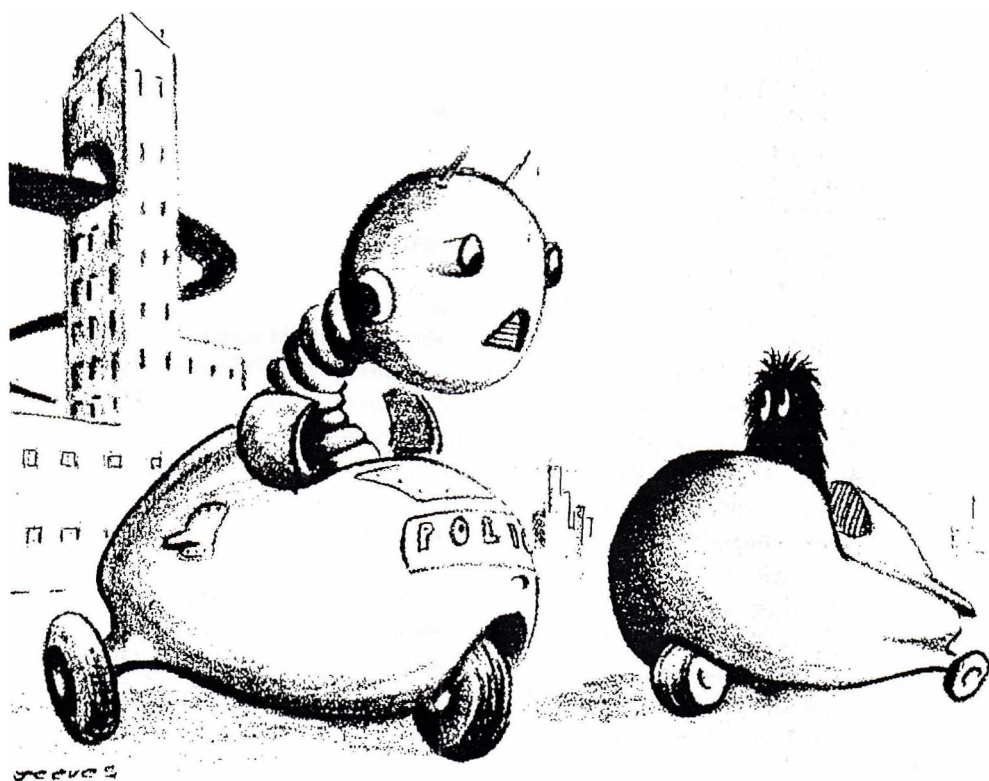


ERG 159

QUARTERLY

OCTOBER 2002

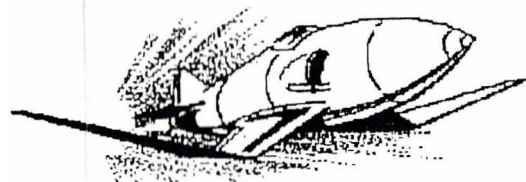


ERG 159

QUARTERLY

OCTOBER 2002

E-MAIL erg40@madasafish.com



This issue comes to you in person. You can get the next issue for a LOC

Greetings ERGbods,

I've asked this before, but maybe someone now has answers. Firstly, can anyone give me addresses where I can buy (a) Linsen (sp?) paper for book binding or (b) Clear casting (embedding) resin for making glasslike blocks for preserving items? **WANTED RED DWARF** Nos. 4, 5, & 6 To buy or trade. Can you offer help? If so, contact my son, Keith R. Jeeves, 274 Springfield Rd., Sheffield S10 Ph (0114) 2669351

October 1st. marks my 80th. birthday so the question arises, how long, or should I, continue publishing ERG? Costs continue to rise and LOCs tend to decline. Solution? **FAILEYING.** Steve Sneyd gave me the address and I wrote to a cultural centre and they very kindly sent me a full print out of the verses. Memory was fairly close after all.

I still have lists of non-fiction titles going cheap. They cover a wide range of subjects, so if you're interested, send me a S.A.E.

The cover this issue is from a pencil drawing which I did many years ago. I put it through the scanner and it seems to have come out pretty well. Greatly delighted, I dug another oldie out of the files and used it for the cover of the next, January 2003, cover. If you like 'em, let me know and I'll see what else I can find.

Way back in ERG.25, I wrote VENGEANCE, the first of a brief series. "Tales From The Wye Tart" (sound familiar?), I then sold it to a newspaper. Some 30+ years later I thought it might be an idea to run the stories again, so Vengeance lurks within. If you enjoy it I have a couple more, equally zany.

I still have loads of paperbacks and hardcovers to sell, send SAE for list. I can also offer **ASTOUNDING SF** 1935 issues. General condition bearing age in mind: F = Fair, G = Good, VG = Very Good, TE = Trimmed edges, ST = Spine Sellotaped. Where an issue is not VG, damage as noted is confined mainly to cover. All text pages are Good. Prices are £Sterling/\$USA. If ordering, send no cash until you get the mags.

