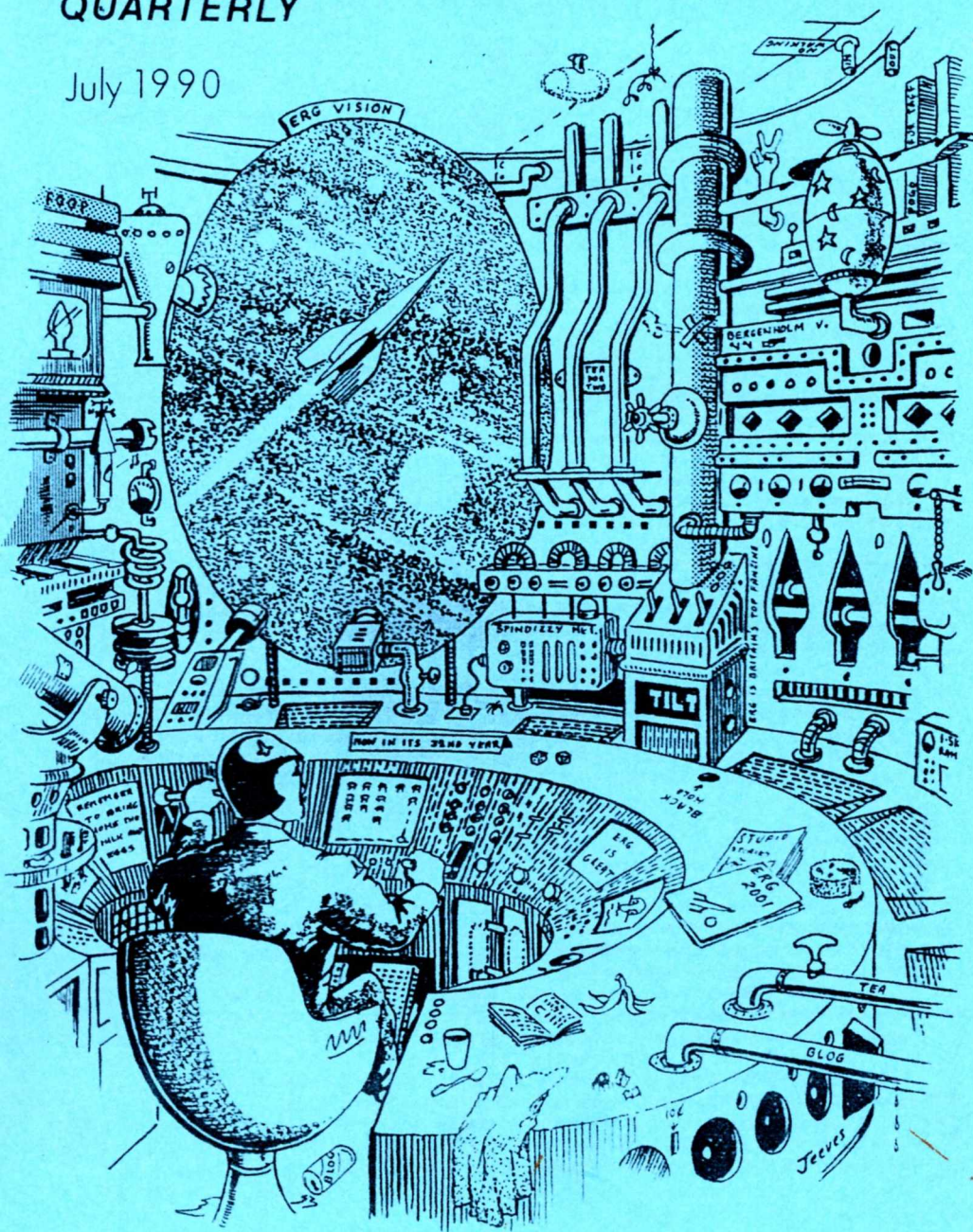


ERG III

QUARTERLY

July 1990



E R G 111

QUARTERLY

JULY 1990

B. T. JEEVES
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SCARBOROUGH
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➤ NOW IN ERG'S 32nd. YEAR ➤

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There are three ways to get the next issue :-

1. Write a LOC on this issue and enclose TWO second class stamps unless you live outside the UK.
2. By cash sub. \$1.00 an issue USA, in dollar bills please, NOT cheques, the banks rip off too much.
3. By trade, not for fanzines, I can't handle any more, but for old prozines, or aircraft magazines. Contact me to work out a deal.

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, I'd like some sort of a RESPONSE! even if it's only to say you don't want any more issues.

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MINI-ERGITORIAL

The computer-generated headings in this issue are the product of my new Fontstyle program which in addition to some 64 different typefonts, also permits creation of one's own letter styles. This is much easier than using the method outlined in the Epson handbook which I used to create the

ERG lettering and the symbols:- Ω \circ π \gg \ll \diagup

Query. I have a telephoto-zoom-macro lens which stops down to f.22 - but beyond that is a setting marked EE. Can anyone tell me what that is for .. and the red R at the other end of the scale?

Quite a few readers have asked to be put down for a copy of the complete CDJ if I ever publish it. I like the idea, but can anyone suggest a publisher mad enough to take it?

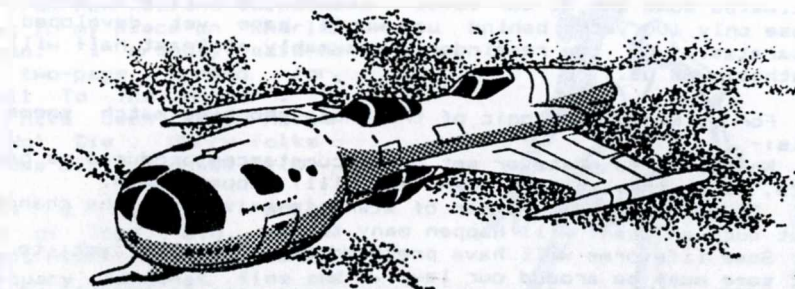
Three readers have responded to my request for a Stateside book-buyer. Terry Bohman, George 'Lan' Laskowski and Mark Manning have all very kindly offered to help. Many thanks chaps. I'll be taking you up on the offers once I've sorted out cash and titles.

In addition, Mark Manning has sent me some fascinating clips from 'Boeing News' and Alan White has mailed some lovely aircraft handbooks including one on the Northrop 'Flying Wings'. My heartfelt thanks folks, they are greatly appreciated.

Back issues of ERG available at 50p each inclusive of p&p. #100, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 & 110. Hardcover and paperback also available, send SAE for lists.

The address logo at the head is a stick-on label done to my design by Able-Labels of Northampton. Cost, around £17 a thousand if you're interested. All the best.

IS ANYONE THERE ... ?



I would venture to suggest that every SF magazine ever published (and every SF anthology) contains at least one yarn which has some reference to aliens. The possibility of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe has long been one of SF's basic concepts, but sadly, like de la Mare's traveller, extra terrestrials don't seem to answer. One reason of course, may be the fact that we haven't really tried to contact them.

Search programmes such as Project OZMA, to listen out for alien signals have been mounted (and discontinued) in America, Canada and Russia, all without any results. OZMA listened out on the 21cm band for a total of 150 hours - this is listening for aliens? That sort of listening is akin to spending five minutes in the middle of the Sahara desert, then saying, "I never heard anyone speaking, so people don't exist." Such short-lived programmes leave a lot to be desired. For openers, is the wavelength the right one? Just because we think 21cm is logical doesn't mean an alien thinks the same.

Then there's the problem of aiming your aerial. Modern radio telescope aeriels as used for OZMA etc, have a resolution of .03 of a second of an arc, and there are 3600 seconds to each degree which gives 3600² degrees to a global scan before you get down to splitting them into seconds of arc ...so if you're aiming off any target by much more than .03 arc seconds, you'll never hear anything anyway.

Also, when should one listen? If the alien gave as much time to sending a signal, as OZMA gave to listening, the chances of the two activities overlapping are slim indeed. Then again, maybe he won't be using radio -- cosmoics perhaps? gravity waves? Dirac holes or even the instantaneous action at a distance of the quantum theory which has recently been demonstrated?

All this assumes that the aliens are trying to contact US. If we're not signalling to them, why should we expect them to spend vast sums of whatever they use for money to build a gadget to call to us? Maybe they're sitting there listening out as well. Imagine thousands of galactic civilisations all sitting by their telephones waiting for someone else to call.

Books have been written on this topic, and a complicated equation has been contrived to work out how many other civilisations there might be. But since all its variables only involve guesstimates, the final answer is likely to be even wider of the mark. In his book, *Extraterrestrial Civilizations*, Asimov estimates some 260 at our level - assuming our rate of development, those only 100 years behind us won't have yet developed radio apparatus. Of the remainder, presumably at least half will be as apathetic as us.

For my money the logic of the whole shooting match seems like this:-

1. We exist, so whatever set of circumstances produced us happened once, it is inevitable it can (and will) happen again.
2. Given the sheer number of stars in existence, the chances are that such an event will happen many times.
3. Some lifeforms will have preceded us, some have yet to come, but some must be around our level.
4. Only those at or above our level will be capable of making contact.

