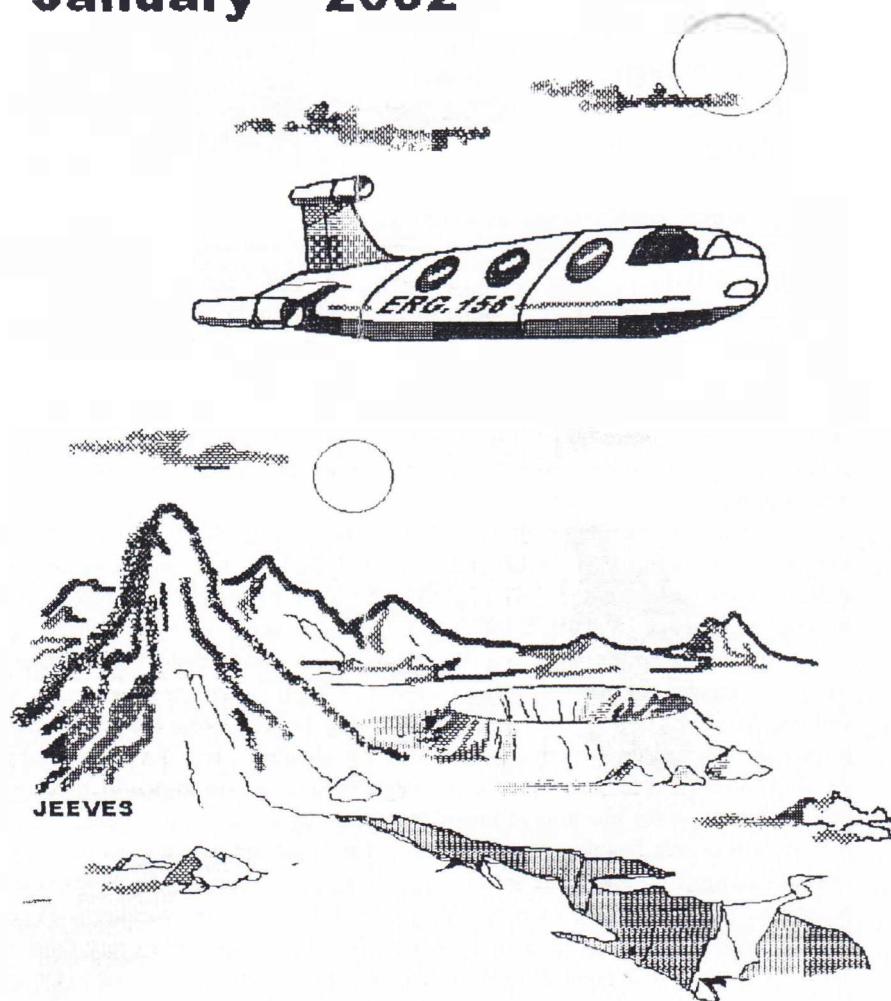


ERG.156

QUARTERLY
January 2002



Now in its 43rd. Year

ERG 156

JANUARY 2002

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Greetings ERGbods, First of all, a hearty dollop of Season's Greetings and a very Merry Whatnot to one and all. I hope all goes well with the turkey and pud.

Brief reminder, if in doubt, a LOC will get you the next issue which will be ERG's 43 Anniversary Issue and I'm sure you don't want to miss that.

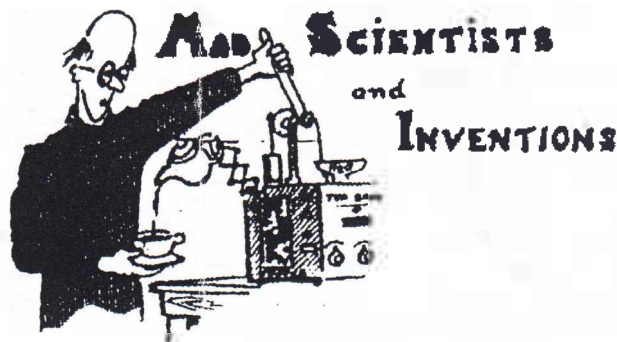
If you want back issues, almost all from No 98 to date are available for 60p a copy. If ordering, send no cash until you get your order, this saves refunds if a copy is sold out. If you want hardcovers, paperbacks or aircraft books, send SAE for lists. My Sale still on.

And if you're selling or trading, I still want:- THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, I.O.Evans. THE PULP JUNGLE and CHEAP THRILLS, both by Frank Gruber. THE PULPS, Tony Goodstone. LAST LEAVES, MODEL MEMOIRS, FUNNY PIECES, all by Stephen Leacock. STORIES IN VERSE, c 1938, a small poetry anthology.

