All the details of every one of 'em. flying notes, tests, photos and even 3-view drawings. A real feast for me. You may still be able to get a copy from W.W.2 Publications, PO Box 272, Corona Del Mar, CA 9265. Thanks again, Alan.



**FAERIE TALE** Raymond E. Feist Grafton £11.95

The best terror tales are strongly rooted in the 'real world' - this one starts innocently when the Hastings move into a ramshackle house edging a Haunted Wood, its previous owner a dabbler in black arts. Twins Sean and Patrick encounter an elvish being and are stalked by a spider-like monster. Teenager Gabbie is lusted after by another forest dweller. Gradually, the threads of horror and menace intrude on their world in a complex saga of suspense and terror.

**VALE OF THE VOLE** Piers Anthony New English Library £6.95

Esk, son of ogre and nymph, joins Chex (a winged centaur), and Volneythe Vole. Needing help, they seek the Good Magician. Aided by Princess Ivy and an adjustable skeleton, they meet strange creatures and adventures along the way. A lovely range of beings, word play and atrocious puns make this a refreshing change from sword swinging sorcerers. Read and enjoy.

**KNIGHTMARE** Tin Child & Dave Morris Corgi £1.95

Tredgard seeks to regain his family castle now held by an evil sorcerer. After setting the detailed background, the ending becomes a role-playing fantasy. Based on a TV series I missed.

**DAUGHTER OF THE EMPIRE** Raymond E Feist & Janny Wurts

Grafton £3.50 Father and brother killed by a traitor's action, Mara becomes ruling Lady of the Acoma in a blood feud with a rival House. She is driven to a treaty with alien insectoids and betrothal to the son of her enemy. Crammed with strange rituals, a multi-layered fantasy of rivalry and treachery in a barbaric land.

**THE BOOK OF DREAMS** Jack Vance Grafton £2.99

A striking Foss cover enhances this fifth novel in the 'Demon Princes' series wherein Kirth Garsten seeks out and destroys the last of the villains who slew his parents. Howard Treesong, 'Lord of the Overmen' is the vilest of them all, but amidst the strange peoples and customs of Vance's excellent yarn, he too meets his match.

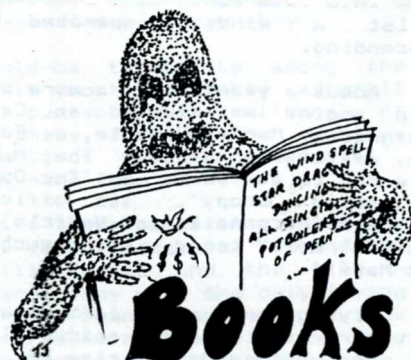
**THE SLEEPING DRAGON** Joel Rosenberg Grafton £2.99

A group of fantasy game players find themselves shifted (method, a 'no-no') to an alternate world of magic and violence. They become their game characters complete with powers and physical attributes and must find the Gate to their own world. Excellent fare, and first in a new series.

**TALES OF THE CTULHU MYTHOS** Ed. August Derleth 500pp £3.99

**NEW TALES OF THE CTULHU MYTHOS** Ed. Ramsey Campbell 335pp £3.50

Lovecraft Devotees will love these two Grafton anthologies which use HPL's background. The first title has a Biography and 30 stories by various masters (2 by HPL), dating from pre-1963 magazines. The second volume holds 9 more modern tales plus note on the authors. Spread your reading to avoid any sameness, and it's a feast for lovers of creeping, supernatural horror.



**THE DARKSWORD** Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman Bantam £3.50

Merlion is a land where magic works, but Joram lacks the power. When this is discovered, he flees to the Outlands, joins the 'Technologists' and with 'catalyst' Saryon, begins a quest for the magic sword. First in a new trilogy by the Dragonlance authors.

**THE DARK DRUID** Kenneth C Flint Bantam £3.50

In ancient Ireland, legendary hero Finn MacCumhal begins a dangerous quest to save the land from the evil schemes of the Dark Druid. A mix of Sword, sorcery, enchantment and heroism in the concluding saga of the Sidhe Legends. There's also a brief glossary of names and pronunciations to help you with the tongue-twisters.

