

EDITORIAL

DEAD TO RIGHTS

Nowadays, the newspapers, TV and radio seem to dwell on three main areas of events. Taking pride of place is always the latest disaster - milked for all it is worth with repeats, interviews, umpteen explanations - and of course, the inevitable Church services and a yea later, the 'Memorial'.

Then of course the great God sport must be covered in all its boring and repetitive aspects. If Olympic time is around, this takes the form of "How many 'Golds' can/will we get?" Be blown to 'Friendship between nations', good triers or magnificent races.

Third item for newsmongers are strikes, strikers and disruptions of any kind. It is this area of the news that I'll be addressing myself here. Take strikes themselves for openers. I firmly believe that anyone has the right to strike - provided of course he (or she .. and from now on, for simplicity, I'll stick to 'he') hasn't signed an agreement promising not to do so. However, I also believe equally firmly that anyone also has the right to NOT join a strike.

In practice this means that if Fred of the N.U.N. (National Unions of Nits) strikes, he has NO RIGHT WHATSOEVER to expect or stop Bill, also of the N.U.N., to strike as well. Nor has he any right - other than to join a peaceful (hollow laugh) line - to harrass Bill in any way or to prevent him entering the place of work. That of course brings up the point, "If Bill is a Union man..." Well, as I said, Bill has a right to NOT strike, but then in all conscience, if the Union has called the strike, he should resign from it and eschew future benefits. As a matter of fact, I did this myself in my teaching days. When the NAS called a one-day strike with which I disagreed, I came out for the one day, then wrote and complained and resigned from the NAS.

Which brings us to that other iniquity, the 'Closed Shop'. No person should be barred from a job of work simply on the grounds of not being a union Member. People can't be banned for not being Black, Catholics, or women and so on (at least in theory), so why should it be possible to ban anyone from work for not being a member of a Union?

Immediately the answers come - "Why should such a person get Union-negotiated pay rates?" Why not? That's the old 'labourers in the Vineyard' complaint. So long as Fred gets his rise, why complain if Bill also gets one?

On the other hand, if Bill isn't in the Union, he doesn't get Union protection against any injustice, victimisation, bad working conditions or unfair dismissal etc. Those are the penalties he accepts for being his own man.

There is also another seldom mentioned point to striking. As I said, everyone should have the right to strike - but that doesn't give them the right to be supported financially by the public purse. If Fred strikes on a Union call, then that Union should pay him. If it's a wildcat strike, then NOBODY should give him lolly, and that

Terry Jeeves
56 RED SCAR DRIVE
SCARBOROUGH YO12 5RQ

OCTOBER 1989

NOW IN ERG'S 31ST. YEAR

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

1. Write a LOC on this issue and enclose TWO second class stamps. (Outside the UK, you can skip the stamps)
2. By trade with me. NOT for fanzines, I can't manage any more of those, but for magazine SF (not Analog), Model Aircraft, Military Aircraft or old books. Drop me a line and we'll dicker.
3. By cash sub. £3.00 for four issues UK, or \$1.00 an issue USA (and pro rata), in dollar bills please, NOT cheques.

A cross at the top of this page indicates that sadly, this will be your last issue unless you DO something. A question mark means "Are you interested? if so, let me know. Remember, the name of the game is

RESPONSE

MINI-EDITORIAL

COMPUTER Trouble looms again. Whilst preparing this issue of ERG all sorts of queer things have crept in. Whilst typing, random characters keep appearing and vanishing throughout the text - Fortunately NOT appearing on printout. Sometimes the thing locks up and then loses whatever is in it - ghastly if you haven't been SAVEing regularly. Memory capacity is also reduced as older, longer files can't be handled and the limit seems about four pages. I hope to get all this issue out before putting the machine in dry dock, but if I don't and it (or the next issue) is delayed - please bear with me.

To those who say, "Why don't you buy a new one?" The answer is simple. I have some forty floppy discs loaded with all my files on aircraft, SF mags, indexes stories, Income Tax, pro sales and submissions etc. Unless a new machine is compatible with all these, I'd lose the lot.

Well, by crafty use of Elite print and 1/8th spacing, I've managed to cram in a bit more book coverage this time. I hope the result is legible. Here a reminder. 'BOOKS' is to tell you what is available NOT TO TRY AND MAKE A VALUE ESTIMATE or a critical 'review'. Some items are culled from jacket blurbs (I can't abide S&S). The point is, I try to tell you what is on offer, then it's up to YOU to decide whether or not you might be interested in buying any titles mentioned.

DO ME A FAVOUR? If you don't save your copies of ERG, would you pass them along to a friend (or enemy) and thus help to spread the gospel? Ta.

4- includes the local dole office. Ah, but what about the innocent wife and kids? Well, what about 'em? If Fred chooses to withhold his labour, that's one of the things he should think of before he does it, either by using his savings, or by finding other employment. Yes, I know it isn't easy, but it isn't easy for all the people hit by the strike, and they have NO redress.

That 'no redress' hit a lot of small shopkeepers in mining districts during the long miner's strike. The local shops were expected to give miners 'credit' and large bills were built up (many were never paid). Nobody gave the shopkeeper credit. His bills still had to be paid and as a result, many were forced out of business. Innocents who were NOT protected by Union or Government handouts. Stop paying strikers and the result would be much more deliberation and arbitration before such a last ditch step was even considered.

Changing the theme somewhat, but using similar arguments leads me to the Salman Rushdie case. Where emotions and lop-sided beliefs are substituted for common-sense and 'rights'.

I haven't read Rushdie's book, but I fancy his comments were ill-advised, but he had every right to make 'em. Similarly, Muslims everywhere have every right to object to them. They also have the right to ask publishers, booksellers and libraries to ban the book — but they have NO RIGHT to expect these people to act on their requests .. much less on threatening demands. Desires, no matter how strongly held, are NOT laws or common rights!

Muslims have a right to peaceful protests and marches, IF carried out in accordance with the law. They have no right to riot, to demand Rushdie's death, or worse, to openly work to that end. I strongly suspect that had Muslims not reacted so insanely to the book, few people would have heard of it, it would have sold a few copies, then sunk without a trace. As with 'Spy Catcher', 'Satanic Verses' gained its best seller status not from literary quality, but from the actions of the very people trying to stop it.

Having said that, I for one feel that Rushdie was daft in writing anything so obviously offensive to a section of the community.

Personally, I'm an atheist, but I have feeling for people who do believe in a God, and wouldn't offend them by saying something they would feel as 'blasphemy', even though there's no such meaning for me.

Nor would I go out to insult someone's sensibilities by using foul language before them. We get along in this world by give and take, by making adjustments and allowances for other's beliefs and feelings. In my view, strikers, Rushdie and the fanatical section of the Muslim community don't operate that way.

The connection between strikers and fanatical demonstrators is simply that both groups believe that their views and demands are the only ones possible, and that all others are totally untenable

..... or do you disagree?



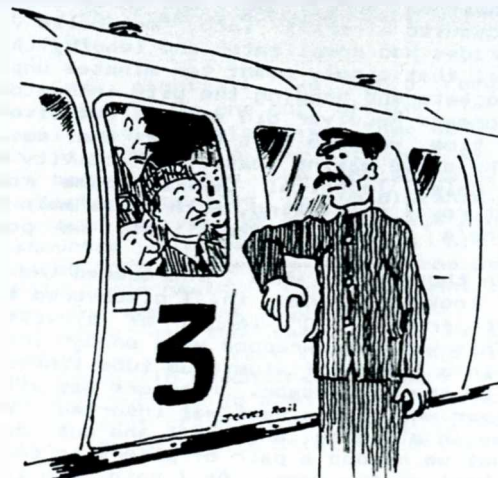
The Mysterious East - (Anglia)

As mentioned in the last instalment, covering the 140+ miles back to Swannington was a real problem in logistics. Along with Ted Nelson, another Sheffielder, we would be shoe-horned into luxurious seats on the corridor floor on the 8-15pm from Sheffield on Sunday night. If it survived, the train got us to Peterborough around 9-40 where we made a quick dash to the Saracen's Head for egg sandwiches (ours) washed down with copious pints of wallop. At closing time, fortified by our gurglings and guzzlings, we would saunter (or stagger) over the railway bridge to catch our next train. That was due to depart at 2-30am on a ten mile an hour race to Norwich, stopping at all stations, bus-stops and wherever there was a cow on the line.

Even that boring East Anglian train journey from Peterborough to Norwich had its lively moments. Amazingly, some of the carriages would occasionally be lit by gas mantles fed from a cylinder beneath the coach! We discovered that although timed to depart at 2-30am, the train was already standing on the platform by the time we left the 'Head'. The obvious course of action was to pick a compartment, settle down and start sleeping. Normally, this presented no problem, simply get in, and if the lights were not of the gas fed variety, switch 'em off and get one's head down. On one particular night, a bloody-minded guard had locked all the carriage doors on OUR train, to prevent naughty airren getting aboard too soon. However, he had left one window open. One by one, twenty of us scrambled in, switched off the lights — and that was what the crafty blighter had been watching and waiting for. He popped out of his lair, unlocked the doors and made us all get out again to sit on the platform until 2am, when he ceremoniously unlocked the doors. Shades of winning a war.

