

ERG 109

Quarterly



January 1990

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ERG 109

JANUARY 1990

Terry Jeeves
56 RED SCAR DRIVE
SCARBOROUGH YO12 5RQ

NOW IN ERG'S 31ST. YEAR

There are two ways to get the next issue :-

1. Write a LOC on this issue and enclose TWO second class stamps (If you live outside the UK, you can skip the stamps)
2. 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 us know. Reader, the name of the game is RESPONSE!"

MINI-ERGITORIAL

Once upon a time, it cost 3d to mail ERG in the UK, and 2d overseas. Now the latest Postal hike means 13p in the UK and a whacking 30p overseas. I'm afraid at these rates, I can no longer carry any non-responders, even long-term readers. Last issue brought in less than a dozen LOCs, not really a cost-effective operation, especially with increased costs all round. Sorry, but this will be the LAST ISSUE sent to those who never LOC — I hope that won't include YOU. Next issue marks ERG's 31st Anniversary. I was a stripling of 37 when it began, and I'm now a doddering 67. The query is, should I continue spending cash money to publish ERG when the response rate has fallen so low, or do I let the mag fold?

At the end of October, we saw the Scarborough preview of 'A CHORUS OF DISAPPROVAL' and thoroughly enjoyed it. I was there in two quick close-ups of the in-theatre audience, twice in the outside theatre crowd, and once talking to Val at the top of a flight of back-stage stairs. Autographs anyone?

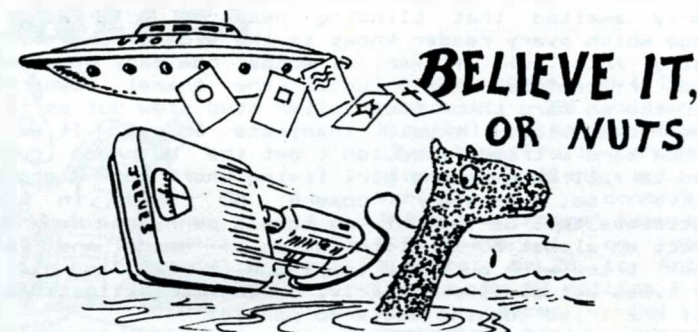
BACK ISSUES OF ERG: Prices include p.k.p. Duplicated issues No.70 (21st Annish) No.86 (25 Annish) Nos.91, 94, 95, 96, All 6 for £3.50 or \$6.00 1st order secures. Printed issues, 100, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108. Seven for £3.50 or \$6.00 1st order secures.

Send a S.A.E. if you'd like copies of my sales lists - paperbacks, hardcovers, magazines and Aerospace - say which you would like. All proceeds go to ERG costs

Meanwhile — A MERRY CHRISTMAS to you all.

Terry

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ERGITORIAL



John W Campbell Jr., is rightly credited with being the father of modern science fiction. However, whilst looking for new ideas and angles, he often wandered down some strange by-ways...

Perhaps the most scream-raising, was his 'revelation' of the Hieronymous machine. All you had to do was construct a linear, Class-A audio amplifier, hook its input to one coil and its output to another, the latter being wound flat like a pancake between two plastic sheets. You then bunged a metal sample in the first coil, switched on, and gently rubbed the plastic sheet covering the second coil whilst tuning a variable condenser. A process closely akin (and about as rewarding) as simultaneously rubbing one's stomach and patting one's head. However, some people claimed that the plastic felt 'tacky' or 'bumpy' and so on. In theory, a skilled operator could deduce and analyse all sorts of facts from the machine ... even if it wasn't switched on!

The late Eric Jones made one, and when I tried stroking it, John Campbell appeared !!! You might even say we got stuck on the same Hieronymous Machine. True, but I must admit that this happened in the King's Court Hotel at the 1957 Worldcon in London, where Eric had installed his machine in the foyer and I chanced to be twiddling its knobs. How could JWC pass it by? Anyway, we had a rather one-sided conversation. Just HOW does one talk coherently to one idol of some 20 years, even if it turns out he isn't ten feet tall?

Later, JWC published details of a 'symbolic' version of the machine. You simply drew the circuitry on paper. I made one and got results which were absolutely 100% reproducible by anyone -- NOTHING ever happened when I used it.

Then there was the 'DEAN DRIVE' whereby one hooked a Black and Decker power drill to the bathroom scales and took off for the stars. Despite all the furor in such prestigious journals as MISSILES AND ROCKETS and other trade papers, thirty years of progress don't show any bathrooms in orbit. Admittedly, a variant of the thing surfaced recently in Yorkshire where an ex-miner had harnessed his drill to a gyroscope and claimed a new power system - but so far, coal production hasn't increased.

Despite such negative results, SF definitely widens one's horizons. Take the case of parapsychology and Dr. Rhine of Duke University. Having encountered this psi stuff in many a story, it was only natural that I dig out the text books and read them. The next step was making my own set of ESP cards and having a bash at telepathy,

telekinesis, clairvoyance and suchlike. I tried manfully to develop my wild talents along the approved lines laid down by various authors. I eagerly awaited that blinding headache or flash of supernal knowledge which every reader knows is the sign of one's latent powers blossoming into full flower. I wonder how many other fan have done the same, gritted their teeth until the enamel powdered away and concentrated so hard their back collar stud flew out as they attempted to move some bloody stupid inanimate object. It was useless, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get the bathroom curtain across the road to fall down as the girl living there took a shower.

Even so, stranger powers DO exist in the universe. Mathematicians tell us that if you toss a penny one hundred times, you can expect an almost 50-50 distribution of 'Heads' and 'Tails'. Aha! Try that trick with buttered toast and it will land sticky side down some 99 times out of 100. Clearly, further investigation is needed... maybe if one tried tossing buttered pennies ???

Moving further into psionic investigation, there are some fine hunting grounds waiting for some future PhD to come and plunder them for a thesis. How about the correlation between car-washing and rainfall? Any Sunday morning car cleaner will tell you that washing the family jalopy is a far better monsoon bringer than a Hopi rain dance when it comes to bringing down the wet stuff. Moreover, at this point I am not ruling out the strong possibility that car paint has Thiotimoline in it as a trace element.

Nearer to home than the car on the drive, is the housewife in the kitchen. She will tell you that the quickest way to bring milk to the boil, is to turn your back on it. The converse of this phenomenon is to be found in the old adage, 'A watched pot never boils'. Now why doesn't somebody bung a bucket on the boiler and try that one out for a PhD? Want more? How about the winning line on the pools coupon that only turns up the week you forgot to mail it? Or when the blonde bombshell at the office asks you for a lift home on the night you promised to pick the wife up from the hairdresser?

There's no doubt about it, this world is full of wonders. Many people catch pneumonia each year by paddling up and down Loch Ness in search of a publicity man's brainwave. What is more, some of them actually claim to see it... and even take (fuzzy, unidentifiable) photos to prove it. Each year, the London Zoo imports a new attraction for the suckers to come, drool and go 'ah' over whilst heaving indigestible fodder into the latest Panda, lion, chimp, wolf, or man-eating banana. Now if they only had a cage set aside for the infrequent appearances of an invisible man from a flying saucer, those drooling hordes would actually SEE the blighter... and take more fuzzy photographs to prove it.

Speaking of Flying Saucers touches on another thesis topic. Why does the ratio of UFO's photographed to those photographed in fuzzy, unidentifiable pictures approach unity? Seemingly, the only clear UFO photographs ever obtained are of models faked up by the cameraman.

