

ERG

QUARTERLY

61

January 1978

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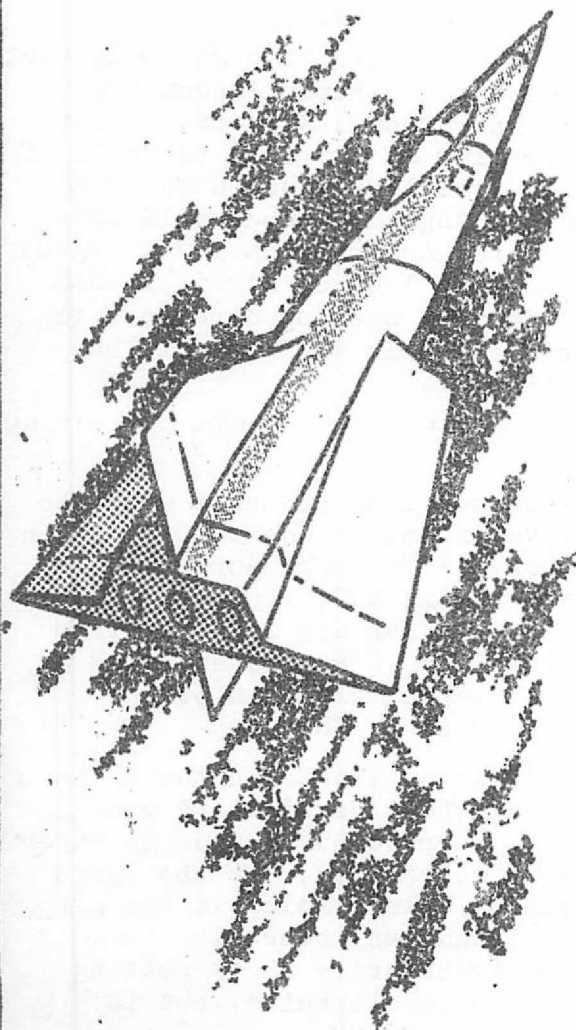
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Jeeves

Status

ERG 61
(QUARTERLY)

JANUARY 1978

An X in the
Status Box
indicates
renewal time. I
hope you will
sign up again.

ERG is produced by Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd.,
Sheffield S11 9FE
ENGLAND.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES :- U.K. Five issues for £1

U.S.A Six issues for \$2.00 (Please send dollar
bills, NOT cheques or Money Orders..they lose
too much in exchange rates)

With this issue, ERG completes NINETEEN years of publication. I'm rather
proud of this record and look forward to notching up many more years at
the helm.

Mini - ERGITORIAL

The main item of news this time round is that
Lou Tabakow has written to confirm that the members of First Fandom are
raising a fund to get me to the 1978 Worldcon in Phoenix, Arizona. Being
entirely in favour of this idea, I am also starting my own fund as well. If
anybody out there would like a copy of my book sale list, just drop me a
line. Again, if anyone in the Phoenix (and Los Angeles) area would care
to offer pre-con hospitality, I'd much appreciate hearing from you. It has
to be pre-con, as my leave of absence dictates that I shoot straight back
to the UK immediately after the Convention. Oh yes, and any donations to
Lou Tabakow, 3953 ST. John's Terrace, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236, would be
appreciated. FANEDS..please copy with my blessing.
Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Rd. Reading, Berks RG6 1PL is the bloke collecting
any very welcome contributions from within the U.K.

The cover this issue is by way of an experiment, so comments would be
appreciated. Do you prefer it to the full cover illo, or not?. Once again,
all electronic stencils are from Mr. B.C.Sexton, 14 Ventnor Court,
Wolstenholm Rd., Sheffield S7 1LB...paper (as used in ERG, 75p. vinyl, for
long (over 1,000) runs, £1.15, or \$1.30. Also on offer are IBM Selectric
typing, various faces, for your special heading, at 1p a word and also a
service for reducing your original art and then making electros of the
reductions. Return mail service..mention you saw it in ERG.

Want your own STAR WARS film ? It is already available in the UK in
various styles...colour sound or silent, long or short version and even in
black and white. I rather fancy the 115metre colour sound version in Super
8mm, for around £29. Prices vary, so if you're interested, get the Movie
Maker magazine or send me an S.A.E. for details. Also available are King
Kong, Flash Gordon and three Avenger episodes..and many others.

SPACE 1999 buffs can make their own Eagle transporter up by getting
the Airfix plastic model kit. Rather a simple model to build, but it
makes a lovely model for show or photography.

All the best, Terry.

