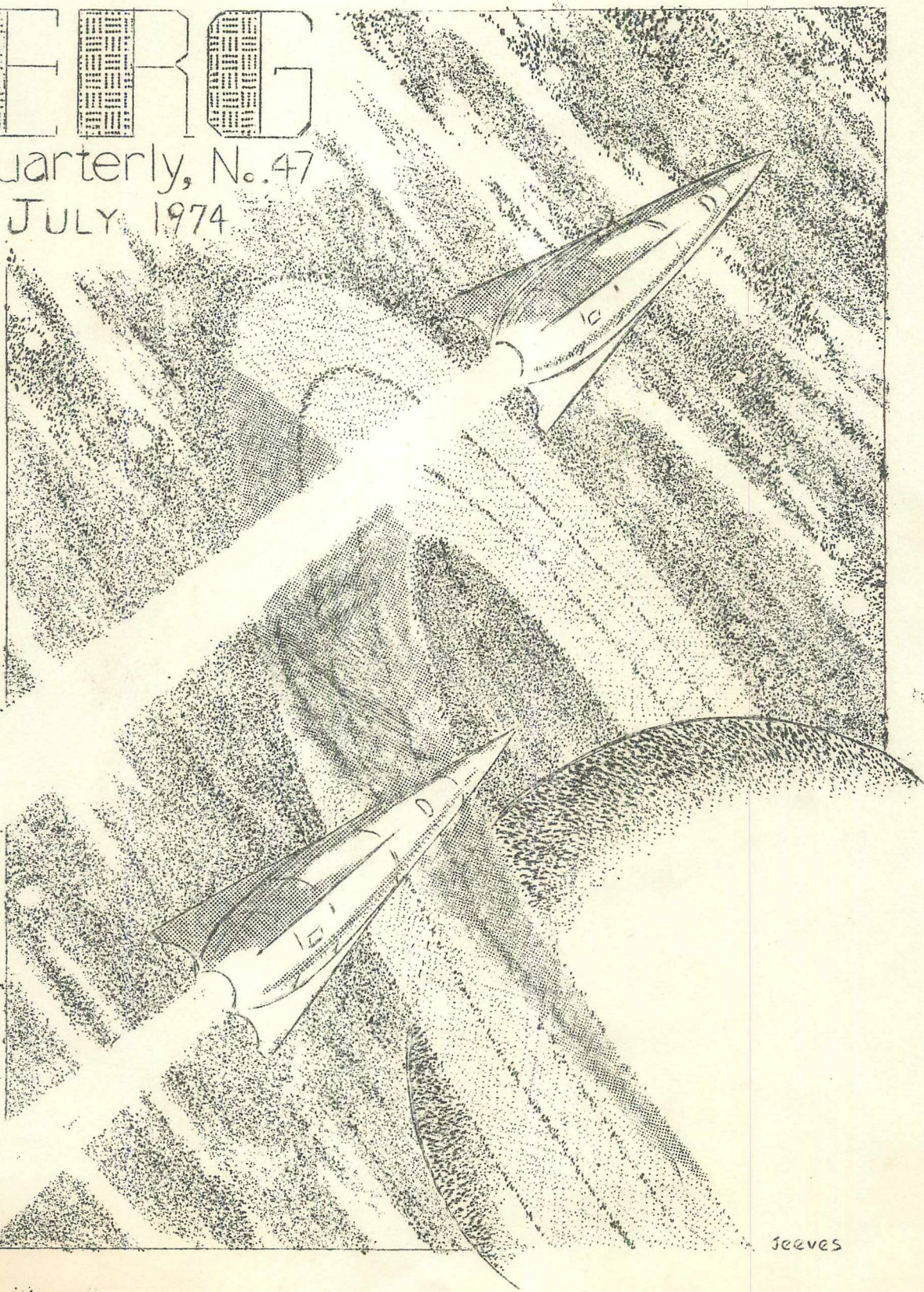


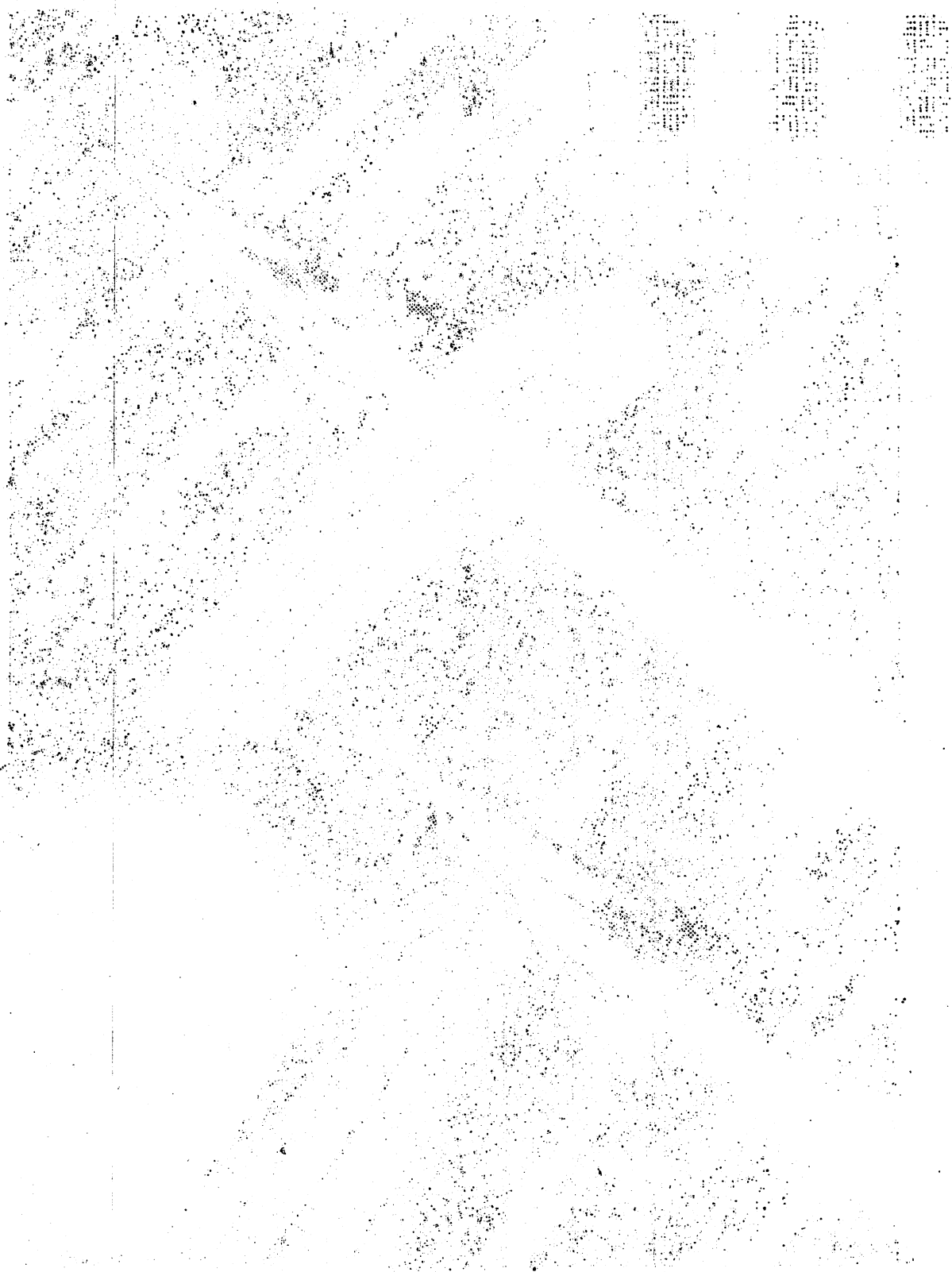
ERG

Quarterly, No. 47

JULY 1974



Jeeves



ERG is printed and
desecrated by,
Terry Jeeves,
230 Bannerdale Rd.
SHEFFIELD S11 9FE

ERGITORIAL

SUBSCRIPTION RATES are, 5 for 50p in the UK. USA readers may send a dollar bill for the next 4 issues. A cross in the status box on the right indicates that you sub expires with this issue, and I hope that you have enjoyed ERG enough to renew once again. TJ.