All was not lost however.

We duly entrained, doused the lights and settled down. Old misery-guts struck again. He came along the carriages, putting on the lights, waking us up, delivering homilies and checking tickets. He vanished off along the train, a moving blob of light, as behind him, lights were extinguished again. Having had a natter with the driver, the guard began a return trip down what was expected to be well-lit train, finding it in dark he set about bringing light to the Force.



6

and once again, a moving band of light followed by pitch blackness followed him back down the train -- about the half way mark, he got suspicious and prepared to catch somebody 'at it'.

No sooner had he turned on our lights and vanished into the next compartment, than I nipped out, doused the corridor lights again and shot back into my snooze space. The crafty blighter had been lurking round the end of the corridor just waiting for this. He shot back into view just as another airman stepped out of his compartment to visit the toilet. The guard full of virtuous (Trade Union type) wrath and indignation began to tear a massive strip off the poor bloke -- who thrice-armed in his total innocence gave argument back in equal measure and with knobs on -- whilst two yards away, wrapped in my greatcoat and ostensibly sleeping, I was struggling to make my hilarious giggles sound like snores.

Arrival time in Norwich was around 5am, and as the waiting room was invariably crammed with somnolent bodies, we would hunt up an empty space on the platform and bed down. By 7am, it was so cold that on one occasion I was awakened to find my bedspace on a luggage trolley was being pushed up and down the platform by a frozen Ted Nelson as he tried to get warm. At 8am we would board a decrepit passenger train for the trip to Swannington's nearest station. Once there, it was a case of sort out the tangled puzzles of umpteen interlocked pushbikes, pump up the inevitable flat tyres and cycle back to camp for a quick meal before first working parade. A hectic life, but a gay one.

By some weird miracle of Air Force misorganisation, I found myself senior NCO (though just a corporal) in charge of eight other ex-overseas types -- which if anyone in the Postings Department had thought about it, was simply asking for trouble. Oh there was a Signals Officer somewhere on the Camp, but he never found out where we dwelt in a hut formerly owned by the Instrument Section. They had unwarily left a vastly complicated test bench, an air compressor and other gadgetry to our tender mercies.

By vandalising the panels and switches of the instrument panel, we built up a lucrative little trade in tea trays and table lamps. One airman brought his own cycle up from London, dismantled it and gave it a re-paint job using RAF materials. Another employed a rotary gadget designed to clean aircraft instruments to set up a line in watch-cleaning.

Back up there, I mentioned 'work'. Well the chief activity on the aerodrome was putting Mosquito aircraft into 'mothballs'. This meant that all the other trades had complicated and lengthy things to do, but for Signals personnel that simply meant ten minutes unplugging radio gear, taping up the sockets and handing the bits into stores -- well, most of 'em. A Command Receiver did sort of get diverted to Sheffield. The rest of the time, we were left to our own devices -- such as sitting round the stove making toast. An activity we were busily pursuing when the Chief Technical Officer came round on inspection. We got a right royal rollicking, with me as main target. However, one learns from one's errors. After that, we posted a lookout.

Even lookouts are human though, and when I introduced the game of high-pressure darts, our lookout joined in. I discovered that one could make an excellent dart from a 10" length of bicycle spoke sharpened to a point. This was then wrapped with enough insulation tape to make it a snug fit in a length of aluminium tube linked by a few feet of rubber tubing to the compressor. Pressure was allowed to build up by kinking the rubber whilst the dart was inserted. When the kink was released, there was an almighty 'Whooosh!' and out came the dart with so much force that we needed a pair of pliers to get it out of the target drawn on the back of the door. As I said, the look-out

7.

joined in. This was very disconcerting for 'Nobby' Clarke who arrived and opened the door just as a dart tried to come through it.

We even participated in one epic event involving the Flight lieutenant Montague, the CTO. Current practice was to stack the 'mothballed' Mossies into hangars -- as tightly as possible. I think the usual number was about ten to each hangar. However, came the time when our Chief Technical Officer (who it was rumoured, had been to school), had busily drawn a scale plan of a hangar, cut out a heap of paper Mossies to the same scale and carefully shuffled them around to discover that it was possible to get TWELVE aeroplanes into each hangar. He ignored the fact that he could pick up his paper aeroplanes, but the real ones were a bit too heavy for that -- nevertheless, thus was born OPERATION PUSH!

Came the day, all available airmen (who hadn't vanished in time) were mustered to shove all the Mossies out of No.2 hangar. The CTO turned up just as the last aircraft was pushed outside. He drove into the empty hangar, parked his jeep in the corner and looked around in great satisfaction. "Right then," said our leader turning to the nearest airman and handing him his master plan drawn up on a sheet of paper. "Put 'em all back like this. I'll be back in a little while",

He nipped off to the Mess for a quick tippie. He returned as the hangar was almost full to give further incoherent instructions telling us to shove the aircraft hither and thither in the intricate ballet pattern devised by his genius. It was a triumph of mind over matter, he didn't mind and we didn't matter. We duly stacked aircraft until the hangar would hold no more -- strangely, although ten Mossies had come out, only nine could be pushed back in, let alone the dozen called for by our Fuhrer's master plan.

The mystery was finally solved when the CTO counted up and found out why. His jeep was parked behind a hangar-full of aircraft -- but by the time he noticed that, there were no airmen around to hear his sobs.

Come nightfall, we would range the countryside in search of quaint pubs. On one such mission, Taffy, Derek and myself imbibed happily until closing time, then we began to weave (literally) our way back to camp. A two mile journey ending with a turn onto a narrow path between bushes. We wobbled happily along the road until a car's headlights appeared in the distance. Taffy got the wind up. He was so scared that one of his zig zags might coincide with the car, he dismounted and began to push his cycle. Being well kettled, he managed to entangle his legs in the pedals and the other bits which dangle underneath. Over he went into the ditch. Derek turned his head to see what had happened -- and inadvertently turned his handlebars at the same time. He too landed in the ditch. The car swished by, and I felt very pleased with myself for missing both car and ditch. To demonstrate my superior ability, I executed a beautiful graceful turn to go down the cart track -- but twenty yards too soon, and I went crash into a gravel pile, over the top and into the other ditch. Motto, don't drink and drive.





Hell-tire corner, a hairpin, downhill bend was marked by heaps of scattered eggshells, dried up yolks and bits of slowly rusting bicycle to show where someone hadn't quite made it. Senior officers had 'scrambled egg' on their caps, we had it on our tunics.

It was at Swannington that I had my chance to play cops and robbers for real. I was busily doing nothing when a bloke popped his head round the door to tell me I was wanted by the Station Warrant Officer (a bloke akin in exaltation to the Army's RSM). Mentally reviewing all my (so far) undiscovered crimes and hastily composing excuses for them, I presented myself at his office. He gave me a cheerful/gloating smile/leer of the kind cats usually reserve for captured mice. "Ah, Corporal Jeeves, I've fixed you up a chance to have a quick trip home. You're to go and collect a prisoner from Birmingham." In vain did I protest that I came from Sheffield, but who ever heard of an SWO who knew any Geography (who knew anything for that matter). My defence that I was a Wireless Mechanic, not a policeman fell on equally stony ground. I was issued with a pair of handcuffs, a service revolver, 12 rounds of ammo (plus strict instructions NOT to use 'em) as well as a webbing belt and holster. I felt like Wyatt Earp. I was given another erk as companion and bunged on the 4pm train into Norwich. The steaming iron juggernaut knocked off the 20 miles in a scant two and a half hours and we only had a few hours to wait for the next snailtrain to Brum -- which we reached at 2am. My erk actually came from the benighted place, so he vanished into the night leaving me to hunt up a bed in the YMCA.

Next morning, we rendezvoused and strolled round to the Detention Camp ('glasshouse') to collect our man. He proved to be a beefy ex-boxer who had opted out of service life and who cheerfully said he would repeat the performance once he had got a new uniform. This he duly did after serving his atest sentence, he tanked up a car in the motor pool and vanished once again.

We were not to know this however. The only way back to Swannington was via London, so I showed the bloke the handcuffs and said he could either wear 'em or promise to be good. He promised, so we duly boarded the train and set off. Half an hour later, he asked to leave the room. Not being daft, I stationed my erk outside the

Being a widely dispersed camp, travel everywhere was by cycle. Since most of the paths were only a yard wide, any airman on foot was taking his life in his hands. As we extended our range of operations, it became obvious that the patriotic local farmers were eager to help the boys in blue (us) by selling black market eggs at 3/-3d a dozen. Every Friday saw airmen sneaking off to do the egg-run - and returning, riding one-handed down the rutted cart track from the farm whilst clutching a haversack full of eggs.

toilet, opened the nearby window and stuck my head out. Sure enough, ten seconds later, a surreptitious opening of the toilet door revealed Jeeves' man on duty there. The door closed again and then the toilet window squeaked open. My prisoner's head appeared through opening and turned my way. We exchanged sweet smiles, the head was withdrawn and after a short pause, he rejoined us and gave us no further trouble. I signed him over at camp, and returned my boy detective outfit. Even so, I'd love to have loaded up that revolver and hollered, "Halt or I fire", before loosing off a few rounds into the roof of Piccadilly Station.