TERRY

RINGWORLD

JEEVES

RAMBLING

In one of those vacant or
pensive moods which flash
upon the inner eye, I was
musing on Dyson spheres.
For those who have never
heard of the things, I'd
better explain that way
back in 1960, Freeman
J. Dyson speculated
on how a super
civilisation
might
dismantle
one or
more planets
and then
reform same into a sphere
completely encompassing the
sun at a distance of .4 AU
and thus collecting all its

radiant energy instead of just a minor fraction.

The idea has been used by
various writers, Niven's 'Ringworld' and Shaw's 'Orbitsville' spring to
mind. Enjoyable as they both were, it wasn't until I did my musing thing
that I realised how certain consequences of the idea had been overlooked.

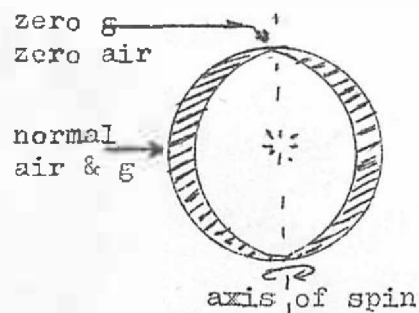
Assuming we take our Earth, dismantle it and re-shape its
material into a Dyson sphere, radius 93,000,000 miles, and completely
enclosing the Sun, the thickness of the sphere so formed would be pretty
thin (my pocket Sinclair boggled at the cube root involved, but made it
'less than a mile'), a quick glance at Adrian Berry's 'The Next Ten Thousand
Years! Coronet, £1 indicated the real value would only be a few centimetres.
Not a particularly strong surface on which to live, build and survive, so
let's assume our super civilisation can also alter the molecular structure
to toughen it up a lot. Great, we now have some 108×10^{15} square miles of
living space (assuming my Sinclair is right). Hang on, what are you going
to breathe? Spread Earth's atmosphere that thin, and you'd have a layer
a few molecules thick. Might suit an amoeba, but not people. However the
civilisation which can work such wonders wouldn't be offput by the idea of
manufacturing enough air to give the inside of that sphere a 5 mile layer
of air. Problem solved...

..or is it? How do you hold it to the sphere? No gravity
from a few cms of toughened whatever-it-is, so the stuff would diffuse into
space. Solution (No, I won't assume artificial gravity) is to spin the
Dyson world and create artificial gravity from centrifugal force. Great...
except that by spinning the sphere around an axis,
the gravity induced would be maximum at the
sphere's equator..and zero at the Poles,
shading off in between. Result, normal
air and gravity along the Equator..and

an absence of both at the Poles ...a result shown diagrammatically in the sketch to the right.

All right, discard the low g/air sections and just make the part of the sphere where gravity is normal...or nearly so. ($g \cdot \cos \theta$ will give the fall off ratio if you want to find out how wide an acceptable gravity area may be)...and presto .'

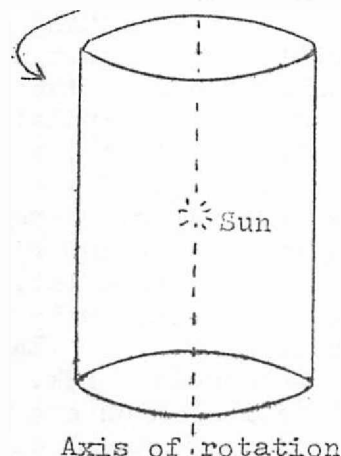
You have a RINGWORLD !



Admittedly, you will have to give it edge walls some five miles high in order to conserve your air and keep it from spilling over the rim and into space...but apart from the psychological effect of your world being bounded by such walls, that would pose no problem to our super-builders.



A further possibility, and one which I have not encountered in SF, is to make, NOT a ring cut from a sphere, but a true CYLINDERWORLD with parallel sides. This, unlike the ring cut from a sphere, would maintain the same gravity for all its interior surface. It would also enjoy another advantage with regards to sunlight, of this, more later as I muse into other aspects. Such a cylinderworld could be of virtually any length if enough material is available, but if made too long, the outer ends would be as frigid as Pluto. Probably the nearest to this cylinderworld concept would have been Rama the giant space ship in Clarke's excellent novel. Having got this far, we might even have worlds made from other surfaces of solids of revolution, or any mathematical function rotated about an axis. Astroidworlds, Cardioidworlds, Cycloid worlds spring to mind...heck, if you don't mind some real air and gravity problems, you could even have a SQUAREWORLD. The mind boggles !!



Let's keep it (relatively) simple... back to Ringworlds. Writers of SF happily spin their creations to provide centrifugal 'g' force... but just how fast must a 93,000,000 travel at its rim to generate one g on the inner surface. Well, unless I pressed the wrong buttons on my mighty Sinclair, I make it around 9,600 miles per sec. ... roughly $1/20$ of the speed of light...not enough to create any major relativistic problems although there would be a very minor slow down in time and a reduction in length along the line of motion. One spin would take around 10hrs at a very rough estimate...rather a short year if that system is still in use in the far future !