The solution could be that UFO's and their pilots possess a mystic power to cloud men's camera films and lenses which they use whenever the would-be Cecil Beaton lines them up in his lens. That may only be a .0001 probability, but when does that daunt a true nutcase? Since there's no smoke without fire, I wonder if the saucers are really piloted by Loch Ness monsters?

No doubt about it, this world holds stranger things than even Arthur C Clarke ever dreamed about.

FANORAMA



LAN'S LANTERN 28 & 29 Gorge Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Blomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA.

Two beautifully produced A4 zines, excellent art and a variety of contributors. These are 'theme' issues with all material on specific authors. No.28 is Arthur C Clarke, No.29 William F Temple and Lester Del Rey. Anecdotes, poems, essays and articles. Each a collector's item. Available for the usual.

C'est Dipsomanie.4 35pp, photo-offset, A5 from G.A. Bryant, Rue Jan Pauly 121, B-4300, ANS, Belgium. English language (or you can have a French edition), Diplomacy game playing zine. 45p a copy (6 issue subs preferred) or trade. Also some brief fanzine reviews. yhos 48 Art Widner, 221 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563 USA. 36pp. Columns, letters, good artwork, a variety of typefaces and a total refusal to be typeset other than as a 'small, friendly zine'. Get it for the usual.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK.27 is the O.O. of Melbourne SF Club, Po Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne 3005, Victoria, AUSTRALIA. a 24pp melange of Club & Con news, reviews, a personal record list, library items, etc. A sprawling zine which looks as if it were edited by a dozen people. Get it for trade or sub (\$12. for 6)

Talk about vote-hassling! I've just received MARITAL (sic) RATS OF SHAOLIN.5 along with a Novacon Ballot form for the fanzine Nova Awards — with its first places already filled in for Marital Rats and its editor George Bondar !!! a neat way of evading the line saying — If you vote for yourself or your fanzine, your vote will be ignored — just con others into doing it for you. I wonder if anybody WILL fall for the idea? Otherwise, it's a nicely printed, 42pp A5 zine with notes on Cons, lots of LOCs, a piece on rats, and excellent artwork and cartoons — some pinched from a Chinese comic. No rates, but I guess the usual will do.

Now what else... I'm currently working on my autobiography, a combination of Carry On Jeeves and Down Memory Bank Lane, who knows, it may sell. Other items lost in Limbo at the time of writing... On the cartoon front, MAKING BETTER MOVIES, now retitled VIDEO MAKER, are again letting debts pile up and owe me £45 for published cartoons. 'AEROMODELLER' still hasn't printed the piece they accepted last April and another publisher has been considering a short story collection for three months and CAMCORDER USER have now had a submission for six weeks without response. A toy firm has NOT returned a photo I sent them last July, along with B.A.E. for its return. No wonder British Businesses seem to be in the doldrums if they treat everyone this way.

On the other hand, Messrs Dawson of Folkestone responded by return when I asked for their catalogue of magazines for which they handle subs. Some companies have sense.

Charles SCHNEEMAN

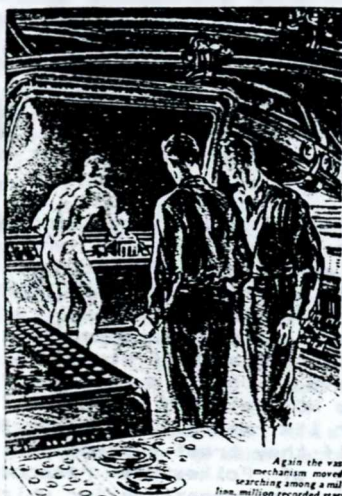


One of my all-time favourite SF artists is indubitably Charles Schneeman, born Nov. 24. 1912.

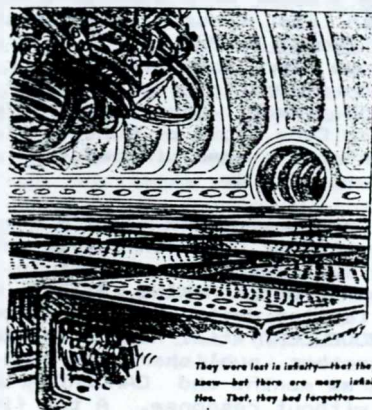
He attended the Pratt Institute of Fine and Applied Art in Brooklyn, where after three years, he earned a diploma. He also attended figure drawing classes at the Grand Central School of Art - which helps to account for the excellence of his lifelike characters. Part of his tuition fees came from money he earned for work on Bernsback's **SCIENCE AND INVENTION**.

His first SF illustration was for 'Into The Infinitesimal' in the June 1934 **WONDER Stories**. His

first appearance in **ASTOUNDING** being the artwork for 'Menace From Saturn' in the July 1935 issue. At first, he drew only the minor stories, but reader acclaim soon saw him getting the lead novels such as this one for 'FLIGHT OF THE DAWN STAR' IN MARCH 1938.



Again the vast mechanism moved, searching among a million, million recorded stars for that one they sought—



They were lost in idleness—that they knew—but there are many latitudes. That, they had forgotten—

THE port lock opened with a slight hiss, and Technician Jack Graham stepped out. He tucked in great mouthfuls of the wine-rich air of this new planet, and it flooded through his lungs like a draught of an opulent, glowing elixir, which somehow seemed to melt away the fear that had been

Despite his heavy use of solid black, Schneeman used light and skilful cross-hatching very effectively to add depth and realism to his work. His figures were real people actually doing their tasks, rather than window dummies posed stiffly in position. Their clothing hung in realistic folds, whilst his mastery of both perspective and gadgetry was superb.

Incidentally it was Charles Schneeman who, as a fan, wrote to suggest that Doc Smith should, "Eliminate the inertia of the cosmic flyer and our hero can attain infinite speed with negligible power ... if he should collide with anything there would be no shock" Thus was born the famous 'Bergenholm'. His artwork for the Lensman stories was outstanding as witness the one showing an unconscious Kinnison being carted away by a couple of thugs and the one showing Kinnison and Haynes gazing into a visiplate as a great space battle rages



Just look at the heading illustration for 'High Frequency War', (Feb. 1940) depicting two crouching figures watching several others. The machinery is totally convincing and the glow from the huge wall screen supplies sufficient illumination to highlight the whole scene yet leave the watchers convincingly unseen. The same quality can be seen in the other illustrations despite their inevitable suffering in the reproduction.

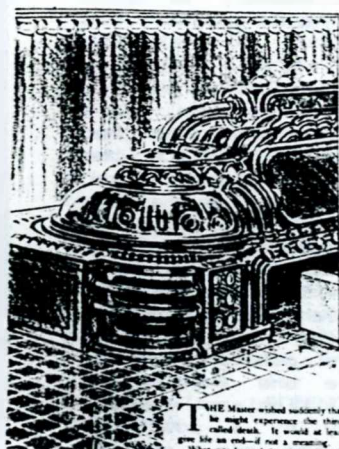
Many SF artists allow their figures to be almost totally overpowered by background machinery. Others as with so many current illustrators in **Analog**, completely fail to capture the spirit of the story and offer nothing but figures and faces



to try and convey the mood of a story. I venture to suggest that if Stanley Schmidt swapped some of his story illustrations around on the stories, nobody would be any the wiser. Not so with Schneeman. His double page spread for FAREWELL TO THE MASTER was perfectly tailored to the story which it illustrated. The brooding, darkly detailed machinery beautifully balanced and counterpointed by the realistic figure work -- and just enough of a tease there to make you want to read the yarn to find out what it was all about.



"He died a thousand years ago--but he is not dead." The Master says the words made.