Swannington boasted several exotically named satellite aerodromes, North Creak, Oulton and Little Snoring. Eventually, I was moved to North Creak to organise Mossie storage there. Once again, it was a case of oodles of spare time, and since the early Summer of 1946 was a scorcher, we would strip off and get some sunbathing hours in behind the nearest aircraft. On one scorching hot day, probably due to all those atom bombs or satellite launches. Whatever the reason, there it was, a dirty great sun putting in unpaid overtime. Taffy Jones had just finished a heavy dinner and a stint in a hot aircraft. Never one to do things by halves, he stripped right down to his unmetionable. Keeping only his forage cap as a protection against sunstroke. So bedecked, he settled down comfortably in the

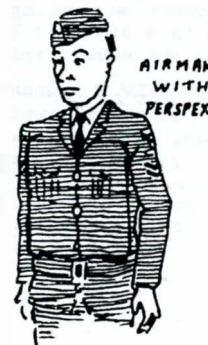


long grass. It was at this most inopportune moment that our arch-enemy, Flight Lieutenant Montague decided to tour the aircraft to see what was going on -- in this case, it had decidedly gone off! He belted up in his Jeep, the engine's roar awakened Taffy, who only half awake, leaped to his feet and his RAF conditioned reflexes took over. If it stands still, paint it. If it moves, salute it. Here was an officer type shape moving towards him. Taffy drew himself up in full dress underpants and cap and gave the CTO his best salute. I wasn't near enough to hear what Montague said.

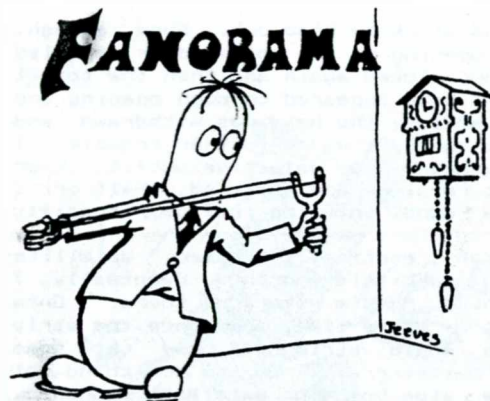
Then there was the day the Flight Sergeant left his office unattended. Covering his desk was a large sheet of Perspex which I had long coveted and here was a chance not to be missed. Five minutes with a hacksaw and I had bisected the sheet. Thus reduced, the bits slid neatly up inside my pullover. I fastened up my tunic and only a certain unusual regularity about my outline showed where the Perspex had gone. I beat a hasty retreat and assumed the standard

position of 'Airman busy at work', as far away as possible. Ten minutes later, a minor explosion from the Nissen hut told me that Chiefy had discovered his loss. He ranted in and out of every hut in search of his missing plastic. Beady eyes peered into lockers, tool boxes and under benches as he kept up a running commentary on the evil fate he would wreak upon the culprit. At one point, he asked if I had seen his Perspex. My rectangular tunic front seemed to stick out a mile as I disclaimed all knowledge of the stuff. However, nerves of steel carried me through and Chiefy rampaged off into the distance.

=====



AIRMAN
WITH
PERSPEX



SUNDAY ITEMS which through the letterbox dropped, might prove of interest to ENG readers ...

S.F. CHRONICLE Andy Porter,
PO Box 7230, Brooklyn,
NY 11202-0056 \$27.00/year. The
July issue is crammed with news,
reviews, books, cover repros and
two excellent reports on British
SF markets, a must for authors.
SFC runs to 46 slick paper pages.

TAND.1 Mark Manning, 1400 East
Mercer No.19 Seattle, WA 98122
54pp mimeo, good art, verse,
letters, interview, fiction and
articles. Nice friendly zine, for
the usual. (No.2 now out)

TWILIGHT ZINE M.I.T. SF Society,
Room W20-473, 84 Massachusetts

Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139 42 superbly produced pages of news, reviews, LOCs,
fiction and excellent artwork. For trade, contrib or \$1.50 an issue.

POUTNIK Miroslav Martan, Pocatecka 12, 140 00 Praha 4, CSSR, Czechoslovakia
is A4, mimeo 48 pp of news about SF over there. No rates, but I assume the usual
LOC cum launch would get you a copy .. or trade for your zine.

NIEMAS 39 Ed Meskys, RFD 2, Box 53, Center Harbor, New Hampshire 03326-9729.
(Seems US fans are becoming highly numbered) 58 beautifully printed pages,
superb illos, card covers, crammed with articles, news, LOCs, a Moskowitz
Checklist of Pulp Mystery Fiction and other goodied. One of the 'must' zines
at \$19.00 for four issues to UK readers.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF OLAF.2 Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West
Midlands, DY8 1LA Verse, fiction, matter, LOCs and crammed with Kench's own
Olaf cartoons. Colour cover, courtesy of usual child slave labour (??)

LISTS RECEIVED Ken Slater, Fantast Medway, PO Box 23, Upwell, Wisbech,
Cambs, PE14 9BU 12 pages of books, paperbacks and magazines.
Simon Gosden, 25 Avondale Rd., Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8NJ, 24 pages of hardcovers,
and paperbacks, he can also get you US mag subs at good rates.
Dreamberry Wine, Mike Don, 233 Maine Rd Manchester M14 7WG magazines, paperbacks
and hardcovers plus letters, reviews and SF news... and you can get my sales lists
by sensing an S.A.E.

SHIPTARD BLUES (successor to Crystal Ship) John Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport
Pagnell, Bucks MK16 9AZ 32, A5 offset pages. Beautifully produced and illoed.
Natter on petrol and its effects, me on nuclear things, Ken Lake on fanzines,
Syd Bounds on writing, Sue Thomason on junk mail fund raising plus a good LOCcol.
There is a distinct left-wing bias in it, but otherwise a topnotch zine. Get
it for the usual, and enjoy.

CAN YOU HELP? Graham Stone, GPO Box 440, Sydney 2001, AUSTRALIA would like to
hear from anyone owning a copy of OUT OF THE SILENCE by Erle Cox, the Hamilton
edition, with jacket. He would like to buy it, or alternatively, get a photocopy
of the jacket. (Or you may be able to pass this SOS to someone who can assist.
Last minute news (this is THE VERY LAST LINE TO BE TYPED OF THIS ISSUE), Just got
the computer back and operating after six weeks in dock, and a repair saga that
is a story in itself. Hopefully, all will now be well for the next issue .. and
you too can get it if you send in a LOC. Bestest, Terry.

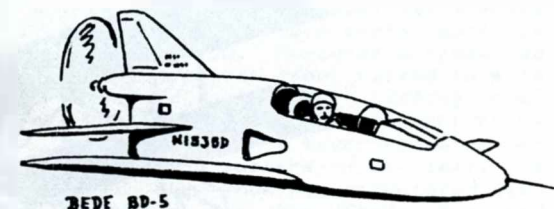
The Weird & Wonderful. 8



In case you're wondering what the queer aircraft in the
heading might be, it's the 'Super Guppy' created by Aero Spacelines,
for among other things, to ferry large rocket components for the space
mission. They took a standard Boeing Stratocruiser and enlarged it to
come up with the 'Pregnant Guppy'. Not content with this achievement,
they tried again and produced the 'Super Guppy', and in another
version, the 'Mini Guppy'.

American designers seem to have a very creative bent when it
comes to unusual flying machines, especially in the homebuilt section
of the market. Every sport flying meet seems to attract yet another
exotic variation on an old theme, or some totally new concept.

The homebuilt aircraft
serves at least three
purposes, it exploits its
builder's creative urge,
puts him into the air and
if he is able to sell
construction details to
others, puts money in his
pocket. The small, BEDE,
BD-5 has a pusher
airscrew powered by a
70hp, two-stroke, yet it
managed a cruising speed
of 210mph.



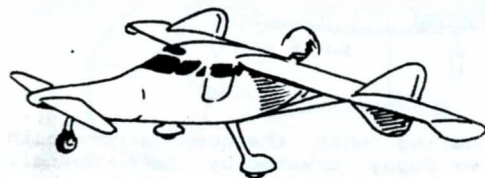
If you want something really weird looking in the homebuilt
field, you need to go no further than the Rutan Vari-Eze (and don't
ask me where that name came from.) This canard two-seater with angled
wings complete with winglets and two vertical fins used a 100hp engine



to power the pusher airscrew. A system favoured presumably because the driven airstream doesn't have to find its way around the rest of the aeroplane. The canard layout also helps to greatly improve the stalling characteristics, and it had a top speed of 200mph.