.....
.....
.....

Greetings ERG bods,

First of all, the sad news. Val is in hospital at the time of writing, and naturally, I cancelled my Con attendance. She hasn't been well for quite a while, and when her brother came home from Belgium on business, it seemed a good idea for her to go back for a holiday. It just didn't work out. She left Friday, Saturday I got a phone call that she would be on the next day's boat train. So Sunday saw me drive some 350 miles round trip (including thick fog on the M1) to collect her and Monday morning saw her into hospital. At the time of writing, she seems to be coming along nicely. Meanwhile, in addition to full time teaching (I'm a teacher Dave, not Alan Burns) I am also head cook, washing machine operator (Thank ghu we got an automatic) and chief visitor.

On a happier note, this seems as good a time as any to explain the three faces of ERG. A few issues ago, in view of Ompa's lactivity, and my entrance into FAPA, I decided that different issues were essential. Subbers and Traders got the full works. Ompa gets a brief issue as befits response, and FAPA gets a brief issue because of postal costs. The differing contents for this edition are as follows.

GENERAL

OMPA

FAPA

Cover
Ergitorial
Tales From The Wye Tart
Book Reviews
Drought
American Letter
Sorcery
Stencils
Letters

Ompaviews

Fapaviews

Astrophilately

This section common
to all editions.

As can be seen from the above, Reviews are common to all issues as this seems to be a section everyone likes, and also, gives the publishers a fairer deal. In the general listing, the item 'STENCILS' needs a word for thos who don't get that issue. This is part of a series in which I hope to cover all I know (OK it isn't much) about duplicating and

4 to include samples of different techniques and their results. When the whole thing is complete, there will be a limited (50 copy) edition available, which will contain additional material in the way of examples of hand-cut and electro work by various artists...if I can lay hands on them (So far I have my own stuff, plus run offs from the current TRIODE 19 Cawthorn folio. Price uncertain as yet...probably 50p or \$1.00.

Speaking of Golden-Age fanzine TRIODE back there, you may know by now that after a hiatus of some 14 years (while Eric hunted for the missing LOCs) we finally got around to resuming publication in as near as we can achieve to the old standard. Enquiries to Eric at 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Ches....and a three issue sub will cost you a quid.....which is better than the £1 I paid for a year of non-appearing issues of Speculation.

FAPANS. Overleaf, I included FAPAvIEWS in the contents listing for your section...this only applies if I get a mailing on which to comment. At the time of writing (April 10th) I have only had ONE mailing since my name came up, and I commented on that in the last issue. If one arrives before collating day, then I'll add on comments....OK ?

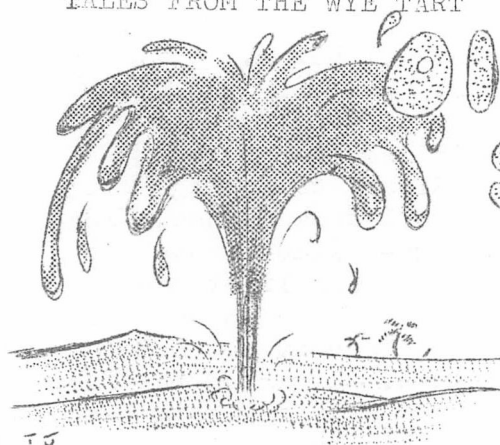
TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS be-sprinkle Erg like flies it is sad to say. Reason one is that 90% of the time, I sit in an easy chair to type, and tend to be too lazy to corflu. Often the meaning is obvious, but occasionally, serendipity takes a hand, and up comes a word which although it doesn't exits...jolly well ought to. Like 'airpoty' which came up in Fans Across The Sea. Several readers noticed and commented, some asking what it was. Well, apart from what it was meant to be, I feel it a waste to let it sink beneath the waves, so how about...
An airpoty is an Elsan toilet" ? Any other ideas ?

THE CONVENTION FILM I had planned, suffered rather badly from the Kodak strike, plus a few other things..such as eldest son staying with us nearly a year, and thus taking over my fanning room. Finally, in desperation, I quickly whipped up a sound track for my film 'Knights of St Fanthony' and entered that. The final track was laid in one run after getting back from the hospital and before doing the washing. It came out passably, so rather than muck about, I called it a day, and nailed it off...so if you thought it a bit sub-standard, then now you know why. Nevertheless, I'd appreciate comment from those who got to see it, and in the meantime, I have got the set ready for next year's epic.

FINALLY, my appreciation to all those good kind souls who wrote in commenting on ERG 46. I regret that space prohibits using them all in the lettercol..and indeed, I don't care for overlarge lettercolumns. Nevertheless, they were appreciated (and a LOC usually adds an issue to your sub if it is a good one), so please keep them coming. Which applies particularly to the few remaining psaaive non subbers who have been getting ERG simply because I like em as very special friends. Sorry chums, but though I still value your friendship, after this issue, you too, will be dropped from the list of those whom love of Ghu has blessed...unless you come to life in time.

Bestest to all,

Terry



OIL BE SEEING YOU'

Terry Jeeves

It was a freezing cold winter evening in July. Brass monkeys sat crying their eyes out in the gutters, debating the relative merits of epoxy adhesive against brazing equipment. Inside the 'Wye Tart' only a handful of regulars were gathered round the delicate beer-polished patina of the corner table. The desultory conversation had fizzled fitfully from Artur Blord's 'Book Of TAFF', past Brunel's 'Fall Off Zeebrugge', paused briefly on TV's latest horror item, 'Doctor Ecch', until finally, even Old Billings had been propped up in the corner and allowed to mumble his way through a fistful of extracts from his latest, updated, fully revised and annotated version of 'The Saga Of British Fandom'. The soporific effect of this perennial left everyone gazing mournfully at the petrol soaked effigy of Tin Panman spluttering feebly in the grate.

Bill Church broke the silence by putting everyone's thoughts into one neat, cogent and pithy epigram. "It's bloody cold," he grunted. "Think yourself lucky !" came Miguel Moork's voice from behind a cunningly cultivated barricade of whiskers. "When I was in the desert at Sidi Barrani, we'd have welcomed a cold spell." Fred Butt, seated on Church's left, rasied his eyes heavenward, made a mock salute and whistled a few bars of, 'Sand In My Shoes'. The histrionics were wasted. Moork was now mentally shuttling back along a personal time-track, shedding years and waistline inches as he went. Even a quickly signalled round of beers paid for by Blummer only served to zero him in on a pet incident. He eased his sun-parched throat with a long draught before resuming. "I remember one little incident at the Oasis of Kumman-Getit. Me and a Yank named Cagle had been hired by Monty to find some oil for his tanks. Together, we'd wild-catted all round that oasis without finding enough to oil a fly's brake blocks."

"Quite a dark situation", quipped Blummer heaving another ream of poetry crudzines into the fireplace. Moork warmed his fingers from them before going on. "One night Cagle and I sat drinking beer among the dead holes, chucking in the cans as we emptied them. Suddenly, Ed grabbed my arm, "What's that ?" he whispered in his cultured Boston drawl. My glance followed his pointing finger in time to see a dark shape emerge from our supply tent and vanish over a sand-dune. Pausing only to finish off the last few cans in the pack, we followed the tracks. They led to a camp-fire surrounded by the nastiest looking bunch of characters you've ever see." "Ompan's ?" queried Church, "...or Gannets, perhaps ?"

6 "Worse even than them," grimaced Moork. "It was Eldritch The Unmentionable and his dastardly robber band - all stretched out on the sand, swigging our beer and pitching the cans into dead oil holes. Obviously they had been picnicking our beer - and our habits. Going by the swastikas on their tents, they were in the pay of the Germans. Cagle and I decided to draw up a plan, but while we were still searching for a pencil, a great big drunken Arab called Mustafa Slash, came staggering out into the darkness, tripped over us, and all hell broke loose. The whole mess of them came boiling after us as we high-tailed it back to camp. Bullets whistled in all directions, only the poor light and drunken marksmen saving us from being hit. Something had to be done, and Cagle did it. Reaching in his back pocket, he brought out a few sticks of dynamite he had been saving for Christmas. Lighting the fuses he heaved the sticks out into the darkness. There was an almighty BANG! The last we saw of the Unmentionable Eldritch and his band was a bunch of singed nightshirts vanishing into the night. We heard later that they had accidentally over-run Rommel's HQ and won the desert campaign for the Allies. Naturally, our part got hushed up and Monty took all the credit." Moork sat back and downed his beer.