THE Master wished suddenly that he might experience the thing called death. It would at least give him an end--if not a meaning. What was beyond that door or lack.

Schneeman did only a few cover paintings for ASTOUNDING, the first of these being the May 1938 issue for the first part of The Legion Of Time. These, though technically competent, lacked the impact of his superbly rendered and atmospheric black and white work with his inimitable 'dry brush' technique. Nevertheless, they still ranked among the magazines best.

Caught in the first WW2 draft, Schneeman entered the Air Force at Lowry Field where he became an artist with the Photography Unit and was demobbed in 1941 -- only to be recalled in 1942 when America went to war.

After the war, Schneeman was gradually forced away from SF illustrating and into full-time newspaper work by financial pressures. Supporting a family on the irregular \$10 a time for artwork had always been precarious, and when he moved to work on the Los Angeles Examiner, the distance proved too great for viable magazine commissions and SF lost a great artist.

SOURCES:- THE COMPLETE INDEX TO ASTOUNDING.. Mike Ashley
ASTOUNDING SCIENE FICTION .. sundry issues
'SCHNEEMAN' by Alva Rogers, in Habbakuk c.1950

Illustrations were photographed on colour film, from the magazines, photocopied in black and white, pasted up into text and sent to the printer.

*KEN CHESLIN.
12 CONEY GREEN.
STOURPISSE.
W.MIDLANDS. 078 114

I'm not happy about folk getting benefits which they have not fought for. @>That rules out virtually all DHSS handouts. @

I have in mind in this instance the P.A.T which moralises about the wickedness of action, but the members of which see nothing wrong in accepting whatever benefits other teachers have won for them. They should decline any pay rise for which they have not worked.

I feel a resentment something like I suppose the un-prodigious son felt when his wastrel brother got the fatted calf. @>Read the parable of the workers in the vineyard. If you get what you agitated for, you should be satisfied. If I harass the Council until they repair a hole in the street, should everyone else keep tripping up on reaching the spot? Likewise, in Sheffield, a bunch of us got a road closure reversed. Should those who didn't lobby the Council. not be able to use that road? We who did agitate were happy that we got what we had asked for .. and were pleased it helped others. @> ON SCHOOLS.. "It is true that corporal punishment is banned on the continent, but seldom explained is that there is a disciplinary structure set up outside the teaching staff, where the staff are not expected to discipline, this other arrangement does discipline the kids. Here, they take away the deterrent from the teacher, but replace it with nowt. @> Dead true Ken, that's something I've said for a long time. @>

TED HUGHES. 10 KENMORE RD., WHITEFIELD, MANCHESTER M20 6BR

DEAD TO RIGHTS was really up my street. You may think it was controversial, but I couldn't find anything to differ with in it, and I've been a Union member all my working life. As for strikes. I agree everybody should have the right to strike, if their convictions demand it -- and every management should have the right to sack strikers if they so wish. That means you put your job on the line every time you come out. That would take care of a lot of these wildcat and sympathy strikes. The closed shop I lived with all my working life. I don't like it, it's unfair. The Dold illos in ART in SF came out surprisingly well. Are you limited to reproducing the size of your camera prints? If so, give us a treat: do us a full page Wesso from a period preceding my cut off date of March.1936. @> I fancy I could get photocopy enlargements, but just can't spare the space to give a whole page to one illo. I'm afraid. @>



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ETHEL LINDGAY, 69 BARRY RD, CARMONISTIE, ANGUS DD7 7QG, SCOTLAND

How I agree with you on how the media reacts to disasters. You can almost hear them rubbing their hands. Not so sure on your strictures on the right to strike. There would be little point in striking if it didn't cause havoc of one kind or another. I would not like to live in a cuntry where there is no such right. @> Read ay bit again, Ethel. I didn't put any strictures on individuals striking - ONLY on them demanding that others MUST join them, or that their families should be supported out of the public purse. If Fred wants to strike, that's his right -- but it is NOT his right that I should support his family while he does so. <@

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 17 RIVERSIDE CRESC. HOLMES CHAPEL, CHES CH4 7NR

I enjoyed the Carry On Jeeves bit which always gets my own grey matter thinking back to earlier times. Prior to my demob I spent a lengthy spell at a very well split-up MU not too far from where I now live, there was as much as four or five miles between some sites. I was engaged in handling stores for the Wireless Section in between helping the Signals Officer get a divorce and playing shove ha'penny - no sissy game this, we played on sheets of highly polished glass and the coins when well-flicked often achieved speeds in excess of aircraft of the time; in fact this pastime got such a hold on the camp that my unit had other satellite areas wired up for Tannoy commentary when a big league match was to be played. Sadly, this had to cease when an Air Ministry Order was received for a quantity of certain transceivers whose parts had been used for the broadcast system.. However, we were never caught out by unwelcome, predatory visitors as we had a very sophisticated electronic grapevine to provide warning.

ALAN SULLIVAN, 13 EIR GARDENS, RAYLEIGH, ESSEX SS6 7TH

"RIGHTS", there's a price to pay for them whatever they are - even the 'inalienable' ones. It's usually having to put up with the inconvenience of the rights of others. Everybody has a right to be heard, even the National Front. There do have to be limits drawn though - where recognising someone's rights infringes on the rights of others. @> Spot on, Alan. Why is it that strikers feel others should (must) join them, and not that they should join the non-strikers? <@ Art in SF, I've got a book with some examples of Dold's work. The pieces you used are pretty good, but you really need to see them 'in the large' to appreciate them properly. @> True, as several others have suggested, Trouble is, I can't spare that much space with a page limit of 24, A5 sized pages <@

VINCE CLARKE, 16 WENDOVER WAY, WELLING, KENT DA16 2BN

The ART IN SF piece is getting into its swing and the illos by Dold brought back a lot of memories. Primarily, I suppose, it's the memory of that statement by Brian Aldiss in SCIENCE FICTION ART, "His (Dold's) world-picture includes man as a unit of a pre-ordained cosmos governed by the second law of thermodynamics." @> That says it all <@ Admittedly Aldiss was squeezed for space @> Clearly, not enough. <@ but I think he means that the human figure is integrated with the machines in Dold's pictures, as a contrast to, say, Paul, where the machinery is all, or modern artists where the figure is predominant. And those readers who thought Biger invented intestinal art, the depiction of machinery as an analogue to the human interior, would be surprised if they studied Dold's writhing artifacts. @> I must admit I'd never noticed that angle before, but now you point it out, I think you're dead right. <@

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 COMMERCIAL ST, NORTON, *ALTON, N. BRADSHIRE YO17 2ES

As a firm believer in Great British Traditions, I'm quite happy to see them continue the ritual of marching round with placards, the brazier that must be kept burning, even at the height of summer. What I object to is everyone else joining in, i.e., that just because the dockers might have a genuine dispute, that doesn't mean every miner has to walk out in sympathy, or railway worker (if that isn't a contradiction in terms), and join the picket line. If it's their dispute, it should remain their's alone, no matter that brothers should stand together. On payment, I hope we can still be humanitarian (or idiotic) enough to support a striker's wife and children; but what has he ben paying his dues for? Why shouldn't he expect his weekly wage from the Union if they call him out on strike? @> Why not indeed .. I wonder why their 'protection' slows down at that point? <@