Another little Ringworld problem is the one of the central Sun. It's rays would always be perpendicular to the Ringworld's surface..so what? Well, the entire surface would thus get Tropical heat as received by our Equatorial countries today. There would be no insolation effect caused by the rays losing energy by coming obliquely through the atmosphere..and so all your Ringworld would be more than Equatorial..more, because (a) there would be no let up for the seasons...with no axial tilt, there would be no seasons, and (b) despite many author's ideas, there would not even be any night to allow cooling down.

Why no night? simple, the sun would always be at the zenith, and never round the 'other side of the planet'. Oh I know that Larry Niven postulated large screens orbiting the Sun to give alternate night and day... but how BIG would they have to be? When the Moon totally eclipses the Sun, it doesn't give full nighttime darkness, and even that shade only lasts a very brief time..so how much bigger must each screen be, 20 lunar diameters, forty? or what. Move the screens nearer to the Sun, and they would need to be even larger to occult the disc. Well, I reckon you might do it..but only by creating another Ringworld of alternate segments orbiting inside the first. Problems, always problems!

Then again, if you don't make some provision for night and day, you have a civilisation which never sees the stars. Asimov's Lagash in Nightfall saw them every thousand years..our Ringworldians would never see them at all, except by space ship...think of the phobia that would produce.

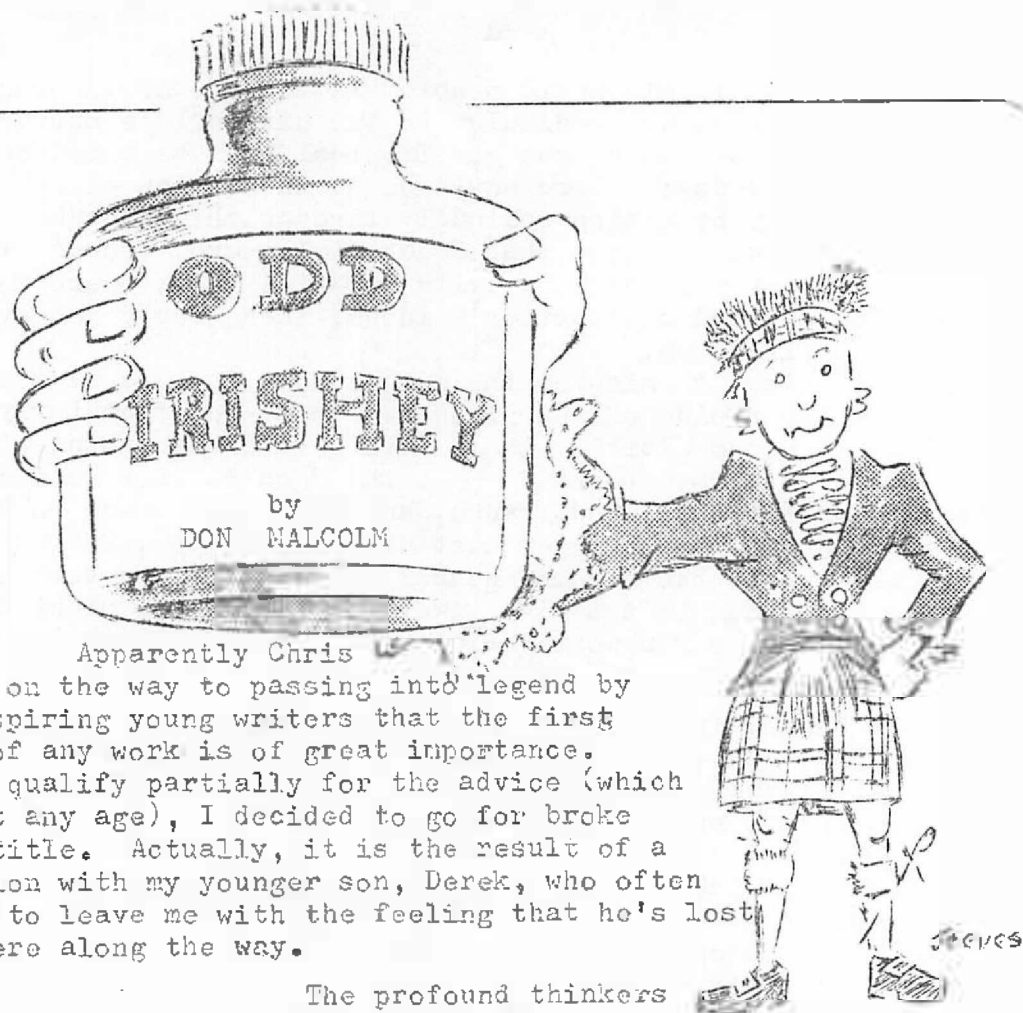
Landing a spaceship on a Ringworld moving at $1g$ would pose a few more problems, although take-off would be easy...just drop over the edge. Astronomy might be uncomfortable as it would have to be done from the outer surface of the ring and therefore in $1g$ negative gravity. OK, you simply stand on the ceiling...but the shattering effect of looking down on nothing but space with $1g$ tugging you down there must be something out of any world...Square, Ring or otherwise.