**JINIAN STAR-EYE** Sheri S Tepper Corgi £2.99

Jinian and Peter continue their adventures. This time, they struggle in a time-maze, are conjured and joined by Ganver, an Eesty. They encounter strange creatures and events in a gentle, engrossing fantasy trek. Third in the Jinian Trilogy wherein Ms Tepper again demonstrates her ability to create fascinating characters and situations.

**THE SCREAM** John Skipp & Craig Spector Bantam £3.50

The rock band 'The Scream' has taken teenagers by storm, and drives them to orgies of drugs, sex, violence and sadism. If blood, and horror appeal to you, here it is in abundance.

**THE NAUTILUS SANCTION** Simon Hawke Headline £2.99

Another in the time-travel wars sees Major Lucas Priest agent of the Temporal Corps. This time, a nuclear sub has been hijacked by a man who plans to start history's greatest war.

**COUNT BRASS, THE CHAMPION OF GARATHORM, THE QUEST FOR TANELORN** by

Michael Moorcock Grafton £2.50 each.

The three novels of the 'Castle Brass' trilogy now re-issued in a new format with striking cover art by Paul Damon. They tell the adventures of Dorian Hawkmoon, Duke of Koln and his endless battles to save his wife Yisselda, his children and the realm from the forces of sword, sorcery and evil. Moorcock's stories aren't for me, but if you like 'em, then don't miss this collection.

**THE FALL OF THE FAMILIES** Phillip Mann Grafton £3.99

Sewuel to 'Master of Paxmax' (ERG 104) sees Paul assume his position as master of the Fifth Family. Alien species, oppressed by the Families and guided by 'The Tree' begin their moves to cast off the yoke - and Paul's little alien friend Odin is sent to betray him in a conflict with outre results for Paul and his new wife.

**SAM McCADDE: IMPERIAL BOUNTY** William C Dietz N.E.L. £2.99

When the old Emperor dies, his successor is missing, so bounty hunter McCade, a sort of interstellar James Bond, has to find him against the opposition of powerful odds. His mission involves bloody battles and dangerous adventures before its completion.

**PENNTERRA** Judith Moffett N.E.L. £3.99

The Quaker colonists on Pennterra have come to terms and harmony with the native hrossa having agreed to limit population and remain in one valley. Then new colonists arrive, deny the agreement, ignore warnings - and the planet strikes back. Slowed a bit by the sex angle, but a rattling good yarn of hardcore SF.

**ROOF OF THE WORLD** Christopher Fowler Legend £11.95

A youth 'flying' into a Coca Cola sign is the first in a series of grisly killings carried out by a cable-riding rooftop gang obeying the sadistic Chyme - a man of strange powers. Inspector Hargreaves investigates whilst TV agent Robert and photographer Rose stumble across a trail leading to a rival gang which they join to overthrow Chyme. Strange rites, aerial cableways (NB You can't ride down a cable and gain both height and speed), unlikely chases, poisoned missiles in a lively mix of fantasy and detection.

**SLEEPING FLAME** Jonathan Carroll Legend £10.95

Walker, an actor/writer in Vienna meets Maria York who is being threatened by her ex-boyfriend. As they fall in love, strange events begin to occur - prevision flashes, a sea serpent appears, and Walker meets with the mysterious Venasque who teaches him a skill in a whirling kaleidoscope of mystical experiences, places and times.

**ISLANDS IN THE NET** Bruce Sterling Legend £11.95

In a nuclear-safe 2023, the Net communications system is all things to all men. Rizome employees, the rather square David and Laura run a company hotel to win popularity promotion votes. Then a visitor is killed and they find themselves uprooted and sent on an appeasement mission among the 'data pirates'. A hectic assignment which changes their lives in a vividly depicted drama.

**TRANSFORMATION** Whitley Strieber CENTURY £10.95

Following up an earlier book 'Communion' in which the author described his contact with alien beings. Now he follows up with his experiences and findings to show how the visitors have watched over and interfered with human destiny. More introspective than Daniken, his account involves UFOs, abduction, changes in reality and more - all written in a personal style. UFO and ET buffs will snap it up.

**LAST SWORD OF POWER** David Gemmell LEGEND £11.95

Ancient Britain under King Uther's rule is threatened by invading forces of the evil magician Wotan who seeks to become a Black God. Foundling Cormac (Uther's lost son) joins with immortal sorcerer Revelation to foil the plan. They rescue blind girl Anduine, possessor of strange powers, but Wotan steals Uther's soul as his forces move in. Complicated names and places, but a gripping saga of Sword & Sorcery.