PAMELA BOAL, 4 WESTFIELD WAY, CHARLTON HEIGHTS, WARRAGE, OXON OX12 7EN

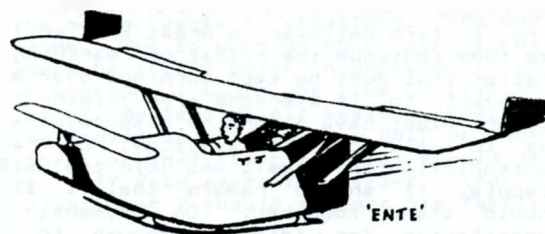
"Can you remember the days when a man of equal ability and proven work record to another, saw his family go hungry because the gate foreman at dock or factory didn't like him? I would also point out that in the ambulance drivers' dispute, it is the employer that is refusing to go to arbitration and that the men are not striking, but foregoing a living wage by banning overtime. @> I agree, both are cases where strikes are justified. In the first case, the Union itself should discipline suh a foreman, and in the second, I agree the Government should go to arbitration -- and once again, I never said strikes should be banned, only that nobody should be FORCED to join 'em .. or harrassed for not doing so. <@ C.W.BROOKS, 713 Paul St., Newport News, VA 23605, USA

I read about half of Rushdie's SATANIC VERSES, it is pretty dense. I rather doubt if 1% of the Moslems makingn such fuss about it ever read the thing - someone told them it was 'blasphemous'. I could not see the account of Mohammed's early career was any more offensive than, say the film, 'Thr Last Temptation Of Christ, or the odd book, Holy Blood, Holy Grail would be to Christians. I think the rabble rousing is done by a few men at the top for political reasons. @> I agree entirely. I some ways, one could draw a parallel with Hitler's rabble-rousing. Eventually, a point is reached where even the decent members of a sect feel they have to go along with the mob for fear of having it turn on them if they don't wave fists and chant slogans like a lot of thick-witted morons.<@ A fellow at our wind-tunnel built a Vari-Eze in his garage and flew it for a while. Then he ran out of gas in flight and landed just a few feet short of the end of the runway. He walked away from it, but the damage to the plane was considerable. I don't know if he ever got it back in the air or not.

I reckon that's all for now, as I'm in a rush to get this out in time to avoid the Christmas mail pile up. Here's to the next time - and just because it's the Festive Season, you won't forget to LCC will you? Just sit back, let that turkey digest and put pen to paper and let me know what you think of this issue.

All the very best,

ROCKET 'PLANES

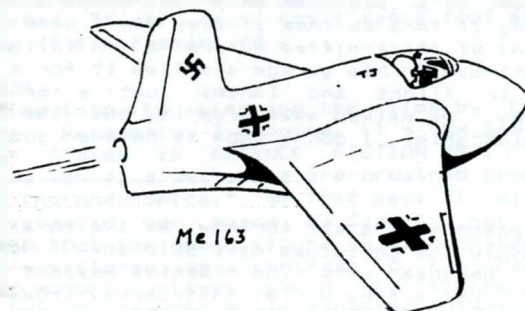


Many people believe that rocketry began with the V-2 and that rocket planes are only a futuristic Buck Rogers' dream. Rockets themselves are a Chinese invention dating back to at least 800AD, and their use as war weapons to propel bunches of fire arrows followed soon after. War rockets were used against each other, and against the British troops by Indians in the 18th Century and by 1813, Britain had its own 'Rocket Corps' using Congreve rockets. They were also used against Fort Mchenry during the War Of Independence and found their way into the song of freedom in the line 'the rockets red glare'.

It took a further century before they were harnessed to man carrying flight, but then Fritz van Opel and Max Valier persuaded aircraft designer Lippisch to try lashing two solid rockets to one of his gliders. On the 11th. of June, 1928, the canard (tail-first) 'Ente' achieved a 35 second flight. Experiments continued for over a year before Opel lost interest.

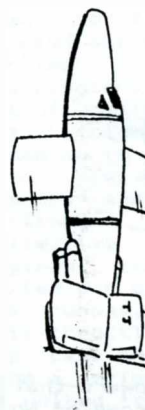
The German aircraft designer Heinkel was next to take up the idea with his model 176, but he used a liquid fuel motor and the aircraft made its maiden flight on June 20th. 1930. He also used a propeller as well as rocket propulsion for his He.112.

Then there was the Messerschmitt Me-163 which made its first flight in August 1941, taking off on a jettisonable dolly. However, its propellant was highly unstable and the rocket motors had a nasty habit of exploding - especially after landing when fuel residues ignited.



In 1944, the Japanese set out to manufacture Me-163s, but when the specimen being shipped from Germany was lost, they designed their own version from the maintenance manuals! War ended before they got them operational.

Bachan Ba-349A

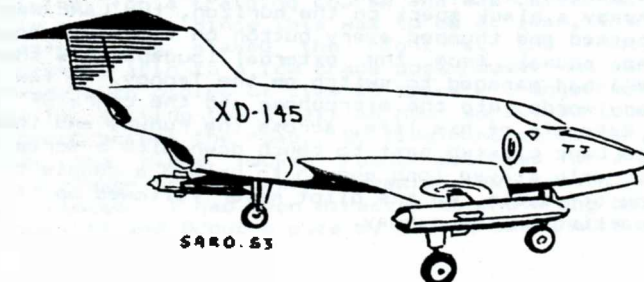


Other German rocket planes included the Bachan Ba349 fighter, developed in 1944. It was designed for vertical launch and armed with some 30 rocket weapons for use against American bombers.

The Russians were not slow off the mark either, as their BI-1, liquid fuelled rocket plane was airborne in May 1942. In 1946, Mikoyan and Gurevich designed a rocket powered interceptor, the I-270, which achieved a speed of 620mph.

Over in the U.S.A., rocket flight started a bit later, but was explored much more thoroughly and methodically. The Republic XF-91 was had a mixed power system of jet and rocket. The Douglas Skyrocket reached Mach 1.9 and 24,000m. The Bell X-1 series pushed speeds to Mach 2.4 and an altitude of 27,566m. Impressive as these figure were at the time, when the North American X-15 project came along, it saw records pushed to a fantastic Mach 6.7 and an altitude of 107,960 metres.

Britain made one brief venture into the jet cum rocket plane stakes with the Saunders Roe (Saro) S.R.53. A well designed machine powered by a D.H. Spectre rocket engine and a Viper turbojet. Performance details were never released, but the machine did several display flights at Farnborough before it (and its Mach 3 development) were killed by the infamous White Paper of 1957. I suspect the Labour Government also killed off several other interesting projects - Westlands had a project for jet & rocket interceptor. Hawker had no less than three designs on the board, the 1124 pilotless drone, the 1065 mixed power plant job and the 1089 rocket fighter. Avro were nearing completion of two tail-less, delta wing rocket planes when their contract was cancelled. So we're still waiting for a production rocket plane.



FINAL DAZE



Another incomprehensibly trusting deed of the powers-that-be was to put me in charge of a work party at the tiny aerodrome of North Creek. Our mission (and we had no choice but to accept it) was to render airworthy an abandoned 'Mossie' which was to be flown back to Swannington. My protests that I was but a humble W/Mech Corporal fell on deaf ears. I was the only available NCO, the job was mine and I had better get on with it or else face charges of mutiny, dereliction of duty and any other crime that could be thought up.

Ever an optimist, I consoled myself with the thought that since my demob number, 3B was looming ever nearer, there was always an outside chance that I might be plain Mister Jeeves before any nasty cans had to be carried. Bearing this in mind, I did the standard RAF thing, I delegated. I called each tradesman to me, told him to find out what he needed, and to report back. Once the lists began to come in, I started placing orders -- several dozen sparking plus, umpteen gallons of cooling glycol, engine oil, trolley accs and all the other esoteric junk needed to get a clapped out machine airborne. All the bits eventually arrived and formed a Steptoe-ish heap around the unfortunate Mossie.