While speculating high wide and yonder...just suppose the dwellers on a Ringworld established a 'Greenwich meridian' inside their ring and used it to set up the length of a year. As mentioned previously, this would only last for about 600 minutes...but forget that angle for a moment. Each time the meridian passes (say a line from the Sun to Alpha Centauri), a year clicks up...therefore places behind the meridian will not yet have reached New Year, those ahead will have passed it. Carry this right round to the opposite diameter of the ring, and you would have a dateline situation such as we have on Earth where you gain or lose a day when sailing the Pacific... except that on the Ringworld you would pick up or drop a YEAR..!

There are plenty of other side (or snide) effects, but I rather fancy that these will be enough to be going on with. Any budding authors are free to use the foregoing in their stories...but if you do, how about naming a character, a spaceship, or even a planet after me? I'm much too late to get a Lunar crater...so to be Tuckerised in a Ringworld would be just dandy.

=0=0=0=0=

Terry Jeeves 1977



Apparently Chris Priest is on the way to passing into legend by telling aspiring young writers that the first sentence of any work is of great importance.

As I qualify partially for the advice (which is good at any age), I decided to go for broke with the title. Actually, it is the result of a conversation with my younger son, Derek, who often contrives to leave me with the feeling that he's lost me somewhere along the way.

The profound thinkers ~~among~~ you - come, come, Brian can't be the only one - will have perceived that the title of this article should read Irish Odyssey. It concerns a few reminiscences of my visits to the home of James and Peggt White (and three children and a goldfish), when Andersonstown, and Ireland was a peaceful place. Today, news from that troubled land always has a special poignancy for me, tinged with concern.

It was almost pleasurable sitting squeezed into a Mini, marooned in a traffic jam in Royal Avenue, hemmed in by a palisade of towering green buses, and friendly cyclists leaning on the roof of the car, giving me a cheery 'Good evening' as I slowly asphyxiated amid the fumes. Those days are gone, for the time being. In a similar situation, I might get a pound of gelignite dropped on my vital statistics, which would not be hilarious.

To get back to the story: I was once a representative, what was known in gentler times as a commercial traveller. When I took over the job, I was told that Ireland was part of the territory. At that time (1962) I knew Jim White only through his writing. Here I thought, was a great opportunity to meet him in the flesh; if he'll pardon the expression. John Carnell, who was our agent, gave me Jim's address; I wrote to him, saying that I was going

to Ireland and that I would like to meet him.

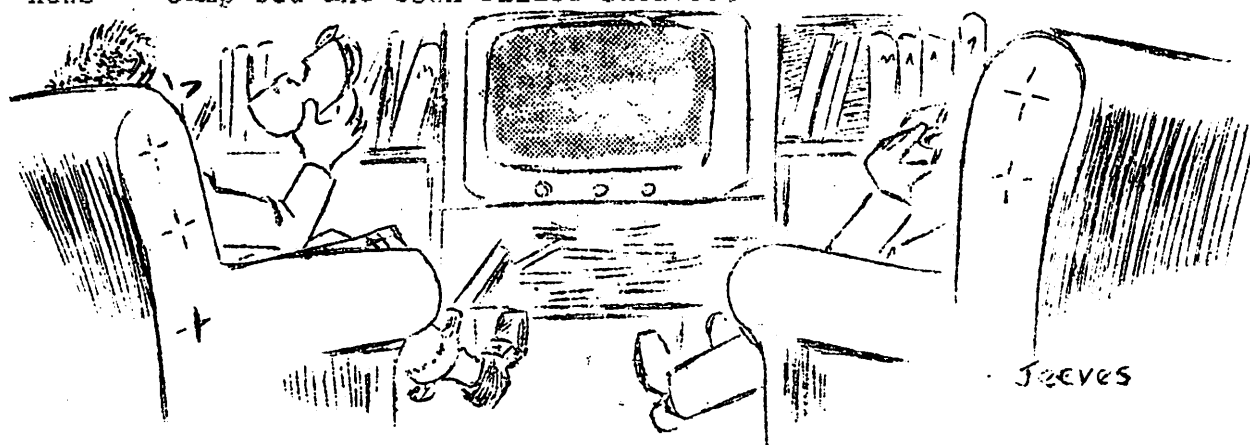
Further correspondence brought about, on my part, a complete misapprehension (can you get a partial one ?) concerning that particular group of sf fans and is an example of how to achieve one without trying too hard. My contacts with fandom were via fanzines and, as I recall (vaguely) there seemed to be a great deal of talk about drinking. I made one or two references to booze and, somehow, Jim and I got the impression that each was an incipient alcoholic. Looking back, I wonder if Jim and Peggy ever had misgivings about who they were inviting to their home.