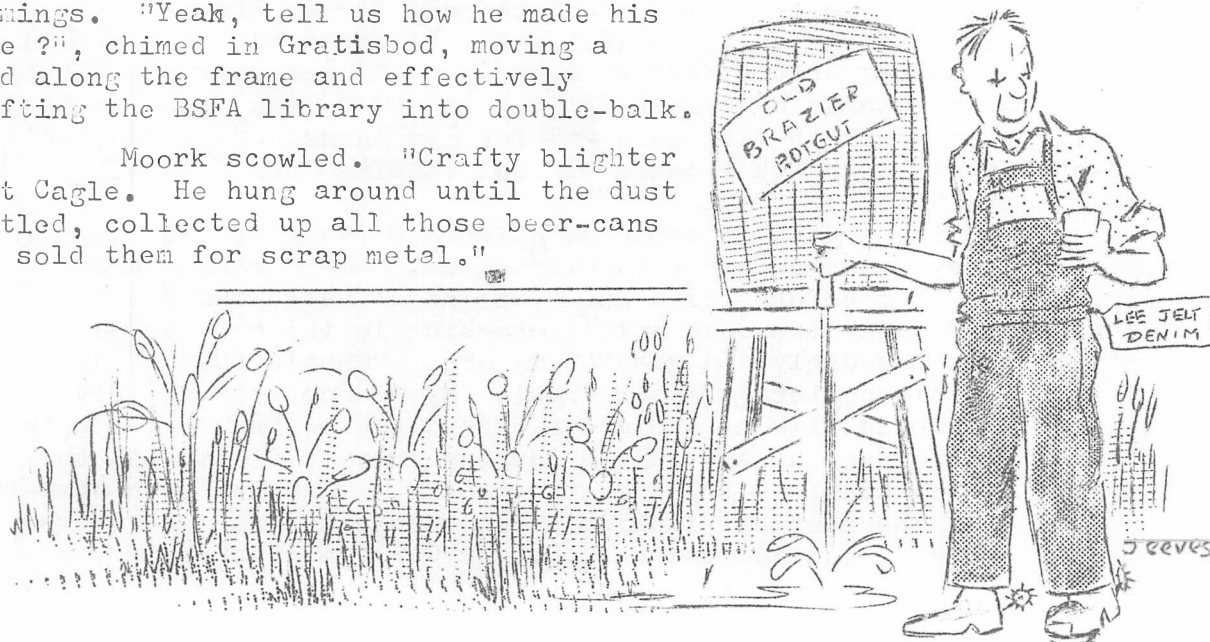
"Was that all?", asked Keith Gratisbod looking up from the BSFA abacus he used for keeping tabs on the library's whereabouts.

"Not quite", smiled Moork. "That dynamite must have jarred our drill holes. There was a loud rumbling. Sand flew in all directions and from a nearby hole spouted a huge oil gusher and about two million beer cans.

"So if your gusher came in, why aren't you rich?" smirked Hummings. "Good question," conceded Moork. "It sorta turned out that we'd blown up a buried pipe line belonging to Anglo Iranian. Luckily, we blamed it all on Eldritch and his mob. The dust settled and I was posted back to England. Cagle went back to America and bought himself a ranch and wild pickle farm in down-town Kansas. He irrigates 'em with corn whisky and lives the life of Riley."

"Well how come HE made his pile and YOU didn't?" queried the mercenary-minded Hummings. "Yeah, tell us how he made his pile?", chimed in Gratisbod, moving a bead along the frame and effectively shifting the BSFA library into double-balk.

Moork scowled. "Crafty blighter that Cagle. He hung around until the dust settled, collected up all those beer-cans and sold them for scrap metal."



Recent

7

Reading

*** Denotes Highly Recommended.

MYSTERIES OF THE EARTH

Jacques Bergier. Sidgwick & Jackson £3.25

The author's thesis is that an 'Intelligence' has intervened in our past to shape our civilisation. Starting with the dinosaurs, he claims these could not have died for the usually given reasons or other species would also have vanished. He postulates an 'Intelligence' created nova to do the job (why did that miss the other species) and start man on his evolutionary climb. This postulate is then treated as 'fact' and leads on to interstellar (FTL) travel, communication by gamma and cosmic rays, plus tachyons. Many obscure authorities and oblique references are given :- 'calculations aided by computer indicate', or 'The Archbishop Agobard (779-840) investigated', and one page refers to 'John W. Campbell, the late physicist and s-f writer studied cosmic particles'.

After dinosaurs, Bergier covers discoveries of strange artifacts and buildings, ancient maps which show knowledge beyond their era, strange appearances (Kaspar Hauser), Henry Cavendish, and a host of Fortean phenomena. All this is entertainingly covered in the first half of the book, but thereafter, the documentation becomes more piecemeal, and the original thread occasionally vanishes.

Certain items, I just couldn't swallow :- The Russian scientists who identified a strange object as a petrified tree in which microbes had transformed Calcium into Iron !! The object 'corroded beyond recognition by the sea', which when reconstructed proved to be a planetarium (This is presumably a translator's error for 'orrery') for calculating planetary positions - 'as accurate as anything that can be made today'. This from an object 'corroded beyond recognition' !! The famed 'Tunguska Meteorite' is credited to inmates of a concentration camp, who discovered a simple method of nuclear fission !! Lights in the sky cannot be satellites, 'They would have to re-appear 91 minutes later'

Such errors and inaccuracies weaken what might have been a well-presented, if implausible case, but no doubt the book will appeal to Forteans, Shaverites, Saucerians, and indeed anyone interested in unusual phenomena.

*)According to 'Practical Electronics, Drs. Jackson & Ryan of Texas University have postulated the event was caused by a minute 'black hole' striking the Earth and producing temperatures of 10^5 K plus a bright blue 'plasma column' (witnesses mention a 'bright blue tube') T.J.

Shaw's 'slow glass', like H.G. Wells' 'Favorite' is one of s-f's delightfully impossible inventions, and here it forms the basis for a collection of short stories deftly interposed as 'sidelights' into the main narrative of Alban Garrod, Retardite's inventor. Opening with the discovery of slow glass, when it causes the crash of a supersonic aircraft by delaying the pilot's flare-out and continuing with its development and impact on society coupled with Garrod's own personal crisis as his possessive wife is blinded in a laboratory accident. Retardite assumes Frankenstein-like proportions as it invades privacy, solves crimes, and forms the ultimate in personal intrusion. The 'sidelights' which effectively help the action along, are 'Light Of Other Days', 'Burden Of Proof' and 'A Dome of Many Coloured Glass'. Well and convincingly written, and excellent value at 35p.

SCIENCE FICTION ; The Great Years. Ed. C & F Pohl Gollancz 32.50

*** The Pohls assembled this seven story (five from asf) anthology on the basis of having liked the stories when they first came out, and still liking them on re-reading. A yardstick no more subjective than most others. In this case, it produces a pretty good mix. It opens with E.F. Russell's, '...And Then There Were None'. An earth battleship renews colony contact after some 400 years and the crew succumbs to the passive resistance of a society based on 'obs' rather than currency. EFR has the knack of oversimplification without frustration, and here he is in great form. Next comes William Tenn, with 'The Liberation Of Earth' in which the old planet is gradually ruined by the alternate liberation actions of Dendri and Troxxt...lovely satire. R.Z. Gallun's 'Old Faithful' raised a storm of appreciative letters when it first appeared, and although naive by modern standards, this tale of interplanetary contact and travel still plucks the heart strings. 'Placet Is A crazy Place' by Fred Brown, is still one I don't care for. The planet follows a figure-eight orbit round two suns and in addition to queer field effects, it also has birds which fly through solid rock! Then comes Pohl's own 'Wings Of The Lightning Land'. Two mooncalf herders get dimensionally transported to another world...you need a combine harvester for the corn in this one. Then two real goodies :- Kornbluth's 'Little Black Bag', the tale of the time travelling doctor's bag which gets used for beauty treatment, and then H.L. Gold's, 'Matter Of Form' where Reporter Gilroy gets turned into a dog by the bad scientist. Despite such a ghastly theme, the yarn is an excellent piece of real old-time s-f. I don't know who chooses the Gollancz s-f material, but the result as in this case, is almost always excellent.