JAN Bacovert and 6 pages of Brass Tacks have 1" by 2" crumbled away rest OK

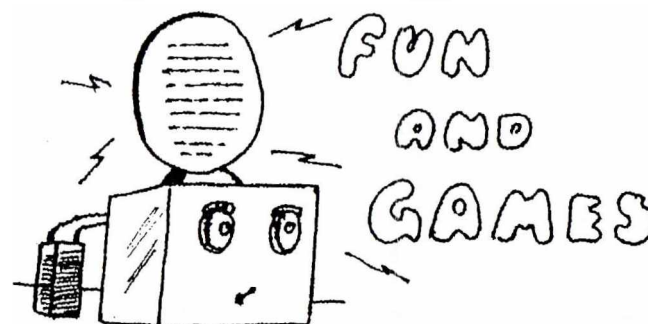
ST TE £10.00/\$16.00

FEB VG ST TE £15.00/\$22.00

MAY F Spine poor, cover has 1" tear, bacovert and Brass Tacks have pieces torn out and page 43/44 is missing. Reading copy £7.00/\$11.00

Best. Terry

CARRY ON JEEVES 2



In the mid thirties we were given an unwanted 'wireless' by someone graduating to a better model. The one we got consisted of a square mahogany box with two dials

on the front. A large, round loudspeaker resembling a washing up bowl on edge stood on the top and hiding bashfully behind this duo was a large high-tension battery and a bulky lead-acid accumulator which had to be re-charged at the local garage every few days. The radio was a 'straight' receiver employing feedback reaction to give it better sensitivity and volume. This endowed the thing with a few strange foibles. You tuned the thing by twiddling one dial to go up or down the frequency band, whilst simultaneously adjusting the other knob to keep the whole shebang on the verge of self-oscillation. If you overshot, the thing would begin to emit a banshee sort of screech - which we discovered later, was being picked up by all local radio sets. If you fiddled both knobs successfully, the loudspeaker would give out a rather faint version of a BBC programme.

Another little idiosyncrasy soon became apparent. If you walked round the room and passed too near the radio, it would de-stable and begin to emit the banshee-wail. We stuck this performance for several months then decisions were taken and a brand new Marconi three-valver was acquired. With this sophisticated model I was able to explore the joys of short-wave radio listening by picking up the American station, WGEO in Schenectady. I loved its organ music program of 'Church in The Wildwood' -- so did the BBC as they quickly pinched the idea and re-titled it 'Chapel in The Valley'.

Sunday for the BBC was a day of solemnity and wall to wall gloom. Slow, stately dirges or talks on serious subjects. Anything light-hearted or laughter-making was verboten. One must not enjoy oneself on Sunday. We solved that problem by tuning to Radio Luxembourg. On doing this we were regaled by the Ovaltineys with their songs and secret code messages. Betox gave us the jingle, "Hurrah for Betox, what a delightful stew...". There was 'Salty Sam the sailor man', the Horlick's hour and of course, the unforgettable Sax Rohmer serial - sinister music followed by a menacing voice, "I Fu Manchu am determined to wipe out all my enemies..."

We had no TV, computer games or other expensive and elaborate ways of amusing ourselves. Pastimes were simple and sporadic. On sudden impulse we would move to the nearest bus-stop and start collecting tickets from descending passengers. We had no use for the things other than plating them into accordion-like shapes. Of even lesser value was the urge to take pencil and paper and start recording the numbers of passing cars. Sometimes we would persuade local shopkeepers to part with their rubbish and empty boxes. This treasure trove would be lugged to the 'Donkey Hill' for a right royal bonfire.

Light relief coupled with excitement, danger and sheer physical activity could sometimes be obtained by a visit to the local Mormon Church. This building stood alone on a small patch of land with a grassy path all round. It was constructed from corrugated iron, so was known as 'The Tin Tabernacle'. It was standard practice to take a strong stick and run round the outside of this edifice, trundling the stick against the corrugations. The row was bad enough from outside; inside it must have been indescribable. This harmless amusement inevitably led to the perpetrator being hotly pursued by one of the inhabitants.

We also played 'Relievo' by forming two teams and hunting each other. 'Kick Can' was a variation on Hide and Seek. Whoever was 'On' placed an empty tin can in the middle of the road, someone would kick it and we would all scatter and hide.

Whoever was Muggins had to retrieve and replace the can before starting his search. Each 'find' was brought to the 'den' until all were found, but if he strayed too far from his can, one of the uncaught would dash out, kick the can away, all would scatter and the whole thing began again. 'Tip Cat' was another pastime - until I scored a direct hit on a neighbour's window and brought an end to that entertainment.

Cigarette cards supplied another interest, these small pieces of cardboard inserted in packets of cigarettes boasted many colourful pictures on a variety of themes. Collecting them to get the full set of cars, aircraft, footballers or some other desirable series, involved much swapping and horse-trading. It didn't end there, they also featured in our games. Flicking cards was popular in a variety of ways. One had would stand a few cards against a wall and everyone else flicked their cards at them. If they knocked one down, it became theirs. Obviously, the 'banker' always came off best as periodically he would clear the fallen cards when the pile got too big.