So why haven't those capable of doing so, contacted us? Well, as I said earlier, they may be as apathetic as we are, they may use a system we have yet to develop, or they may be aiming their radio beams in some other direction. Another argument goes, "if there are aliens out there way ahead of us, why haven't they come to visit? Well, apart from the whacky types who talk of UFOs, little green men and pictures on the Nazco plain what are the chances?

Think of all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the world. Imagine that, say, 1000 are painted black. What are your chances of finding one specific black grain out of that lot - if it takes a few light years to travel between each one! I would imagine finding our planet in one of the millions of star systems is an even greater problem.

Then again, we're nowhere near having real space travel, let alone a FTL system, so it would seem that at least 5,000 years of civilisation are needed to reach that point. This again reduces the number of lifeforms available to come hunting.

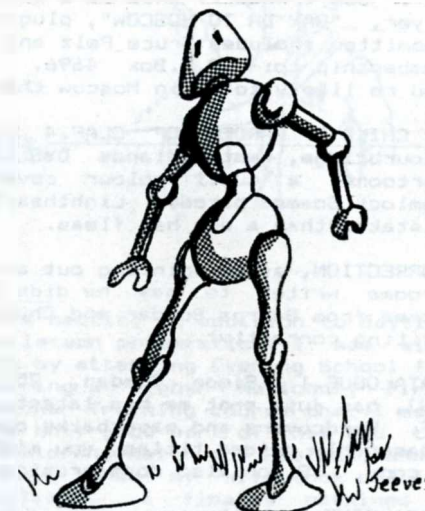
Even with a FTL drive, our aliens would need to be exceedingly long-lived, have a burning wish to explore and most important, have some agency willing to put up their equivalent of lolly. Right now, IF we had a triple light speed ship, I have no doubt volunteers could be found to head for the stars, but I doubt very much if any government would - or could, put up the fantastic money required. Heck, already people howl at the meagre sums doled out to NASA (with an annual budget lower than that spent on cosmetics by American women). Imagine the horror at funding a star mission. If aliens have similar problems, what chance is there of 'em coming round for tea?

Assume all factors are favourable, FTL drive, long-lived aliens, adequate funding and an exploratory urge. Just how great are the chances of their finding our little star with all those billions of other stars to check out. A very slim chance indeed I fancy --- but, it is nice to think that there IS a chance.

FANORAMA

First an apology. Tom Cockroft writes from New Zealand to point out that in my piece on Charles Schneeman. I wrongly said he did a two-page spread for, 'Farewell To The Master'. It should have been 'The Master Shall Not Die'. Sorry folks - but it was still a great illo.

PULP is a rotating editor fanzine of 36pp, Qto, mimeo. Excellent Atomillos and, sadly, an obituary to that fine and prolific artist. Also items by Langford, Harris, Ortlieb, a Conrep by Hansen, fanzine reviews by Mary Bond and an excellent LOCcol. Available for the usual, next issue from Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB - for the usual.



DIPSDMANIA 47pp, A5, printed from G.A.Bryant, Rue Jean Pauly, B-4300, ANS, BELGIUM is devoted to postal gaming, but has a strip cartoon and LOCcol. It has two editions!!, one French, one English. Cost 55FB. A great little zine for International gamers.

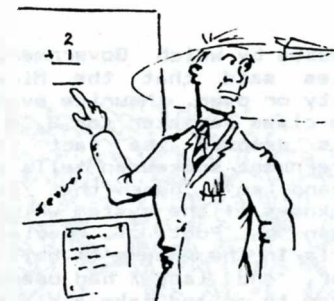
THE MENTOR 65 R. & S. Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. 28 A4pp photooffset? Very well produced, not much artwork. Editorial on fanzines, two fiction items, the first dull, the second good. Some verse (unrhymed), a travel report, an excellent lettercol and an even better review section. Get it for contribution, LOC or \$2.00 a sample.

POUTNIK.2 Egon Cierny, Matechova 14, 140 00 Praha 4, CSR Czechoslovakia. 33pp, A4, mimeo. An English language fanzine devoted to spreading SF in Czechoslovakia. An editorial explains their plans and hopes. A cartoon strip, fact, fiction, film, fax and book reviews. I fancy the editor would gladly send you a copy on receipt of a spare paperback or your fanzine.

SPANISH ARMADILLO.2 from Terry Broome, 101 Malham Drive, Lakeside Park, Lincoln LN6 0XD. 52pp.A4.mimeo has a striking cover and a little, but good interior artwork. A sensible article on age and attitudes, assorted fmz reviews (Marital Rats gets three). Horse racing, an Australian report, cartoon strip, and a theft report. Quite a mixed bag, good reading, but why not put all the fmz reviews together instead of piecemeal? Get it for the 'usual' ???

SGLODION is an 8-page flyer from Dave Langford recounting the background story to a fake UFO account which led by a convoluted path to a libel suit. Dave is calling for aid for the innocent victim. Contact him at 94 London Rd., Reading, Berks RG1 5AU.

BACK TO SCHOOL



I don't know if this is a hoax or not, but I've just received a flyer, "SAY DA TO MOSCOW", plugging a Worldcon 1995 in Moscow. The Committee includes Bruce Pelz and the Stopas. \$5.00 pre-supporting membership to:- P.O.Box 4496, Louisville, KY 40204-0696. If you're likely to be in Moscow then, why not attend?

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF OLAF.4 from Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LA. 38 photocopies pages of Olaf cartoons, a multi colour cover, LOCs, a Far East report and a Hemlock Soames parody. Lighthearted fun, but it has more spelling mistakes than a dog has fleas.

CORRECTION, after printing out and illoing the previous page, Terry Broome writes to say he didn't put out SPANISH ARMADILLO but it comes from George Bondar and Chuck Connor (if I've decyphered his writing correctly).

CATALOGUE.1 Simon Gosden, 25 Avondale Rd., Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8NJ, has just sent me his latest, 20 page price list of fantasy and SF. Hardcover and paperbacks old and new, so if you want to buy reasonably priced titles, you might send him an ERG-sized S.A.E for a copy. Simon also does prozine subs.

CATALOGUE.2 Likewise, you can send an SAE for my sales lists of recent and new, hardcovers and paperbacks in mint condition at less than half price.

CATALOGUE.3 16 A4 PP of hardcovers, paperbacks and some news and fan items from Mike Don, 233 Maine Rd., Manchester M14 7WG

CATALOGUE.4 20pp, ERG-sized and crammed with SF titles. If it's in print, Ken Slater has it, or can get it for you. Write to Fantast (Medway) Ltd., PO Box.23, Upwell, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 9BU

DON-O-SAUR.58 Don C Thompson, 3735 W. 81st Place, Westminster, CO 80030-3919, USA. 38 immaculately produced pages. Personal natter on quitting smoking and drinking. Capsule fanzine reviews and a hefty LOCcol. Get it for \$2.00 or 'the usual'. A nice zine, but Don, can't you beg, borrow or steal MORE illos?

Two NIEKAS specials of note, both stiff-covered, slick, vertically folded A4 size and beautifully produced collector's items. OBSESSIONS (\$3.95) has 42pp of art and verse. THE ILLUSTRATED BRADBURY (\$5.95) has 56pp of comment, review and listings of Bradbury's works. Both are obtainable from Niekas Publications, RFD.2, BOX.63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729, USA

MIKE GLICKSON, 508 WINDERMERE AVE, TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA M6S

- who got squeezed out of the LOCcol, writes to ask, "Any particular reason you don't have a WAHF column, general fannish tradition is to at least acknowledge the readers who responded to the previous issue." The answer is simple .. and is also why your fanzine didn't get a mention, Mike. Lettercol and Fanorama are both limited in space, and space allocated to them gets filled up almost two months before cover date. Thus fanzines arriving late don't usually get carried over to the next issue. If I squeezed in WAHFs on a page foot, there'd still be letters arriving too late for inclusion - and not even getting in the WAHF column can be even more frustrating when you know you did write - so, no WAHFs,

sorry.

Becoming a teacher was quite hectic, in addition to daytime courses, assorted project work and lesson preparation, I was also pursuing my own private interests by attending Evening School for advanced mathematics, finally acquiring a Higher National, First Class Pass. It was during the Teacher Training course that I made the mistake of getting married. The only good part of this was the subsequent arrival of two lovely children, Keith and Pauline, and I was able to retain their custody, when my wife took off for pastures new and men with larger wallets. I finally obtained a divorce on the grounds of desertion.

I eventually qualified as a teacher, and in March of 1948, duly toddled around to report to my appointed school. Handsworth County (Mixed) in the East end of the city, was one of those monolithic, smoke-blackened structures closely resembling a fortified prison. Its asphalted playground was marked out with cabalistic lines, circles and other devices laid down in past ages for the mystic rites of the ancients.