ZARDOZ John Boorman Pan 35p

The story of the 20th Century Fox S-F film starring Sean Connery (Zed) and Charlotte Rampling. When industrial society falls, scientists create an immortal community, sealed off in a valley. A hidden computer brain complex re-creates anyone who dies. They live parasitically on the 'Outsiders' until the day when Zed penetrates their valley and leads his Exterminators against them when he stows away inside the god Zardoz on one of its food gathering trips. As devious as van Vogt...though not as plausible, and written more like a screen play than a work of fiction. Judge this one for yourself, and see the movie for comparison.

How Gollancz continue to give such good value for such a relatively low price, is beyond me. Nevertheless, they have done it yet again, with this ten-story, 440-page collection. In his Introduction, Bova explains how the stories were selected by SFMA vote, and are individually longer than those in Vol.1 One might quibble over the voting procedure, but not over the results.

Asinof's THE MARTIAN WAY opens the book, with its gripping account of how the water starved settlers turn the tables on a penny-pinching Earth Government by bringing home an ice asteroid. Then ROGUE MOON by Budrys describes the penetrating of a Lunar maze where even a wrong gesture is death. Cogswell's THE SPECTRE GENERAL is a tale of a lost Galactic regiment, living like Indians, but perpetuating their original technical skills. EARTHMAN COME HOME by Blish, is the final (?) Okie yarn where Amalfi's city makes a new Earth after freeing the peasant slaves of a renegade Okie. Pohl's THE MIDAS PLAGUE is a delightful satire of the consumer society where the poor must consume a plethora of products. THE WITCHES OF KARRES by James H Schmitz is the tale of the not-too-bright space captain who rescues three young TK-powered girls and is adopted by them. Sherred's E FOR EFFORT concerns what happens when you make your pile by photographing the past via a time-viewer. Then Shiras' deservedly well-known IN HIDING where radiation created genius children come together. Sinak's THE BIG FRONT YARD is where the handy man finds his basement walled off, his gadgets repaired, and finally a portal to elsewhere - lovely stuff this. Finally, Jack Vance's beautifully symbolic, THE MOON MOTH. On the planet Sirene, all wear masks, and communicate by song. A murderer tries to move in, but a strange justice is achieved.

Such capsule comments do less than justice to what is yet another anthology to be treasured and re-read again and again. Highly Recommended.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF 24. Ed. by K. Bulmer Sidgwick & Jackson £2.25
===== Seven stories, and an excellent editorial which points up a few home truths about energy problems and s-f. Opening the stories, comes 'The Ark Of James Carlyle'; one of those Earthman aids alien species against natural disaster, tales. Nicely written, but nothing new. 'And When I die' gives an insight into an undertaker's day showing that pleasure depends on one's viewpoint. 'All In A God's Mind' is an Aldiss piece which wanders through Heaven without getting anyplace. 'A Strange And Terrible Sea' involves dream contact through time with Earth's last species. Different, and enticing, is 'New Canute' with a vignette of skin diving in the ocean of time in order to re-live the past. 'No Certain Armour' is a gripping little tale of explorers on a planet with a menace (although it is hard to swallow air cars, fission-powered which are so badly shielded as to cut out at 200 yards from a radiation source..without their occupants being harmed by it). Finally, 'Now Hear The Word' concerns a man whose news items comes true, and the menace he represents. Not quite as good as earlier 'New Writings', but still a good collection with something for everyone.

RACE AGAINST TIME Piers Anthony Sidgwick & Jackson £1.50
===== Teenager John Smith lives in the rural community of Newton. A peaceful, uneventful life until his dog starts to climb trees. This leads to further investigation into his surroundings, and it emerges that Newton is one of those 'set-piece-for-one' communities. Further probing leads John to contact other enclaves, and six 'specimens'

U escape. They have various adventures before finally discovering the purpose of their 'cages' and a logical, if rather flat, settlement is achieved. Although not stated, this is obviously a juvenile in the Heinlein tradition. It has a steady pace, no blacker-than-black villain and should make an excellent present for any young reader.

THE ETERNAL FRONTIERS
=====

James H Schmitz Sidgwick & Jackson £2.25

The time is the far future. Civilisation is divided into two (surface friendly) camps, the Swimmers who dwell in zero G, and the Walkers who live normally. The action takes place on a newly discovered planet which Walkers are trying to investigate. Their efforts are complicated by hostile species and a mysterious monster, plus sabotage and plotting by the Swimmers, the latter wishing to force all humanity to forsake planets and live as Swimmers. The Walkers have allies in the Galestrals, with whom they have an uneasy alliance. All in all, a highly mysterious and entertaining brew from the author who gave us the excellent Vegan agent series.

THE STAR TREASURE
=====

Keith Laumer Sidgwick & Jackson £2.25

Five Starlords control Earth and the Space Navy is part of their Police Force. Lieutenant Ban Tarleton becomes involved in an intrigue against them. Escaping death in space, he flees to Earth, where after a hectic chase, he is apprehended and sentenced to a penal planet. Marooned on its desert, and almost dead from exposure, he encounters a small group of exiles, but has to flee once again, when he refuses to join their scheme. This time he encounters an ancient race. Healed and endowed with increased mental powers, he then discovers a 'Starcure', the secret of the Starlords power. Using it, he sets off on a final bid to oppose them. If you can overlook the numerous coincidences be-sprinkling the plot each time the hero is knocking on death's door, you will probably enjoy this past moving piece of space-opera.

OPERATION UMANAQ
=====

John Rankine Sidgwick & Jackson

Page one has Secret Agent Mark Chevron in a satellite orbiting, 'along the 5th parallel' -- when will authors learn that the only latitude a satellite can orbit along is the Equator. Recalled to Earth, Chevron's contact man is killed by Southern Hemisphere agents, who hunt him, a beautiful girl, and a Negro assistant right across Africa. Along the trail, Chevron gradually assembles pieces of a plot to overthrow the Northern Hemisphere by juggling its climate. Events move faster and faster until the final confrontation in the Polar Reactor Complex.

Author Rankine has successfully created a Space-age James Bond, with a touch of Alistair Maclean in this gripping cliff-hanger. It should sell as well in the mainstream as in the s-f market. Personally, I found it one of the most hard-to-put-down tales I've had the pleasure of reading for quite some time. For my money, I hope there are many more to come in this vein.

GENERAL NOTE. The above three titles all boast the same dust-jacket design, although in different colours. If this trend is to be continued, S & J will quickly have a very presentable bookshelf line.

AUSTRALIAN LETTER

from

JOHN J. ALDERSON

DROUGHT

Droughts don't come out of the blue like a thunderstorm. Nor do they vanish like a summer shower. They build up, year after year until the cumulative effect is disaster. Ironically, sometimes the worst drought years are years of fair to average rainfall.

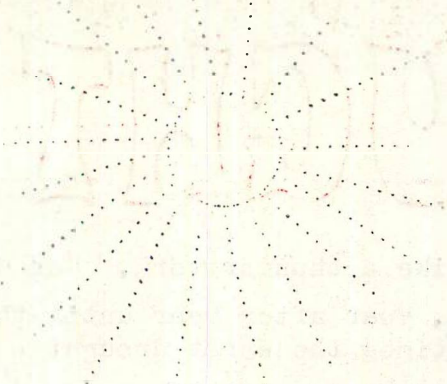
1956 was, if I remember correctly, the last of the really wet years. They too are cumulative, and these had been accumulating since the breaking of the previous drought in 1943. Slowly the extra rain we were having penetrated the sub-soil and by 1956 it was soup. I know, I was carting wood out of the bush in that year; If one got off the beaten track the truck was down to the axle. I carried wire-strainers to pull it out after throwing off the load. As the years became drier, the sub-soil moisture carried the vegetation on so that we got good crops and good grass, even in quite dry years. By 1966, with sub-soil moisture all gone, and the rainfall light, we had a drought. That drought did not really break until early in '72, with the highest flood on record.