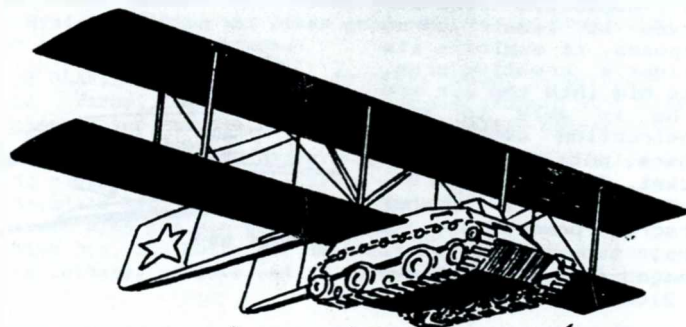
However, let us not assume that America has a hammer-lock on the unusual. Behind the Iron Curtain there have been very strange

creations flying around. The Mig-8 'Atka' (Duck) had a fairly conventional fuselage with a rather elongated nose. This supported the canard foreplane which gave it its name. A tricycle undercarriage, pusher propeller and fins mounted on wings with drooped tips made it almost a composite of all the strange variations tried on other aircraft.



Mig-8 'Atka' (Duck)

Without doubt, the queerest creation to originate in Russia was the Antonov 'Kryla Tanka' - and at this stage, I need to repeat - and stress, that every machine mentioned in 'Weird and Wonderful' actually existed - except in the cases where I clearly state the device was only a design speculation. So, this monstrous answer to getting a tank to a battlefield as quickly as possible, was actually built but flew!



Antonov 'Kryla Tanka'

The contraption consisted of a T-60 tank fitted with wings, hence the 'Kryla Tanka', 'Wings To The Tank' name. The resulting composite was towed behind a TB-3 4-engine bomber. Test Pilot S.N. Anokhin first took a tank drivers' course before going up in the 5,800Kg tank from an aerodrome near Moscow in 1942. Heaven knows how he was able to see enough to make a landing, but one of the chores was to start up the tank's engine in flight and engage the tracks into motion before touch-down.

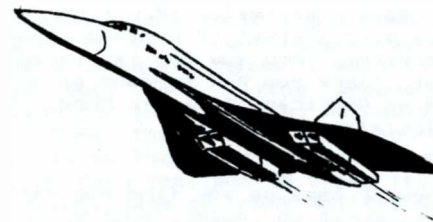
BIBLIOGRAPHY:-

AVIATION .. Ed. Bill Gunston, Cathay Books

RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT

THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE WORLD'D AIRCRAFT

LETTERS



VINCE CLARKE, 16 MENDOVER WAY, WELLING, KENT SA1 2BN

The 'Carry On Jeeves' instalment was as interesting as ever, and the illos were very good indeed. My own nearest 'drome' after an overseas posting was about 30 miles away. It makes me shudder now, but I used to bike it on weekends on a heavy bike wearing heavy RAF clobber. @- Why did your bike wear RAF clobber? #

I agree with you on the efficiency of computers. I'm amazed that Ken Lake should go from beginning to the end of a letter or whatever without wanting to change it in some way. @- .. and without typing errors too! # Yes, your words on SF are very true. If I want to tickle my finer sensibilities with a work of art, I might read modern SF, but if

I want a story, I find myself picking up something copyrighted 1955 or earlier. How can you say that Concorde 'are making profits' for BAC if you don't take any account of development costs. We apparently are the only country where the taxpayer was sucker enough to be lumbered with those costs. America and Japan to name but two developers of hi-tech haven't followed our lead. @- Do you count development costs when buying and running a private car? That expense is up to the company and is recovered by MASS SALES. Here are the facts of life. Even Henry Ford's Model T would have been a total financial disaster has a lobby blocked its production after only 12 had been made. Such costs must be spread across a production of (say) at least a 100. Concorde already had about 50 pre-production orders when the American lobby raised so much smog and opposition that the buyers chickened out, thus closing down Concorde's production at an uneconomic cost-per-unit if development costs are added to each single model. However, BAC as a buyer-operator ARE operating theirs at a profit. As for tax-paying suckers -- at least we get a public service vehicle and all the know-how associated with development - which is more than US taxpayers get for their B-1 and (subsonic) B-2 bombers? Had Concorde not been killed by the American lobbying, we'd have had a world-beating lead in supersonic transport. Some might say, 'Who needs it?' Well after spending twelve hours of discomfort (each way) flying to and from Los Angeles, I'd have welcomed a way of cutting down that time. #

THE EDITOR, WEIRD AND WONDERFUL, MANCHESTER M13 9EP

A touch of the Emshwillers on the cover, I half expected an outline drawing inside, with the various characters identified for us readers. Quite one of your best efforts, and don't imagine I missed the subtle touches - aces in the waistband, stick of dynamite under the chair. Great stuff. I look forward to your plans to reproduce illos from the old pulps in ERG. Hope your views of what is worth reproducing coincide with mine. Cartier, Schneeman, Brown -- remember his marvellous drawing for 'At The Mountains Of Madness'? @- Yep, our tastes are similar, but I've chosen Brown's illos for 'Spans Of Eternal Thought' with Schneeman also on the way. # Read Homeward Bound with interest. Fancy being away for four years! And I grumbled over a trip which lasted a mere 14 months. Enjoyed the Weird and Wonderful. First time I've seen the word 'canard' used to describe a plane driven tail-first. @- It's standard usage in aircraft description, Ted. For some reason, ducks are supposed to fly that way. #

JANICE M EISEN, 225 STATE ST 0454, SCHEMECTADY, NY 12305

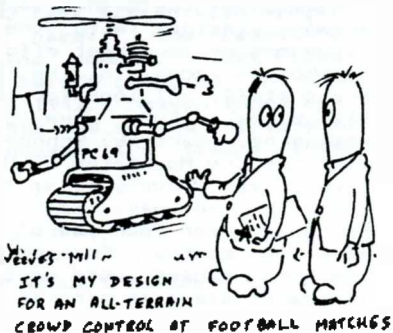
There was an interesting typo in your ERGitorial in ERG 106, 'gagazines'. Considering your complaint about their current state, that's appropriate. I can't comment on the specifics as I gave up reading Analog not long after Stanley Scsmidtytook over. @+ Most of the artwork is blacked out these days, as well @+ Your new residence seems lovely. We recently paid a visit to England and were impressed by the beauty of the countryside. And you English are so friendly: two days after we got there you had someone go on the rampage with a shotgun, just to make us Americans feel at home. @+ Aw shucks - anything to make you Colonials welcome. @+

KEN LAKE 113 MARKHOUSE AVE. LONDON E17 8AY

Sorry you are giving up buying new SF because you find non-fiction more appealing. I grant all your strictures on much (most?) modern output in the SF/Fantasy genre, but I still buy about a dozen paperbacks a month and find probably one in three ends up on my shelves. Anyone who is ignoring modern SF has missed out on - to name a few worthwhile experiences - all Terry Pratchett's hilarious fantasies, Ken Grimwood's 'Replay' the intellectual challenge (even if you don't agree with it) of Brian Aldiss' 'Science Fiction Blues' ... @+ Ken goes on to list numerous titles. @+ ..and that, believe me is but a snippet. Have you really missed all these, or do you really mean, "From my privileged position as editor of ERG, I get to see a vast bandspread of new SF free as review copies and I don't think they are much cop"? @+ Hoo boy, loaded question. NO, I don't think that, nor can I afford to spend £30 or £40 a month sampling the market in the hope of finding (as you do) only 8% to 25% of books to my taste. A further point regarding your list is the 'one man's meat is another's poison' factor, I suspect most of 'em would bore me. That is why in 'Books', I try to give NOT a balanced literary critique, but simply an idea of what a book is about. Sometimes I gather this from the jacket blurb. The idea is merely to show what is available and let the reader decide whether or not to invest his lolly. Nowadays much is saga Fantasy .. and I don't buy that!:-@

ALAN SULLIVAN C/o 13 WEIR GARDENS, RAYLEIGH ESSEX SS6 7TH

'A Nibble At The Nucleus' very succinctly put, shame about the 'cold fusion' though. 'Art In SF', a subject with much mileage in it, and the pictures have come out fairly well too, considering. The 'Weird & Wonderful' some improbable, some impractical and some that inspire the latest designs. The idea of a ducted fan dating back to 1910 is not a real surprise - consider Leonardo da Vinci's 'Helicopter' and 'Parachute' designs, there have always been ideas which took ages to catch on properly. @+ Heresy coming up. I fancy da Vinci's schemes were only eculaion, and no more viable than the spaceship designs created by modern SF artists (and writers). None of them would have worked if built. It took modern materials, design, technology, determination and money to make 'em operate. Coanda's ducted fan FLEW which is more than can be said for any of da Vinci's ideas. Buck Rogers had a flying belt, Dick Tracy a wrist radio but it took modern technology to make the reality. @+