A bell was tolling as I entered, calling the faithful to their lessons. On the South end of the bell-rope was my new headmaster. New to me, that is, actually, he was rather shop-soiled. At 64, Maurice Green was a year short of retirement, stood 6'2" tall and ruled his school with an iron hand. He took me into his office when I explained that I was his new teacher. Naturally, the Education Office hadn't bothered to warn him of my coming. After a brief natter, he took me on a tour of his domain. This turned out to be five classrooms on the first floor of the building (A Junior School had the ground floor), and a two-room prefab in the yard. The upstairs classrooms had glass windowed walls and opened out onto a narrow corridor which doubled as the Assembly Hall. We strolled along it and Mr. Green pointed to a room on the right, "That's Mrs. Sedgewick's room." We walked on, and had just reached the next door when Maurice snatched it open, shot inside, produced a short strap from his pocket, grabbed a lad out of a bench seat, and gave him a couple of whacks on his backside and said, "Now pay attention to your teacher!". Without a word to the master in charge, he walked out and rejoined me with the remark, "That was Mr. Dawson's room". The tour continued.

Not believing in teacher's getting 'free periods', Mr. Green got round the arrival of an extra teacher by having me share a class with a Mr. Simpson. Our joint class was S.3B/4B and contained sixty children. This introduced me to one of the many

wheezes by which Government Regulations are circumvented. The rules said that the Ministry had to be notified of any class of sixty or over. Maurice evaded that one, by entering child No.60 on the class register for S.3A. Officially, I taught 59 children, this despite the fact that sixty sat before me. Next time a Government spokesman tells you "There are empty three thingies in so-and so", bear that sort of fiddle in mind. I recall another weakness of the system which surfaced when a certain teacher was given a 'Post of Special Responsibility for the Welfare of the Girls in The Annex' (half a mile away). This was worth £100 a year, and lady X had been drawing it for three years when she was asked to go and take a class in the annexe. She had to ask for instructions as to how she could find the place!

Teachers and Education Committees often howl for more money, but ignore savings which could be made in their domains. A few examples point this up. At one school, we had a staff room with a beautiful parquet floor. For some fiscal reason, several hundred pounds were allocated to be spent on the room. As a result, the parquet floor vanished beneath wall-to-wall carpet, which soon looked worn and tatty.

Then there was the Allowance given to Department Heads for special purchase of books, equipment and so on. This had to be spent before the end of a financial year and could not be carried forward. If your allowance was £150 and you only spent £130, your next year's kitty was likely to be reduced by £20. Naturally, to avoid this, you blew any end-of-year surplus on anything in sight. No, you couldn't carry it forward and thus acquire enough cash to afford a tape recorder or other expensive equipment.

Speaking of tape recorders reminds me of another money-waster. For recording at home, I bought tapes from discount houses at about 50p each. At school, I used quite a lot of tapes for my lessons, so when I needed some new ones for classroom use, I naturally suggested the same supplier. No deal. I was told that all purchases had to go through the official Education Office dealer. I sent in my order and that way, the tapes cost me £2.00 each. I strongly suspect that somebody got a nice kickback for insisting on an official supplier.

Modern teachers often seem capable of teaching only one subject - I've had trainees refuse to teach basic maths on the grounds, "My subject is English". When I began, I taught everything! Maths, English, Art, History, Geography, Science, Crafts, Religion, P.T. and Games. On occasion, I even taught Needlework.

In the classroom, having sixty strong imposed considerable problems. By the time you had walked right round the class and given each child a mere 30 seconds of help, half an hour had gone by and you had a pile of exercise books awaiting marking. At the end of the day, you needed a truck to carry the load home. My class was a 'B' Stream, and since the 'A' stream only took children capable of passing the 11+ exam, it left my nominal 'B' stream to take everyone below that level - 'C', 'D', 'E' and on down. This included one sad case, a retarded lad called Basil, who was an epileptic. He had a front row seat so that when an attack struck, the class would shout, "Sir, Basil's off again" and we would slide

him down under his desk, then lay him on the floor to recover, whilst I stepped back and forth across him to teach the class.

Teaching Games to sixty children was a fantastic operation. For openers, regulations said they were NOT to play cricket, football, rounders or netball but merely to practise skills leading up to these activities.

The regulations didn't say how you did this with only ONE football and two rounders bats. Solution? Ignore regulations, thirty girls played fifteen a side rounders while thirty boys had fifteen a side football.

Whilst doing my Teacher Training, I renewed my direct connections with Science Fiction fandom. Being a penurious teacher on a salary of £31 a month, my finances were knee-high to a soggy pancake. I couldn't afford to stay overnight in London, so the answer was to travel down on the 7-30am train which reached St. Pancras just before noon. We Northerners always travel 'down' to London, none of this up-market stuff. After spending some time at the first post-war Convention, I then caught the 9pm train back to Sheffield, getting there around 2-30am Sunday and facing a two mile walk home. Happily, muggers were virtually unknown in those days.

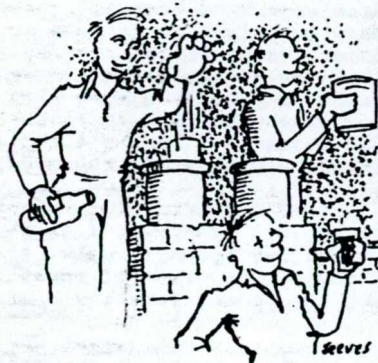


Events worked out according to plan. On arrival at St. Pancras, I descended into the rotunda and began to walk slowly round and round the central bookstall, gently waving the identification colours of the day - a copy of Astounding. I wonder just how many fans have met through a similar signal. Anyway, it worked. Before I could be arrested for displaying subversive literature, I was absorbed into a bunch of real, honest-to-gosh, SF fans. Over forty years separate me from that weekend so that the only names I can remember are Ron Buckmaster and Daphne, the girl who later became his wife.

After introductions we out-of-towners were split into small groups to be taken on a flying tour of London before recombining into a fannish mass at the White Horse Tavern. As we approached the place, our ears were assailed by the nerve-shattering clamour of an alarm bell in a nearby jewellers. The poor little thing was doing its best to call out Police, Firemen, Army, Navy and Airforce, but to no avail. Nobody took a blind bit of notice, so it went on throughout the Convention giving most speakers the habbads, including Ted Carnell and Walter Gillings.

Billings showed us an early cover painting for TALES OF WONDER. It depicted a skin-clad character fending off a giant wasp in an Earth over-run by jungle. Sitting beside me as words of wisdom poured from the platform, was a young chap busily scribbling away in a grubby notebook. Seeing my interest, he explained that he was called Tony Thorne and was 'Covering this for Operation Fantast'. I later discovered that 'covering' simply meant he was writing a report and that 'Operation Fantast' was a fanzine and book business run by Captain K.F. Slater from his Army base in Germany. It was in his fanzine that my own first fannish drawings and writings made their appearance. About the only other thing I recall of that Convention was the signing of a duplicator stencil, along with all the other attendees. Vince Clarke showed me a copy some thirty years later and the names recalled many nostalgic memories - any chance of a photocopy please Vince???

That short exposure to real fans was addictive. I was back again, year after year, missing only the 1951 affair, right up until ill health caused me to drop out in 1968. Records don't show a 1950 Con, but I have a vague memory of attending one held in a cafe somewhere behind St. Paul's. Does anyone else have any details?



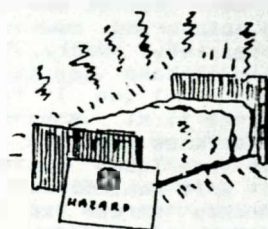
Over the years, those London Conventions tend to blur into one amorphous mass. One at the Royal was enlivened by a cat walking to and from on the glass roof of the auditorium. Then 1953 Bonnington affair saw the organisation of 'roofcons' in which revellers found their way onto the hotel roof. Empty bottles soon piled up, and to dispose of them, they were dropped down any handy chimney. I missed this part of the non-programme fun, as Ken Slater and I were waylaid on the main staircase at 2am by a porter who had the silly idea that since I wasn't a resident, I ought to go back to my own hotel (The Avondale which only charged 16/6d B&B). Ken and I argued loud and long, but I was eventually evicted and forced to walk back to the Avondale where I was sharing a room with Eric Jones.

Eric hadn't got back yet, so I changed, doused the lights and got into bed. I had a full fifteen seconds of peace, then there came a tapping on the door accompanied by a slithery, sliding sound terminating in a soft thud. I opened the door to be confronted by the 5'4" Eric Bentcliffe standing over a heap of old clothes. On closer inspection these turned out to be the 6'2" form and 14 stones of Eric Jones. How Eric B. had manhandled him from Bonnington to Avondale is one of the minor mysteries of the universe which man may never solve. The slithery, sliding, thud had been Mr. Jones collapsing slowly down the door frame. I signed for the recumbent body, lugged it into bed and settled down to sleep - whereupon a blurred voice announced, "I want to be sick". I spent the rest of the night propping Mr. Jones over the wash basin.

Then there was the North West Science Fiction Convention held in Manchester. One of the highlights was a film made by writer, John Russell Fearn. It got a very fannish reception, which annoyed its maker intensely when everyone laughed like crazy as a model spaceship took off for the moon (from Blackpool sands). With a sparkler stuck up its posterior it wobbled its weary way up on a length of black thread to a background of ribald comments.