When I get a drink in my hand - preferably in a glass in my hand - I usually have to dust the cobwebs off it to get it finished. More of it evaporates than gets drunk. Only amiable big Danny has, in recent years,* persuaded me to take two drinks within a short space of time. I think I had lost the key to my purse, or something like that.

Anyway, I was allowed into Ireland, (a) because I wasn't English (sorry, editor !) (('s OK, it isn't your fault you're a Scot.)) and (b) my name wasn't Cromwell. Jim and I met, the Earth stilled in its orbit - and we quickly discovered that we were both non-drinking addicts. Thus was started a friendship that has grown with the years, fuelled during my Irish forays with mountainous platefuls of sandwiches - somehow, I still remember the cheese ones - and other good things to eat, prepared by Peggy. It was pointless watching your weight there.

Peggy was invariably going out to her operatic society practices. Suitably fortified as we were, Jim and I spent many happy hours discussing a range of subjects, but mainly SF. At some time or another, every writer comes up against a seemingly-insurmountable problem. We called it, 'digging yourself out of a hole'. That isn't always possible and the story has to be abandoned. Probably there are other contributory factors in such cases.

On the evenings that Peggy was at home, exercising the goldfish and doing other urgent household tasks, the talking would take place in the partially converted loft, which Jim had made into a very comfortable work-room, complete with recessed television - "Just for watching the news" - camp bed and book filled shelves.



* Coventry, 1977, to be exact

Some of the original paintings done by Gerard Quinn for front covers of Jim's stories were on the walls. In those days, original art work was not as much sought-after as it is now. I met Gerard several times at Jim's home and it is unfortunate that he is no longer working in science fiction.

Others I met were Walt Willis, Bob and Sadie Shaw and a man whose name I cannot remember. What I do recall was that he was the only sarcastic Irish person I've ever come across. And, as I travelled all over Ireland for seven years, I met plenty of Irish people.

Fallacies arise almost as easily as mis-apprehensions. Bob said to me on one occasion, "We don't all walk about saying, 'begorrah'." I didn't answer "Och aye"...

One evening, I was getting ready to go back to the hotel. I must have had my shoes off - that's real hospitality for you - and I started to put them on. I was sitting opposite Sadie at the time. As often happens, the laces had assumed a life of their own and I found that they had long ends and short ends. As I began to adjust them, I all but jumped off the chair.

"Oh, my God !" Sadie shrieked, clapping her hands, "He's measuring his shoelaces !" I was, of course. That was the object of the exercise, to get even. I still measure my shoelaces, Sadie...

Anyway, it was perhaps just as well that I was leaving. Even Divine Intervention might not have saved me from all that Irish irony.

I must away, now. You see, I have this consignment of cheese and Patent Lace Measurers to run into Belfast and the Customs are very alert, to be sure, to be sure -----

Don Malcolm.

GIL GAILER
1016 Beech Ave
Torrance
CA 90501

Has a project. He seeks to utilise the evaluative judgement of some of the most knowledgeable SF readers in the world..ie. Fandom. The aim is to evaluate any/or all, of the SF novels you have read and rate them on a scale devised by Gil. For full details, why not drop him a line..it only costs you a and gives you the chance to participate in a worthwhile project.

KEN SLATER
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Wisbech,
Cams PE13 2LX

(Fantasy Medway) Can supply you with all the books reviewed in ERG, any Sf mag, hardcover or paperback book, new or old. If you want an item..or are trying to complete a collection, or just want to get more SF, drop him a line and 20p in postage for his latest catalogue.

THE TUCKER TRANSFER..aims to bring Wilson 'Bob' Tucker here for Worldcon.. funds, donations etc, to Jan Funder, P.O.2038 Fort Riley, Kansas 66442.

A VORTEX

IS SOMETHING THAT GOES
DOWN A PLUGHOLE



Terry Jeeves interviews Keith Saddon

T.J. Can you give a brief account of how you came to edit Vortex ?