The dams were low; most of them dry and dusty, others just stinking mud. The creeks were dry, and believe me, creeks are scarce here. Yet, at other places were worse hit. Day and night, semi-trailers roared past, laden with sheep and cattle, so thin that one had to look twice to see them....took about seventeen to make a dozen. Most were being sent to more favoured areas for agistment. That is, their owner pays someone else to feed them. Butchers had a field day with stock a drug on the market so that even prime quality sheep would only bring a dollar (pound). The boiling down places (which put mutton into tins) made fortunes. One Stock and Estate Agent was owed twenty million pounds. The farmers lost the lot of it, and when the drought broke the firm had to lend as much again to the same farmers in the hope of getting it back. Their only security, the farmer's face. They got it all back ... and more.

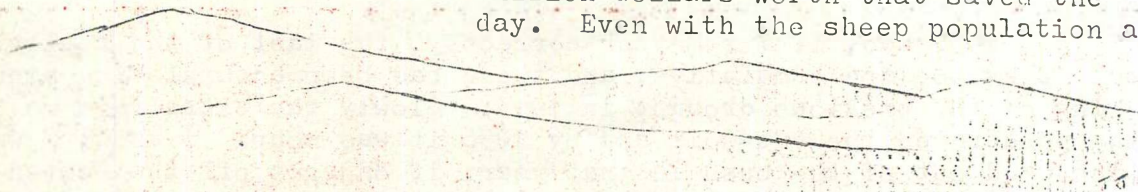
A benevolent Government came up with a magnificent scheme. They would loan a farmer money if he had no mortgage and could raise money nowhere else. Naturally, with two such mutually exclusive conditions, no farmers took the Government loans, so the Government declared the farmers were in no real hardship. However, they did institute some 'Drought Relief work', which was all right for those who sold everything and so were not needed on their farms - but for those struggling to keep stock alive

Sheep stand drought better than cattle. Given shade and water they survive on virtually nothing. Given half an ounce or so of oats a day they remain strong, however lean. It's not the drought that left the

12 paddocks covered with dead sheep, it was the rain. What little dry feed was left was ruined, and with the rain came cold weather ! Sheep died in hundreds whereas only the isolated one or two had died before, and sheep have a habit of doing that at the best of times.



But the dry years hung on for four or five more years, never quite enough feed, never quite enough water. Indeed, many of the dams had not filled. To make all this worse, wool prices slumped to half of pre-war levels. Mine was valued at 20 pence (Old Australian ones at that) per pound. Overseas buyers were determined not to let the prices rise again. It was the advent of the Wool Commission buying up nearly a hundred million dollars worth that saved the day. Even with the sheep population a



part of what it was, and prices so low, wool still earned twice as much for the country as all the mineral exports together - and all that wool cheque went to pay to sell those minerals. That is, it cost Australia two dollars for every dollar's worth of minerals sold. The previous Government thought that was good economics. It was - for someone. Unemployment rose to record heights. They used to say, Australia rides on the sheep's back, and by heaven, she still does. When wool prices rose, unemployment virtually ended and things started booming again. And of course the price of meat went up because the farmers weren't selling the stock. If you want to get rich, buy a butcher's chopping block, that's where the money is.

John J. Alderson, Havelock, AUSTRALIA

=====

AMERICAN LETTER

=====

Water

Being an extract from the rare 'Cagle Chronicles'

"..... took a contract to enlarge an existing lake, without draining the water from the original impoundment. Cleverly we installed a 14' extension to the rather huge overflow pipe before we began adding dirt to raise the dam. A few hundred thousand cubic yards of dirt later (not to mention any number of varieties of booze consumed along the way) we had a somewhat large earthen structure, ready for a good rain to fill it. Pretty job it was, slick as a pool table. The only blemish was the 14' section of 48" pipe sticking up in front of the dam, joined by us to the existing bruied pipe with a steel band and rod clamps. Say I, "That clamp may leak when the lake fills."

Says PD Morris, "Yeah, maybe we'd better put somep'n waterproof at the joint."

Says I, "Good idea, we'll do it first thing tomorrow morning."

It rained ! Not a little....a LOT. The lake was full next morning. The clamp was now under water...and leaking.

Two weeks later, after the water had cleared, we arrived on the scene with our equipment. 2 twenty foot lengths of garden hose, some rope and two buckets of some kind of insoluble, and had to be removed from the hands by approximately four months normal wear. (From the belly-but on, it takes six months - other areas are worse, but not to be mentioned here) Onward to the patch job.

PROBLEM 1. It is extremely difficult for a man without weights to stay on the bottom in 14' of water. Solution, tie a rock to your person.

PROBLEM 2 To breathe through a garden hose from the bottom of a 14' depth sounds easy... but watch that first exhalation. Solution, release air from the lungs verrrrrry slowly.

PROBLEM 3 Don't let mischievous friends tend the breathing hose up topside. To suddenly breathe water is ... puzzling. Solution, surface and heave the bastard into water by overturning boat.

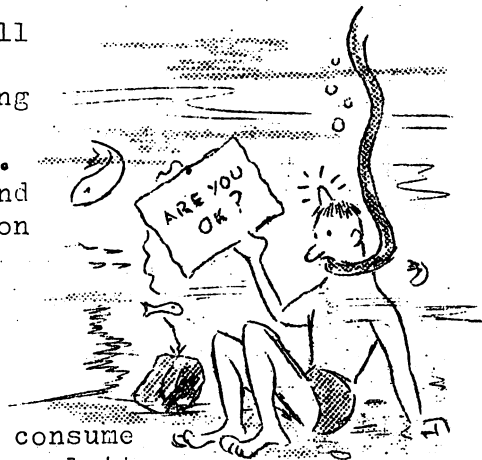
PROBLEM 4 Don't sit on bottom when fresh-water crustaceans are about. Solution, grit teeth and press on... do not try to swear.

PROBLEM 5 Resist urge to surface during the chore because of total exhaustion, or you'll be tempted to drink. If you drink and go back down, you'll either waste time watching the crawlies, or smear your mate's helmet with mastic sealer. Solution, don't drink.

PROBLEM 6. Do not have the surface tender send messages to you by dropping stones. Solution tip message sender into water and hold him under a while.

FINAL NOTE. Do the job right the first time.

===== later.....



One evening after work, I was helping Palmer consume bourbon, when Hogan and Rader arrived in a big splutter. A crude oil line had ruptured crossing a creek. The river beneath was in flood and we had no boat. We swam out in the swift current with pepe wrenches and repair stuff. Palmer and I were getting along well with the repairs when we missed Hogan. Looking downriver, we saw him floundering as he disappeared round a bend in the river. Palmer and I looked at each other, then finished the repair. Rader on the bank was more excited. "The sonofabitch is drowning" he yelled along with other things designed to enlist our immediate assistance. Palmer shouted, "There's a log chain in the truck, go throw it to him".

A short time later we swam ashore, drove down the riverbank, and found Hogan clinging to a dead log and drifting with the current. He began shouting terrible things and demanding immediate rescue. Seven miles later, he managed to catch a line across the creek and desert his log barge. By that time it was dark and he had to inch ashore like an onscene sloth. He didn't like being called Captain Hogan either.

..... Ed Cagle
(A ghood nan)

14 Some Notes on

SWORD and SORCERY

by Alan Burns

One rather unfortunate spin-off from the current technological explosion is that it has made life very difficult for the writer of SF. A brilliant idea may germinate for a while, then when it is finally written, the author glances through "Nature" or the "Scientific American" and finds that it has been worked out by the Clarendon or the Bell Labs. This may not be a bad thing for it could encourage a revival of interest in sword and sorcery stories, a genre which died somewhat with the demise of Unknown Worlds. It is true that currently quite a lot of sword and sorcery is coming out in paper-backs, and Mike Moorcock has attempted to revive it in England with a certain success. Visions of Tomorrow was planned to have a sister mag devoted to sword and sorcery, it folded so the idea was stillborn, more's the pity.

If sword and sorcery does become popular again it opens up interesting fields for the author who has not had a scientific background, for it requires no rigorous holding to natural law, all it requires is a good theme and plenty of action. Which is not to say that there are no rules to observe. Indeed it could be well argued that sword and sorcery writing has just as many rules as SF, and is ten times as hard to write so as to drag the reader along willy-nilly.