Are you an um-er talker or a flapper? Reason I ask is that whilst watching people being interviewed on the box, many (most?) of them punctuate their speech with ums and ers. We had a college tutor who was so bad at this that I kept a tally. During an hour lecture she clocked up something like 240 of the blighters - and *she* was telling us not to develop habits. As for flappers, I can understand a wide arm stretch to indicate 'the one that got away', or the pinching of finger and thumb to denote a small item. but I estimate that 90% of people feel they must wave their hands around wildly in all directions whilst talking. So much so that some are in danger of getting airborne. Another frequent catch phrase is "You know what I mean". Very often I don't, but the speaker is so sure that I understand every word of his jargon once he has slipped that into every third sentence. Then we have "at this point in time" which seems to be replacing "now". Other regular items are "I can hannel it", "sorted" and the use of gofe" for "golf".

Meanwhile, you will remember that LOC won't you.

All the best, Terry



Way back in the good old thirties, SF had utterly reliable, ever used, pot-boiling stand-by plots. In the first, the doughty explorers in their trusty spaceship, would blast off to some strange planet where they would battle against a variety of menaces in the form of pirates or aliens, which were almost invariably insect-like, but they could be man-eating turnips, carnivorous cucumbers, giant frogs or predatory platypuses (platypusii ??). The second plot involved the good old scientist, sometimes a Professor, although we never heard what he professed. He was often mad, usually bewhiskered, bespectacled and bewildered, coming in a variety of sizes, but almost only one colour - white. Oh, Oriental Fu Manchu clones such as Ku Sui were permitted provided they were jock full of evil intentions..

These scientists appeared celibate or at least no wife was ever seen hanging around the place. Nevertheless, each still had a beautiful young daughter lurking somewhere around the place. One mustn't forget that other essential member of the cast - the down at heel, seven feet tall, unemployed ex-college boy, so desperate he was ready to hazard his life and limb by testing some incredible invention dreamed up by the scientist. Inevitably, there was a baddie lurking evilly in the back room. Usually sallow featured with a pencil moustache and sleek black hair, in those innocent days he could be of any nationality without offending anyone - until he carried out his destiny to kidnap the wench or pinch the great invention.

The young hero and the winsome maiden had to uses. Firstly to inject a mild, watery and totally sexless love interest. Secondly, the girl had to wander off on some strange planet, be kidnapped by the villain, or disappear into the innards of the Professors four-dimensional doodad. No prizes are awarded for guessing who will come to rescue her from creeping carnivores or rampant robots. Sweeping her up into his manly arms he would run with her, not to the nearest bed, I hasten to add. All heroes were chaste, or at least hadn't read any of the books advertised on the back pages of the sf mags - "*How To Hold Your Loved One .. Secrets of the Marriage Bed Revealed*"



Instead of all the mushy stuff, the girl would gaze at him with limpid eyes - which can't have been fastened in that well as she was always letting them fall. The hero would look manfully into her eyes (wherever they happened to be), and tell her that she was a 'real, true brick' - possibly meaning she was a red-faced square.



Mind transference was another favourite theme. The scientists were always grabbing heroes for the dastardly purpose of switching their brains or intelligence into the bodies of apes, gorillas or even robots. One *Astounding* yarn had a reporter following up the mystery of mindless people found wandering in Central Park. (I suspect only the mindless would go there). He discovered a mad scientist was transferring their minds into the bodies of animals - and vice versa. The reporter wound up inside a sheep dog and became a popular music hall turn until he finally switched back again.

Sometimes this switching was done by highly complicated equipment and 'Electricosity' or actual surgery, but not all shifted the grey matter between man and animal. In *The Affair Of The Brains*, Hawk Carse's arch enemy, the nasty Oriental Ku Sui, created a super computer by loading in the brains of a bunch of scientists (serve 'em right). This of course was BAD, but in a later yarn it was good because in *Spawn Of Eternal Thought*, the hero linked twenty brains to make a super unit and then invented space travel, wiped out war and brought world government and peace. Then the baddy swiped the device for evil ends and the hero had to create a hundred-brain unit to thwart him. Ah wonderful stuff!

One scientist devised a gold-making machine, then carelessly flogged a few tons of the stuff to a local jeweller. A local gang boss grabbed the gadget with disastrous results. In a very similar story, the lab assistant bopped the scientist on the noggin, then made himself a bar of gold which he smuggled out of the complex by slipping it up his sleeve. Sadly for him, its radioactivity began to convert his body into gold.