**THE TRILLION YEAR SPREE** Brian Aldiss & David Wingrove Paladin £6.95

This highly revised version of 'Billion Year Spree' has a Chris Moore cover of an up-dated Icarus. Behind it lurk nigh on 700 pages of scholarly SF criticism. Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein' is claimed as the first true SF (as 'earlier tales came before the genre was originated' - a sort of Catch-22 statement). Authors, and editors are examined in detail through Campbell and on via the fifties boom and media 'Sci-Fi' to when SF hit the 'big time'. No punches are pulled in the assessments of literary quality, and you may find your own views being readjusted. This is definitely a title no true SF buff should be without.

**WHITE MARE, RED STALLION** Diana L. Paxson £3.99

Set in a pre-history Scotland of gods and magic. Maira, Chieftain's daughter and warrior-woman is loved by her rival clansman Carric. A Romeo/Juliet romance in which the couple must face battles, magic and much journeying before they find peace -- for a time, as the ending hints at more to come.

**THE WHITE RAVEN** Diana L. Paxson N.E.L. £12.95

Set in 6th. Century Ireland. Branwen (White Raven and Queen of the Otherworld) grows up as companion to Princess Esseilte. When Esseilte is betrothed to the English King as a peace pawn, she calls on Branwen's powers to aid her. A massive 400 page re-creation of the Tristan/Iseult legend in an involved, delicate mix of ancient history, magic and folk customs. There's also an Afterword plus generous lists of characters, places and lineages.

**PIRATES OF THE THUNDER** Jack L. Chalker N.E.L. £2.99

Second in the 'Rings Of The Master' series wherein humanity is ruled by a giant computer - A band of escapees including an intelligent space ship and a shape stealer seek to acquire the five programming rings which can overthrow it. Excellent and fast moving space opera in the Doc Smith tradition.

**A MULTITUDE OF MONSTERS** C.S. Gardner Headline £2.50

Sequel to 'Malady Of Magicks' wherein the Wizard Ebenezur continues to seek a cure for his violent sneezing when near magic. Along with warrior Hendrek, demon Snarks and apprentice Wuntvor the romp leads to demons, a Brownie, monsters and the Society For the Advancement of Mythical and Imaginary Beasts and Creatures.

**A MATTER OF OATHS** Helen Wright Methuen £3.50

Oath-breaking and mind-wiped Rafe is an ostracised 'webber'. He is hired by Rallya, Commander of the Bhattya in an interstellar conflict of Immortal Emperors. Rallya probes his origins with surprising results. I can do without homosexual central characters, but otherwise, it's excellent, enthralling space opera.

**COUNTERSOLAR** Richard A. Lupoff Grafton £3.50

1942 in an alternate time track, Jack Northrop pilots a Flying Wing to investigate signals from a CounterEarth orbiting the other side of the Sun - and to foil an Argentinian mission to take over the planet. A mix of improbable characters, incidents, creatures and a detour to Ceres in a send up of pulp SF.

**DEATHDEALER, Bk.1** James Silke Grafton £2.99

The Kitzakk warriors and slavers are coming. Only superwarrior Gath of Beal can save the Forest People. Aided by village girl Robin, faced by sorcerer Dang Ling, but betrayed by Serpent Queen, Cobra who offers him a helmet of invulnerability if he will be her consort. A saga of blood, battle and magic.

**TALES FROM THE SPACEPORT BAR** Ed. George H. Scithers & Darrell Schweitzer N.E.L. £2.99 A score of stories, all having some connection with a spaceport bar. The include a Niven vignette, alien invasion, revenge, a force field, Feghoots etc. A host of entertaining yarns with enough variety to please everyone. An excellent reader for bedside or train journey.

**A BLACKBIRD IN TWILIGHT** Freda Warrington N.E.L. £3.99

Fourth in the 'Blackbird' sequence. The dead Serpent God lives again in old Ah'garith, Emperor's adviser who seeks to attach the Sorceress Melkavesh and bring ruin to all. Against her machinations is the blackbird Miril. Close on 400 large size pages of battle against resurgent evil.