Although only a small affair, it showed that a convention could be held outside London. So we got the Supermancon of 1954. Many Londoners complained that it was too far to travel all the way North to Manchester, but after a quick check on a map, a scientific spokesman revealed the astounding fact that the distance was exactly the same as a journey from Manchester to London. Nevertheless, being highly dubious of the higher mathematics used in working out the distances, only a few hardy souls ventured to make the journey to an affair being staged by 'those bloody provincials', as we were called by Bert Campbell, editor of Authentic Science Fiction.

A contingent set off North, some fell by the wayside, but the survivors had planned 'Operation Armageddon', a full-scale sabotage of our Convention. Plans which fortunately, were never put into action. Supermancon was a resounding success and led directly to a series of Conventions held outside London - thus making them more accessible to a larger number of attendees at considerably cheaper rates. Sadly, since the 'Eighties', Southern fans seem to have established a firm hold on the Eastercon, so that it is now held in Brighton, a place even more inaccessible and expensive than ever.



I seem to recall that it was at the Supermancon where Brian Burgess brought along a package of offal to serve as the nasty bits due to be removed from a 'patient' in a fake operation. For some perfectly logical reason, these were temporarily stored under Nebula editor, Peter Hamilton's bed ... and then forgotten when that item was scrubbed from the programme. They were remembered several weeks later when their decaying presence made them known to the management. A discovery duly passed along to the Convention Organisers. So, if you ever hear a reference to 'Burgess' 'lights', you will now know what they were.

Highly memorable were the Kettering Conventions of the late fifties. A sleepy little market-town, it didn't boast a hotel large enough to hold all of us, so we took over two of them - The George Hotel and The Royal. The George was ideal, a large Con hall, wandering corridors and plenty of local eateries. It wasn't long before their menus acquired a few unexpected, extra items such as 'Blog, toast and chips' or 'crottled greeps'.

Other delights of Kettering were the fan-huckster tables alongside those of the regular dealers. Paintings, books, fanzines, plaques, models and other weird items were all on offer. The programmes included all sorts of prize competitions, audience

participation items, panel games, skits and tape recordings. You didn't want to miss anything for mere 'socialising', that came at mealtimes or in the evening, after the official doings ended. Whatever happened to those halcyon days to convert them into the modern (expensive) film, speech and panel fare predominant at modern conventions?

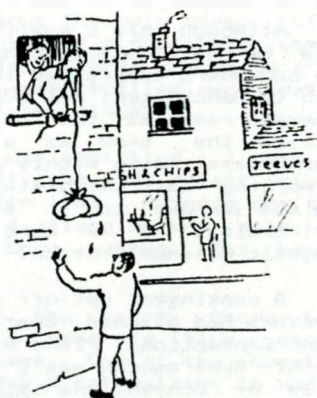
A nearby 'chippy' was also available for impoverished gourmands. The snag was smuggling a redolent package into the hotel past the receptionist; a problem which was easily solved. An accomplice in a first floor room would lower a length of string, the fish and chips were tied on the end, then hoisted up to the bedroom. The idea worked well until an over-vinegared bundle disintegrated on its way up and showered passers-by with soggy fish and chips.

Another Kettering legend was the late Ken McIntyre, after whom the Award was named. A bon viveur and confirmed Guinness addict, his first act on booking in at a Convention hotel was to bribe the duty porter to smuggle a crate of his favourite tipple up to his room. A friend to all, and an enemy to none, it disturbs me to see the debasement and petty bickering over an Award meant to preserve his name. When setting up the award, we did our best to avoid this by avoiding all sorts of voting 'qualifications' and worded it simply, "Vote for the person you would most like to see win the McIntyre Award". This was meant to avoid bickering over 'he or she is not a fan/artist/faned/con-goer' variety. Sadly, fans still find ways to badmouth what was meant as a tribute to a well-loved fan.

It was at Kettering that the British Science Fiction Association was formed. Rammed through mainly by Ted Tubb, its avowed aim was to 'bring new blood into fandom'. Eric Bentcliffe and I were roped in as joint Secretaries, Archie Mercer as Treasurer, and Dave Newman as Chairman. Ted Tubb was to edit Vector, with me duplicating it on my trusty Gestetner. 'Vector' by the way, was a name I proposed at a Committee meeting, it went into a hat along with other suggestions... and came out on the draw.

At this point, the newborn BSFA almost vanished. Chairman Newman gaffed with all the information, leaving Eric and I to sort out the whole mess -- In the middle of this panic, Ted Tubb sent me material for the first issue of Vector, along with his resignation owing to pressure of work! This left Eric Bentcliffe to be Secretary and total dogbody, with me to edit, cut to stencil, duplicate and collate the first issue of our new magazine -- and do the whole shooting match for the next three issues. I still have my copies of those first four issues should anyone want to offer me VAST SUMS for them.

.... To Be Continued



LETTERS



The first LOC to arrive comes from KEN LAKE 115 Markhouse Ave., London E17 8AY.

"I received ERG.110 yesterday, but you say the LOCcol was completed in January, to which the only answer can be that

(a) You've too much time on your hands. (b) You should be running bigger issues. (c) You can do with a break to let people catch up with you. (a) I manage to fill all that time, and like to press on with ERG rather than rush like crazy at the last minute. (b) Just adding four pages would DOUBLE the cost, first by upping the print bill and second by lifting ERG into another postal bracket. (c) I type in LOCs as they come, I had enough by mid January. Yours arrived just after I had closed off the LOCcol. #

While agreeing with you over the misuse of language in some of the more esoteric dialects and their

being wrong for use in public media, and whilst supporting all you say about grammar and spelling in all media (including fanzines). I feel you were ill-advised to bring up this topic in ERG. Let's look at your own writing, huh?" -- "You then have the chutzpah to criticise others." #Ken goes on to list (some of the) sundry clangers in the issue. Well, first I excluded fanzines (see para.2, line 3) and fannish typos. My objection was to professional, paid-for clangers. I can't sing or play the piano, but if I pay for a concert seat, I don't expect the performer to make errors. Is it chutzpah if I then complain? Of the slips Ken lists, most are my standard sprinkling of typos 'Mister.,' for 'Mister,' 'as' for 'all' and so on. Others are complaints that 'and the like', 'first off' and so on are 'dialect expressions. Maybe, but are they unintelligible, esoteric or unclear in meaning? Oh, I admit to numerous errors, but then I'm NOT being paid a professional rate to ensure that I don't make 'em. #

ALAN SULLIVAN, 13 WIRE GARDENS, RAYLEIGH, ESSEX

"On grammatical and spelling errors, I've heard quite a few people say that they're losing the ability to spell as a result of relying too heavily on the spellcheckers of their word processors. # I can believe it, just as people who rely on calculators seem to lose their numeracy -- in shops, I'm always amazed when assistants enter 12p three times rather than just 36p. # "Some of my fellow students are undergoing teacher training. Things haven't changed much -- it's just the level of violence the pupils use nowadays has escalated. # More than that has changed, kids now swear like troopers, even at the staff, and virtually all forms of correction have been emasculated. TV shows such as 'Grange Hill' don't help. Adults get punished for their crimes, schoolkids seem almost immune. One of our teachers had the misfortune to be on a service bus when two of our pupils were shouting and stamping about. She told them to sit down and be quiet and was told to "fuck off". Next day, she reported them to the head -- who did nothing. #

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KINGS RD, 9TH., WALLSEND, N. TYNE/SEIZ ME28 7RE

"I instantly take issue with your criticising dialects, they are only horrible to the ear when admixed with Americanisms. Pure dialects, particularly Yorkshire (sorry tyke) or Northumbrian (Geordie) are most mellifluous to the ear and savour of a Norseman coming ashore and being led away to his ball and chain by a piece of the local crumpet. @ But I didn't criticise dialects, I said how I couldn't understand what the person was saying. We both failed to communicate. @ "Ah those wonderful drawing of the old pulp days, but I wonder if they were better and blacker because of the paper quality (what quality?) of those time. @ Dunno, I suspect one reason is today's artists use slushier materials. @

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 17 RIVERSIDE CRESC. HOLMES CHAPEL, CHES CW4 7NF

"I particularly enjoyed your Civvy Steet adventures - it's amazing what state vehicles on the road could be in, in those days. I recall having great fun with a Renault Dauphine minus reverse gear (not a normal French fighting attribute!) which meant when you wanted to fill up with petrol, you had to pick a garage with a forecourt where you could drive on and off. Motoring was much more adventurous in those days. @ I seem to recall the 3-wheel, English Powerdrive and early Bond 3-wheelers lacked reverse. To turn round, the driver had to lift the rear and stagger round! @

SANDRA JEEVES, PICCADILLY THEATRE, DENMAN ST., LONDON W1V 5DY

A quick typographical burble as beaucoup to do and not enough time to do it in. Am enjoying reading ERG and so far emitted a delicate guffaw at every page as far as the end of 'Carry On Gerbils'. Have only had time to read it in the bath so far. The Water Board finally rectified the Gas Board's inadequacy so we have hot water again. I was harbouring intentions of suing the Gas Board, but apparently they are infallible. I think they claim diplomatic immunity for having drilled through the water mains. I'll be at the Olivier Awards, so look out for the fat lump in a red dress with duck soup down the front. @ He did, and didn't see you. Why didn't you stand up and wave a flag when the cameras turned your way? @

ÅHRVID ENGHOLM, RENSTIERNAS GATA 29, 11 5-116 31, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN.