Not all scientists were mad, some were merely misguided. One of my favourite yarns in, I think, an early Gernsback *Amazing* had the MS (mad scientist) happily mixing a dollop of this, a touch of that and a chunk of the other in a test tube. The mixture suddenly became a tiny bit of LIFE! The dear little thing

started out quite harmlessly on a chemical diet, then began to scoff any fly daft enough to land on it. Had things stopped there, the MS could have made a bomb selling the stuff as fly paper, but NO, he kept on feeding the thing with the result that it tried to add him to its diet. It survived all attempts to kill it, but proved ideal food for his pet goldfish. Lacking enough goldfish to eat the lot, he washed it down the sink into the sea. There would be enough fish there to finish the stuff off. He reckoned without the appetite of his creation. Not only did it eat up all the available fish, but it grew so much that it began to add passing ships and their passengers to its diet. The MS finally finished it off by injecting himself with a virulent cancer and jumping from an aircraft to land in the stuff. You don't get stories like that nowadays.

Another of my favourite *Astounding* yarns was 'The Eternal Wanderer'. In the World Council The oppressive Martians were dishing the dirt to Earth, but one human, probably an ex-college boy, was revolting, well not really, he was a nice chap trying to overthrow the Martian yoke. He was caught and sentenced to the punishment of the Eternal Wanderer which involved strapping him on a series of grids and blasting him into tiny pieces. When everyone had gone home for lunch, his girl friend and her dad (an S, not a MS) nipped in and reversed the machine, but in error re-created him as a fourth dimensional entity

I think it might have been this yarn, along with John Russell Fearn's two tales, 'Mathematics' and 'Mathematica Plus' which hooked me. Another 'hook' was the number of yarns featuring the fourth dimension. I didn't know what it was or where it could be found, but I wanted some of it. Hugo Gernsback set out to make it all clear with a diagram so blotchy that his dot resembled a black pea and his line a snake. His tesseract resembled a cat's cradle.

J.R.Fearn was fond of creating scientists, mad or otherwise, whenever weird machinery was required. Dubbed 'The Cover Copper' because his outlandish, giant devices were frequently used on the magazine covers. In his 'Man Who Stopped the Dust', his inventor caused all sorts of bother by eliminating all dust from the air. A procedure which put an end to twilight and a few other things. He also liked giant brains, and gave us 'Brain Of Venus' which told how a criminal's brain was landed on Venus by a crashing spaceship. As everyone knew, the surface was a steaming hot jungle, ideal for growing things - so the criminal brain grew and began to wreak its nastiness.



In 'Brain Of Light', he didn't need a criminal, the thing created itself when high frequency experiments played havoc with its other dimension. It retaliated by cancelling all light on Earth and battle was on. These scientists can't leave well alone. If they invent a door between dimensions it's only a matter of time before their daughter goes through it. If their brand new rocket ship blasts off into space, you can be sure that she will be found stowing away in a storage locker. Soon after she emerges she will be captured by the creeping green space peril of Pongtutti. This allows the hero to take a deep breath before leaping into the airless void to rescue her. Presumably she too had been holding her breath for a mere half hour. After all, as many a cover painting has shown, girls don't need space suits, helmets or oxygen tanks in space.

Then there was the MS who wrecked an alien's world after inventing a matter transmitter. He and the alien swapped items for a while until the MS sent a lighted candle to his friend's methane saturated world and so accidentally blew it up.

In another story had a gadget into which you put earth, rubbish, metal, iron or indeed anything for conversion into a marvellous plastic used everywhere. The demand for stuff is so great, the Earth itself gets smaller to feed the machine and through the ages the planet gets ever smaller, hence the stories title, 'The Dwindling Sphere'.

One yarn had an off-beat effect on me, I think it was called, 'Other Space', a real pot boiler about a man who devised a machine with an long, long gear train where a small movement of the first gear had a great effect on the last one and shifted him into another dimension. Impressionable me, I got out my Meccano set and made a gadget which used up every gear I had in the box. No, it didn't translate me elsewhere, but at least I discovered the principles of gear chains to multiply speed or force.

In all this nostalgia one mustn't forget the work of H.G. Wells and his imitators. 'The Invisible Man' sparked many of these, such as 'The Shadow and the Flash' in which two rivals both invented a way to become invisible. One does it by a serum allowing him to move ultra fast, (Shades of 'The New Accelerator'). The other made himself transparent to light rays although he still cast a shadow. In one of the *Artur Blord* tales by E. Mayne Hull, (or later under the *vanVogt* by-line) invisibility was achieved by means of a cloak which routed light falling on one side of its wearer, round to the other side. Other writers have used super camouflage, hypnotism, mind control or even special paint to do the trick. In one case, the gimmick was reversed as special eye drops enable the user to see through everything. Relax all you potential voyeurs, the poor bloke couldn't even see the Earth on which he stood. Only the sun was still there and it blinded him.