The first rule, shared with SF is to dress the shop and show all your goods. Nothing up the sleeve, nothing under the counter, all ways and means written into the first page or the first chapter. Then again the sword and the sorcery must be credible. For instance if your hero is swinging a six-foot broadsword, he isn't likely to parry and riposte, and your magician, if he is a necromancer is not going to break forth with thaumaturgical wonders. We can dismiss the swording easily, the sorcery is very difficult to handle well and the author should be well aware of what ground he is on.

The best book for this is the currently published Purnell's Man Myth & Magic. The total cost will work out at about £20-25 as it is in 96 weekly parts at about 5/-oops 25p each, then there are 6 binders at 98p each. This book or encyclopaedia is however a mine of information, all laid out and, when completed, copiously indexed. It's odds you'll local

library will be getting it in. Further, don't waste your time poking about the sections under witchcraft and magic in the reference section, most of the books are quite useless for the aspiring writer. So if you've a plot have a good long think about what you want your magicians to do, make notes, and remember especially that magical arts are like science, no magician is going to be an expert at the lot, but, he does not have to be limited on that account, he can find a book giving a spell and cast it, just as a chemist to-day, given full instructions, could work a cyclotron. And by Bel and Astarte eschew books or amulets conferring all-power, there should be a special place for authors who drag them in. A book can only contain so much, and encyclopaedias of magic should be on the author's desk and not in his story.

The reasonable order in sword and sorcery writing is magicians first and heroes next. I must confess to feeling a sense of being cheated when the rough crude barbarian bests the accomplished and civilised magician. Once a barbarian always one, Conan notwithstanding. I had no brief for Elric, who can only do anything when equipped with his devil sword, but at least he was borne of a sophisticated and advanced civilisation and from that point is fairly credible. If you feel that you must drag in a barbarian hero, at least don't have him enter a city and be immediately at home in its alleyways, mores and folkways, but a way out is found in remembering that primitives generally have highly developed physical and esper senses, use this fact, but as a last resort.

Then comes the matter of where to set the story. It is ridiculous to transport the hero to another world in the universe where the laws pertaining to physical phenomena as we know them don't hold. No, locate your setting in the distant future "The Dying Earth" by Vance, or in the distant past, "Thongor of Lemuria" by Carter, or elsewhere. Draw a map and be sure to make it cartographically possible, with streams becoming rivers, lakes becoming seas, and volcanoes, storms and other like pleasantries flung in for good measure. Look up something about old cities, and remember it was the custom for trades to gather in one place, religious affairs to be in another and royalty and the nobility to live in yet another part. Recall also that there was no such thing as suburbia, the poor lived where they could, and there were taverns and inns by the thousand. Don't make the silly mistakes a thoughtless author does, like imagining that doors could be equipped with locks superior to a Chubb or a Yale, or that chariots can do fifty miles an hour, and finally, do recall that having no sewerage ancient cities STANK! Realism is a good thing to have in a story, although again remember that ancient Rome had baths and heating not too inferior to what we have to-day. Last about locations, remember that cities existed in ancient times as now because there was something to base their economy on. Don't locate the lost city of Danger-ous in the middle of a howling wilderness unless natural disaster, as aforementioned, caused its

16 decline. Flora and fauna need scarcely a mention, mythology gives plenty, and don't worry how a dragon breathes flame, suffice that it does.

Now as to the plot. I don't go for the Moorcockian death-wish theme, preferring my hero to end with body and soul intact and his princess or beggar-maid to share his triumph and raise up a family, but the number of plots in sword and sorcery is probably larger than in SF. Remember Conan ran to more books than any SF character. So first of all having selected your characters draw out your map of the country where the story is to take place and putting yourself in the lead character's place consider what could happen to you. I'm cheating a bit in story I'm working on, the hero is a sorcerer-king, he's made it, but if trifling things happen to a barbarian, much bigger and more exciting things can happen to a king. A point to bear in mind is not to spread your happenings over too much country. In days of old a thousand miles away was the other side of the world, and a kingdom the size of England was a vast empire, probably bogged down by poor communications. Don't imbue your magic carpet with the speed of a mirage jet, the passengers would be swept off instantly, so that again limits your range of territory. As good an idea as any is to endow your hero with an excess of one of the virtues, and your villain with an excess of one of the vices and work it out to a logical conclusion.

Lastly I would have liked to conclude with some remarks about the market, but unfortunately I'm not au fait with what's doing in the States, and publishers over here are cagy about handling novels from authors who have not made their mark elsewhere. So my advice, for what it's worth is to kick off with cowboys and indians or gangsters and cops, for which there is a ready market and then, when you've established yourself thump down your sword and sorcery, there's a good chance the publisher won't notice what it's all about and get it printed.

SOME UNLIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING BOOKS FROM CIDER PRESS

My Hundred Best Dunes	by Frank Sherbet
Way Of A Needle	by Ethel Emdell & Halk Lement
The Electric Secretary	by AC Clerk
Run Down Chronometers	by John Windham
Blight Of Other Daze	by Penny Shord
The Mutton Chops o' Fisher)
and) by Artur Blord
The Majority Vogt)
Corsets and Umpire	by Amisov & May Denform
Twisher in Time	by Charl Splatt
I Will Fear No Weevils	by Robert A Sidelinc
It Is A Fa Pa Better Thing I Do	by Merry Dickens

Stencils

STENCILS come in a variety of types, but the one most commonly used is that illustrated on the right.

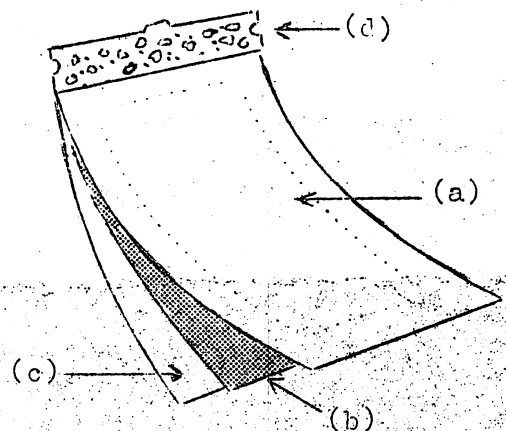
(a) is a very thin, long fibred paper impregnated with a wax-like material. When this is pressed out of the fibres by the action of stylus or typewriter key, a gap is left through which the ink passes to the duplicating paper.

(b) is a sheet of carbon paper, often fixed in place, which shows up areas where the stencil has been cut. For this purpose, it is 'goosey' side up in contrast to normal carbon usage.

(c) is a firm backing sheet which not only protects typewriter platen and the fragile stencil, but also gives backing during cutting and thus a better result. It is perforated along its upper edge to allow for easy removal once the stencil is on the machine and ready to use. At this stage, it acts as an ink pressure pad to start the ink flow before actually running paper through.

(d) is a heading card for fitting the stencil on to the duplicator. Its perforations match the pegs on the machine, and at one time, both Gestetner and Roneo had their own distinctive patterns in an attempt to prevent any customer changing his allegiance - a situation easily foiled by transposing the heading from the rival company. Nowadays, most stencils come with a 'universal' heading card so that they will fit either type of machine.