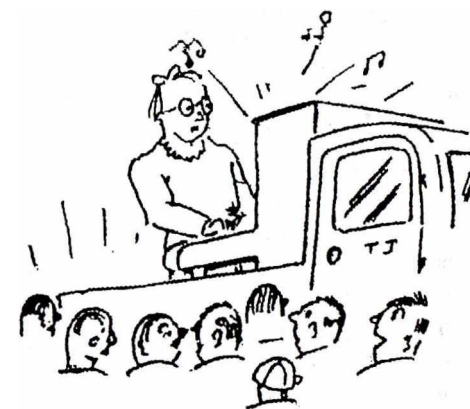


A favourite Winter activity was 'pinging'. This had to be carried out at night. Armed with wads of paper and numerous elastic bands, we would creep down a passage into somebody's pitch-black backyard and tiptoe to the far end. This gave us a good hiding place plus a clear view of the back windows of the houses in the next street. Picking out a lighted window, the fun would begin. Paper pellets were fired from hand-held elastic bands at the selected window. They caused no damage, but gave a satisfying 'Ping!' Two or three such pings and someone would come out to investigate. At this point, we would suspend activities until they went back indoors, whereupon hostilities were resumed. Our victims would soon reach the stage of lurking behind the door ready to leap out at the first tap. The game went on until they gave up in resignation or we ran out of ammunition.

Naturally, we went through all the other ritual crazes. Conkers when in season, yo-yos, marbles, spinning tops and even road-racing with Meccano-made land yachts. Carol-singing was a must at Christmas. This was followed on New Year's Day with 'Faileying' which was carried out in the morning and took the form of going round all the local back yards putting on a play involving such characters as a Derby Ram, and Little Devil Doubt "With my pockets turned inside out". Then there was Beelzebub, "In my hand I carry a club" and the butcher who ended up killing the 'topsy' (the ram). This done, we would go to every house in the yard for a donation.

There were other special occasions. At Whitsuntide all the local shops had stalls outside offering such essentials as pea-shooters, balls on elastic, liquorice sticks, cinder toffee, bullseyes, lucky bags, toffee and the like. The local Church fielded the massed band of the All Saints Boy's Brigade, all blowing their lungs out on trumpets to the accompaniment of a lorry-borne piano. This ensemble toured the district followed by a motley retinue of parents, children and other hangerson. Every few hundred yards, the cortege would pause to sing a few hymns and wind up back at the church in time for dinner. In the afternoon, everyone toddled off to the Atlas and Norfolk sports ground for races, ice-cream, side shows and general jollity.

Armistice day was another one to remember. Nobody would dream of going out without a poppy in their lapel. Black arm bands were to be seen on every side, but the most memorable part was the two minutes' silence. Maroons sounded at 11 am. and everything stopped! In the streets or in shops, people halted in their tracks. and



removed their hats, all heads were bowed. Cars, buses and trams came to a stop and their passengers rose to their feet and stood in silence for the two minutes of Remembrance. It wasn't patriotism, jingoism or any other currently, sneered at reaction. It was simply a mass homage to all those who had died. When 'for convenience' the silence was shifted to the nearest Sunday, 'for convenience', much was lost. I wonder if those who had died would have asked for their deaths to have been saved for a weekend 'for convenience'.

On reaching the lofty age of ten my birthday present was a REAL BICYCLE! It was a 'Wiggies gas-pipe' with an 18" frame and cost the vast sum of £3.19.6d. Marketed by the local firm of Wigfall's, a totally false rumour claimed they were made from old gas piping, hence the nick-name. Mother went with me to collect it. Having already done my basic training on friends' bicycles I was confident of being able to ride the machine, nevertheless just to be on the safe side, I pushed it all the way home. Reaching the end of our road, I decided to demonstrate my skills. I hopped neatly on to one pedal intending to swing gracefully into the saddle and glide smoothly away. It didn't quite work like that. My foot slipped off the pedal, I fell tummy down across the saddle and went sailing across the road. Luckily no other traffic got in the way, but it took a while to convince that I was safe to try again.

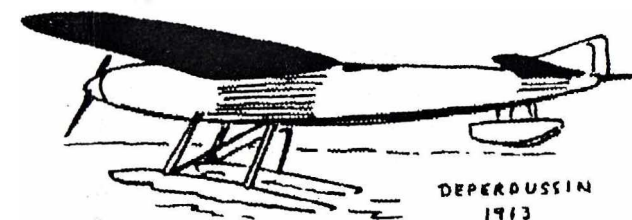
Cycling provided all sorts of fascinating activities such as imitating our favourite speedway stars. We laid out a track on the ash-covered recreation ground, marked the corners with concrete blocks and held races. It was during one of these that my pedal caught one of the blocks. My bike stopped, but I didn't. I escaped unhurt, but the crank of the pedal had been bent back against the frame. Several hefty bashes with a half housebrick and I was mobile once more.