If the inventions of mad scientists aren't enough, how about *Theodore Sturgeon's 'Microcosmic Gold'*? This was a large sealed dome in which he created a miniature world of his tiny 'Neoterics' and then proceed to bedevil them into inventing whatever he wanted. They lived at a much faster rate than humans so could compress ages of development into a few hours of real time.

Mad Scientists seem a bit thin on the ground these days. Somewhere along the line, that old pot-boiling, anything goes, inventiveness has been lost. I'd hate to return to those old hackneyed tales, but at least they had action a-plenty

THE OLD MILL STREAM -- A Country Column of City Life

by Penelope Fandergaste

I've finally come to the conclusion that life is passing me by. I sit here, chained by destiny and Mr. Jeeves to my computer keyboard while all sorts of wonderful and exciting things are going on Out There in that magic land beyond the front door. And I don't only mean the next door neighbour's cat clawing the bark of my Japanese cherry tree into ribbons or the government closing the Channel Tunnel to prevent the Euro getting through.

No, I'm referring to The J. K. Rowling Phenomenon.

Those Harry Potter books seem to have been with us forever, like digital T.V. and alcopops. I was surprised to learn that the young wizard made his inaugural appearance on the world stage less than five years ago and that, furthermore, there are to date only *four* Harry Potter volumes. Heavens! I'd begun to think that the books outnumbered the Perry Mason series.

I learnt all about Miss Rowling and Master Potter during an intriguing little programme on T.V. earlier in the week.

There was, of course, the usual drivel about how many millions the erstwhile lass, and Bloomsbury Press, had raked in, which is certain to have as many wannabe writers (and millionaires) churning out a plethora of tales about boy wizards, girl wizards, baby wizards, cat and dog wizards, hamster wizards... well, you get the idea.

The part of the programme which really hit the spot was that which involved half a dozen kids of about eight years old discussing the Potter books and the forthcoming (as I write this) movie. Normally, I'm the antithesis of Joan Rivers when it comes to children talking on the box. She has stated that she has nothing to say to children. Children on television have nothing to say to me. I deplore the decline in children's television. All I ever hear when I'm changing channels in order to catch *Rug Rats* is screaming and gabbling.

But these kids, all keen Harry Potter devotees, were *not* looking forward to the movie, as one might expect they would have been. They were of the unified opinion that "they'll spoil it." They all had pictures in their minds of Harry and the various scenes in the book and, naturally, the film wouldn't match these images, they feared.

Well, I don't know whether this combined opinion had been fed into their little brains or whether they'd worked it out individually or during a discussion in their little group, but I applaud them. *That's* the sort of lesson that should be taught in schools, never mind all this investigative science for three year olds.

Well, how many films or television adaptations can you think of that have stood up to what you've made of their original printed word? Yes, yes, I've heard *The Maltese Falcon* mooted. And others?

So, yes, I certainly commend the Harry Potter books and the Phenomenon. Any book that get kids reading... why! They may even read other books... is a phenomenon we can do with more of. Three cheers for Miss Rowling. If anyone deserves her millions, this innovative writer certainly does.

Go on, be a spoil sport and tell me that she's plagiarised what you thought of first.

MEMORIES

Just occasionally, bits from books tend to stick in the memory long after the rest of the text has been forgotten. Here are a few such items which have got their memory hooks into me.

In 'The Viking Rocket Story' by Milton Rosen, (Faber 1956) there is a description of an accident occurring when a leaking fuel tank caused a fire. The blaze was soon extinguished but the leak continued and was draining the thin-walled fuel tank, thus producing a partial vacuum inside. The tank's surface began to give way thanks to the external air pressure and threatened to destroy the container. Problem, what to do? The solution was simple but unusual. One man rushed to bring out a rifle (what it was doing at a test site is not explained). He put a bullet through the top of the tank, pressure was equalised, the tank drained and a patch was put on the bullet hole.

A more striking incident occurred during the testing of the V-2 as recorded in 'V-2' by Walter Dornberger, (Hunt, Hurst & Blackett 1954) Fuel and liquid oxygen were turned on and to ignite them, Wernher von Braun took a 12 foot pole, tied a cup of petrol on then end, lit it and held it to the mixture as it streamed from the rocket motor. As might have been expected, the whole thing blew up and destroyed the test stand. By some miracle, von Braun was unhurt.