This type of stencil is easily cut either by typewriter, or with a hand operated stylus. When typing, it is inserted in the machine in the normal way, and its built in carbon shows you what you have typed, in place of the typewriter ribbon which should be removed or switched to 'carbon' position. If you forget, the result will come out as an improperly cut stencil..like this :- This is typed through a ribbon. Errors may be corrected by the use of correcting fluid..usually known as 'corflu' the procedure is as follows :-



(Hand-cut illustration)

CORRECTING A TYPING ERROR ON A STENCIL

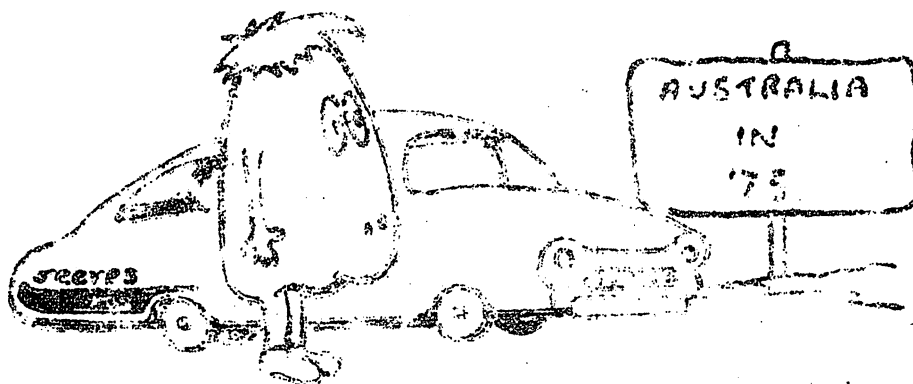
- (1) Wind the stencil to the top of the platen, and burnish lightly over the error using the finger nail, or the dome of a ball-pen. This forms a closure to the fibres
- (2) lightly brush corflu across the error...avoid large blobs as these hamper the re-typing. At this stage, a purist inserts a pencil between stencil and carbon to prevent the two sticking together as the corflu dries... a matter of seconds
- (3) Re-type the correction, using normal pressure

CORFLU HAS OTHER USES... Cracks and blemishes in creased or mis-handled stencils may be cleared. When patching inserts into a stencil the joints can be sealed with corflu. A heading produced by a shading mat, or similar overall texture, may have lettering painted in with corflu, so that letters appear white on the printed texture.

Stencils..2

ELECTRONIC STENCILS generally come in two types, paper, and the longer lasting (and more expensive) vinyl plastic. These are 'cut' by an electric spark. Special equipment scans the original illustration or other material, and the spark, burns a corresponding hole in the stencil. The result gives top quality reproduction, which, in the case of artwork, is almost indistinguishable from the original. Fine line work and tints mechanically transferred such as 'Letratone', are easily handled. About the only area where it fails to cope, is a solid black. This renders as a very dark mottled area with a nasty tendency to disintegrate on the machine. Typing on these stencils is not to be recommended, unless you have a heavy hand, and no respect for your typewriter. The high cost inhibits the general use of 'electrostencils', but a compromise is to submit a composite 'paste-up' page of several illustrations on one sheet of foolscap size, leaving ample space (at least an inch) between them, and then cutting the resulting electronic stencil into separate sections for patching in to the required spaces on ordinary stencils among the typed material.

THERMOSTENCILS, as their name implies, these are 'cut' by the action of heat on a special stencil. Instead of a slow scanning motion as with the electro, the thermostencil is a one-shot operation relying on the principle of black areas absorbing heat and light areas reflecting it. The result is cheaper than electrowork, but the resulting illo has a slightly fuzzy line, and is nowhere as clear cut. A competently hand-cut stencil can easily better the thermo stencil as the latter does not cope well with tints or shading, whereas a hand-cut stencil can make use of shading mats and textured plates to achieve this end. Nevertheless, a thermostencil can be a boon to the inexperienced editor with low funds and a desire for reasonable artwork. Here is a sample of a thermostencil. It was very kindly sent to me by Eric Lindsay after I had mailed him some 'Australia in 75' fillos. Patching-in on these is even easier than on electrostencils.



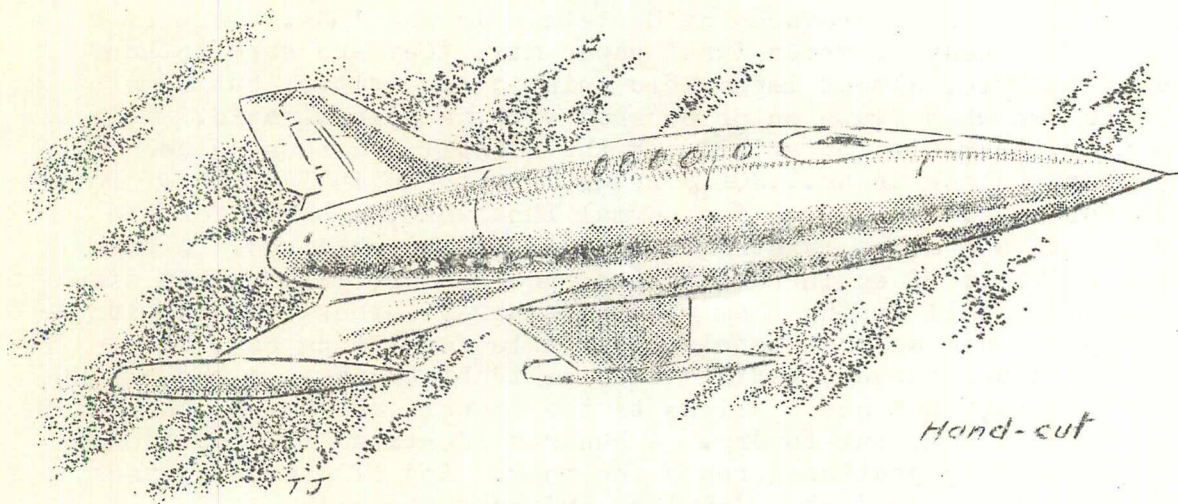
..... but typing on them is NOT

Stencils.,3

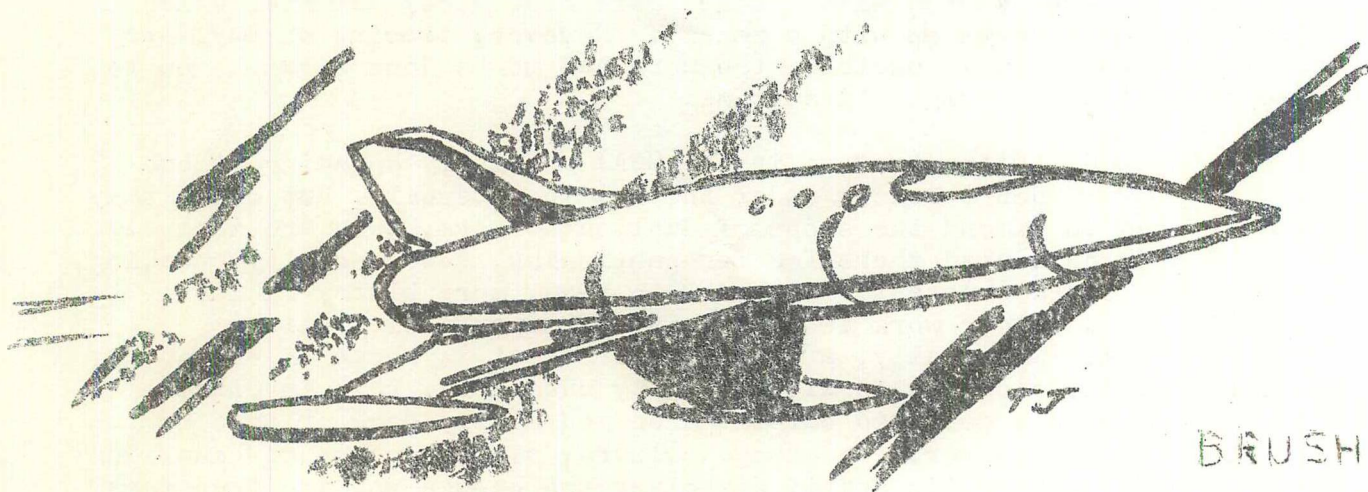
BRUSH STENCILS were introduced by Gestetner in the '50s. Made of a heavier grade 'wax' paper mix, they are hard to hand cut using a stylo, almost impossible using a typewriter, but come into their own when drawn on or brushed with, a special acid. This etches away the resist material, and the stencil can thus be used to produce large black areas...SOLID black, not the stipple grey of the ordinary stencil. Use a pen for normal line work, a brush for the larger areas, and a really striking result can be obtained. I have used these fairly often in ERG and its predecessor, TRIODE, but off-hand, cannot recall seeing them used elsewhere...other than one faned who condemned them as 'completely unsuitable for typing on'. One point about usage though, getting that solid black takes a lot of ink, and as a result, each sheet sticks to the stencil and has to be peeled off by hand and laid out to dry. A hundred identical illustrations look quite striking scattered round the room. And of course, brush inserts can easily be 'patched in' to ordinary stencils.