ERIC BENTCLIFFE, RIVERSIDE CRESCENT, HOLMES CHAPEL MES. SW4 7NR

Enjoyed your further adventures in carry on Jeeves, but you did not tell us what was in the TWO KIT BAGS and LARGE TIN TRUNK ?? Were you the first person to start smuggling in Pakistanis perchance? Or was this merely the first duplicator you pubbed ERG on? @+ Sorry, Official Secrets Act, you know. @+ Strangely enough, I've never got around to chronicling my own adventures in the RAF. @+ So get cracking! @+ ..but there were some notable moments; like when I lost a Lancaster bomber - well it wasn't easy to keep stock of them when they were flying around y'know (in fact the CO had to ban all flying for three days so we could get the Airmin's returns all right! And then there was that benighted and desert-drained pilot who maintained that landing a seaplane in the desert would be as easy as on a calm sea, and he tried it, but only once! And a certain whacky inventor, name of Frank Whittle who was deemed too valuable to fly but who took delight in taking off in any available aircraft and in dragging his tail-skid across the top of corrugated-iron hangars. @+ Whittle, didn't he invent the pencil-sharpener? @+

PETER SMITH, 16 TRESTA WALK, WOKING, SURREY GU21 4TF

I was surprised to see Ken Lake accusing computers of being error-prone. Most 'computer errors' are human errors. Humans make mistakes naturally, but with computers they can make mistakes at a high rate of megaflops. The complaint about user friendliness - or the lack of it, reliability, erratic behaviour - are frequent complaints about any human institution or bureaucracy. Computers are a tool, nothing more - used carefully and appropriately they will do things, but if you use them carelessly you'll get problems. @+ I fully agree. Cars, TV sets, typewriters, aircraft, trains and even ships can all cause troubles if they go wrong or are mishandled. I wonder if Ken avoids all these for the same reasons of 'error-prone'?

Comment, Ken? @+ I liked reading the latest instalments of 'Carry On Jeeves' and 'The Weird & Wonderful' without finding much to write comments on - yet that isn't to say the articles are bad. @+ That's the snag nowadays, many people only write LOCs when they want to complain or argue. I'll have to be more controversial. How about this issue's ERGitorial? @+

ETHEL LINDSAY 69 BARRY RD., CARMUSTIE, ANGUS DD7 7QG

Looking at your book reviews, I once again wonder why there are so many fantasy novels coming out under the heading of SF. @+ First, because publishers and booksellers don't know the difference, and second, because true SF usually requires a basic knowledge of science if it is to be written plausibly. @+ Is it a reaction against 'too much science'? Surely it can't be that folk see no hope in the future! I can happily suspend my belief while I read SF no matter how far-fetched, if I live to be a hundred, I could never believe in magic or sorcery. In an age where Royalty is a figurehead, why all this series of stories about Kings, Queen and Princesses? When it isn't that its withcs and wizards. No wonder I have gone back to the mystery field. @+ I suspect one very strong reason for so much S&S is that anyone who can write at all, can write S&S. You just keep on letting the Dark Lord get nastier and nastier but then let him lose out (Not completely, remember further parts of your saga! when you reach the right page count. I can't read the stuff either - that's why I quote the jacket blurbs for S&S and leave the reader to decide if he wants to buy. @+

***** WRITE A LOC -- NOW! *****



ART
IN
SF (2)

ELLIOT DOLD

Another great illustrator of the early days was ELLIOTT DOLD who made his debut in the March 1934 Astounding, after work in commercial advertising. He became an instant hit with the readership using a 'dry brush' style which featured heavier blacks and darker interiors than Paul. He made use of the pulp paper requirement for plenty of solid black areas and heavy lines - but even so, was quite capable of producing delicate work when it was required. Dold too, was a master at creating complicated machinery on a huge scale.

His illustrations for E.E.Smith's 'Skylark of Valeron' were particularly memorable where his visualisations of gigantic gadgetry, claustrophobic interiors and fearsome aliens perfectly matched Smith's wide-ranging space saga.

The heading illustration is about half size and loses much of its detail and impact. Despite this, it still gives an idea of the yarn's scope and Dold's imagination as Radnor and Silbin invade the Chloran fortress to short out the giant bus-bars.

His extremely effective use of large areas of solid black is evidenced in these one-eighth sized reproductions of his illustrations for Campbell's 'The Mightiest Machine', some instalments of which overlapped with 'Skylark Of Valeron'.

The "Encyclopedia of Science Fiction" erroneously states that he illustrated in ASF until the 40s, whereas his last artwork in that magazine appeared in 1939. It also claims that Dold's figure work was poor. A subjective criticism not



THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE



A novel of intense scientific achievement, of voyaging
into another space, and of fantastic mechanisms and
their colossal conflict—the greatest story yet told
by
JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR.

substantiated by an
examinations of some of his
excellent work.

The man facing a horde of tiny creatures was to illustrate Donald Wandrei's 'A Scientist Divides' in the Sept. 1934 issue of SF and shows the intricate background details Dold added to his work when the need arose.



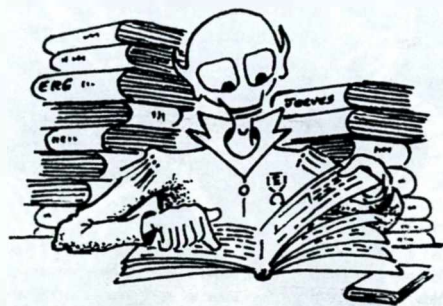
Those were golden days indeed. Sadly, when Dold finally vanished from the pages of ASF - his work was sorely missed. I wonder if the same would be said today if all the gloomy, overhatched preponderance of faces leering out of the pages of Analog were to be replaced by illustrations depicting actual scenes from the tales?



The accompanying, much-reduced illustrations don't do justice to his work. Once again, I photographed them from the magazines, had photocopies made, and these were then inserted into the paste-ups for the printer. Not the best treatment for showcasing artwork. Even so, they give an excellent idea of the scope of Dold's work, his wonderful sweeping curves superbly balancing the black and white areas of his subjects. They also emphasize the sheer size of the weird machinery and above all, they evoke that Sense Of Wonder which was an integral part of pulp-reading in the ld days

共三三三三三三

BOOKS



DRAGONS DAWN Anne McCaffrey Bantam £6.95

The story of how human colonists came to settle the dragon world of Pern. Idyllic at first, apart from undercover politicking and the puzzle as to why Master Pilot Kenjo is stockpiling fuel. Then the Threads begin to fall - (I still don't know why they hadn't overrun the planet before colonists land). There are two main protagonists, husband hunting Sallah who uncovers and foils the counterplot and the young (variable-aged) Soroka who along with young Sean (token male) discovers the Dragons which save the colony. This is the one Dragon saga lovers have been waiting for, so don't miss it.

BIMBOS OF THE DEATH SUN Sharyn McCrumb Penguin £2.99

Don't let the title frighten you, that's just a book written by one of the characters, Jay Omega. Others are sundry attendees at an American SF Con (you may recognise some) where the GOM is an obnoxious but lauded hack. Then a murder is committed and it becomes a who-dun-it with some lovely digs at Cons, fans and the organisers.

THE KILLING BLANCE D.G. Finlay Arrow £4.50

Byssy Jess Bayless, acquires a terrible power, builds his house over ancient ruins and fathers his sister's child before marrying Lavinia and having a child by her. Both offspring inherit the power and one misuses it. The saga follows the force through several generations of incest, seduction, piracy, murder and horror. Here in one hefty volume are all four parts of the Watcher series.

THE OMEGA ZONE Joe Deaver Beaver £2.99

After a scene-setting opening, you're into an illustrated, role-playing game book, 3rd in the Freeway Warrior series. As Cal Phoenix, champion of Dallas Colony One, you must guide the survivors across a nuclear desolated New Mexico to Tucson sanctuary using random number tables and the combat score card.

DOCTOR WHO fans will be delighted to know of a deluge of their favourite's adventures from W.H. Allen under their Target and Star imprints. They include 'Nightmare Fair' (an unscreened episode), 'Mindwarp' and 'The Chase', competitively priced at £1.99 each in Target books. Twice the size, for only £2.95 are the two-in-one Star titles, 'The Seeds Of Doom' + 'The Deadly Assassin' and 'The Face Of Evil' + 'The Sunmakers'. Other titles due to appear monthly are, 'The Ultimate Evil' (Aug.18), 'Daleks Master Plan (1)' (Sep.13), 'Daleks Master Plan (2)' (Oct.20) and 'The Greatest Show In The Galaxy' (Dec.1st). If you've been missing the TV series, here's your chance to renew acquaintance with the Doctor.

Isaac Asimov Presents **MONSTERS** Robinson £2.99 347pp

Eleven superb yarns opening with Silverberg's 'Passengers' teeling of random body possession. There's a city invaded by a creeping organism, a creature which evolves when attacked, a yarn where the humans are monsters and another where they are vermin. Throw in such gems as van Vogt's 'Black Destroyer', and Leinster's 'Exploration Team' and I reckon Robinson have come up with another winner.