Less violent was an account of a marvellous machine in 'Perpetual Motion' by Ord-Hume (Allen & Unwin 1977) which describes many fascinating devices. One of many made by a chap called Redhoffer astounded observers as it cranked steadily away with no visible power source. Then Robert Fulton arrived and quickly revealed that one of the stout struts supporting the device was hollow. It contained a drive shaft which ran through the wall and led to an old man sitting busily turning away on a hand crank with one hand whilst in the other he held a sandwich.

I also recall reading one book on advertising scams, but its name and author elude me. However I remember an incident from the early days of the ball-point pen when they were notorious for leaking ink which faded after a short while. Faced with this problem, the promoter arranged a very public display of several notable people, each adding his or her signature to a sheet of paper. This was duly placed in a locked casket which was placed in a bank vault and left for a year. At the end of that time, the sheet was brought out and the signatures showed no sign of fading. The promoter bragged tht his ink was perfect -- he neglected to point out that being locked away from light, there was nothing to make it fade.

Another elusive memory concerns the showman who had a tent at a fairground over which was a placard advertising sundry exotic attractions including a poster bearing the legend, "See the horse with its tail where its head should be". Customers flocked in and were quite annoyed to find an ordinary horse in a stable but tethered to the hay trough by its tail rather than its head. The suckers were asked not to give away the secret when they went out and rather than reveal they had been tricked, agreed to keep their peace.

FAIREY STORIES

As a youngster, Charles Richard Fairey made model aeroplanes, one of which netted him £300 from Harrods who wanted to put his design on sale. By the age of 28, he was heading his own company, Fairey Aviation and building flying boat aircraft for Shorts. His company became famous for their designs and innovations, one of which, the Fairey Fox, a twin seater bomber was faster than current fighter aeroplanes.

So I'm using this issue of W&W to list some of the more unusual designs from the Fairey stable.

The twin-engined **FAIREY HENDON** was the RAF's first monoplane bomber. It made its maiden flight in 1931, with a heavily spatted undercarriage and a speed of around 150mph, it could carry 1600lbs of bombs for a range of 700 miles. Only fourteen were built and the machine appears to have suffered from being ignored by historians as it seldom seems to get included in lists of bomber aircraft

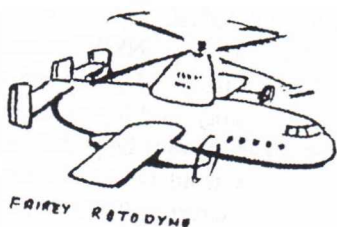


FAIREY HENDON

At first glance, the **FAIREY GANNET**, which first flew in 1949, looked like a single engined machine, but it had a double Mamba engine and contra-rotating airscrews so that one engine and its prop could be shut down thus economising on fuel and allowing for longer anti-submarine patrols for which it carried two torpedoes or 2,000lbs of bombs. It did yeoman service for the Navy and 358 were built



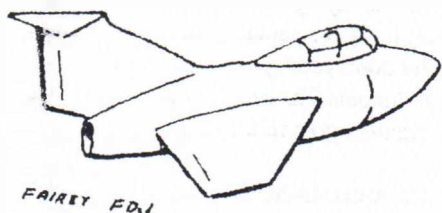
FAIREY GANNET



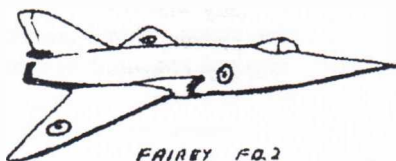
The **FAIREY ROTODYNE** was a large, passenger or freight carrying helicopter powered by a pair of 2,000hp engines mounted on stubby wings. Lift for take off came from a large rotor situated on a central pylon. The rotor was driven, not directly by the engines but by a compressed air supplied by them and fed to tip jets on the rotor blades. After lifting off, the main engines supplied forward thrust for faster flying than could be achieved via the rotors. Sadly, the

tip-driven rotor was too noisy for passenger and airport operation and the scheme was abandoned.

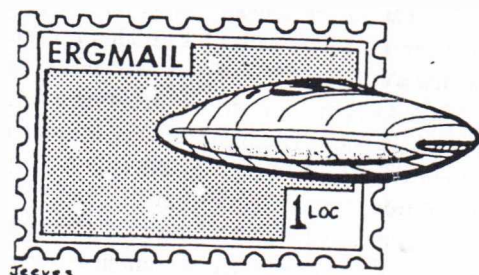
Then came the deltas. The **FAIREY F.D.1** was a single-seat research vehicle for a possible future fighter, meant to be launched from a ship-borne ramp as a defence against suicide attacks. Only one was built, it had a 19 foot span and a speed of 345mph. Progress ended after the undercarriage collapsed after a test flight. However, useful information on delta-wing design was obtained.