We also had great fun dragging our cycles up the local slagheaps and hurtling down them again. The procedure was rendered hazardous by the regular passing of overhead skips filled with smoking clinker from the foundry. On striking a tipping bar, these would dump their hot contents on the ever-growing heaps. Luckily for us, they passed over too high to be reached, otherwise we would have tried to hitch rides on the things with disastrous results. Climbing around these spoil-heaps left us with ash-filled shoes and black feet. The next logical step was a trip over the railway bridge to paddle in the river, a sluggish and murky tributary of the Don. Then came the inevitable attempt to cross the river by walking along the top of the weir. Being weed-covered and slippery, we never succeeded and this usually ended in a drying out session before setting off home.

The return route involved another crossing of the railway line. On one occasion we decided to skip the long detour to reach the footbridge and instead, cross the line directly. We were in the middle of the track when a train came steaming round the bend. Only immediate, headlong dives saved us from becoming mincemeat. A few cheerful words of greeting, followed by several lumps of coal flew at us from the cab of the engine as we scrambled through the weeds and away before a posse could be sent after us from the station.

3WEIRD & WONDERFUL 52

THE SCIENEIDER TROPHY



In 1912, *The Coupe d'Aviation Maritime: Jacques Schneider*, was announced, better known as The Schneider Trophy. It was the brainchild of armaments tycoon, Jacques Schneider and had the aim of improving the role of the seaplane in aviation. He set up a magnificent gold and silver trophy as well as a large cash prize. Entries had to float safely for six hours, be towed and taxied without accident and then do speed trials. The race was open to all, but in practice, only manufacturers and Governments could afford to take part.

The first event was held in Monaco in 1914 when ten entries turned up. Bad weather, engine trouble and as failure to qualify meant that only four actually took part. The French entry, a Deperdussin, won with the average speed of 48mph. This included time on water due to an error over the number of laps flown. A day earlier, the pilot made a bad landing and broke off the tail of his machine. It says much for the construction techniques of the day that the damage was repaired overnight in time to win the race.

As winner of the 1913 event, France hosted the 1914 race which was won by Great Britain with a speed of 86mph. with a Sopwith 'Tabloid' which later went on to establish a new record of 92mph. The Great War put an end to racing for several years, so it was not until 1919 the event was resumed in Britain when everything seemed to go wrong. Race day was foggy and because of varied starting times, some contestants were not ready. Other got lost, gave up or didn't risk flying. After much argument the result was declared 'No Contest' and because of making a good showing in the test, Italy was made host for the next Schneider.

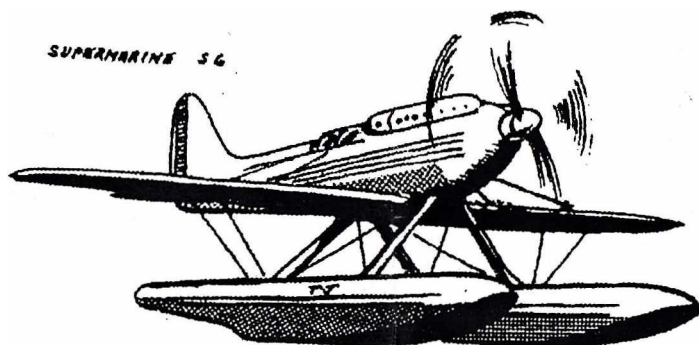
Venice was the site for the 1920 event and through lack of financial support there was no British entry and of the rest, only one qualified for the race, so the Italian, Savoia S.12 only had to fly round the course to take the event with a speed of 107mph. In 1921, Italy was the only entrant and fielded three machines. The winning speed being 117mph. Since the 1920 event didn't count, Italy now had two victories and only needed.

The USA came to the fore in 1923 and took the win at a scorching 177mph. and the 1924 event was postponed. In 1925, the USA won again at 232mph in a Curtiss machine. 1926 became a USA versus Italy clash which was won by Italy at 246mph.

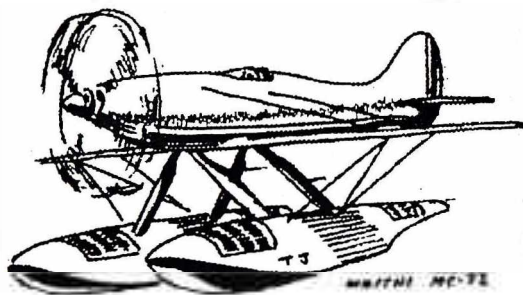
In 1927 the race was in Venice but was won by Britain's Supermarine Sea Lion at 281mph. There was no race in 1928 but in 1929, Britain won again when Flight Lieutenant Waghorn took his Supermarine S.6 to 328mph. Finally, in 1931 a new Labour Government refused to put up the money for an entry. They were shamed when Lady Houston donated £100,000 to foot the bill. It was worth it as the beautiful Supermarine romped home at 340mph. This made a third win on a row and the Trophy was taken home by Britain and now stands beneath the winning aircraft in the Imperial Science Museum.



SUPERMARINE SEA LION 1927



Sadly, the Italian Macchi MC.72 failed to qualify due to engine trouble. Had it done so the race would have been epic as the marvellous machine later went on to set an absolute speed record of 440mph. This not only stood for several years, but is still, as far as I know, the unbeaten record for a piston engined seaplane.