THE FOG James Herbert N.E.L. £12.95

When a freak earthquake devastates a peaceful English village, the earth opens to release a yellow fog which drives people crazy. Survives his initial encounter, John Holman seeks to establish a link between the fog and secret weapons research. Suicide, murder and atrocities occur as the drifting mist grows despite efforts to disperse it. A gripping 'real world' horrific menace which grips throughout and would make a terrific film.

MILLENNIUM Ben Bova Methuen £11.95

Chet Kinsman commands the U.S. half of moonbase Selene and when population and pollution pressures push Earth to the brink of nuclear war, he and the Russian leader plan to take over Selene, grab the ABM laser satellites and bring peace to Earth. A top-notch, 'it could happen tomorrow' yarn. The jacket says 'first published in Britain in 1983' - which ignores the 1977 MacDonald & Janes Edition, but it's still as good a read as ever so if you missed it before, now's your second chance.

DEATH BLINDER Bernard King N.E.L. £2.99

Concluding the trilogy of Mather Lambisson, Champion of the Yngling Dynasty. Again the Gods and Norns test his powers, this time in Finnmark where he faces the great sorcerer Vultikamian who seeks power and destruction of the Yngling. A bloodthirsty saga of sword and sorcery.

STILL RIVER Hal Clement Sphere £3.50

Five students of assorted species arrive for their final assignment on Knigga 88, a tiny planet, too small to hold an atmosphere, but which does. First a robot disappears, then a student and all are pitched into a series of escalating problems from the weird environment. Clement has taken a basically improbable situation and produced one of his logical 'situation' puzzles.

AMY GIRL Bari Wood Sphere £3.50

When her drunken father brutally kills her mother, 8-year-old Amy is taken in by the Levin family. Then she begins to develop a terrible power to use against any who cross her. Thus begins a tale of horror and violence. One of those tales which leaves you wondering just what is safe -- and normal.

SWORD AND SORCERESS Ed. Marion Zimmer Bradley Headline £2.99

After a brief item on women, fantasy and submissions come some twenty tales of sword and sorcery with women as the central characters struggling against cruelty, oppression and the Dark Forces of Evil plus a few other hazards. Virtually all the writers are women, so now you know.

IN THE CAVES OF KILLS Ru Emerson Headline £3.50

Second in the Tales of Nedao. Along with Nisana of the cat-kind, Ylia Queen of Nedao has fled the barbarian hordes and now seeks to rally the last of her people. She must use her powers of sorcery against an evil enemy out of the past if she is to survive.

MEAT Ian Watson Headline £2.99

Saul and Diane save a rabbit from a vessel only to have a horde of the creatures move in as a bloodthirsty power is released. They are pitched into a nightmare of horror which also involves the local goons of the Animal Liberation Front and causes a butcher's shop statue to come to terrifying (and blood spattering) life. Plenty of violence, horror and gore.

DEEP QUARRY John E. Sith ACE £3.50 Pub. Date Feb. 1 1989

Private Eye Ben Takent is called in to investigate missing relics from an Architectural dig on Tankur. Each step forward leads to further puzzles including a number (1) of killings, a hectic chase and an awesome discovery. An excellent, forties-style SF yarn on a who-dun-it theme. Highly readable and I enjoyed it for its pace and lack of current 'messages'.

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT'S REVENGE Harry Harrison Bantam £2.99

Slippery Jim marries Angelina before setting off to find how the planet of Clisand is successfully waging Interstellar War. Aided by a band of women, he finally solves the mystery in a fast-moving, slick and totally improbable series of adventures. Fun for rat-lovers.

TRACK OF THE WHITE WOLF Jennifer Roberson Corgi £3.99

4th in the 'Chronicles of the Cheysuli' I quote.. "Prince Niell should have been the link between the warring Cheysuli and Homsnan. Yet neither of his peoples feels anything but suspicion and hostility - the Homsnans fear Cheysuli heritage and the Cheysuli refuse to accept his lack of 'shape changing powers'. Now Niell must travel through war-torn lands on a mission fraught with danger, searching for his bride, his destiny and facing the deadly Ihlini sorcery"

MORT Terry Pratchett Corgi £2.99

Another tale of Discworld, the planet borne on the backs of four elephants riding on a giant turtle. The ineffectual Mort is offered a job by a stranger called Death and off he goes on another hilarious - if impossible romp through a land where anything is possible.