The magnificent, **FAIREY F.D.2** was a slim, needle-nosed delta which made its first flight in 1954. It had a Rolls Royce engine and fuel for around 800 miles which proved just enough for the requisite two-directional flights when in 1956, flown by Peter Twiss, it boosted the world speed record to an astounding 1132mph, a giant leap from its previous level in the 800s.



The F.D.2 later became BAC 221 and was given a new ogival wing design as a try out for the design of the supersonic Concorde. It now resides in the air museum at Cosford along with sundry other striking machines.



RON CLARKE, PO BO4 746,
Bankstown, NSW 1885,
AUSTRALIA Liked reading the
fanzine history. Not having seen these
zines, it is always helpful in hearing
about how it all was back then, and
seeing the covers. THE OLD MILL
STREAM was published at the right
time for me. Early this week I

received a letter from the Sheriff's Office. "What is this?" I thought, "not a speeding ticket, I hope?" No, it was a notice that I was to be on a jury for a criminal matter. Probable length of trial: four weeks ... I am lucky I am now retired, and thus get paid for attendance, travel expenses and meal money. It's in Sydney, about 30 minutes train travel away (Plus 20 minutes walking to my local train station). If the trial goes ahead, and IF I get selected, it should be interesting. SLOW SUPPER was a good horror story - why don't you try for a paying market? *[I gave up selling stories and cartoons in 1995 the Income Tax hassle wasn't worth the trouble and one firm went bust owing me £120. I decided go call it a day]*

JIM VERRAN, 12 Ellis St., Port Noarlunga, S.Australia 5167 The other day Betty, who brings me books from the local library, brought one home that twanged my memory. "Kings of Space" by Cpt. W.E. Johns. Remember that one? I read it, and one or two follow-up books when I was a lad. I am fortunate, or unfortunate, depending on your point-of-view, in that I can usually re-read most books after a few years and enjoy them all over. I suppose so much passes through my mind that I unconsciously erase a large portion of what I read. Works the same for non-fiction too, unfortunately. Poor Betty was a bit crestfallen when I told her it was actually a young person's book -- our library often gets categories mixed -- a sore point with Betty who knows the ropes but can't get a job there because they have so many well-meaning but inept volunteers running the place. *[I know what you mean, our Sheffield main library had filed, "Atlas - The story of a Missile", under shotguns!]*

GEOFF BARKER, 19 Oldfield Grove, Sheffield S6 6DR Modern Mysteries : How very true. I know a guy who worked on the computer "Help Desk", who answered a call from a lady who complained her computer hadn't worked since windows were installed. "But we haven't sent anyone to re-install any software." Oh no, Since they fitted new windows in her building. Some dust had blown inside her PC while the glaziers were working and the hard drive was nackered. "A LONG SHOT" I understand we should be more worried about a volcanic explosion that may send a tidal wave all the way across the Atlantic, to New York. *[And there'd be precious little warning for that.]*

JOSEPH T. MAJOR, 1409 Christy Ave., Louisville, KY 40404-2040, USA

The Germans did introduce something similar to the upward-firing cannon on the Westland C.O.W. Gun fighter. They fitted some fighters with upwards-firing rockets, on the same basis that "it was easier to attack a bomber from underneath where it was less well protected." They called it "Jazz Music" which I thought was interesting since I understood that officially, jazz was "degenerate music." But then the bomber campaign was "terror fliers" and I suppose they figured that one deserved the other. [It's a wonder they didn't call it, "machine-with-upward-firing-anti-aircraft-gun"

BRIAN TAWN, 27 Burdett Rd., Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 2PR I'm glad you've seen a Vulcan flypast. Magical sight! I was lucky enough to see a Vulcan put on a display at Mildenhall one year and it was awesome to see .. and loud! The one at Duxford currently has a Lancaster to one side of it and a Blackbird just behind it. What a trio! We used to see a Lancaster flying over Wisbech, along with the Spitfire and Hurricane. An advantage of not being too far from their base. Every time I hear them coming I have to go outside for a look.