Work began, but as might be expected, there were snafus .. like the day a few of us were sleeping peacefully in the control tower when the 'phone rang. A bored voice informed me that a Lancaster bomber would be landing on one of our runways, as the Swannington strip was too short. Oh well, landing an aircraft was the pilot's business, not ours, so we moved to the window to watch. PANIC! The local clerk of works on a trip to count hangars to make sure none were missing, had parked his jeep slap on what he had taken to be a disused runway. Already a black speck on the horizon, the Lanc was on finals.

I pulled, pushed and thumped every button on the tower board until an ear-splitting squeal from the external loudspeakers showed that by sheer chance I had managed to switch on the Tannoy. A few well-chosen non-dictionary words into the microphone and the clerk of works made the fastest take-off of his life, across the runway and into the ditch -- whilst the Lanc blasted past to touch down with a screech of tyres.

Luckily, it only stayed long enough to unload a couple of passengers before taking off again, so the pilot never followed up the question of illegal parking on the runway.

Despite delaying tactics, the burning of joss sticks and prayers to Allah, my demob didn't come through before our Mossie was ready to fly. The fatal day arrived, engines were run up, tradesmen carried out their Dis, the Form 700 was duly signed and a pilot ferried over from Swannington. No hurricane or Act Of God intervened to halt the procedure. Glumly we lined up to watch the fiasco with visions of Courts of Inquiry and other nastiness flitting through our collective noddles. The engines fired, the pilot taxied our plane to the end of the runway, a brief pause, full throttle and he was away! Up came the tail, the Mossie made a perfect take-off and flew back to main base without a hitch. We walked ten feet tall for the rest of the day.



Incidentally, at this time I was sharing a room in the unused Medical Quarters with three other airmen. When we moved in, I found six lovely white hospital blankets on my bed. Before I could lose them, there came a knock at the door. Opening it, I was faced by a medical Sergeant .. "Oh, I left some blankets here, I've come to collect 'em" Curses, there they were in plain sight. The only thing I could do was think fast. "Right, I'll get 'em for you". I turned, walked smartly to the bed, pushed the top blanket off the pile and down behind the bed, scooped up the remaining five, and took them to the Sergeant who departed with grateful thanks. Oh well, at least I did get one excellent blanket out of the deal.

Further investigation of our new billet revealed an electric heating system - inoperative as some kind person had thoughtfully removed the fuses. A few bits of copper wire fixed that, and we had a warm, snug bedroom. A welcome change from the normal RAF Nissen hut with its inadequate coke-burning stove. No longer were we dependent on midnight raids on the fuel store or a stove which had to be cleaned out each day.

It was about this time that I began to wonder what I might do on leaving the service and actually having to work for a living. What civilian job would give me four weeks leave in a year and have short working hours plus most Saturdays and Sundays off? I could see this was going to be a problem. I ploughed through lists of available courses before, in my innocence, selecting teaching. I duly filled in forms applying for a training course and was called to attend for an interview in Norwich. Since this was to be at 10am, I travelled down the day before and stayed the night at the YMCA - a palatial dormitory closely akin to a low grade doss-house. An early breakfast saw me ready with oodles of time to spare. I enquired my way to the interview site, getting there half an hour early, so took a sunny seat on a park bench across the road. By five minutes to ten, it occurred to me that the place looked rather deserted for a busy interview centre .. a closer investigation revealed the reason. The flaming place was closed. I had been directed to the wrong building! I was forced to set off and Scout's pace my way across a mile of Norwich,

wearing full RAF clobber and carrying a side pack. A procedure NOT to be recommended prior to an important interview. Somehow I got there just before my name was called ... answered a load of stupid questions and was accepted as a future moulder of young minds.

Less than a week later, I heard the magic news that I had reached the top of the Hit Parade. Group 38 W/Mechs were due for release.

A word here about this wonderful 'First in, first out' system. The theory was supposed to be that those with the longest service would be demobbed first. That was the original theory before certain modifications were made.

First, (a never explained) points system was flanged up which counted not only length of service, but an airman's age. I had a nice hefty five and a half years' service, but since I had volunteered at the age of 18, and was still not yet 24, I had precious little in the way of age points. To make matters worse, I was in a Group 1 trade and as such was held back way behind lower Groups. Even so, Release Number 38 finally turned up on DROs (Daily Routine Orders) and in mid July 1946 .. many moons after war's end, I began a frantic tour of the camp in search of signatures for my Clearance Chit to prove I hadn't borrowed a couple of Mossies and forgotten to bring 'em back. Having satisfied everyone that I didn't have the Adjutant's Jeep hidden in my kit-bag, I reached the final hurdle - an interview with the CO so that he could bid me a tearful goodbye.

"Have you thought of signing on again Corporal?" I could see the brave way he concealed his tears.

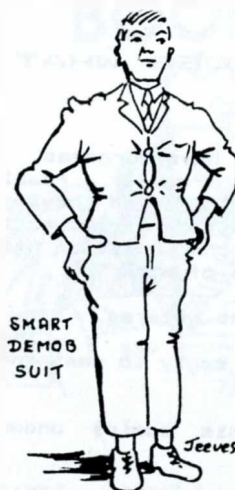
"Yes sir -- and decided against it." I'm sure his face was about to crumble.

"H'm, and are you going to join the RAF Association?"

"Yes sir" Not bloody likely, but I'd have promised to join the Ku Klux Klan if my demob had depended on it.

"H'm, yes, very good. Well all the best in civilian life. Goodbye" He choked back a large lump in his throat and turned his face away to hide his tears.

Off I toddled to Cardington. "Sit and wait until you hear your name called." "Right, hurry up over there and wait to be called..." "Wait, hurry, sit, stand, and wait again." Getting OUT of the RAF took just as long as signing on in the first place. Medicals, pay chits, travel warrants, ration cards, a visit to a giant warehouse stuffed with clothing and the final act which made me realise I had finished the obstacle course -- the dropping of my knife fork and spoon into a salvage receptacle.



It was a sad thought to think it was all over, but on the other hand, 'Civvy Street' and further adventures lay ahead.

THE END (of part 12.)

Eventually, I shot out of the far end of the demob centre like a pip from an orange, clutching a huge cardboard box holding a demob suit given me by a grateful Government. It would have made a scarecrow blush in shame, but I was FREE. A final ride in a bumpy three-tonner got me to the station and the inevitable hour or two to wait before the next train heading North towards God's chosen county - Yorkshire, in case you were in doubt. A couple of train changes, several hours and one bus-ride later, I arrived back home in Sheffield.

Then came the time when I took off my RAF blue for the last time to hang it away in the wardrobe, ready in case I was ever called on once again to help defend this fair isle against the Dark Lord and his Evil Forces. The long-awaited day was finally here and I was a civilian. Now, strangely enough, having worn RAF blue proudly for so many years, I was going to miss it.



WANTED

Can some kind Statesider come to my aid. I have two requirements, so either two people (or one willing to help out with both) are needed. Specifically:-

1. Someone willing to accept dollars from me, and buy the occasional book and mail it to me. Naturally, I'll pay postage incurred.

2. Someone willing to buy 'as new' paperbacks from me at approximately 1/3 to 1/4 cover price, but instead of sending me the dollars, to use them to buy and send me Stateside books and magazines.

Anyone out there interested? If so, drop me a line and we'll work something out.

WHO'S WHO,

READS WHICH

AND DOES WHAT?