The improvement in the machines for a mere 18 years, was outstanding and the Supermarine monoplanes made a good foundation leading to the incomparable Spitfire four years later. Who says air races are pointless?

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

-- Penelope Fandergaste

I was very young when I first realised... and began to appreciate the power of advertising. We all know about "Put a tiger in your tank" and "My goodness, my Guinness." And even "Because I'm wuth it," but what got to me was the humour in signs whose reader base would be little more than localised.

I remember my parents trundling me along in my Silver Cross pram and my looking up from the latest Perry Rhodan picture book as we passed a church. "Our ch—ch. What is missing here?" asked the billboard outside its entrance, supplying the immediate answer, presumably for those with a reading age even lower than was mine at the time. "UR." And see! I've done exactly what I've just denigrated and been sarcastic about. Sorry.

But come on now. Don't be like that. I'm sure you've seen the same sign outside churches up and down the country, but it was new to me then, and, come to think of it, it had to have been original *somewhere*. Anyway, I thought it rather clever. And still do. So there.

Since then... well, since I could write, and I know that some of you are still anticipating that happening... I've jotted down a few signs which have caught my rheumy eye.

Hairdressers seem to have almost a monopoly on the genre with adverts that read, "Hair today and gone tomorrow," or "Hair cut while you wait." There's something nice and outré about that one that I rather take to.

A speedy trawl through the local Yellow Pages reveals that there are actually hairdressing salons with names such as Beyond the Fringe, The Clip Joint, A Cut Above, The Cutting Edge, Headline News, A Head Start and Talking Heads. There are also no fewer than seven establishments called Headroom and six called Strands. Mind you there are also eight called Jules, which, I think, doesn't prove anything..

My own favourite is the place just around the corner from Elstree Studios, called The Cutting Room.

These names, of course, are examples of what might be called Indirect Advertising. Clever... it says here... plays on words that insinuate themselves into the brain.

Of course, hairdressers aren't the only tradesfolk to play these mind games. Not so far from where I'm reclining... you don't expect me to sit and give myself back trouble, so you? ... there's a kitchen "make over" company called Cupboard Love.

In the window of a pawnbroker's shop in Toxteth, Liverpool, there's a sign which reads, "Call in at your earliest inconvenience."

In Sheffield there's a beauty salon that advertises, "If your face isn't becoming to you, you should be coming to us." Whilst Nottingham boasts a laundry that happily claims, "We soak the clothes, not the customers."

I'd close with the sign I saw recently on a passing van that read, "J. Patel and Son, Roofing Contractors. You've tried the cowboys, now try the Indians," but I just *have* to mention the Chinese Take-Away in Otley. It's called *Wok Away*.

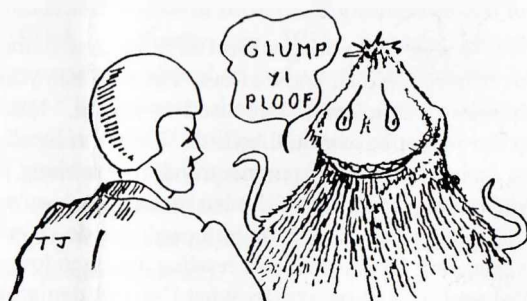
Sorry.

--pf

YOU DON'T SAY

"The sleek black spaceship came in over the hills, reared on its tail and settled in a torrent of flame. Once the ground had cooled, Roger the Rover climbed down the access ladder to be faced with a small welcoming party of aliens.

"Welcome to our planet" said their leader."



From this point on there are several lines which SF likes to follow. Firstly, Roger can be greeted in perfect English by a telepathic voice bidding him welcome. There are a few flaws in this. For several thousand years no real evidence has been found to indicate that humans have the equipment to either receive or transmit by telepathy, so why should it suddenly appear? Another snag is that we usually think in our mother tongue when composing a message. Aliens will no doubt do likewise, and certainly not in a strange one, so Roger's telepathic message will be an unintelligible mess.

OK, so telepathy is out. What next? Well the computer linked translating device is a hot favourite; which is akin to the old "We learned it by listening to your radio and TV". Poor blighters, but how does listening to a load of gabble, enable you or a computer to decypher it's meaning? but just imagine tuning your radio to a foreign language and simply by listening and without referents of any sort, decyphering that language. Giving visual referents, it may be possible to work out a few basic ideas, but when you think how linguists were stymied until the Rosetta stone was decoded, it isn't a quick method. Even the ENIGMA code crackers used their knowledge of the German language to help break the secret codes. I reckon we can scrub the instant translating machine from Roger's kit.

Another favourite is that after hearing a short dollop of alien natter, Roger suddenly realises it is a mutated version of an ancient Earth language which, being a student of old SF books, he happens to know. How? well, the aliens originally came from Earth, probably fleeing the flooding of Atlantis or the cracking of Krakatoa.