ALAN BURNS, 19 The Crescent, Wallsend, N.Tyneside NE28 7RE Re Cons, I have attended four Kettering, Birmingham (with Ken Slater frantically trying to negotiate the new traffic system). Cheltenham (with Jeeves failing signally to drink the local waters - not knowing the rhyme, "Here lie I and my several daughters, died of drinking Cheltenham waters. If we had stuck to Epsom Salts, we wouldn't be lying in these here vaults"). London for the Worldcon where I collected autographs of everyone of note in SF and had the dubious pleasure of sitting till after midnight while someone recited the antics of the crew of the Spaceship Venus; and the last one in Newcastle as I live there. *[I make that five, did you miscount?]*

PAMELA BOAL, 4 Westfield Way, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW A quick comment on the electrical power front. Yes, it does take about eight hours to recharge electric boats fully but that is no problem as people do not cruise the river overnight. The Environment Agency boasted they were encouraging boatyards to supply suitable points for the length of the Thames. There may be such facilities on the lower reaches but I know of only one place on the upper reaches. The idea is feasible, the boats are available but the system will never get in place while the Environment Agency is in charge. Of the three authorities in charge since we have been regular boaters the EA is the least efficient, least user friendly, very long on promises, but short on action.

HENRY WELCH, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017 The square root of -1 used by electrical engineers is a modeling simplification and does not in any way reflect the actual existence of an imaginary anything. It all stems from Euler's Formula [$\exp(jx) = \cos x + j \sin x$]. You have to remember that it is used as a short hand to model

steady-state sinusoids and that this part is only balancing the phase shift information and not the more important, but factorable term, $\cos wt$. There is also an implied take the real part of $\exp(jwt+jx)$. *[I'd never dream of arguing with you.]*



TED HUGHES, 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield, Manchester M45 8ER 'More Idle Thoughts' What about my puzzle? If the universe is expanding at the phenomenal rate we're told it is - and has been doing so since ever - what is it still only four and a half light years to Alpha Centauri? See any astronomy text for that slice of what can only be - if the experts are correct about the universe - misinformation. [Can any reader explain this to Ted .. and to me?] I liked your cover - especially the banana skin and the apple core. I read somewhere that the Russian space station was riddled with junk. If that was the case, your cover could not be far from reality. *[It was drawn from life]*

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, Yorks YO17 9ES

Will science ever solve the mysteries of migration? I tried to follow the magnetic lines of the Earth theory, but for swifts and swallows returning to the exact places they left, there has to be something more. Perhaps those magnetic lines compate to our motorway maps; only when you leave them do you depend on local knowledge. And what about racing pigeons? Their journeys are always too short for the broad sweep of the Earth. Whatever we may like to think, science hasn't got an answer for everything; yet. *[I bet expert navigators couldn't get back to an exact departure point using just a compass, it makes the magnetic lines theory look a bit off doesn't it?]*

A. LANGLEY SEARLES, 48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, NY 10708-5909, USA

My main criticism of E152 is the inaccuracies on its front cover. For shame Terry! If the space vessel is indeed in space, with not gravity (as the astronaut depiction indicates, confirmed by stars showing through window), there could NOT be a dripping faucet. Nor a dripping leak on the tank in the foreground. Or an apple core or a banana skin on the floor. Nor would gas be leaking (top centre) into the ship - it would be leaking out *[Ah, but don't forget artistic licence to depict quantum possibilities.]*

ALAN SULLIVAN, 26 Thornford Rd., Lewisham, London SE13 6SG 'Modern Mysteries', Fascinating stuff. Some genuine mysteries, but all too many of the others seem to have there roots in commerce and politics - which leads us neatly into conspiracy theory and beyond. I still think the biggest mystery of all is why we trust any of the blighters 'Meating out Justice' I saw this one coming, but... 'The Old Mill Stream' (Penelope), It is often thus and has been since time immemorial.

RON BENNETT, 36 Harlow Park Crescent, Harrogate, N Yorks Good piece by James Verran. Agree, particularly about printing on coloured backgrounds, a trend on the increase in magazines. The reason retail outlets price goods with ninepences is that change will invariably have to be given and therefore the transaction will have to go through the till, thus cutting down on possible employee theft. Some white goods stores use a pricing system usually ending in 95 pence, as a code for an item that is shortly to be replaced by a new model. The steak through the heart gag... terrible! The Miles M-20 was designed to be built quickly in case we ran out of Spitfires and Hurricanes? If it could be built more quickly than other planes why wasn't it? I'd have thought that in wartime any addition to the planes in operation would have been an advantage.

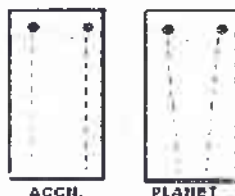
[Several possible reasons, 1 Ministry wary of its fixed undercarriage. 2 Lack of liaison between Ministries. 3 Stupidity, they'd all ready turned down the much better Martin Baker. 5 and even the wonderful Mosquito had to be a private venture model.]

IDLE THOUGHTS.3

Every so often when reading books on Cosmology or Relativity, I come across the dogmatic statement that an acceleration of $1g$ is indistinguishable from a gravity field of $1g$. Or putting it another way, if you were in an enclosed lift (elevator if you prefer), there would be no test you could make which would tell you whether you were accelerating at $1g$, or sitting still on a planetary surface in a $1g$ field.