Five people, Tom, Dick, Harry, Mary, and Jane have surnames, Smith, Jones, Robins, Brown and Green. Their regular reading materials are, ERG, ANALOG, BOOKS, THE MIRROR, BATMAN, and they work in a ... bank, shop, library, school, pub. But not in any respective order. Using the information given, can you fit the Christian names to the surnames and to reading material and places of work?

1. Tom Brown's schooldays will continue until he retires.
2. Green, the ERG reader left her shop early to meet the librarian in Harry's pub.
3. Jane takes a daily paper, and Smith keeps his comics under the bar.
4. Robins often sneaks into the vault to read his monthly magazine.

	SMITH	JONES	ROBINS	BROWN	GREEN	ERG	ANALOG	BOOKS	MIRROR	BATMAN	BANK	SHOP	LIBRARY	SCHOOL	PUB
TOM															
DICK															
HARRY															
MARY															
JANE															
BANK															
SHOP															
LIBRARY															
SCHOOL															
PUB															
ERG															
ANALOG															
BOOKS															
MIRROR															
BATMAN															



SURNAME READING WORKPLACE

TOM			
DICK			
HARRY			
MARY			
JANE			

ANSWERS

TOM BROWN, BOOKS, SCHOOL, MARY GREEN, ERG, SHOP, JANE JONES, MIRROR, LIBRARY, HARRY SMITH, ANALOG, BANK, DICK ROBINS, BATMAN, PUB.

NO PEEKING

BOOKS



THE TOMMKNOCKERS

Stephen King N.E.L. £4.99
When Bobbi Anderson stumbles on an alien craft in the backwoods it drives her to obsession, digging and invention. Alcohol-friend Gardner comes to aid her whilst the compulsions and physical changes spread to the local township bringing telepathy, violence and horror. A ruthless isolation policy is enforced. I could do without the intimate details of menstruation, alcoholism, brand names and T-shirt slogans, but otherwise King juggles characters, side-stories and his main plot superbly in what is one of the best SF Horror stories I've read in ages. Highly recommended.

FAERIE TALE Raymond E Feist Grafton £3.99

The best terror tales are strongly rooted in the real world, this one starts innocently when the Hastings move into the standard, ramshackle house bordering 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. Teenage Battie is lusted after by another creature. Gradually, threads of horror and menace intrude on their world in a complex saga of suspense and terror.

ROLE-PLAYING MASTERY Gary Gygax Grafton £3.99

Interested in Role Playing Games? Here in one volume are hints, plans and game strategy to help you become a top-level player. Choosing your characters by attributes, group play, opponent assessment, defining parameters and much more. Pl appendices on groups, conventions, magazines, game and products, as well as a glossary of terms. To my inexperienced eye, it seems the answer to a Role Player's prayer, he (or she), beginner or adept.

REQUIEM FOR A RULER OF WORLDS Brian Daley Grafton £3.99

When Caspar Weir, monarch of 17 stellar systems dies, he picks Earthman Hobart Floyt as one of his heirs. To claim the inheritance, Floyt must travel light years to attend the Will Reading. He sets off, shepherd by spacer Alacrity Fitzhugh who was blackmailed into the job. Their journey is beset by many perils as enemies try to dispose of Floyt. Lightweight, but fast-moving space-opera, first in a new series.

BLOOD OF THE TIGER Rose Estes Bantam £2.99

Set in prehistoric days, Eri and Hawk, cast out by their tribes are accompanied by lion cub, Masca. They struggle to survive against an evil shaman, powerful animals and other dangers in a hostile world. A touch of Tarzan-cum-Androcles and sundry conflicts mark this first in 'The Saga Of The Lost Lands'.

SONGS OF A DEAD DREAMER Thomas Ligotti Robinson £3.99

A collection of tales of horror (plus essays on writing it), many from magazines and fanzines. They cover all the facets of the genre - an escaped daniel, imaginary creatures, psychology, metamorphosis, Mesmerism, vampirism, magic and fantasy. Many are of the 'unresolved ending' type, but Mr. Ligotti avoids the over description trap, leaving his readers' imaginations to conjure up their worst fears. A nicely balanced collection.

THE WHITE RAVEN Diana L Paxson N.E.L. £4.50

Now in paperback. Set in 6th Century Ireland, Branwen (White Raven, Queen of the Otherworld) grows up as companion to Princess Esselitte. Unwillingly betrothed to the English King, Esselitte calls on Branwen for help. A fantasy romance based on the Tristan-Iseult legend and retold in a blend of history and folk customs. There's also an Afterword and list of characters, places and lineages.

MATHENAUTS Ed. Rudy Rucker N.E.L. £3.50

25 tales from a galaxy of authors, each one having some basis in mathematics - don't shy away, you need no more maths to enjoy these, than you need astronautic training to read space opera. Read about a coded will, unusual research, 4th dimension, alternate history, a mental home computer service, dimensional reversal, infinite regressions, demon foiling, endless universes, dicing with death and a host of other goodies. A nicely balanced mixture without an insecure ending in the lot.

CREATURE John Saul Bantam £3.50

When the Tanner family moves to a new home in the company research town of Silverdale, all seems idyllic. 16-year-old Mark finds everyone football crazy, there are strange doings in the Medical centre, in the town, things are slightly off and gradually, the true secret of the research emerges. Not a blood and guts shocker, but a superbly escalated tale of menace which kept me hooked until the small hours. One of the best of the year, it would make an excellent film.

BROTHERS OF EARTH C.J.Cherryh Mandarin £3.99

Kurt Morgan, solitary survivor of a space battle crashes on a planet ruled by Djan, an enemy female who is also abandoned there. Against her inclinations, she gives Kurt a chance to live and he is taken into the household of warrior Kta where he begins to learn the native customs, falls in love, but also becomes the focus for feuding and conflict. Cherryh's own brand of SF, verging on heroic fantasy.

OF MAN AND MANTA Piers Anthony Corgi £4.99

An unlikely trio, the strong, veg, beautiful Aquilon and the cripple Cal whilst surveying the planet Manta they meet the weird, intelligent Manta and take them back to Earth where they pose a terrible threat. In part two, they and four Mantas are shuttled to a prehistoric Earth to face monsters, volcanoes and the birdlike Orn. Part three has them on a world of free-ranging machines and the energy pattern, Dr. Unusual adventures on widely differing planets go to make up the complete trilogy, here in one massive volume.

PRIME EVIL Ed. Douglas Winter Corgi £3.99

13 tales of horror, opening with an overlong vampire yarn by Stephen King. Then comes cannibalism, a quarry-dwelling monster, metamorphosis, child abuse, insanity, suicide and others. No brooding menaces looming in the background, but a curate's egg of a collection with more ugh than deftly hinted at horror for my taste - but of course, yours may differ.

PEACEKEEPERS Ben Bova Mandarin £3.50

In episodic style, we hear how the Peacekeeping Force comes into being when an Arab/Israeli conflict see three cities nuke. After an enforced cease fire, General Shamar dusts Jerusalem with radioactive dust and escapes with six atom bombs. The resulting upheaval and hunt leads to the war-stopping Peacekeepers. A taut, hard core, near future yarn of the type Bova does so well.

THE HEAVENLY HORSE FROM THE OUTERMOST WEST Mary Stanton N.E.L. £3.50

Appaloosa stallion, Dancer is first among the Guardians of the Court of Outermost West. Anor is his enemy and serves The Dark Horse. Dancer, Duchess, (a mare) and the dog, Cory escape their fate but are hunted by Anor and his hounds. An anthropomorphic fantasy in which the animals replace standard humans.

PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN Mary Stanton N.E.L. £4.95

Sequel to Heavenly Horse recounts the further struggles of the horses. Duchess is killed by El Arat, Dancer has lost his soul, so his son, Piper must take on the battle against the evil Anor and his hounds. A massive, 300pp trade-size volume. If you have a horse-crazy younggirl around, either (or both) of these make an ideal present.

PRELUDE TO FOUNDATION Isaac Asimov Grafton £3.99

When the young Hari Seldon presents his infant theory of psychohistory, Emperor Cleon and the Mayor of Mye both see it as a way to manipulate the masses. Seldon is hunted, befriended by newsmen Hummin and along with the beautiful Dors Venabili, embarks on an episodic series of adventures as he seeks to perfect his theory. An excellent yarn in which Asimov neatly ties off all the seeming loose ends to give us one of the best Foundation novels yet.

BACK TO THE FUTURE II Craig Shaw Gardner Headline £2.99

Once again, young Marty McFly goes time travelling with Dr. Brown, this time, to the future along with his girl friend Jennifer. The purpose is to prevent their son to come from going to jail and future daughter out of a mental home. Complications develop when bully Biff sees time travel as his oyster and things get hectic before it is all worked out. Rather juvenile book version of the film script, but if you enjoyed that, you'll probably like this one.

WHITE NUN'S TELLING Fay Sampson Headline £3.50

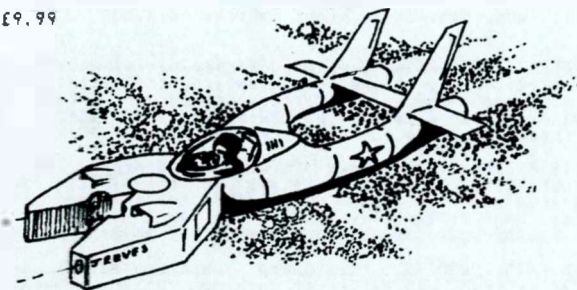
Second in the Daughter of Tintagel series sees Morgan attempt to kill her half brother, and banished to Tintagel Convent which stands above a sacred cave. The austere life has strong undercurrents as Morgan involves the abess, old nurse Gwennol and a young nun. At the risk of being dubbed a male chauvinist, I'd say it was the Fantasy version of a woman's romantic novel and ideal for Arthurian legend lovers.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE Brian Stableford £2.99

Esqard is a many-layered planet, former home of an advanced, but vanished race. Mark Rousseau is a scavenger for their lost secrets. He is coerced into leading a Star Force group into the core in pursuit of an escaped android. Pursued by a gang of criminals, he faces danger from all directions as he seeks to avoid death - and turn a profit from the experience. Not cerebral, but an entertaining read.

FOSS POSTER PORTFOLIO Grafton £9.99

If you're a lover of his weird conversions of everyday machinery into striking, esoteric space hardware, then you'll want this collection of ten full-colour posters in A2 format (roughly 2 feet by 18 inches). They make a stunning wall display, or you can get one frame and put a different picture in whenever you feel like it.

**FOR LOVE OF EVIL** Piers Anthony Grafton £3.99

Book Six of Foundations Of Immortality. In Southern France, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Parry weds village girl Jolie, but crusaders seeking non-believers, kill her (though her spirit stays with him). The hunted Parry takes refuge in a monastery, develops his powers and becomes an inquisitor. Seduced by a demoness he gains immortality and finally confronts Lucifer. A wide-ranging anything-goes fantasy.

STAR TREK: THE FINAL FRONTIER J.M.Dillard Grafton £3.50

Klingons, Romulans and Terrans are working to develop Nimbus 3. Then renegade Vulcan, Sybok, a mind-master akin to Asimov's Male, raises a band of terrorists and kidnaps the diplomats. Kirk and an unready Enterprise are sent in - as is a Klingon ship captained by an ambitious killer. Sybok, captures Enterprise and heads for the Galaxy's centre, pursued by the Klingons and Kirk faces an incredible encounter.

IN OTHER WORLDS A.A.Attanasio Grafton £3.99

Lari Schirmer vanishes in an inexplicable explosion, meets the skyler, an energy being in a black hole at the end of time and is given a new, non-aging body. Cast into The World among the Foke he must face the totti, predatory, intelligent and sidereal. Sent back to Earth to get a load of pig manure for the skyler, he inadvertently opens a path for the totti. A wide-ranging fantasy in which almost anything can happen - and often does.

MYRD SISTERS Terry Pratchett Corgi £2.99

When KING Verence is killed by Duke Folant, his ghost haunts the castle, but his infant son is rescued by Granny Weatherwax and two other witches and given into the care of wandering actors. The witches tangle with the new king and his men before justice is served. Sixth Discworld novel sees Terry Pratchett mangling words, meanings and Shakespeare with hilarious abandon.

CUCKOO'S EGG C.J.Cherryh Mandarin £3.50

Human baby, Thorn, is raised to manhood by the batani warrior, Duun, who harshly schools the child in martial arts before launching him into Sonun society. As a hated alien, Thorn becomes the centre of a power struggle before discovering his origins and fulfilling a long-planned destiny of inter-race contact. A re-issue of one of Cherryh's best space operas.

RED DWARF Grant Naylor Penguin £3.99

Lister signs on aboard Red Dwarf, finagles himself into deep freeze, for a short trip, and awakes 3 million years later to find the rest of the crew dead, the ship a cat has evolved into an intelligent being and the Red Dwarf is being run by a senile computer. For company he has the hologram of the dead, Rimmer. From here, things get complicated in this book version of the TV series. If you liked that, you'll want the book.

SHODDOWDALE Richard Awlison Penguin £3.99

When the Tablets of Fate are stolen, the overgod Ao consigns the lesser gods to human form. Ex-god Kane seeks power, the others, a return to their godhood. They seek the tablets and so begins a quest beset by danger, magic, strange creatures and treachery. After a complicated, character-crammed start, this first book in the 'Avatar Trilogy' settles into a standard S&S fantasy in the 'Forgotten Realms' series.

HIAZEL Isaac Asimov Doubleday £10.95

I much prefer Asimov's shorter stories, and here are eighteen of them - each revolving around the deeds performed and told to Asimov by his friend, George. HAZEL is only 2cm high, but he is called on to help a basketball player, a singer, a marriage, a would-be Casanova, an accident-prone, and others. Sadly, the results are never quite what the beneficiary wanted. Light-hearted fantasies in the Woodhouse style, and ideal one a night bedtime reading.

THE FACE OF FEAR Dean R Koontz Headline £3.50

After a climbing accident, Graham Harris develops psychic powers which allow him to give vital clues to the police seeking the sadistic multiple killer, The Butcher. The murderer sets out to get Harris and his girl friend and traps them in a near-empty skyscraper for a terrifying confrontation. Fast, violent horror, not for the squeamish or those who leave doors unlocked at night.

A DISAGREEMENT WITH DEATH Craig Shaw Gardner £2.99

Apprentice Muntvor is still on the trail seeking a cure for his master, Wizard Ebenezur's affliction of sneezing in the presence of magic. This time he encounters Fates, Mary, Jane, Victoria and Hortense as well as challenging death himself. The final hilarious S&S send-up in the Ballad Of Muntvor trilogy.

WITH FATE CONSPIRE Mike Shupp Headline £3.99

War veteran, Tim Harper is working on an alternate universe thesis when he is engulfed in a force field and sees Boston devastated. Then begins his journey 90,000 years into the future where some people are telepathic. He is picked up by the Algherans who are in the middle of a war, which Harpers time travel ability may allow them to win. This first part of the 'Destiny Makers' series seems rather pedestrian, but could develop.