K.S. Most people who get appointed to a 'desirable' position know the right people at the right time. In April 1976 I found myself having a chat with my father's printer. (My father is in the greeting card business.) Ron Booch, the printer -- not his real name, I'll be getting a little slanderous later on -- was telling me of another client (he had two in those days -- the deepest he'll ever get into Bigtime Printing), a magazine and book publisher, 'Mr. Shacklady' (A good one, that) was doing very unsuccessfully with a failed aeroplane magazine, and was looking around for something else to do. I wanted to do a magazine, Shacklady wanted me to, so I did.

T.J. The fiction in No.1 was very much what is generally termed 'New Wave'. Was this your own choice of material, or were you pressured in any way to use it ?

K.S. The balance between the 'various types of fiction' that went into all five published issues of Vortex, in my opinion, was very even. Certainly the fiction I chose was of a more fringe nature than all the other magazines, except New Worlds itself. This was deliberate. SF magazines have not had a good time since the dawn of the paperback. If Vortex was to survive, then I would have to give readers material that they would not find too readily in books. (And I think at this point to say that Vortex's contents had nothing to do with its closure)

T.J. No.1 was on slick paper, with colour-work. Did its reception offer encouragement ?

K.S. Criticism was generally very favourable. I remember someone telling me he would have preferred pulp with ragged edges. Most people (including myself) wouldn't have cared either way. Vortex was on gloss stuff because that was the cheapest paper which could take colour well. "And colour", Shacklady would chant, "is essential to the success of your rubbish". (He never liked my choice of fiction -- and I hope I can go into this later on). I told him as forcefully as possible (I didn't want to get chucked off the job), that the colour question was a moot

point. Readers wanted to read fiction, not browse through a picture-book. Numerous letter-writers told me so, which proved my point. Shacklady still wanted the colour, and he was boss.

T.J. Speaking personally, I thought some of the art in Vortex was pretty amateurish. What are your views on this ?

K.S. I think most people would say that. Most correspondence was amazingly positive (the fact that there was artwork was a good thing) -- a few negative letters voiced just your own comment; though everyone, whether they voiced it or not, would agree. I was commissioned to start Vortex on June 1 1976, and told that issue one publication would be 1 September. An almost impossible target -- the deadline for material was set for the middle of July. I thought I could do it, and I did -- but not the way I expected.

My good contacts in the world of fiction allowed me to sleep easily on that score. Illustrative material would be another matter.

I was banking on using the services of two major London art agencies to get the ball rolling. I had duplicated the scripts, selected the artists whom I thought most suitable (I have had little training in art -- even so, Shacklady wouldn't employ someone to handle that side of things) and was waiting for the finished stuff. It was a bit of a shock to hear that the agencies had taken out references on my publisher and were not satisfied. They would be advising their artists not to complete the work. That left me with a fortnight to get illustrations for two scripts.

T.J. Were some of the artists personal friends as distinct from commercial illustrators ?

K.S. Indeed. When you start a project like Vortex, obviously all your stuff is going to come from personal contacts. My contacts had been the agents. That particular rug pulled out from under my feet. I had to go directly to artist friends and persuade them to do the work in next to no time. There is one other point that should be mentioned here. For Shacklady to get his favourite distributor to take the magazine, he would have to present material for the first THREE issues by the end of August 1976. (As it happened, for some reason, the distributor couldn't take the mag until January 1977). At a cost I did the job. My rewards you will hear about.

T.J. Which items were the most praised...and which most disliked ?

K.S. All but the odd few letters that said more than just "Nice to see a new mag" were very strongly worded. I had no airy-fairy comments about the numerous setting errors. Readers who had read the magazine seriously (and by that, I don't mean with frowns across their brows) and who had bothered to write, had something positive and important to say. I was very pleased to get this reaction. You wouldn't expect remarkable (true meaning) comments about airy-fairy fiction. You would expect remarkable comments about remarkable fiction. Literally, the readers have spoken for themselves -- Vortex was worthy of attention.

I am satisfied that Vortex was appreciated by the audience for which I had intended it to cater. Mundane fiction is for mundane people. Not being a mundane person myself, I was determined to enjoy my nervous breakdowns over Vortex. My model reader was a college student between the ages of 18 and 22, with a brain.

There was no single aspect of the magazine that everyone hated; not even one that almost everyone hated. I was surprised that so many people liked the interviews so much -- probably because I was bored to death doing them. Steve Axtell gave me some help at the transcribing stage -- the names of the interviewers printed were fictitious. The whole show was mine.

But really, at this point, I'd like to stick with my college student with the brain. My student would have enjoyed Mike Moorcock's 'New Worlds'. But Vortex could not be like that straightaway, if only for the reasons it would never have found a distributor. (I was trusting Shacklady's experience on this point) So I decided to start off with a good-sized dose of what I have already called fringe SF. (Christchild, Ambient) balanced by a pretty familiar modern SF (Holdstock, Corley, Penny, Greenhough). Issues 6 to 9 were fully planned, but not published. They contained a greater proportion of fringe material.