I couldn't help noticing that ERG had an article about weird aircraft designs. Did you know that Swedish SAAB in the end of WW2 launched their own quite original design. A fighter called the J-21 with a pushing propeller and twin tail. It was later rebuilt for jet propulsion, the engine and propeller simply being replaced by a jet turbine. It's the only fighter in the world to be successful in both jet and propeller version. The J-21 also pioneered the catapult chair, a necessity for an aircraft with a pushing propeller. @ Surely Martin Baker pioneered the ejector seat around the end of the war? I seem to recall the Gloster Meteor had one. Quite a few designers have used that 2-boom, pusher layout. I don't know who pioneered it, but the Heston 'Air Observation Post' used it prior to the war. Consolidated Vultee's XP-54 used it in 1943 and that had an ejector seat. The Fokke Mulke 198 (Actually the Dutch 'De Scheide S.21') used the layout and was under construction but not completed in 1941. The F.W. D-23 used it with both pusher and tractor airscrews, that was 1939. Many other aircraft have used the layout, so I'm sorry Åhrvid, but your J-21 (which first flew in jet configuration in March, 1947) wasn't 'quite original'. Gg

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 COMMERCIAL ST, NORTON, MALTON, N. YORAS. YO17 9ES

"I can fully agree with your comments about English as she is spoked. Of course, English is a living, growing language - mostly through outright theft with words taken from every other language on Earth - and I'd hate it to be delivered into a rigid mould and become as dead (and boring) as Latin; but that doesn't excuse what's being done to it through ignorance. My particular peeve is with a current advert for a plastic card, where the refrain goes, 'Does you does, or does you don't take Access?'. Now we both know it isn't meant to be taken seriously; but what about all the foreign language students out there who are taking it down religiously, and all the idiots who believe everything they hear on TV? Then again, without a knowledge, an appreciation of proper English, how can they enjoy that other dimension that it often brings? Such as the envelope where someone has written, 'Photographs Do Not Bend', and a cheerful postman has written, 'Oh yes they do'. The Underground sign that says, 'Dogs Must Be Carried On The Elevators' (have you ever tried finding one in the rush hour?); 'Heavy Plant Crossing' where you expect to see a triffid lurching out of the undergrowth - and one that doesn't bear thinking about, 'Family Butcher'. @ You hit the nail dead centre Roger. My own favourite is 'He keep stationary' @

PAMELA BOREL, 4 WESTFIELD WAY, CHARLTON HEIGHTS, WANTAGE, OXON OX12 7EW

"I'm not against identity cards, as you say, we had them during the war, and I had to carry one when we lived in Singapore and also in Cyprus. I do however think that they are a needless administrative expense. Both criminals and illegal immigrants will all too easily be able to get forged cards." @ I'm inclined to agree. I feel that such cards merely make a burden for the law-abiding, whilst criminals forge 'em at will - and who does, or can, make a check on a forged card? Likewise football passes - barred hooligans will either borrow one, or get a new one under an assumed name, or forge one. "The majority of shop and cafe owners know that rubbish on the pavements deters customers. Where it is left, the cause is far more likely to be the inadequate (paid for by you and I and at a higher rate by businesses) collection and cleansing services, than shop keepers ignoring the existing laws regarding obstruction and littering. @ You're scattering red herrings again, Pam. Look around some cities late Saturday night and see the rubbish dumped in huge scattered piles. Manchester and Leeds are particularly bad. If you want an extra late Saturday business refuse collection, someone has to pay a LOT extra. If rates go up, there's an almighty howl against Government, and nobody blames the shopkeeper. Why can't he do as you and I do, store his rubbish until collection day .. or cart it to the tip himself as I do with extra junk. @

T.L. BOHMAN, BOX 14, EAST THETFORD, VERMONT 05043-0014

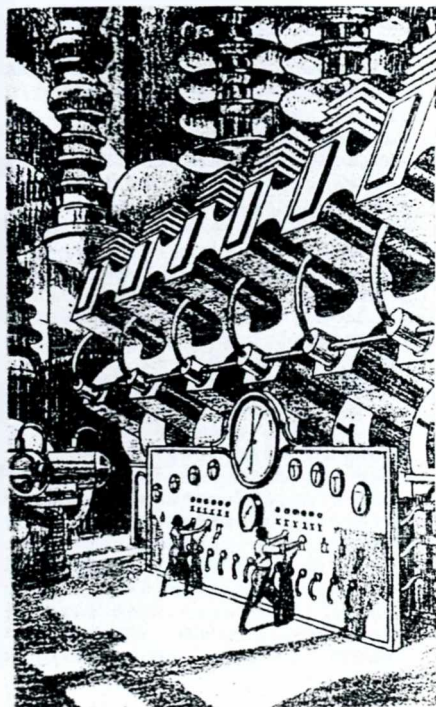
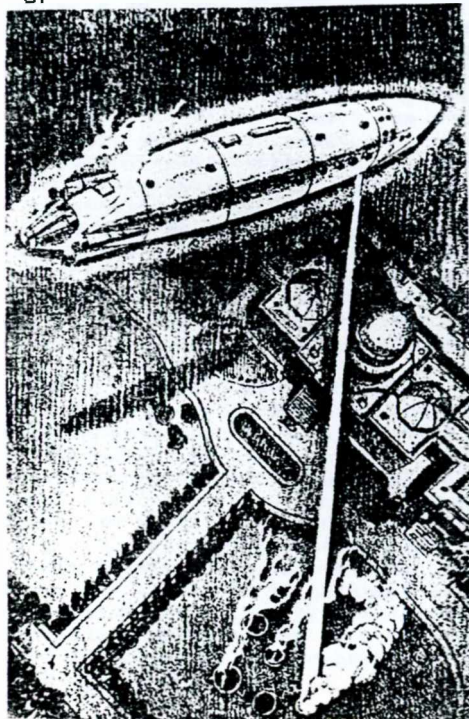
"Your autobiography is sure to be interesting. Are you considering fannish publication, perhaps as a preview to a mainstream edition? I'd love to see the 'Weird & Wonderful' collected too. Speaking of which, wasn't the XF-91 that odd-looking aircraft with wing-tips wider than the roots?" @ No firm plans for COJ or H&W, but when complete, I hope to try a publisher. The XF-91 was the Republic fighter powered by both jet and rocket. It had a wing with variable incidence, sweepback, and inverse taper (so the tips were, as you say wider than the roots). In December 1952, it was the first US fighter to exceed Mach 1 in level flight. Sadly, I don't have a picture of it. @ "Thanks for the view of Charles Schneeman. His use of light to create perspective and depth was impressive.

HOWARD V. BROWN

My reference sources contain little or no factual information on this great SF artist of the 1930s. The Nicholls Encyclopedia gives his birthdate as 1878, but no date of death; I doubt if Brown is now 122 years old. The only other slim facts add that he was born in Lexington, Kentucky, studied at the Chicago Art Institute and illustrated for Astounding, Thrilling Wonder and Startling.

The Holdstock Encyclopedia only adds that Brown replaced Wesso as ASF's cover artist in 1933 (Wesso continued to do interiors and also cover work in 1937-8). The Gunn Encyclopedia paraphrases the Nicholls' entry almost word for word. Brian Ash's 'Visual Encyclopedia' merely confirms Brown's 1933 debut; his 'Who's Who In SF' totally ignores the artist. The two Kyle books, 'Ideas and Dreams' and 'Pictorial History of SF' add nothing further.

Other works which neglect one of the greatest cover artists of

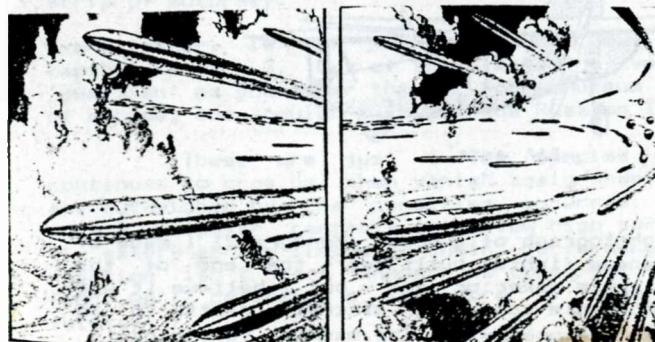


the era are:- Sadoul's '2000.A.D. Illustrations From the Golden Age', Frewin's '100 Years of SF Art', Rottensteiner's 'S.F. Book', Del Rey's 'S.F. Art', ALDISS' 'S.F. Art', Allen's 'S.F. Reader's Guide', Lundwall's 'S.F. - What It's All About' and Lester's 'International S.F. Year book'. This latter omits mentioning Brown, but includes me!