ANTARES DAWN Michael McCollum

Grafton £3.50

When Antares goes nova, it destroys the local 'foldpoint' thus cutting the Altan civilisation off from star travel for 125 years. Then the point re-opens and a gigantic, derelict and badly damaged Earth battleship arrives. What could have ruined it and could the danger be following? Fleet Captain Drake is sent to investigate and finds both friends and foes in a fast-moving hardcore space opera.

BEASTMAKER James V Smith Jr. Grafton £3.50

Warren Howell creates a violent (and intelligent) monster by genetic engineering. It escapes and begins a reign of mayhem. Drunkard helicopter pilot Payne (who has inexplicable blackouts) finds himself involved and pitted against the monster and a murder hunt with him as the 'framed' fall guy. A frenetic, scene-switching mixture of blood, violence and terror.

SWORD AND SORCERY

TRIUMPH OF THE DARKSWORD Margaret Weiss & Tracy Hickman Bantam £3.50

Third in the Darksword trilogy. Jorae, should have been heir to the throne in the kingdom of Merilon, but he lacked magical powers and was outcast. Now he returns to claim his birthright, fulfil the Darksword prophecy and win his Gwendolyn.

STORMBLADE Nancy Varian Berberick Penguin £3.99

Heroes Vol.2 set on the Dragonlance world of Krynn. Isarn Hammerfell, a dwarf ironmaster makes the ultimate magic sword Stormbringer for the Lord Hornbill. When it is stolen, dwarf apprentice Slanach, along with Kyan Red-Axe and Piper set out to recover it. A journey beset by perils, war and magic. You ought to read it immediately before (or after) 'Bimbos Of The Dark Star'.

THE LIGHTLESS KINGDOM Jonathan Wylie Corgi £2.99

Second in 'The Unbalanced Earth' series sees Gema, along with adventurer Arde, set out for the Southern lands to prove magic still exists. She encounters floating cities, siren sands and saves the Valley of Knowing before entering the impregnable Tower of Steel. Fantasy, but with a touch of underlying SF.

AN EXCESS OF ENCHANTMENTS Craig Shaw Gardner Headline £2.99

Another saga in the life of the hapless Muntvor, apprentice to Magician Ebanezum who is afflicted by sneezing. Muntvor continues his search for a cure - and must contend with giants, talking wolves, the nasty witch, Mother Duck, and all the other whacky inhabitants of the Eastern Kingdoms.

THE ROAD TO AVALON Joan Wolf Bantam £3.99

The jacket tells us this is, 'The epic story of Arthur reweaved into a rich tapestry capturing all the pageant, majesty and passion of his age... the story of warrior-king, who vanquished the Saxons and united a kingdom. It is also the story of a man who desired but one woman, the beautiful Morgan of Avalon, whom he could never marry.' For page counters, it's a massive 474pp.

DARKWELL Douglas Niles Penguin £3.99

Tristan Kendrick, newly crowned king of the Ffolk must forge a lasting alliance between people of the Isles. The Druid Robyn must confront an evil that has infested the land itself. Together they must decide if they will face the future as king and queen - or as enemies separated by failure and mistrust.

STARSONG Dan Parkinson Penguin £3.50

On wings of song, five aliens of the Cai return to their ancestral home of Earth seeking the answer to a plague which is killing their race. One dies and joins souls with human woman Margaret. It is hard for the seven-sensed Cai to interface with five-sensed humans, but it must be done if both races are to be saved. A neat blend of SF and modern fantasy.

RIDDLE OF THE SEVEN REALMS Lyndon Hardy Corgi £3.99

Can man Kestrel trick the wizard, Phoebe over a load of wood. She tests it, and the demon Astron appears on a mission to find the Archmage and save his master from a deadly enemy. Kestrel sees it as a chance to make more money, but the three become involved in a hazardous journey through alternate and dangerous worlds. Entertaining fantasy without loads of swords, spells and Dark Lords.

THE DRAGONBONE CHAIR Tad Williams Legend £14.95

Young, Walter Mitty-ish kitchen boy Sion is apprenticed to Dr. Morgenes at Hayholt Castle - built by the vanished elf-like Sithi. The old king dies and eldest son Elias succeeds but is mysteriously controlled by the evil magician Pryrates. The realm declines during drought and tyranny, whilst King Elias' brother Prince Josua vanishes. Sion's inquisitiveness pitches him into the middle of intrigue, black magic and the fight for the kingdom. Book 1 of the trilogy of 'Memory, Sorrow and Thorn', a massive 650pp fantasy plus an appendix of names, places and pronunciation.

BARD Keith Taylor Headline £2.99

The wilderness of oak, ash and thorn that men call the Forest of Andred is old, filled with the strange and perilous magic of a world before men could measure time... To Andred comes Felimid mac Fal, Bard of Erin, descendant of Druids and the Tuatha de Danaan, the ancient fairy race of Ireland. Andred only with his harp and the fierce magical powers of his poetry, Felimid faces dangers both human and supernatural.

THE CRYSTAL KEEP Shelia Gilluly Headline £6.95

A 312pp, Trade-size pb. 'The black crystal pipes have sounded after long ages of silence, and with their call sadness and death have come to stalk the lands of Ilyria. Long has the Dark Lord, the Unnamed One, waited to spring this trap on Ariadne, the Greenbriar Queen and her loyal defenders. The wizard Alphonse is driven to break his most sacred vow and unleash a wild magic which could turn as easily against ally as against foe.'

GIANT'S STAR James P Hogan Grafton £3.99

Third part of the saga. Shortly after the Ganymeans leave in search of their home 'Gistar', messages are received from that cluster - followed by a second lot, in English. Earth is being observed, but by whom, and to what end? Vic Hunt is called in to make secret contact with one set of aliens. He finds treachery, double dealing and a high-tech civilisation reminiscent of one of Doc Smith's. High grade, well organised space-opera.

NEGRASCOPE II Brian Lumley Grafton £3.99

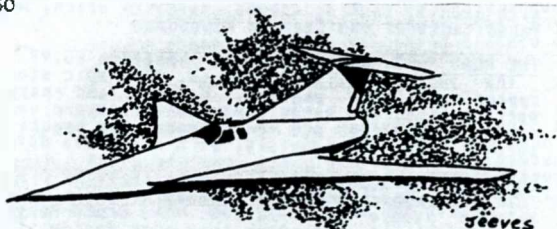
When the U.S. Airforce downs a UFO which proves to be a monster, agent Jazz Simmons is sent on a spy mission. Captured, he is shown an alien creature which appeared during a Soviet experiment. They have created a portal through which come vampire monsters from another dimension. A horror fantasy which could have originated in a pulp magazine of the thirties.

LITTLE HEROES Norman Spinrad Grafton £6.99

In the hip, turned-on, drug and booze culture of L.A. aging pop singer Glorianna O'Toole is approached by the giant Musik Inc. company to help create a new A.P. (Artificial Personality) rock star. At gutter level, a new electronic drug machine is harvesting addicts. Cramped with four-letter words, explicit sex and the sleazy jargon of a decadent and depraved society, this 700+pp yarn in the Bug Jack Barron vein might be right up your alley.

MILLENNIUM Ben Bova Mandarin £3.50

Kinsman, Commander of the U.S. section of a Russo-American moonbase sees an overcrowded Earth heading into war. In collaboration with his Russian counterpart a plan is worked out to take over the base. It leads to mastery of the laser weapons and an all-out struggle to bring peace to Earth. Taut, gripping hard core of the 'it could happen this way' type. Very good.

**WISE WOMAN** R.A. Forde N.E.L. £3.99

Now in paperback. As a child, Keri sees her mother raped by a barbarian warrior. She flees to sanctuary with King Gradlon, but his evil regent has plans of his own. Keri grows up in an atmosphere of barbarism, decadence and intrigue. A non-SF, historical woman's romance. OK for those who like such tipples.

TITUS GROAN £3.99 **GORMENGHAST** £3.99 **TITUS ALONE** £3.50 All from Mandarin

If you have never had the sheer pleasure of reading this Mervyn Peake trilogy grab your chance now. Gormenghast is the sprawling, labyrinthine, crumbling ancestral home of the Groans, full of endless corridors, strange rooms and weird characters. The trilogy opens with the birth of Titus, 77th Lord Sepulchre into the ritual bound society and people such as the abominable Steerpike, the bony Flay, Rottcod, Swelter, Dr. Prunesquallor and others. It is impossible to do justice to the saga in this short space, suffice it to say, this is a timeless epic fantasy to be read slowly, savoured with delight and cherished for a lifetime. And you can get all three parts for the price of one hardcover.

RAVENMOON Peter Tremayne Mandarin £3.50

Based on Irish mythology, this is the story of Aonghus of the Desi tribe. At his birth, auguries say he will drive out his people by the cast of a spear. This comes true when he slays the high King's son for raping his sister and killing his father. The Desi must then face magic, monsters (and some tongue-twisting names) before they reach their new land.