From Mandarin at £3.99 each come two re-issues of Alfred Bester yarns. **EXTRO** Originally 'Indian Giver' in Analog (1974/5). Tells of small group of immortals, who got that way after undergoing excruciating pain. One of them, Guig, seeks to recruit scientist Sequoya to their ranks by exposing him to a ghastly accident, but is forestalled by a real calamity. Sequoya then begins taking over super computer Extro and the immortals are fighting for their lives. Well-written, good characters and future idiom. Recommended.

GOLEM In a sleazy future, a bunch of bored women try to conjure up the devil, and so release the Golem. Horrible killings ensue, which are investigated by Policeman Subadar Din'dli. Perfume designer (working on Dil d' Eau) Shiea - who in schizophrenic moments becomes the macabre Dr. Wish - joins with trouble solver Gretchen Nunn to aid the Subadar. Some SFnal 'in-jokes' and a whole mad of strange Gaughan art work before you reach the tail sting.

THE JOSH KIRBY POSTER BOOK Corgi £8.95

Do you drool over the covers of Terry Pratchett's Discworld series? If so, here are 13 large size reproductions (12" x16" approx) of Josh Kirby's intricate and hilarious paintings from Pratchett's various books, plus three character vignettes enlarged to this size - all without lettering across them and suitable for framing. You also get biographical notes on author and artist along with photos, roughs and some smaller illustrations. Not cheap, but a lot of fun.

WHEEL OF THE WINDS M.J. Engh Brafton £3.99

Set on a strange, mediaeval world where life revolves around the river Sollet. An alien has landed, been captured and now befriended by the town Warden and a ship's master, he must make an adventurous trek past pirates, monsters and other worlds before he can reach his transmitter and summon a rescue craft. A nice, gentle narrative which avoids stereotyped sex, sadism and sorcery.

STEEL GHOST Chris Hockley Brafton £3.50

After a violent, sleazy opening, we meet explosives expert Tom Quaster who is continually hunted by an anonymous assassin. His life is bedevilled by flashes to the bloodthirsty deeds of Stalin - whose spirit is seeking a new body. I'm afraid I found this one too tedious and bitty to get into. The choice is yours.

T.A.R.O.T Piers Anthony Brafton £6.99

Rather implausibly, Brother Paul is sent to the new colony world of Tarot, where inexplicable mental animations based on the cards, assume reality. He finds a segmented, bucolic society, split into religious factions and semi-worshipping the ubiquitous trees. He investigates the animations and is drawn into their world for a Pilgrim's Progress like saga of incredible adventures, and tests as he seeks the truths of religion. A massive, 600+ pager which also holds an explanatory introduction and Appendix on the Tarot cards

REDSHIFT RENDEIVOUS John E Sith Ace £3.50 (tentative)

Redshift is a hyperspace liner plying dimensional levels of differing light speeds (when his ship is hijacked as a prelude to an attack on the planet Ianahalla's 'Tower of Worship' (the yarn's only weak spot)). First Officer Kraft uses the weird relativistic effects to aid him. 'Slow light' is an exciting new SF concept, here it is well worked out and handled beautifully in an excellent hardcore adventure. There are also appendices on Relativity, its connections with the story and the hyperliner. A good read at about half the price of UK SF. Due out June 1990

CODE BLUE EMERGENCY

James White Futura £3.50

Alien Cha Thrax saves the life of a medic and is invited to join the staff of Sector General, the giant multi-species space hospital. Her outspoken manner and methods irritate others, spread chaos and get her demoted. Eventually, she solves a nasty problem and regains status. White poses and solves some of the unusual medical and social problems of aliens in his usual, easy-going style.

THE MAN KZIN WARS Larry Niven, Paul Anderson & Dean Ing Futura £3.50

Three stories using a common background. 'Warriors' deals with the first encounter and clash. 'Iron' tells of the finding of a secret base the Kzin are preparing for a second go. 'Cathouse' concerns a human prisoner of the Kzin, imprisoned in a zoo cage along with Kzin in suspended animation. The tripartite author line makes for a nicely varied and enjoyable six as the Kzin-Human relationship unravels.

THE CAMP Guy N Smith Sphere £3.50

Illegal Government research is under way at the Paradise Holiday Camp. Ann Stackhouse's job is slipping the hallucinatory drug C-551 into the food of selected campers. Then she develops a conscience and falls in love with one of them. Things begin to go wrong, and a hit man is called in to dispose of difficulties. Rape, violence and murder follow as the drug takes effect and the lovers are trapped in the camp. A modern-day horror shocker.

DEATH BRINGER Patrick Tilley Sphere £3.99

The fifth book in the Antrak Wars series sees Clearwater held by the Confederation which now plans to capture Cadillac and destroy the McCall clan. Steve and Roz continue as double agents as a conflict approaches which can only be resolved by psychic power. If you have the time, sit back and savour the story's unwinding. For me, five (plus) yarns make the series too long to hold all the details.

MATADORA Steve Perry Sphere £3.50

Second in the 'Matador' series, following 'Man Who Never Missed'. Warrior Adept Dirisha joins Matador Villa for advanced training. Led by the enigmatic Pen, the aim is to prepare for the Confederation's fall. After many combats, biographical flashbacks and explicit sex, Pen's true identity is revealed. Fast moving and lightweight, but I could do without the intimate bedroom details.

SUBTERRANEAN James Buxton Futura £3.50

Backwater is a pleasant recreation area with a deep pond. Local demolition turns up a lead coffin, Cherie Simpson finds a cross of power, a man gets the plague, a body surfaces in the pool and a monstrous evil is on the loose. A wide range of cardboard and unsympathetic characters plod through ritual horror to an indeterminate ending.

CHILDE ROLANDE Samantha Lee £4.50

Picture a world where women rule with the men living as slaves. Childe Rolande, hermaphrodite wielder of strange powers, is born, raised as a woman, then forced to geld and slay the man who reared her (it?). When man sees Rolande as a prophesied Redeemer, unrest begins, but Rolande must first defeat the Warrior Queen and mad sorceress Fergael. A tale of women warriors, monsters, sword, sorcery and plenty of sadism, told in a semi autobiographical style which gives it added power.

BATTLE CIRCLE Piers Anthony Corgi £4.99

The complete trilogy comprising, 'Bow The Rope', 'War The Stick' and 'Wag The Sword'. Set in a post-atomic world where contests of honour take place in the dwelling circle using weapons supplied by 'the crazies' - which they in turn get from the dwellers in the mountain Fortress, Melicon. Gos helps to create an army and finds the truth behind their society. Var, a mutant furthers the search which Meg completes after a terrible ordeal. Although the characters and background are totally improbable, the yarns still have a smooth flow, make excellent, compulsive reading and prove a welcome change from saggy and morose versus some Dark Lord.

FANTASY TALES Robinson 99p (Subs, 4 for £4.00, to your mailbox!)

This third issue of the magazine bears a striking, wrap-around cover, five tales of S&S, terror, and surprise, plus a couple of poems, a lettercol and an excellent book column by Mike Ashley as well as Con news and a profile of the cover artist. How can you go wrong at the price? From next issue, it goes quarterly.

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THE DEMON LORD OF KAPANDA David Eddings Corgi £3.99

Volume 3 of the Malloreon where Garion and Belgarath continue the search for their son, kidnapped by Landraas. Captured by Zakath, Emperor of Malloreon, they escape and come up against the mad Urvon, disciple of the evil God Torak, and the demon Haxel. Once again, the goodie triumphs against overwhelming menaces, but Landraas escapes to wreak more evil.

The Glumps