DRAWING STENCILS are mentioned here only for completeness. Once have I met them - about 15 years ago. A product of Roneo, they were coated with a soft, dark blue gooey material which came away when drawn on with a pencil. However, tracing or any form of layout work was impossible, the work had to be done straight on to the stencil and be right first time.

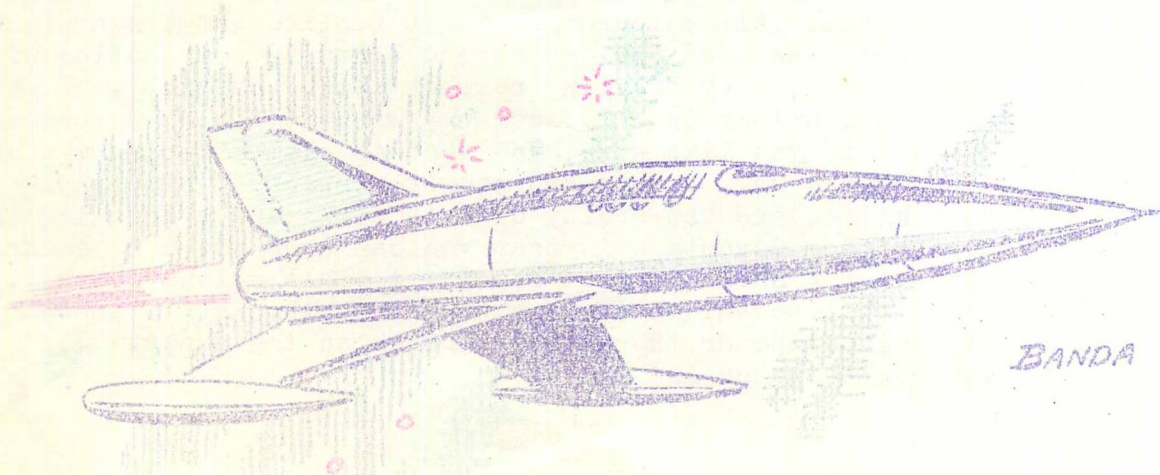
BANDA MASTERS (Ditto masters in the USA) Strictly speaking, these don't belong under the heading stencils, but since they can be used to extend the scope of duplicated work, they are included. Many faneds have used these for fan publishing, but generally speaking, ditto work lacks contrast, is harder to read, more blurry in its printing, and colour work is much fainter compared with colour stencil work. Basically, a Banda master sheet is sheet of white paper with one side coated with a chalky substance, this is placed in contact with a coloured carbon, then you simply draw or type on the back of the master. To change colours, simply change carbons. On the run-off, a volatile spirit dissolves the carbon goo and transfers it, all colours at once (thus solving registration problems) on to the duplicating paper. Naturally, this depletes the master, so runs in excess of 150 drop off badly. A snag is the amount of show-through caused by the spirit. All colours are faint (Yellow and brown almost non-existent), but when used for background tints in combination with ordinary stencil work, very striking results can be obtained. I have tried various combinations in ERG...usually with little or no comment from readers, but if you like work, and want special effects, why not experiment? By the way, errors are easily corrected, simply scrape lightly with a knife, and the chalky deposit comes away, bringing the goo with it. Another advantage is that you can even use a 2" square off-cut from a master sheet if just running a small colour insert... ..but of course this technique needs a Banda run through followed by the partially printed paper then going through an ink duper. For this job, you can't 'patch in'.



Hand-cut



BRUSH



BANDA

SELECTIONS

from your

LETTERS

with
ERGitorial interjections
marked thus
//.....//



Eric Mayer RD 1 Falls PA 18615 "Thought I'd better renew one issue in advance, postal service being what it is (((Ghood man))). You really know how to do a cover, that on 45 was just great. It reminded me a bit of old time s-f illos. It's got to be among the half dozen best I've seen and the sponsor really got himself a bargain (((Ta muchly..now who'd like to sponsor the next issue for a quid ?))) The 46 cover is a lot of fun too. I looked it over pretty well and think I found everything. = If I'd known about your Cinemagic magazine article I'd have bought a copy. It's too late now. = I enjoyed both stories by Alan Burns, though admittedly I don't know what he's talking about half the time. Britfandom is still a deep mystery to me. = Your astrophilately article omitted some interesting stamps. Do you have any 3-D ones ? (((Yes, see part 2 when/if it appears))) = I was interested to read about all the old British fen in 'Carry On Jeeves'. I never knew Michael Moorcock was a fan. = Looks like ERG will be seeing changes pretty soon with 'Carry On' over. I only wish the mails were a bit more efficient, it certainly puts a damper on transcontinental fanning. (((Eric's letter also bore a lot of other interesting comment and query, mainly on stamps...and also the illo to the right, which I just couldn't keep waiting for a later issue))

Graham Poole
23 Russet Rd.
Choltenham
Glos

"Tan Der Filk" was not as good as "Tan Called Ironside", but why the preoccupation with thom/thoth/tom (whatever he calls 'iself) Penman ? (((Alan loves him, and he loves Alan, I think..))) = The reviews were as good as ever, and the Reader's Digest episode typical of a computerised organisation. = The Fans Across The Sea article, a 17 year old con-rep



no less ! (((Ah, but it had been kept in the fridge.))) I found it particularly interesting for it mentioned the formation of St. Antony. It was around this time that the BSFA was formed wasn't it ? (((A year or two earlier I fancy, but I may be wrong..it happened at that old con site, Kettering. TUBB and Newman pushed it together..than dropped out leaving Eric and I to do all the dirty work.))) Maybe in your nextish you could mention that I have just drafted an introductory zine for all BSFA members, with fan history, slang and suchlike. The zine is called GENESIS and will contain a short history of the BSFA, details of BSFA facilities and posts, details of other s-f organisations, awards and competitions, a news section, fanzine book and film reviews and also addresses of fanzine editors, bookshops etc. and will be updated periodically so long as I receive sufficient support from faneditors and fandom in general. (((Sorry, Gray, I couldn't possibly mention all that as it would be advertising..and I daren't suggest that faneds and interested parties write to you about it.)))

Alan Burns
6 Goldspink Lane
Newcastle on Tyne
NE2 1NQ

Many thanks for ERG 46, I often think you must have your own personal Sogrob (soggy robot) to assist you in keeping to schedule. Anyway, the frontal illo was very good. = Shades of memory of the Worldcon, I spent mt time collecting all

available autographs. = I note your book reviews, the publishers seem to be reviving a lot of the oldies, not a bad idea, although they don't hire a fan to see what they are bringing out (((I'd hate such a responsibility on my shoulders))) = I see that you put in the sound section on Cine. This will be useful to me as a reference as it codifies the many bits of advice you gave me on tape. = LOCs, Jeeves, I'm surprised at you after all your ideas about scrapping them. (((Tech, and here, we have son of LOC riding again...you just can't trust nobody no how these days)))

DAVE ROWE
8 Park Drive
Wickford
Essex

Alan Burns gets my back up saying that Ian Maule is 'Too lazy', and then you saying, 'direct all the bombs to Alan. Hell, if you aren't open to discussion, don't print the activator in the first place. (((Surely you can't be advocating censorship ?? That I deny my

readers their god given right to annoy each other ? Shame, we must stop all this censorship,now!) This is despicable. Ian is editing a fnz (OK, we haven't seen it for a year, the same goes for Speculation, Macrocosm Egg, Viewpoint etc.) (((Dead cunning being editor of a non-appearing zine it seems to me))) would Alan call their editors lazy as well ? (((Probably..wbuldn't you ? I sent Pete Weston a quid last May..and having got nowt for it, requested the quid back a month ago...he wrote and apologised and said the quid would be sent on later....so far it hasn't arrived....me, I'd call that more than lazy.. and from a TAFEnan too))) (((Apologies to Pete if it gets here before this issue is out))) Since Newcastle has been

getting a young fan group, Alan has been acting more like a school-kid than a school-teacher. (((He may as well, since he isn't either, or didn't you know ?? Check your references))) Erg is still too light. (((Sorry, I'll add more lead shot next time... but even so, it seems to stimulate you as it is ..keep 'em coming)))

AND THAT'S YOUR LOT....but have you seen TRIODE 19 ? Send your lolly to Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Ches...

....Bestest, Terry