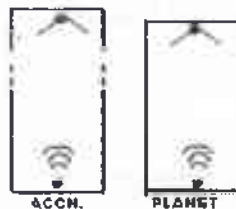
<y idle thoughts immediately began to try and think up tests and I came up with a few. Remember these are Einstein-type 'thought experiments' where you can measure to superb accuracy. Maybe you can tell me if they are flawed.

TEST.1 place two large, heavy masses a distance apart at the top of the lift, release them simultaneously and record their paths of fall. In acceleration, both tracks will be parallel, whilst falling under, they will converge towards the centre of mass. A very slight difference, but recordable under our rules. A quibble could be the balls would converge slightly by virtue of their masses. This convergence would be greater under gravity as it would be the sum of mass attraction (which could be calculated) and planetary convergence.



TEST.2 Replace the two masses, measure their distance apart, and wait a few hours. Under gravity, this distance will remain unchanged. Under acceleration, thanks to Einstein's mass/velocity equation, their masses will have increased, as will their mutual attraction, so they will have moved slightly together.

TEST.3 Put a sound source at the foot of each lift and a sound recorder at the top. Emit simultaneous pulses from each sounder and record their transit time to the recorders. If in a planet's g field, this takes x second, it will take slightly longer in the accelerating field as the roof will have moved up slightly during the sound's transit. Quibble here is will the sound may travel faster in the upward moving air?



TEST.4 Take two similar masses, place one on the floor of the lift and the other at the ceiling. Now measure their weights. If under acceleration, both will weigh the same. If in a planetary field, the one nearest the centre of the planet will weigh slightly more because of the old $(m_1 \times m_2)/d^2$ law for attracting masses.

Over to you to pick holes in these ideas -- or think up a few more. T.J.



THE KNARLEY KNEWS.89 H&L Welch, 1525 16th. Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA 28 pages crammed with goodies. Editorial on gardening, cats, cars, work etc. An article musing on fannishness

and another on A.I. and the problems it will present. Charlotte Proctor chats about shows and there's a long and good, article on touring Israel. Finally a hefty LOC col and a page of capsule fanzine reviews.. \$1.50 or the usual. **KK.90** just arrived, 22pp, a lovely infinite regression cover, Twin Towers comment, personal natter, more Israel travel, media, fnz comments, Hawaii trip and an excellent LOCcol.

ARGENTUS A fanzine to download from <http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus/html> or in hard copy for \$3.00 from Stephen H.Silver, 707 Spring Lane, Dearfield, ILL 60015-3969

FANZINE FANATIQUE Summer 2001 Keith Walker, 6 Vine St., Lancaster, LA1 4UF Four pages of capsule fanzine reviews. Great for keeping you up to date.

CHALLENGER.14, Guy H.Lillian III, PO BOX 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153, USA

No less than 114 pages crammed with goodies such as Benford on Bonestell and SF art, an excellent piece on comic hunting (it reminded me of my own mag hunting days in the thirties). There are articles on Cyrano de Bergerac, a Chicon report, John Berry on fingerprint cases, Gene Stewart claiming paper zines are better than e-ones, Two items on legal cases, some excellent fnz reviews, a dollop of New Orleans Con photos, a hefty LOCcol and oddles of artwork and other goodies. Get it for \$6.00, trade or faunching. It's a great zine. Guy married in June, so belated but hearty best wishes.

NO AWARD.10 Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmour St #105, N.Hollywood, CA 91606, USA 32pp, with an article on Heinlein by Earl Kemp, Len Moffatt writes about the LASFS. Ed Green remembers National Guard service, there's a book review and a fanzine review (Niekas) and a LOCcol. Bags of variety, get it for the usual or \$5.00

SPIRIT OF THINGS PAST.4 CONTACT! Richard Smith & Leah Zeldes, 410 W.Willow Rd., Prospect Heights, IL 60070, USA. No less than 90 pages crammed with some 72 essays by various fen on how they entered fandom. An extra bonus is the inclusion of their e-mail addresses and a brief explanation of how it came about. There's also an excellent Index and some good art. This is one for the archives, \$10.00 but it is well worth it. Heck, it cost \$7.50 to mail my copy!

PLOKTA.24, 24 St. Mary Rd., Walthamstow, London E17 9RG, from Messrs. Davis, Scott and Scott. 16pp absolutely crammed with photos and travel reports, tenting, breadmaking, schooldays, the innards of Citroens, a large LOCcol, bags of variety and some naughty words. You can get it for trade or the usual

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