This doesn't leave many ways to communicate and I venture to suggest the eventual way will be the good old method followed by traders over the ages. By a slow process of sign language, number demonstration, learning simple concrete nouns and relying on a good memory coupled with very patient slogging away to establish the basics. This can have pitfalls, if you hold up a cutting implement and say "knife", does the alien take that to be weapon, blade, dagger, cutter, or what? What one says need not be received with the same meaning by the listener.

I spent one term teaching English to adult immigrants, and believe you me, it is hard work and most definitely not done in a quick half hour session.

VENGEANCE

"I don't suppose any of you have ever been charged by a jealousy-maddened caterpillar" announced Ponsonby to the group around the beer-stained table in the 'Wye Tart'. It was one of the typical, conversation stopping gambits he so frequently drops into chatter and which is invariably the prelude to some preposterous narrative. John Bunna sighed

resignedly and motioned to Drew, the landlord to refill our glasses. Priorities duly observed we sat back and waited for Ponsonby. As usual, he took his time, laboriously committing arson on his pipe, taking a sip of beer, then with a final glance to make sure we were all listening, he began.



"It happened to me on a field trip to the Upper Reaches of the Congo or the Amazon, or one of those Russian rivers, I forget which," he mused. "I had been hired by the Natural Geographic Society to bring back a sample of a rare moth they needed for an illustration to an article they were planning in their magazine."

"Called 'Advice to Young Moth-ers', I suppose", quipped Fred Butt, the would-be wit of our party. Ponsonby ignored him, but gave a shrug. His elbow caught a beer glass and tipped the contents neatly into Butt's lap. As the unfortunate fellow wiped away furiously, our brave explorer continued as if nothing had happened.

"I struck lucky the very first night out. I caught a beauty with a four inch wing-span, shoved it in a jar and took it back to my tent. Next morning when I saw it by daylight, I could have spit!"

"Was it dead?" queried young Blummer who always played straight man to Ponsonby's narratives.

"No", said our hero judiciously. "Not dead, but by daylight I could see it was a female and the Natural Geographic had specifically ordered a male. The only thing I could do was open the bottle and let her go. That was my big mistake." He paused for a ruminative swig of his beer before continuing. "The lady moth's boy friend,

a dirty big caterpillar, was just outside the tent. He saw his girl friend come flapping out all tired and dishevelled and jumped to the obvious, though entirely incorrect conclusion: totally unfounded I assure you. Maddened with jealousy he charged straight at me. Imagine if you can, dozens of tiny feet thundering straight at you. Picture the ripples surging along that spiny-haired back. The prospect terrifies me even now". He took another swig of bitter.

"I suppose you trampled on it?" queried Blummer. We all awaited Ponsonby's next words... all that is, save old Church who was gazing intently at something on the window ledge.

"Not at all", grunted the explorer with an affronted air. "I never take the life of another creature no matter what the provocation. In this case I simply did what any gentleman of breeding would have done".

"What was that?" queried Butt.

"I got the hell out of there as fast as I could go", admitted Ponsonby. "I caught a male moth further down the river and came straight home to England. That was the last I saw of the caterpillar." He sat back and drained the rest of his pint, then sat back to wait for someone to refill the glass.

No one spoke for a long moment. This was the tallest - and flattest of his improbable tales so far. Drew took it as signal and brought fresh supplies. Finally, Church broke the silence.

"I suppose you'll tell us that your caterpillar was bottle-green and had yellow stripes along his body?"

"Yes" said Ponsonby reluctantly, "As a matter of fact it had."

"With little spiky bits on its back?" Church continued.

"Quite correct", our hero admitted stiffly.

"And would it, by any chance, have a miniature Smith and Wesson .38 strapped round its waist?" pursued Church.

Ponsonby relaxed and gave a supercilious smile

"No old boy, as a matter of fact, it did not..." He paused for effect. From the window ledge came a faint 'Pop'. Ponsonby stiffened, then collapsed across the table scattering beer and glasses in all directions. He gave a convulsive twitch and lay dead.

But we had all heard his last words,

"It had a Colt .45"

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LETTERS

STEVE SNEYD, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8PB

Your memories of early toy planes brought recall of something from when I was very small. I got these moulds which came with some alloy.

You were supposed to heat and pour into the moulds to end up with very crude mini Spitfires and Hurricanes. I melted the alloy on the cooking stove, it splashed about and I got into real trouble. Partly the mess and partly because my father said the stuff was poisonous and might have got in the food. *[I've only seen the American moulds for making Buck Rogers figures. Nowadays they'd be banned as dangerous]*

ALAN BURNS, 19 The Crescent, Wallsend on Tyne NE28 7RE I had aircraft, first the original F.R.O.G. then the F.R.O.G. DH Moth. Model railways, I had the Lionel Yankee outfit and now of course I do my railroading on the computer. British Rail, yeuk. But nothing has gone right since Blair and his gang of spinners got in. *[How about pensioners £100 a year heating allowance, lower car tax and free TV?]*

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton N.Yorks YO17 9ES Unlike those protesters I have no problems whatsoever with GM crops; after all, we've been genetically modifying crops for centuries without any fuss. The one objection that I have is the attempt by the countries concerned to patent these modifications, make them their exclusive property and charge the earth for anyone who wants to sow them. I hope it's just a rumour but there's supposedly the introduction of a self-destruct gene in these modified crops so that the seed only lasts only one season and you have to pay the companies again for another year's sowing. What price Africa then? *[I agree, but at least it would solve the 'Death of Grass' syndrome.]*