There is no getting away from the fact that we read to escape; to escape our everyday existence which will be, to some extent, boring and even pointless. You, who will be reading this, must be fed up with some aspect of your life. At worst, you are about to kill yourself, at the other extreme you have five minutes to waste. If you did not fit somewhere along this scale, and were fully content, you would have no reason for reading ERG. You are reading to broaden your horizon. You would hardly read ERG (or any other book) if you wanted to become more enmeshed in your own trivialities -- you would sit in the loo and stare at the door.

Most people are frightened to escape. Most people don't read. A bookshelf more than two feet is a rare thing to find in the average household. Library books that are borrowed are skimmed over very quickly just before bed when the reader is half asleep anyway -- yes this is escape. But there is another kind; one far more positive and energetic.

What made Peter Joseph paint, "Ochre Colour with Dark Border" (a painting as true to its title as any could get)? Artists are people who search for wider meanings. They deliberately reach beyond themselves to escape the pointlessness of day to day activities. Beans-on-toast or cheese-on-toast?

Constable's landscapes are certainly nice to look at, like eating beans-on-toast. Peter Joseph's "Ochre Colour", if you stand in front of it for long enough for it to 'get to you' -- and it's over three yards long and two yards high -- is more like getting the beans down the inside of your shirt. It makes you wake up. Six square yards of ochre right in front of your nose can drive your mind to extraordinary efforts of escape. If Joseph painted a landscape immediately after finishing "Ochre", undoubtedly it would be far more potent than anything Constable produced.

But what is this potency for, in art or fiction?

It is to grab our minds, to wrench us out of triviality, to present us with fresh vistas of meaning. Not like most fiction, which holds our hands and gently leads us to the cliff-top to sample the view and the salt breeze. The fiction I would have presented in Vortex, in say two years, would have pushed the reader violently off the cliff -- to push his emotions to the limit, to make his mind really work, to make him appreciate just how much meaning was waiting to be discovered with this inward expansion. There is a great deal of difference between being a seagull and just watching one fly.

We have all seen sunsets and said, "A yes, very beautiful". But how often do we really mean it? Reading trivial fiction is no better than staring at the luo door.

T.J. A final question. You seem to know what you wanted to do with Vortex, so why did it close ? _____

K.S. Simply -- Shacklady didn't know what he was doing. Vortex had to cease because the colour plates were costing too much. Too deep in the red after issue four. Shacklady's successor, Ron Booch, (who knew far less than Shacklady, even about his own job) decided after two months to stop the new black and white format taking over at issue six. (I had, by that time, arranged the entire contents for issues 6 to 9, accommodating for the colour change). (Shacklady was sacked for doing very unethical things -- which proved his mental age to be no greater than seven.

At the end of the day: I am owed over £2000 (two thousand) salary and expenses. Mike Moorcock is owed £1000 (one thousand) for "The End Of All Songs"...and all contributors to issues 5 through 9 will remain unpaid --- even though No.5 was published, and the parent company is very much solvent.

If Vortex had started with a black and white format, and retained its average 11,000 readership, as you read this it would be a thriving magazine.

.....Keith Seddon
Watford Heath,
Herts.

[illegible]