THE AMTRAK WARS 4 'BLOOD RIVER' Patrick Tilley Sphere £3.50

Japanese 'Iron Masters' send minor official Wantanabe to make trade deals among the North American 'Mutes' whilst elsewhere, Steve tries to save the Mutes, Cadillac and Clearwater in a three cornered struggle twixt Japanese. Mutes and the First Family heading the AMTRAK Federation. A complicated mix of hi-tech and near barbarism in an America where Japanese have a foothold on the East Coast.

DARK VISIONS: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE AMTRAK WARS Sphere £5.99

Patrick Tilley has written this 64 Qto page background to the AMTRAK series to form an alphabetical companion fully illustrated in colour by Fernando Fernandez. Striking colour plates, diagrams and 'technical data' to all the vehicles, aircraft etc. form a collector's item, a superb volume of reference detail to lovers of the series, and for model-makers, a whole bag-full of futuristic devices to construct. Con-goers may prefer to create their weapons and costumes from the designs herein. Come one and all!

THE EAGLE BOOK OF CUTAWAYS L.Ashwell Wood Webb & Bower £12.95

Another feast for modellers, nostalgia buffs and lovers of these lovely centre-spread cut-away drawings which graced 'Eagle'. Here in a 94 Qto hardcover are some of the best - aircraft, cars, trains, spacecraft, buses, trams, tanks, submarines and even a few peeks at 'the future'. Every page recalls a memory - of Spitfires, Hurricanes, Empire Flying Boats, old cars dear to one's boyhood, 'Silver Link' steam trains and much, much more.

THE SWORD AND THE CHAIN Joel Rosenberg

Grafton £2.99 Book 2 of 'Guardians Of The

Flame' set in a land of magic and dragons to which a band of game-playing students were translated at the whim of their professor. However, in this land, they have the super-powers of their game characters ..and need them to stay alive as they seek to free the world from the thrall of wizards and slavers.

THE KING OF IS: GALLICENAS Poul & Karen Anderson Grafton £3.99

Another 'second parter' set in Roman Times in the land of Is where the nine Queens - the 'Gallicenae' cast a spell to bring them a new champion and King, Gratillonius in a saga of violence, bloodshed and treachery. If your knowledge of the era is rusty, first read the 40 page appendix at the back to sort out names, places, characters and other details. An excellent read for lovers of period adventure epics.



**THE PENGUIN BOOK OF VAMPIRE STORIES** Ed. Alan Ryan Penguin \$4.95

If you thought Bram Stoker originated the vampire legend - think again. Into its 600+ pages, this book crams 32 tales culled from more than a century and a half of writings on the theme. They include Stoker's 'Dracula's Guest', C.L. Moore's 'Shambleau' and non-blood sucking tales such as Kornbluth's yarn about a mental vampire. On top of all these, you also get a pair of appendices - (i) Vampire Novels (ii) Vampire Movies. Not to be read late at night!

**FANTASY TALES** A paperback Magazine Robinson 99p

The 'smallpress' magazine is now a slick, digest magazine containing eight tales of fantasy and horror plus two poems and a department of news and letters. Some excellent illustrations add atmosphere and you can take out a 4 issue sub for only £3.60. - Sub. Dept. Robinson Publishing, 11 Shepherd St LONDON W1Y 7LD It's virtually a modernised 'Weird Tales' - but better.

**THE BEST HORROR FROM FANTASY TALES** Ed. S. Jones & D. Sutton Robinson £11.95

Fantasy Tales saw ten years in its 'smallpress' format. Here in a handsome hardcover are 20 tales (and illustrations) from that period. A researcher and a monster, déjà vu, murder, madness metamorphosis, restless spirits, zombies and hauntings are all here along with gore, sorcerers and vampires. All the old thrills n' chills are here, but in up-to-date form.

**STAY OUT OF THE SHOWER** William Schoell Robinson £6.95

An examination of 'blood-horror' films starting with 'Psycho', then on to its copyists, women as the victims, homosexuality the blood spatterers, paranormal, zombies and all the other pegs for such 'shockers'. Crammed with 'stills' and very much aimed at those who like visual gore and violence in their movies.



**CHRISTMAS GHOSTS** Ed. K. Cramer & D.G. Hartwell Robinson £5.95

17 tales from a variety of authors including Arthur Machen, Nathaniel Hawthorne and a couple of Dickens. Read of a chastened sexton, a ghostly inn, a family's monster, Scrooge re-visited, vengeance from beyond the grave and others - frightening, funny or fairy-like, but all having a common link of Christmas time. Ideal bedside reading - if you dare risk them at night.

**THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF PRIVATE EYE STORIES** Ed. B. Pronzini & M.H. Greenberg

Into its high on 600 pages are crammed some 26 tales of gumshoes solving their who-dun-its. Hoodlums, blackmailers, murderers and sundry other nasties tangle with a variety of P.I.s, the only thing in common being the pace. No long-drawn out red herrings, just exciting action. Robinson £4.95

**COLD HAND IN MINE** Robert Aickman Robinson £3.50

A collection of eight tales of the weird, supernatural and unbelievable. Devils, vampires, zombies, even murderous clocks in a variety of locales and eras. All of the slow-building horror of the unusual and with endings which leave you asking ... 'just what.....?'

**THE PRICE OF POWER: Greyhawk Adventures.2** Rose Estes Penguin £3.99

To quote the handout, "continues the exciting adventures of Mika, the young shaman of the fierce wolf nomads of Greyhawk, land of magic and danger. Mika's mission of honour is threatened by a host of evil adversaries - harpies, rust monsters, rabid troll wolves and sinister invincible forces of darkness. But there is a price to pay for any power he can hope to attain..." You also get some rather murky illos by John and Laura Lakey.

**ARTHUR: THE KING IN THE WEST** R.W. Dunning Alan Sutton £12.95

A scholarly investigation into the story of King Arthur. Where, (or what) was the real Camelot? Did the Round Table Knights and Merlin really exist? All the historical facts, writings, suppositions and pointers bearing on the questions are examined in detail. A handsome volume, profusely illustrated by maps, photos and illustrations and a thesis which should be an invaluable addition to the collection of all lovers and students of the Arthurian Legend - and who knows? it could form the basis for a 'Dungeons & Dragons' epic game.

**DRAGON LANCE CHRONICLES: Collector's Edition** Penguin £7.99 Weis & Hickman

Here in one wrist-breaking, 1000 page volume are the three novels of the epic saga - DRAGONS OF AUTUMN TWILIGHT, DRAGONS OF WINTER NIGHT and DRAGONS OF SPRING DAWNING. Heroic Tanis Half-Elven, Tasslehoff the Kender, Raistlin the warped Mage, his warrior brother Caramon and others unite against the forces of Evil when Dragons return to the World of Krynn .. and, a rarity in trilogies, the characters don't remain frozen, but develop with the story.

**THE ATLAS OF THE DRAGON LANCE WORLD** Karen Wynn Fonstad Penguin £9.99

Fantasy readers take their fiction seriously as witness the Tolkien lovers, the 'Weyr's' which sprang up after the McCaffrey yarns and all the Star Trek manuals. Now its the turn for followers of the Dragonlance tales to have their world of Krynn brought to life in this hefty (170 Qto pages) and scholarly description of its climate, islands, wind patterns, cities and major buildings. Maps, drawings, diagrams, demographical details, even the visible star constellations are here. All this is keyed to the various novels of the series. If you take your fantasy worlds seriously, then this is for you.

**THE ART OF THE DRAGON LANCE SAGA** Edited by Mary Kirchoff Penguin £9.99

Another Quarto size companion to 'ATLAS' which describes how Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman of the TSR games Company created the Dragonlance series. But that isn't all by a long chalk, the text is almost buried beneath a flood of superlative artwork. Colour plates in profusion, black and whites from the books, sketches showing development of characters and equipment. A 'must' for lovers of the Krynn world and a marvellous source book for artists.

**THE HEAVENLY HORSE FROM THE OUTERMOST WEST** Mary Stanton N.E.L. £6.95

Dancer is an Appaloosa stallion, first among the Guardians of the Court of Outermost West. Anor is his vengeful enemy and Servant of The Dark Horse. The tale is related by Story-Teller El-Arat as Dancer, Duchess (a seemingly non-descript mare), Susie and the dog Cory escape from their farm, but are hunted by Anor and his hounds. If you like anthropomorphosing animals as in Watership Down, Animal Farm and Black Beauty, you'll go for this good v evil fantasy - and it would make an ideal gift for that horse-smitten daughter.