Most of the above works reproduce examples of Brown's outstanding work, but none tells us what the 'V' stood for or gives any details of his working habits or techniques.

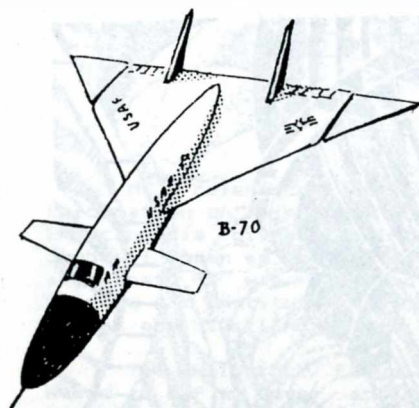
Looking at his interiors, I'd suggest they were done on textured board using either a crayon or dry-brush technique. This shows up well in the two examples from 'Spawn of Eternal Thought' showing a control room and a spaceship above the White House. Aliens are well depicted in a scene from 'Shadow Out Of Time'. The double spread for 'Pacifica' is striking, but the colour cover which accompanied it was superb.

Over the years, Brown used more restrained colours than Frank R Paul, to give us some marvellously evocative and truly artistic covers. Among them, 'Ancestral Voices', 'Spawn Of Eternal Thought' (which sparked an argument over the colour of space), 'At The Mountains Of Madness' and of course, that superlative one for 'Pacifica'.



Today's covers may be less sensational and more trendy-friendly, but give us an HVB cover for sheer Sense Of Wonder.

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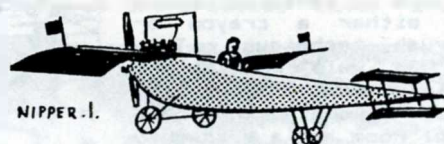


CANARDS

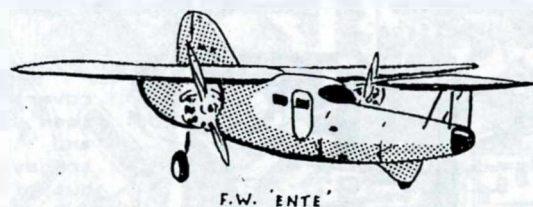
Tail-first or 'canard' aircraft have been with us ever since the Wright brothers first machine staggered into the air. This arrangement has the advantage of placing the horizontal stabiliser ahead of wing (or airscrew) turbulence and also gives shorter take-off and landing characteristics. On the other hand, the canard arrangement tends to be more unstable in limiting 'stalls'.

Over the years, the strange layout keeps re-appearing as designers seek to exploit the advantages whilst avoiding the drawbacks.

In Britain, H.S. Dixon built his 'Nipper.1' in 1911. It must have taken a brave pilot to fly in the thing

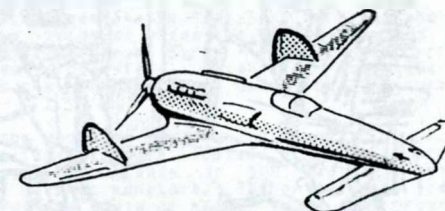


One early canard was built by Heinrich Fokke in 1909. Twenty years later, the Fokke-Wulf Company produced the twin-engine, four-seater 'Ente' or 'Duck'. It had a speed of 89mph, a wingspan of 32 feet, and was demonstrated in England, Belgium and the Netherlands.



In my files, I have a photograph of a model (Monogram?) I made of a high performance Japanese fighter built near the end of the war, but just cannot trace maker or name - but I believe it was made by Kawanishi and the sole surviving aircraft rests in an American air museum. Can anyone help? The machine very closely

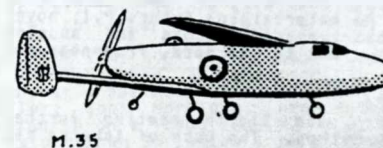
resembles an Italian canard fighter - The Ambrosini S.S.4 designed by Sergio Stefanutti was a highly streamlined pusher canard built in 1941, but sadly, it crashed on its maiden flight.



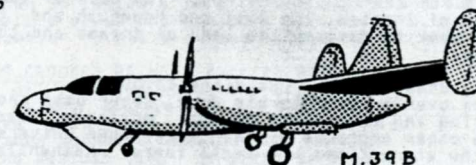
AMBROSINI S.S.4

1942 saw Miles aircraft trying designs which were more tandem-wings than true canards. Their M35 machine had a 130hp engine driving a 'pusher' airscrew. It was followed by their twin-engine, M.39B 'Libellula' design.

This was a fifth-scale model of a proposed M.39 which to have two Rolls Royce Merlins, carry a bomb load of 6,000lb and achieve a speed of 350mph! Although the smaller version performed well, it was not given a contract.



M.35



M.39B

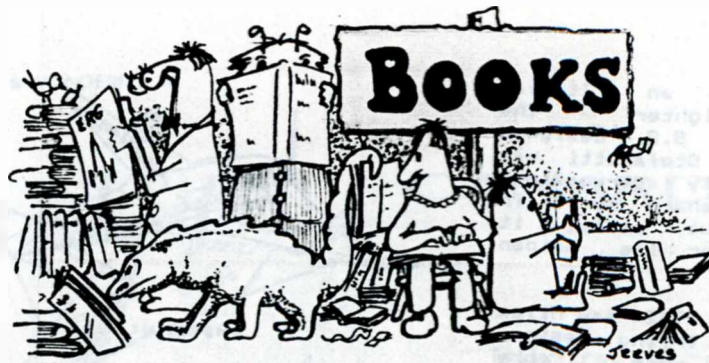
Curtiss XP-55 'Ascender' (ERG.110).

The Mach.2, SAAB 'Viggen' of 1969 is another tandem-wing design which uses the canard STOL characteristic to good effect as it can take off from very short runways, or even a strip of motorway.

Even faster, is the American North American B-70 'Valkyrie', capable of Mach 3. One of these makes a very impressive gate 'guardian' as you enter the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, and of course, one shouldn't forget the Russian Tu.144 'Concordski'.

These are just a few samples of a design which continues to crop up, then vanish again when the advantages gained are outweighed by the penalties incurred. Nowadays however, modern computer controls can allow high performance aircraft to fly safely at the limits of their performance envelope. Pilot reaction isn't fast enough to cope, but the computer is, so I fancy we'll be seeing a lot more of canard aircraft in the future.

Other canards already mentioned in Weir & Wonderful include the Handley-Page 'Manx' and the Boulton-Paul P.100 (ERG.107), The Mig.8 (ERG.108), 'Atka' (ERG.108), The Opel, Valier, Lippisch 'Ente' rocket glider (ERG.109) and the



CARRION COMFORT Dan Simmons Headline £14.95 pb£6.95

The **ELDERLY** mind vampires, Melanie, Nina and Willi (former head of an SS torture camp) can control normals, force them to violence and feed off their emotions. They play a sadistic game, meeting regularly to tot up points. Hunting them are Natalie, daughter of a victim and Saul who escaped the torture camp. Their activities draw the attention of another group which controls Government agencies to play a larger, deadlier game - which Willi plans to extend to Holocaust. This is a terrific, 680pp blockbuster with a myriad threads, all resolved by the end. Horror and violence, yes, but a true main-line SF story to rival *Sian*, *Puppet Masters* or any other 'great' you can think of.

TEK WAR William Shatner Bantam £12.95

Jake Cardigan was framed on a drugs charge and given 15 years deep freeze on a penal satellite. Now, Cosmos Detective Agency has got him a parole to find the missing Dr. Kittridge and his daughter. Kittridge has developed a device to nullify the electronic brain drug, Tek, so is hunted both by law and criminals. Jake runs into assorted adventures and traps, losing one partner and gaining a robot aide, duplicate of the missing daughter. An entertaining future P.I. novel set in a credible, tongue-in-cheek future with bad-tempered robots and amusing sidelights. Some highly improbable incidents, but it has pace, freshness and interesting characters. I enjoyed it.

MAD MOON OF DREAMS Brian Lumley Headline £3.50

Third in the series sees adventurers Robin Hero and Eldrin meeting further challenges in the dream world of the Cthulhu Mythos. The Duke of Isharra has joined forces with Iura, Princess of Lombies, the evil god Mhnoquah and the Leng creatures of the Moon. They seek to destroy the land of dreams and the heroes must oppose their terrible menace.

BRIDE OF THE SLIME MONSTER Craig Shaw Gardner Headline £3.50

Second in the series. Crashing over a cliff to his doom, Roger uses chewing gum to repair his Captain Crusader ring and transports to the 'musicals' section of the Ciniverse. Moving on to other sections of the tinsel-town universe, he is faced with various perils from the stereotypes who dwell there. Meanwhile Dolores has escaped Dr. Dread only to face the lecherous Slime Monster.