SERPENT'S REACH C.J. Cherryh Mandarin £3.50

Raen lives in Serpent's Reach, proscribed star-system of the ant-like Majat. She and her people have an uneasy peace with the ferocious creatures until the time when all others of her family are brutally murdered. Raen sets out on a mission of vengeance. Cherryh delights in using complicated names, rituals, societies and detailed emotions and I find this often gets in the way of an otherwise excellent yarn.

THE BUREAU OF LOST SOULS Christopher Fowler Century £11.95

A dozen tales of horror set in and around cities. A haunted house, a salt-eating parasite, women take an elevating revenge and an entrepreneur meets trouble. There comes an office murder, 'pukka Wallehs' hunt 'big game' in London, child's play, kidnapping, death in a fish shop, how fitness can be deadly, a sex-maniac decorator and Hell's filing system. All good yarns, well plotted and with chilling 'twist' endings .. what's more, there isn't a bad one in the bunch. A good buy.

ROCKWORLD Christopher Fowler Arrow £3.99

Paperback edition of the weird dwellers above London's roofs. Opening with the grisly death of a lad 'flying' into a neon sign and detailing the horrors wrought by the cable-riding gang of the sadiatic Chyme. TV agent Robert and photographer Rose become enmeshed in the aerial villainy, chases and poisoned missiles.

RAGNAROK Anne Thackeray Bantam £4.99

Set in post-Roman Britain. King Arthur is dead, the tribes warring and roving bands pillage the land. Rhianneth, illegitimate King's daughter finds her strange powers developing through the stone, Glainadder. She sets out to oppose the growing evil, oppose treachery -- and to wed her love. A feminist sword-and-sorcery romance in the vein which is mined so often these days. The choice is yours.

ON STRANGER TIDES Tim Powers Grafton £3.99

In the early 1700s John Chandagnac and Beth Hurwood are taken prisoner by pirates when Beth's voodoo-practising father and Leo Friend (who lusts after Beth), betray their ship into pirate hands. John is forced to join the band on a search for the Fountain Of Youth. A tale of sea-adventure, lust, magic, evil spirits and a final confrontation with Baron Samedi. A fast-moving, welcome change from all those heroic princesses and vile forces of Dark Lords, Gods and suchlike.

MARY AND THE GIANT Philip K Dick Paladin £4.99

In the small town of Pacific Park, 20 year old Mary leaves a lustful father and with no idea what she wants out of life wanders aimlessly (and selfishly) from job to job and lover to lover without ever getting anywhere in particular. Dick is an acquired taste -- I never acquired it, and this tale confirms my view.

STILL LIFE Sheri S Tepper Gorgi £2.99

When artist Madeline moves into the Barber household to give art lessons, she paints members of the family - and they die unusual deaths. Neighbour Sara Chenoweth, part Hopi Indian has suspicions. Aided by Professor Bob McClary she seeks to prevent further deaths -- and comes to a totally unsuspected ending after meeting black magic, head-on. Well plotted and refreshingly different.

ANTARES PASSAGE Michael McCollum Grafton £3.99

Follow-up to 'Antares Dawn' and second part of the trilogy. The fleet from Alta sets off to travel through foldspace to locate lost Earth - where Bethany has agreed to marry Richard. To avoid the alien Ryall, the ships must venture through a supernova. The Ryall are attacking the people of Sander and will eventually head for Alta, so Drake and his fleet must contend with interstellar war and intrigue if they can hope to stop the aliens. Taut, hard-core space-opera.

HEROES Dragon Lance Saga.3 'Weasel's Luck' Michael Williams Penguin £3.99

Galen Pathwarden, the 'Weasel' prefers to avoid adventure, danger or heroism. Forced into a year's service as a squire to a noble knight of Solannia, Sir Bayard Brightblade, his job takes him through swamps which change shape to meet desires of travellers, plains where enemies are illusions - and vice versa, and at last to the 'Scorpion's Nest'. Can he, his knight and a dim centaur defeat the Scorpion?

HEIR OF RENGARTH Carole Nelson Douglas Gorgi £3.50

Second in the 'Sword and Circlet' trilogy sees seeress Irissa lying under a cruel spell. Warrior Kendrick suspects the wizard Geronfrey and sets out on his trail - only to find himself in the enchanted land of Rengarth, place of evil and seduction. Another trilogy of sword, sorcery and romance.

INTERZONE 3rd Anthology N.E.L. £2.99

A third collection of tales from the British magazine - including an altruistic plague, a man who is ignored by all, time-travel, spiritualism, an artist's atomic revenge, surrogate murder and even a jilted woman's revenge (How did that get in? These are all 'Speculative Fiction' - which sometimes leaves you wondering what it was all about. If you have the taste, here are fourteen yarns for you to savour.

Isaac Asimov's Magical World of Fantasy DEVILS Robinson £3.99

Into its 350pp, this one crams no less than 18 tales, each one hinging on the Devil, a devilish garment, Nick seeking a job, eternal life and torment, three brothers, seduction, an alchemist's gamble, a murder deal, and a host of others. Some are light some macabre, but not a dull yarn in the batch - and the whole lot for less than you'd pay for a couple of issues of Weird Tales.

THE ALIEN'S DICTIONARY David Hallamshire Headline £2.99

An index of whacky definitions - an aeroplane is steered by holding a gun to the pilot's head. Undertaker - one who steals underwear. Legend - the bit at the end of the leg. There are hordes of 'em, plus illustrations. It would make a great gift for a youngster or lover of horrible puns.

MOON DREAMS Brad Strickland Headline £3.50

80-year-old Jeremy Moon suffers nightmares and is lured to change places with his alter ego, the magician Sebastian. From a strange land where dreams have reality, he escapes to the kingdom of Thaumia where he must become a magician to break the Gate mirrors and defeat the Great Dark One. Different, entertaining and with some nice ideas.

THE MASK Dean R. Koontz Headline £3.50

When Carol and Paul set out to adopt a child, some elemental force seeks to prevent them, and hauntings begin - screams, visions and strange noises. Then Carol knocks down 15-year-old Jane whom they adopt. Events and terror escalate to a horrible climax as Jane is taken over by the revenge-seeking spirit of a young girl. Slow to get going, but then the terror escalates.

CRABS MOON AND NIGHT OF THE CRABS Guy M. Smith Grafton £2.99

What can I say other than tell you that here are two more in the horror series wherein giant crabs invade the land. Large helpings of blood, horror, bone crunching, explicit sex, and mayhem. Read at your own discretion.

R.A.D.I.X. A.A. Attanasio Grafton £4.99

Re-issue of the 1982 Corgi title. Earth has been exposed to radiation causing mutations, psi powers and formation of the vooz patterns. Slabish anti-hero Kagan who gets his kicks killing mobsters, is partly taken over by a vooz mind. Moulded by many forces, he is hunted by the synthetic Nefandi and must destroy the god-being Delph. Richly descriptive with striking landscapes and characters, it's a top-notch novel and a compulsive read.

CHUNG KUD David Mingrove N.E.L. £7.95

By the 22nd Century, Chinese overlords rule all Earth proscribing research and change by the Edict of Technological Control. The Dispersionists seek to overthrow the Edict by bribery, assassination and subversion. The action takes place in the gigantic City Earth where caste and face rule. The sheer size frightened me at first (500 trade size pp), but once started, you'll not put it down. A superb blend of strong characters, intricate multi-level plots, an exotic Eastern background plus a leavening of cruelty and sex. But above all, it's a darned good read which is bound to scoop a shoal of Awards. Book 1 of a series. *** HIGHLY RECOMMENDED ***

THE ARSONAUT AFFAIR Simon Hawke Headline £2.99

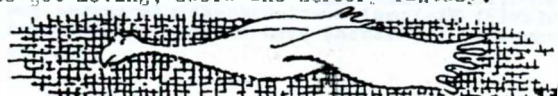
Seventh in the Time Wars series, reminiscent of Beas Piper's 'Paratime Police'. This time, a creature from Greek myth appears in the 27th Century, so Time Commandos, Delaney, Cross and their new partner, Steiger are sent to put things right - 'The future of two universes is in their hands'.

DRUID'S BLOOD Esther M. Friesner Headline £3.50

Queen Victoria is the mightiest mage in an alternate, 19th Century Britain where magic works. She lusts after Dr. Weston, amanuensis of super sleuth Brihtric Donne (Watson and Holmes variants). She calls on the pair to aid in recovering the stolen 'Rules Britannia', source of power, and against demons threatening the throne. A send-up fantasy with a lovely mixture of famous and often anachronistic characters.

THE CRYSTAL SWORD Adrienne Martine-Barzes Headline £3.99

Albion is once again threatened by the powers of Darkness (what else?), with only young Dylan, son of Magic, having the power to defeat them. He must first voyage to Franconia, face a charge of murder and other difficulties before eventually winning the fair Aenor and waiting for some further evil to come by. A rather slow to get moving, sword and sorcery fantasy.