**VICTIMS** Shaun Hutson Star £2.99

After an accident, film worker Miller who is noted for his gruesome special effects, is given a new eye transplanted from a murderer. Meanwhile a sadistic killer is at large .. what is his connection with Miller? A horrific tale of gore, violence and sex, all punctuated by violence and an unexpected ending.

**EVIL WATER** Ian Watson Grafton £2.99

Ten stories which take various aspects of everyday (?) life and extrapolate them until the limits creak. A Bishop gains a halo, an alien mating, a Trans-Atlantic swimming race, food of dreams, dwellers on an endless cliff, annoyance days and more, all in a scintillating variety of themes which push crazy logic as far as it will go.

**HAZARDS OF THE PROFESSION** Colin Douglas Grafton £2.99

Dr. Campbell struggles to rise in his profession despite the trail of chaos (and death) left by his inept houseman, Dennis. There's also the erratically brilliant Professor Hamish in charge and an amorous lady doctor. It's meant to be funny, but somehow doesn't make it.



HUNTER VICTIM Robert Sheckley Methuen \$3.50

If you couldn't afford the hardcover, here's the paperback edition of the tale of Frank Blackwell whose wife is killed by fanatics. For revenge he joins 'The Hunt' and is assigned to slay terrorist Guzman. Blackwell is trained, but Guzman is well protected and the Huntmaster also has schemes underway. A lightly humorous send-up of vengeance-action yarns.. good read.

TALES OF NEVERYON Samuel R Delaney Grafton \$3.50

First in a four volume series of collected stories set in the pre-history land of Neveryon. This opener has four stories and an appendix on the mythical calculus of an equally mythical book. The stories paint a rich tapestry of slaves, satraps, villains, warriors, barbarians and dragons in a highly literate mix of entertaining fiction.

PHILIP K. DICK IS DEAD, ALAS Michael Bishop Grafton \$3.99

On his death, Dick's astral body assumes reality as an amnesiac, Kai, in an alternate USA where travel is proscribed under the dictatorial rule of a 4th. term Nixon. Undercover agents and brainwashing ensure loyalty to 'King Richard's' regime -- which the ghostly Kai seeks to subvert by involving young married couple, Cal and Ida. There's also alien intervention, and the whole is written in Dick's frenetic style -- personally, I preferred his short yarns, but this is so near to his last works, Dick lovers will like it.

FANTASTIC VOYAGE II: DESTINATION BRAIN Isaac Asimov Grafton \$3.99

This is NOT a follow on, but a new story using the former theme. American Scientist Morrison is kidnapped by the Russians who need his help to be miniaturised, and sent via submarine, into the brain of comatose genius Shapirov to find the secret of a greatly improved miniaturisation technique. To complicate matters, he only has twelve hours to complete the mission -- and if he succeeds, will he be returned to America? Taut and exciting.

THEIR MASTER'S WAR Mick Farren Sphere \$3.50

Primitive hunter Mark is press-ganged into the shocktroop forces of the Therom in their interstellar war against the Yal. We follow him from rookie to veteran as he fights impossible odds in a series of battles on land and in space. Highly improbable, but fast-paced, crammed with violence and reminiscent of 'Star Ship Troopers' where human life and dignity have no place.

ANCIENT DREAMS: 'The Wells Of Ythan' Marc Alexander Headline \$3.50

The land of Ythan has lost its Princess and is oppressed by a tyrant Regent as violence and magic proliferate. In desperation, a motley band of a toymaker, a young noble, a jester and others sets off to find the missing Princess and restore her to the throne. First in 'The Wells Of Ythan' series.

LOWLAND RIDER Chet Williamson Headline \$3.50

Violence roams the subways and the evil Enoch, possessor of strange powers and angelic smile, is always there. Loser and bum, Jesse Gordon who rides the trains to forget his own misery, becomes enmeshed, opposes Enoch and faces a terrible reality in a downbeat saga of rape, violence and murder.

THE SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK Ed. David S Garnett Futura \$4.99

Subtitled, 'The Best Short SF Of 1987', this large volume covers a variety of themes - many of them, the 'what was that about?', Speculative Fiction kind. A graphologist meets time travel, life inside the sun, an A-bomb as art, sex changing, a Viet Nam theme park and others. A grand total of 13 stories plus three articles - Aldiss on SF, John Clute on the year's novels, and editor Gardner gives an overview. What more do you want for your money?