THE ATHELING Grace Chetwin Corgi £3.99

Vol. 1 of 'The Lost Legacy'. By 2047, Earth has barely survived nuclear war. Newly-elected World Council Chairman, Pitar Ellisen is warned by seer Pylar that a final conflict approaches. Under a psionic visualiser, Pylar establishes contact with another world whereupon the story becomes one of mediaeval intrigue and swordplay with but a final page back on Earth. I'd advise reading the glossary (at the back) first, that will make the alien words understandable.

BROTHERS MAJERE Kevin Stein PENGUIN £3.99

Dragon Lance Preludes, Vol. 3 wherein another author places his story on the Dragon Lance World created by Weiss and Hickman. Set in the city of Mercklar, it tells the early adventures of Raestlin, the Mage and Caramon, the warrior. Their companion is a kender, Earwig Lockpicker. Cats are vanishing and a giant one is credited with killings; they investigate and meet a deadly enemy. The story is rather weakly illustrated, but if you like *Dragon Lance*, here's another helping.

LILITH: A SNAKE IN THE GRASS Jack Chalker Penguin £3.99

Troubled by spies, the Terran Confederation suspect the Lords of The Diamond - four renegade worlds where a microscopic organism mutates everything, and leaving means death. To kill the first Lord, a clone copy of a top-level agent is sent to Lilith, where he encounters mind control, adventure and a change of attitude. Further stories will see other clones tackle the remaining Lords. Excellent SF and a good beginning to a new series.

THE DAY THE MARTIANS CAME Frederik Pohl Grafton £3.50

A *Maia* mission sets off home bringing some of the seal-like Martians who were discovered in an underground city. In a series of vignettes, we see how the news affects the lives and actions of various people on Earth - A hack script-writer, real estate salesman, phenomena hoppers, hucksters, scientific societies and others, all react in different ways as the NASA spaceship nears home. Naturally, none of the predictions match reality.

THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND William Hope Hodgson Grafton £2.99

Re-issue of this old Classic. Two holidaymakers in Ireland discover an ancient manuscript which tells of a strange house which stands on the junction between worlds and forms a focal point for hideous monsters. Rather dated by today's standards, more in the hinted at Lovecraftian style of horror and a good read if you like its slower pace.

PHOBIA Guy N Smith Grafton £3.50

When John and Leah Strike move into their new, terraced home nightmares of violence begin as something evil stalks the house and John is involved in a ghastly car crash. From here on, the writer piles on the explicit sex, gore and violence in his usual manner. For those who like this sort of stuff, you know what to expect.

THE SUPERNATURAL John G Jones Sphere £3.99

Con Man Lance Sullivan is on the run after a scam that went wrong. Despite his disguises, a series of strange events lead him to Australia where he must claim an inheritance by entering an old house on his 25th birthday. An evil power is luring him to its web, but as its actions become more evident, Lance's own powers develop. A fast-moving, gripping novel of an ancient evil at large in the modern world.

THE THIRD EAGLE R.A. Macavoy Bantam £3.50

Clan Warrior manbi leaves his home planet, Neunacht to seek movie 'rare' in the shimmers. A rather naive character, he undergoes numerous incidents, meets sundry aliens and discovers that his planet has been swindled in purchasing a FIL link, all this before solving his own problems and winning full use of his Third Eagle to father children. A nice, gentle and smoothly flowing yarn.

THE FACE THAT MUST DIE Ramsey Campbell Futura £3.50

A frightening, autobiographical introduction precedes an incomprehensible short story of a psychotic junkie. Then comes the main novel, a study of a paranoid, killer, John Horridge, who mutilates his victims with a razor, this time he is moving in on a young couple. Written in stream of consciousness fashion and less a story than an inside look at the thoughts and motives of a warped mentality. I find Campbell a style and subjects hard to take, and wonder how personal this one may be. However he has a strong following, so help yourselves.

LORD OF THE CROOKED PATHS Patrick Adkins Orbit £3.50

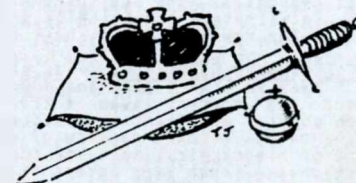
A tale of intrigue among the Greek Gods and their ruler, Kronos at a time when humans have just been created from the Earth. Kronos suspects Okeanos and Poseidon of plotting against him. He gives dark god Thanatos permission to investigate death and ways of killing immortals, thus threatening all the gods. Iapetos and others have their own plans and Proteus defies Kronos. Rather slow moving, with plenty of characters; although it doesn't say so, I suspect this is the first part of a trilogy.

DAUGHTER OF THE LION Jennifer Roberson Corgi £3.99

This is the sixth in the Chronicles of the Cheysuli. Shapechanger Keely is one of those magic-using women warriors, virtual Conan look-alikes. She defies authority and refuses an enforced marriage. The evil sorcerer, Strahan seeks to trap her and there are other perils. The snag with such series is that you know the evil ones will have it all their own way for a while, then get thwarted, only to be back in the next volume.

THE MASK Stuart Gordon Futura £3.50

England is a police state, Scotland has seceded and people keep vanishing into thin air. Hazel is making a final bid to destroy humanity whilst Sam, Pierre and Chrissa come to oppose him in the last battle. This concluding book of The Watchers trilogy is a complex blend of SF and Fantasy which requires slow, careful reading if one is to grasp its involved story-line.



THE CYBORG AND THE SORCERERS Lawrence Watt-Evans Grafton £3.99

Slant is a cyborg spy linked to a computer which can kill him if he disobeys or seeks surrender in a war which has been over for centuries. There's no one left to decommission him so Slant must keep on hunting enemy weapons. Landing on a planet where magic works, his adventures begin as he seeks to subdue the computer and rid himself of the explosive charge in his skull. Reminiscent of the lively de Camp/Zamba yarns, I really enjoyed this one.

DOUBLE HELIX FALL Neil Ferguson Abacus £3.99

Post-quake, Sanfran is a rigidly stratified society where status is based on pre-natal 'Sollyheim' 'life' readings, (birth is seen as death). Sollyheim himself escapes internment and is hunted, whilst TV starlet Annie also rebels and joins the anti-establishment lappers. When hominoid investigator Rick Stator is sent on her trail, the stage is set for a taut yarn, good characters and a refreshing change from the standard space opera.

THE HORMONE JUNGLE Robert Reed Orbit £3.50

The far future in the city of Brule sees people gene-tailored for their jobs. Chiffon, an android courtesan, steals her master, Dirk's valuables and escapes. Saved from a bar brawl by Freestater Seward, she seduces him into aiding her plans. However, her designer has added a partly human personality and Dirk's actions are on her trail. A colourful range of characters and setting, but I found the continuous present wearing after a while.

THERE ARE DOORS Gene Wolfe Futura £4.50

Green falls in love with Lara, then she vanishes leaving a strange note. He sets off on her trail, only to find himself moving through a series of doors into alternate worlds and adventures. He is taken into a mental hospital, escapes to dreamlike sequences in which Lara is a doll, a film star, and a goddess. The tale wanders considerably making it difficult to decide what is relevant - if indeed any of it is. It left me wondering.

SCHRODINGER'S CAT TRILOGY Robert Anton Wilson Orbit £5.99

King-sized, 345 pages plus a glossary on quantum terms, this volume holds, 'The Universe Next Door', 'The Trick Top Hat' and 'The Homing Pigeons'. Don't be scared into thinking this is a high-level physics text. It's a stream of consciousness, wandering yarn with the characters and sequences as seemingly indeterminate as the fate of Schrodinger's cat, or where a quantum will appear next. Understanding either takes a bit of doing.

ARMAGGEDON Mick Farren Orbit £3.50

Religion has taken over the United States with an oppressive, 1984-ish regime controlled by the 'Faithful' and the followers of Arlen Proverb. To bolster his position, Proverb hires Charlie Mansard to mount a gigantic hologram display with full hypnotics. The 'Left-hand Path' oppose the regime, their agent Cynthia Kline has infiltrated the Faithful and policeman Carlisle is a disbeliever. The stage is set for revolt against the corrupt and decadent Government.

THE PENDRAGON CHRONICLES Ed. Mike Ashley Robinson £6.99

A massive, large size and 400+ page anthology of heroic, Arthurian-era fantasy. Sword and sorcery tales of the King and the Knights of the Round Table have long been popular with fantasy addicts; this volume brings you no less than eighteen such tales from a variety of authors. For good measure, Mike Ashley includes a list of biographical notes on the main characters as well as a survey of Arthurian fiction. A must for lovers of the genre.

THE WISHSTONE AND THE WONDERWORKERS Hugh Cook Corgi £3.99

The Wishstone decorates the sceptre of Empress Justina and is stolen by pirates at a time when a mysterious energy drain affects the city of Injilapajura. Falsely accused of the theft, Gregory Guy and his friends are helped to escape by the immature entity Shabbie who resembles a miniature sun. The hunt pursues them through hectic adventures with soldiers, krakens, robbers and other perils. Imagine a blend of Jack Vance and Ernest Bramah and you have a yarn which wanders into all sorts of delightful byways on its way to conclusion.