RON BENNETT, 36 Harlow Park Cresc. Harrogate HG2 0AW I remember a ventriloquist act where a guy came on in Naval uniform with a similarly dressed dummy. Both 'men' stood, very stiff and straight, walked slowly to the front of the stage - I don't know how the dummy was manipulated forward. It looked quite realistic if somewhat stiff... while they indulged in witty patter. At the end of the act the man picked up the dummy, stuck it under his arm and walked off stage. Yeh, you guessed it. The one we thought was the dummy was the ventriloquist. The 'man' was the dummy!

FRED SMITH, 10 Braidholm Cresc., Glasgow 46 6HQ Two full-scale replicas of the Gee Bee were built. One of these was flown for the first time in December 1991 by Delmar Benjamin, a skilled aerobatic pilot and one of its builders. He found it 'a little frightening' at first, but went on to touring it around America claiming it very fast, cruisin' at over 200mph. The other R-1 was built by Bill Turner of California and used in the film, 'The Rocketeer'. It is now in the Air Racing Museum at Sparks, Nevada.

C.W.BROOKS, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720, USA The problem with GM crops is that we don't know the long term effects. There is a wide spectrum of such things, many are probably no more danerous than the ancient method of just keeping the ones you like for breeding stock. I am doubtful about putting a brazilnut gene into soybeans to make better cattle food - I am violently allergic to brazilnuts and soy by-products are widely used in food products. Then there is Monsanto's frightening Terminator-gene cereal plant which will not propagate from its own seed (so that the farmer has to buy new seed from Monsanto every time) - talk about 'Death of Grass'

[Now those are two very good reasons for opposing gene manipulation.]

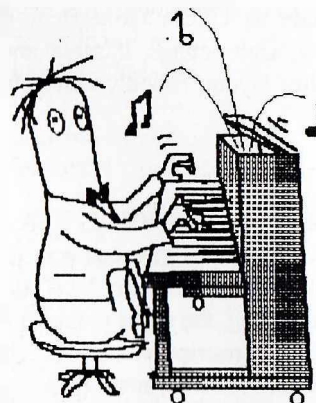
TONY GLYNN, 21 Wright St., Southport, Merseyside PR9 0TZ I did enjoy the last ERG, especially the memories of the music hall appearance of the Triode bunch. I must have read it when it was new in that pioneering TRIODE, but can't recall that I did. Incidentally, was that the early issue of the zine for which I did a cover illo which I recall Vince Clarke calling "a spaceman a la Beardsley"? Ah, happy days! Your meanderings on old time variety acts made me think fondly of the greats I saw, often at the Hulme Hippodrome, Manchester, an old-established theatre, very working-class at which a legion of great names, including Chaplin in his struggling boyhood, had appeared. *[Those were the days my friend, but sadly they did end.]*

DAVE ROWE, 8288 West Kirby State Rd., 44, Franklin, IN 46131-9211, USA One personal memory of the Royal Variety Performance comes from working for the company that use to create the "printed" programme for the monarch. These weren't a shillings worth of A5 pages, oh no, These were printed on silk with quilted covers and embroidered insignia. The further stupidity of it was that it was only used ONCE and then sent back to the company to be stored in their vaults! It was enough to send you republican or communist or both at the same time... However it was fun to look through them and come across performers like Harry Champion, George Formby and Will Hay. Will Hay was also an amateur astronomer and with a six inch refractor discovered the White Spot on Saturn when it appeared in 1933. *[He made several films too]*

TED HUGHES, 10 Kenmore Rd, Whitefield, Manchester M45 8ER Here goes another query, Why is the sea salt? I know about evaporation and condensation, but lakes are not salt and they suffer from both these processes. But they are fed with fresh water rivers, but the sea is fed by fresh water rivers too. They say that several miles from the mount of the Amazon, the water is fresh. It can't be that the ocean beds are supplying the salt - they are full of other minerals to dissolve and they say icebergs are all fresh water. Some bodies - like the Dead Sea are so briny you can't sink in them! It's all very puzzling.

PAMELA BOAL, 4 Westfield Way, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW Your early days contained a few items that no longer existed in my childhood such as the 'knocker up' though I remember Sandy Powell's song. Tin baths, gas lighting and especially the 'Stop Me and Buy One' were all part of my childhood. Even when we moved to a posh new house with a bathroom, it was so bitterly cold in winter that we still used the tin bath in front of the fireplace. No way were spare pennies to be spent on an elastic band aeroplane for me, but I made model planes from scrap wood gleaned from bomb sites.