**SLAVES OF THE VOLCANO GOD Craig Shaw Gardner Headline £2.99**

Roger is a PR man who finds his girl Delores comes from an alternate Ciniverse source of all B movies. When she is grabbed and taken back by inept hoodlums, he uses his Captain Crusader Decoder Ring to follow - and finds himself first in a wild West scenario then other plots culminating in being sacrificed to a volcano. A frenetic romp and first in a trilogy.

DAYWORLD REBEL Philip Jose Farmer Grafton £3.50

To ease overcrowding, only one seventh of the population is awake one day a week, the rest stay stoned in suspended animation. Jeff Caird can beat the system, create alternate personas and lie under truth drugs. As a result, he is hunted remorselessly before finally turning the tables. Sequel to Dayworld - a good story, but too long a hunt.

THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS Charles Sheffield Sphere £3.50

Engineer Merlin is hired to build an elevator from ground to orbit, whilst on the side, he seeks the reason for his parents' death and the mystery of the humanoid Goblins. There's an intelligent squid, a computer named Sycorax and sinister Dr. Morel. Characters are a bit stiff, and I have yet to be convinced of the angular momentum problem involved, but it's a rattling good yarn with a sting in the tail.

VENUS OF DREAMS Rantas £3.99

In a post-war society where women are illiterate, have a matriarchal society, do the farming and have children by roaming workmen, Iris grows up learning via computer and has the ambition to become a worker on the project for terraforming Venus. Then she meets Chen, falls in love and is faced with problems of choice. First in a trilogy, good plot and characters, but rather slow and introspective.

BEST NEW SF.3 Ed. Gardner Dozois Robinson £6.99

Yet another block-busting anthology. 594pp crammed with no less than 28 stories, each preceded by a brief note on the author. All come from the 1988 magazines, which at one time meant mainly Analog (listed here as Analogue 1), but significantly, only two here from that source. IASFM supplies eleven. The yarns cover the gamut of SF, though Dozois' choice doesn't always coincide with mine. There's enough here for everyone - and at that price, how can you lose?

HERO OF THE DREAMS Brian Lunley Headline £2.99

David Hero goes to sleep in Edinburgh and awakens in an adventure Dreamworld where he joins with Eldin the Wanderer. As mercenaries and petty thieves, they face sundry horrors when they tangle with Thyristor Udd, priest of the Dark God, Ybb-istil and seek a lost treasure hoard guarded by 'The Keeper'. They must also foil an attempt to free the ghastly Cthulhu in this Lovecraft mythos-based fantasy quest.

SORCERER'S LEGACY Janny Murts Grafton £3.50

Last into the dungeons on the death of her Lord (and facing a fate worse than death), Elienne is rescued by sorcerer Ielond as a bride for his master, Prince Darion who will be executed if he does not sire an heir. But Ielond dies, leaving Elienne to survive as best she can amidst strange customs, laws and conniving wizards at the Court of Pendaire.

DEMON NIGHT J.M. Stracysynski Sphere £3.50

Haunted by violently destructive nightmares, Eric Matthew is called back to his birthplace in the small town of Dredpoint where his latent power begins to emerge. Then a mysterious, cave-dwelling power exerts its evil on the citizens, starting a reign of horror. A taut novel of gradually escalating terror.

ROBOTS Edited by Isaac Asimov Robinson £2.99

47 Tales, opening with Pohl's superb 'Tunnel Under The World' - which you may think isn't about robots - until the twist ending. Then there's a robot raised as a child, intelligent spaceships and autos, robots using humans on star probes, proliferating, in love, as babies, as soldiers, and the horror of Dick's 'Second Variety', the pathos of Del Rey's 'Though Dreamers Die' and the memorable 'Farewell To The Master'. That rare bird, an anthology without a single duff item. Highly recommended. ...

WHERE THE EVIL DWELLS C.D. Simak Mandarin £3.50

Yet another re-issue of the yarn about a parallel world of elves, trolls, wolves and (real) fairies, etc. Years ago, the 'Evil' sacked the Abbey before retreating to the Empty Lands. Now Charles Marcourt's girl, Elouise has been kidnapped, so off he goes with the Abbot, the Gnarly Man and the strange Yolande. They encounter dragons, unicorns etc in one of Simak's folksy treks which leads to an unexpected goal.

OFF-PLANET C.D. Simak Mandarin £3.50

Seven tales from the magazines (1944-72), all with off-planet locales. You'll meet the creators of the Solar System, a world of addictive music-trees, one where knowledge is stolen, a composite alien monster and an alien trading contract. All told in Simak's warm, credible, human style ... and all are complete stories, not the endless fragments found so often in today's yarns.

THE COMPLETE TRAVELLER IN BLACK John Brunner Mandarin £3.50

Through a land of cruel rulers, elementals, magicians, colourful cities and some rather stupid people roams the mysterious traveller with his staff of light. He seeks to abolish chaos by granting wishes - but their outcome is not always quite what the wisher wanted. A gentle series of five ex-magazine fantasies evocative, descriptive and entertaining.

ANACHRONISMS Christopher Hinz Mandarin £3.50

I should be at first that this was an old-titled 'Space Bangle', but no.. much better. The crew of the starship Alchemor visit a new planet and bring on board an alien life form - with disastrous results. The escalating alien menace is neatly left undescribed until the final confrontation as it gradually takes over the functions of the starship. Excellent, fast-moving hardcore. Recommended.

WITH A STRANGE DEVICE Eric Frank Russell Mandarin £2.99

Workers in a top secret establishment are leaving without warning or on slim pretences. Then scientist Richard Bransome realises he committed murder some 20 years ago and sets off to visit the scene of his crime - to find it never took place. The subsequent actions uncover a sinister brain-washing plot.

THE ASSOCIATED SPECIES Eric Frank Russell Grafton £2.99

A fine story collection by one of my favourite authors. Taming a new world, a couple of alien encounters, intelligent camels, peace on Venus, monotony in space, a plant of the Little Folk, the Associated Species and ending with the last man on Earth. All good yarns and as varied as you could wish.

THE USURPER Angus Wells Sphere £3.99

Second book of 'The Kingdoms'. Tawn, servant of Evil God, Ashar, has failed to defeat Kedryn, so now sets out to undermine the three Kingdoms by subverting King Andurel. He makes his move when Kedryn, blinded by a magic sword, must enter the netherworld to confront its wielder if he is to regain his sight. An S, Bopp epic sword and sorcery fantasy.

ALTERNITIES Michael P. Kube-McDowell Sphere £3.99

Set in an alternate Earth, where megalomaniac President Robinson is willing to destroy the Russians at all costs - he exploits a gate to alternate worlds created by murderer and pervert, Walter Endicott. Into this stumbles courier Rayne Wallace whose task is liaison between worlds. Rather slow to get under way, but an excellent yarn once you get into it.

MONA LISA OVERDRIVE William Gibson Grafton £3.50

Set in a sleek, derelict New Jersey where 'The Factory' allows outcasts to build robotic sculptures, where Kumiko, daughter of a crime lord is sent to be lived with a semi-intelligent guide book, Colin, where Mona Lisa is a whore in a gritty plot. There are other crazy, mixed-up characters in a fast-paced cyberpunk yarn which you'll love or hate according to your tastes.

GALAXY'S END Richard A. Lupoff Grafton £3.50

Sequel to 'Sun's End'. Daniel Kitajima, a post-accident cyborg reaches the planet of a distant sun where he investigates a strange artifact and is shown visions of his destiny .. which is to help others save the universe .. a feat reserved for a possible further yarn. A rather slow space-opera.

ADLER Arthur C. Clarke Gentry Lee Orbit £6.99

Photo-researcher Carol Dawson investigates curious whale behaviour and secret deep activity off the Florida cays. Along with boatmen Nick and Roy, she locates a golden artifact, a runaway missile and discovers an alien spacecraft seeding planets to construct zoo habitats. A rather 40s style plot with considerable padding of characters' lives plus sex and four letter words make a mammoth, trade-size, 370-pager linking alien spacers and underwater activity.

DRAGONLANCE LEGENDS Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman Penguin £9.99

Here in one massive 900pp volume are all three parts of the epic trilogy comprising, 'TIME OF THE TWINS', 'WAR OF THE TWINS' and 'TEST OF THE WINS'. Here is the full saga of Raistlin, Caramon, Tanis, Tasslehoff and the rest as they fight the evil threatening the world of Krynn. Complete with excellent illus make it a 'must' volume for Dragonlance devotees. .. and a new series...

DRAGONLANCE SCAVENGERS 'Darkness & Light' Thompson & Carter Penguin £3.50

First in a new fantasy trilogy set on Krynn, prior to the Dragonlance Chronicles. The Knight, Sturm Brightblade aided by warrior-girl Kitiara is seeking his lost father. The pair encounter danger and adventure on their trek. An unusual feature, is the inclusion of two 'peel-off' stickers of the chief characters.