DARKNESS COMES Dean R Koontz Headline £3.99

Haitian voodoo adept, Baba Lavelle seeks to corner the New York drug traffic. His weird creatures prowling the city killing members of opposing gangs. They threaten the children of policeman Jack Dawson when, with partner Rebecca Chandler, he starts to investigate. Until aided by another adept, Dawson's only defence is his honesty as the creatures close in and black magic threatens to release even worse evil. A gripping horror novel, with quite a bit of padding and the usual sex scene.

**CHASE** Dean R Koontz Headline £3.50

Ex-Viet Nam veteran with a psychiatrist discharge, Ben Chase foils a psychopathic killer who escapes and sets out for vengeance. The police don't believe Ben, so he must find the slayer before he is caught by one of the deadly traps. A well-written but rather run-of-the-mill killer-escape yarn with the usual sex angle. The psycho has all the aces, but never quite gets his victim. It would make a good TV cops and robbers film.

STRANGERS Dean R Koontz Headline £4.99

Writer, Doc Corvax, Dr. Marie Weiss, Ernie Block, Father Cronin and several others are troubled by strange fugues, fears and half memories. One by one they meet as the various threads come together and some of them develop strange abilities and healing powers. Everything centres around the Tranquility Motel where they once stayed and were caught in a massive Army cover-up. Events come to a head in a thrilling denouement in a secret underground bunker. Rather slow to get going, but once it does, this massive 710 page is modern world SF at its best, and would make an even better film than 'Chase'.

NIGHT FEARS Edited by Clive Barker Headline £3.99

First issued in May 1989 and covered in ERG 107, this is a three-author anthology (Koontz, Bryant, McCammon) holding thirteen horror tales set in the present day. Each writer's section is preceded by a brief biographical note on the writer and there are some really atmospheric illustrations. An excellent collection without the verbosity of standard Gothic Horror yarns.

BARD.3 THE WILD SEA Keith Taylor Headline £3.50

Once again, Druid Bard and Harpiat, Felaid mac Fail and his love, Gudrun Blackhair, eighty warrior, sagic wielder and mistress of the enchanted ship Draungandr sail off to another adventure involving the sea children of Lir. This time to destroy the ship-wrecking Lord Orbicus. They face black magic, sea demons, shapeshifters, but Gudrun's prowess and Felaid's harp save the day after such mighty sword play, treachery and sagic.

From Penguin come two new releases in a Buck Rogers series priced at £3.99 each. **ARRIVAL** is a seven story collection. We find how Buck attacked the Russian Masterlink satellite and ended up in the 25th Century where the Russo-American Mercantile (RAM) dominates the Solar System. Rebel forces oppose them. Buck is taken by pirates and becomes a power pawn in the game. **REBELLION 2456** by M.S. Muddock is the first in the Martian Wars trilogy and sees the giant RAM computer network invaded by the Masterlink program which seeks Buck's death. He in turn is aiding Milna Deering and the NED forces against RAM. A couple of fast-moving, lowbrow space operas. Quibbles, how does Buck use ailerons to steer a powerless spacecraft and where does he get a seemingly endless supply of .45 cartridges for his antiquated gun?

SUNFALL C.J. Cherryh Mandarin

The range of Cherryh's writings continues to amaze me. Here are tales set in the far future, each linked to a great city. There's newborn Alain finding love in Death, in a sealed Paris where everyone else is reincarnated. An encounter with the Princess in The Tower, another with a white wolf in Moscow and others, each having its own particular brand of esoteric mystery. An assortment of good stories of people in strange situations and stranger times.

STRANGE TOYS Patricia Geary Corgi £2.99

Nine year-old Pet is a mixture of precociousness and naivety. Her elder sister, Deane is in police trouble and practises black magic. When Pet takes her notebook, strange events happen, then appear in the book and danger threatens Pet's family. Of course, the elder seeks vengeance, but the perils are even greater. Can she survive? Sorry, but I wasn't interested enough to care.

PYRAMIDS Terry Pratchett Corgi £3.50

In an Egyptian-anted nation on Discworld, Prince Teppic has just completed his training as an assassin when his father dies (and remains a disembodied observer). The new king finds his reform ideas hamstrung by tradition in the form of his chief adviser and high priest, moreover the giant pyramid being built for his father is exhibiting far too much pyramid power. Another hilarious tale from Terry Pratchett, need I say more?

THE FIRE WORM Ian Watson Grafton £3.50

Horror-writer Cannon's alter-ego is the Psychiatrist Cunningham who regresses his patients by hypnosis to relive past lives which he then uses as story material. This time, a patient recalls boyhood homosexual experiments which resulted in his dying in giving birth to a monster. A nightmarish horror fantasy which the schizophrenic writing style did not help. Definitely not for the squeamish.

DRAGON WING Margaret Weiss & Tracy Hickman Bantam £11.95

Behind a title and cover worthy of McCaffrey is this yarn set in a world of levitating islands, magic, flying dragons (and riders). Assassin Luth is to be executed for a killing done by an ambitious court magician, but is saved by being commissioned by the King to kill the king's son. Elsewhere, in a Pratchett-like setting packed with some lovely word twists, the practical dwarf Linbeck is thrown off the island for allegedly damaging the giant machine, the Picksey-Winsey. He returns with a god to prove his ideas. Gradually, the threads entwine in a fascinatingly different blend of SF, drama, light entertainment, SF and fantasy.

BEYOND LIES THE WUB Philip K. Dick Grafton £5.99

Now this is one to treasure. A 25 story collection of Dick's short stories from the 1952-55 period when he was writing at his inventive best, and before his tales became incoherent and drug laden. Time travel, invaders, dangerous toys, future wars, aliens, gadgetry and more. Indeed, no SFnal alley is left unvisited in this excellent collection and there isn't a duff yarn in the lot. Whether or not you're a Dick fan, don't miss this one.

FOUR HUNDRED BILLION STARS Paul J McAuley Orbit £3.50

Earth is at war with aliens and telepath Dorothy Yoshida is sent to check for intelligent life on a planet suspected to have been terrorised by them. She contacts something, but is marooned whilst searching. Local creatures mutate and the puzzle gradually unfolds. A rather slow moving yarn, and I strongly suspect the writer is really Pauline, rather than Paul.

DREAMS OF GODS AND MEN W.T. Quick Orbit £3.50

Sequel to *Dreams of Flesh and Sand*. The God, Arius, (once Billi Norton), dwells in the computer matrix and is opposed by computer ace, Berg. Berg is missing and is hunted by Arius, his ex-wife, bodyguard warrior Tosh, and a business tycoon. Taut and exciting, but I was put off by the incessant obscenities. I don't know for what to any people who continually take that way.

THE WAY BENEATH Angus Wells Orbit £4.50

3rd Book of The Kingdoms. Taws is defeated, the kingdoms know peace. Kyrie is king and Wynett his bride - but in the Netherworld, the God Asar plans revenge and takes Wynett as bait to lure Kyrie - who must dare the underworld to gain the hell-forged blade and save his bride from damnation.

SHADOW MAGIC Patricia C Wrede Orbit £3.50

This is a Lyra Novel if that helps. "In Alkyra, children's tales are told of a time long past when rumanking shared the land with folk who had magic in their blood and bones, the small fierce Myrds, the proud Shee in their mountain citadel and the shaggy-winged Neira of the dark sea." Alkyra had shivered at these tales but now she discovers her nightmares were real and war is inevitable. More romantic SFS.

THE PALADIN OF THE NIGHT Margaret Weiss and Tracy Hickman Bantam £3.99

2nd in the 'Rose of the Prophet' trilogy of Sword and Sorcery. Humans ignore the warring gods until Wandering God Akhran decrees that two feuding clans should make peace - but the newly-wed Prince Khardan and Princess Idhra are off on another mission.

THE CURSE OF SLAFID Elizabeth H Bover Corgi £3.99

8th World of the War book. I quote, "In Leifr's attempts to recover his lost love Lyosa and Thorid's attempt to escape the indiscretions, they had fallen into the hands of the evil master wizard Djofull". He has tricked them into swearing to destroy the curse afflicting Hraegsla-djafull. They are now hit a fairly which has suffered the curse 700 years and will not let them destroy the horrid giant Jotuns.

BEASTSTALKER James V Smith Jr. Grafton £3.99

Latest genetic research has created deadly creatures which have escaped to slay in hideous ways. The secret Government agency 'The Corporation' is suppressing details by killing anyone concerned. Ex-Vietnam veteran Grayson and Colonel Constance Gail are hunted by vicious assassins as they seek to save themselves by releasing the details. Fast-moving, violent and very gripping.

PIONEERS Phillip Mann Grafton £3.99

The ace-like Angels and the beautiful Ariadne are genetic constructs whose purpose is to seek out and return the star-travelling Pioneers. When they return with pioneer Murray, Earth as become decadent and as un-human as the people are not welcomed, though Murray is valuable for his genetic material. The remaining constructs are isolated and must act fast to save themselves. - different and thought-provoking yarn.