FANZINES



FANTASY COMMENTATOR 53 & 54

A.L.Searles, 48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, NY 10708-5909 a massive double issue, 136 pp, card covers and crammed with articles by such names as Bleiler, Darlington, Moskowitz (on the Gernsback era) and others including a grand piece on David H. Keller, others on ERB and Tarzan, women writers in SF and a load of assorted verse and book reviews. All this and more. Priced at £10, but is a real tour de force. One of the few out and out s&c zines around **STEAM ENGINE TIME**, Nos. 2 & 3, Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele St., Collingwood, VIC 3066,

AUSTRALIA Greg Benford asks Who is SF's Shakespeare? There are pieces from Ron Bennett, Dave Langford, Chris Priest and many others, plus reviews, LOCs but sadly, no interior illos but there are small photos. Another good zine for your s&c shelf.

VISIONS OF PARADISE, Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Ct., Budd Lake, NJ 07828, USA. This comes in three parts, *Passing Scene* has personal news and comment *Wondrous Stories* details Founders of SF, Book and finz reviews, plus two pages of 'funnies'. *Halcyon Days* has no less than 24 pages of LOCs. A zine with enough life and variety for everyone. I look forward to more of the Founders series. Good 'un.

QUASIQUOTE.4 Sandra Bond, 7 Granville Rd, London N13 4RR 44 pages of interesting items; A Mayday outing guarded by police, purging unwanted books, Ron Bennett with a lovely piece on comic selling (a super illo which should have headed it), gender changing, Warner on radio announcing, Katz on forgotten fanzines, a corfuCon report, a raft of LOCs. Oh yes, there's a double pae centrefold too. Cost £2.00 or \$5.00

MIMOSA ANTHOLOGY, Rich & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885 Every once in a while, something superlative comes along and this 108 page item is IT. A Superbly drawn, wrap round card cover opens to reveal around thirty choice items culled from past issues of Mimosa and all punctuated by top level artwork. You can get it by trade or for \$5.00, or outside the USA, for \$7.00 - This must be the publishing event of the year and you'll kick yourself if you miss out Don't say I didn't tell you.

OPUNTIA 51 A & B Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P 2E7 Comes in two, A5 sized parts, A has LOCs and a fascinating run of personal memories. B has more LOCs, an article on red snow and capsule comments on fanzines and mail art zines. A nice light zine, get it for \$3.00, trade or LOC.

THE KNARLEY KNEWS, H&L.Welch, 1525 16th. Ave, Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA A striking full coloir cover and an editorial detailing horrendous problems with builders. Two pages of book comments, an article on fanzines, oodle of LOCs and a page of capsule finz reviews. Nice cheerful and enough variety for everyone

CHALLENGER.16 Guy H.Lillian III, PO Box 50392, New Orleans, LA 70153 USA
102 pages, striking cover and excellent interior art. Numerous tributes to R.A.Lafferty, Articles on computer art, an 18th. Century prelude to UFOs, Greg Benford meets Stephen Hawking, a look at museums, aspects of law, a photopage, humour and a hefty fanzine review section as well as a large LOCcol. Nice layout, friendly atmosphere, et it for the usual or \$6.00 in cash. Highly recommended.

Late LOCs...

SHIRLEY BIRKHEAD, 25509 Jonnie Ct., Gathersburg, MI 20882, USA About abortions; I feel every woman should be allowed to choose what they can accept and that others should not be able to interfere. It's for the individual to decide, NOT staff of the various clinics - that's murder, plain and simple. On cloning, the more complex the clone cell tissue, organ, complex organism, the more likely transcription errors. That's one reason why not all embryos survive - simple 'mistakes'. When man starts monkeying around with artificial environments so these may all survive - all errors, hidden and otherwise are more likely to be serious.

LLOYD PENNEY, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, Canada M9C 2B2 No need to worry about whinging; it's your fanzine! I get an e-mail from somewhere in Africa, usually Nigeria, almost every day. I suppose it's a cheap geography lesson, but every e-mail is the same story...untold wealth can be yours if only you'll help us release it from a bank account with some of your own venture capital. I'm not sure why it takes my money to release much more of it; why can't they deduct the fees from the current balance? Anyway, it explains why Africa is so poor. All their money is stuck in Nigerian banks...

What do you want to be when you grow up? I could never answer that question. I was too busy being a kid, riding my bicycle everywhere, and reading all the science fiction anthologies my mother would bring from the library. I never had to tackle that question until I was in high school where the various guidance counselors would provide nebulous questions and even foggier answers. It took me a year in a community college before I figured I'd like to get into journalism, and write.

JOSEPH MAJOR, 1409 Christy Ave., Louisville, KY 40204-2040, USA

The people who destroy GM crops are concerned that they will mutate into something horrid. Why, having eaten GM food, you may turn into a disgusting mobile pool of sludge, thanks to some genetic modification making its way into your body. When Hugo Gernsback expressed his wish that scientifiction be a means for learning science, I don't think he foresaw this; but then, he also seemed to believe that stf would contain GOOD science. I believe the term for this is "naive". Considering that the cloned kitty does not have the same patterns as her parent, I think that there are other considerations. Levin got it right in The Boys from Brazil when he had Mengele insisting that the Adolf-clones also had to have the same family life as the Leader, up to and including a premature demise of Vati. And inter-uterine environment is not something to be affected by elderly SS assassins...