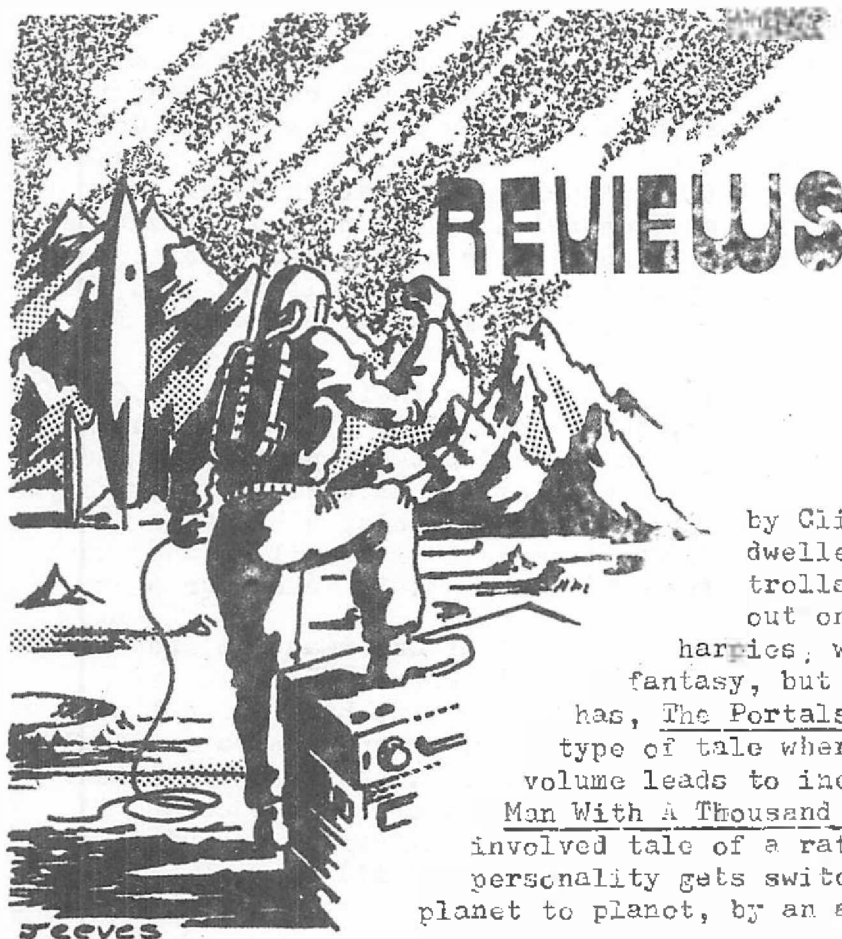
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S.F. SPECIAL No.22 £4.95 opens with Robert Silverbergs To Live Again set in a world where mind recording lets

a dead person's personality be added to that of his heir or next of kin..which leads to a power struggle over a tycoon's memory tape, and a takeover bid by the recording. Cemetery World is another C.D. Simak. Fletcher Carson comes to Earth, now one vast graveyard, to compose a 'sensitape', but the authorities don't want him snooping around. Third comes Mark Adlard's Multiface, the tale of a 22nd Century Megalopolis with a bored population..and the effects caused by the reintroduction of 'business' to entertain the idle multitudes.

A DREAM OF WESSEX
Christopher Priest
Faber & Faber £4.25

The Wessex Project is a projected mental construct of the future into which individual members of a research team send their egos to observe future trends.

Neurotic Julia Stretton, on the rebound from an unhappy affair (the aspects of which make her seem utterly brainless) is one of the researchers, each of whom has found greater contentment in their dream world. Then Julia's sadistic lover joins the Project, not only changing the future construct, but also the lives of those inside it. This is another excellent yarn from Mr. Priest, it holds you all the way through, but I thought the ending seemed rather indecisive after the carefully constructed intricacies of the plot, but that is a minor niggle against a very good tale.

WORLDS FOR THE GRABBING

Brenda Pearce
Dobson SF \$3.95

Sadly, 40 pages were missing from my review copy.. but enough remained to tell me that this is a novel constructed from four separate stories concerning the problems encountered by geologist Chris Collins on various missions. On Mercury, he visits the dayside. On Pluto he solves another problem. Venus has living oil (ex Analog) and Saturn develops a titanic intelligence. The linking (and general idea) is not unlike vanVogt's 'Space Beagle'.. but is done so well the novel IS a whole, and excellent piece of work. This one is my (and Analog's) kind of sf. If you like a good problem story, with a resolved ending..and well written, here it is.

STAR WARS

George Lucas.
Souvenir Press. \$3.95

For sleepers just awakened, this is the story of Luke Skywalker, the robots R2D2, C3PO and several other characters in a grand bit of space opera made (a film) by 20th Cent. Fox. I haven't a review copy, but a note from Souvenir saying that if you want something a bit more memorable than the Sphere paperback at 95p (complete with stills) they have a special, large format, hardcover edition costing \$3.95. Take your pick.

MISTER JUSTICE

Doris Piserchia
Dobson \$3.95

A strange, time-travelling sort of Superman who traps (and executes) criminals the law cannot, or will not punish. Three FBI men set out to trap him, and enlist a young lad for special training. Meanwhile, a criminal with a similar ability is quietly building his empire. An unusual, often difficult style, but a yarn which rattles along at a cracking pace and is only let down by the final confrontation. Tastes will differ on this one, New Wavers and 'Intellectuals' be warned. (I enjoyed it)

THE THIEVES

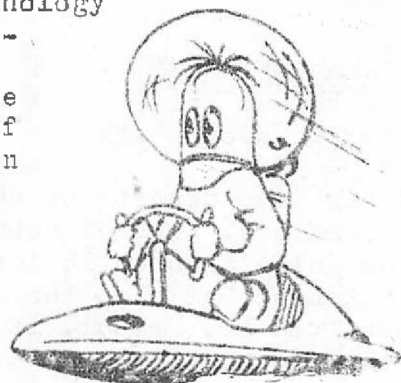
Dean R. Koontz
Dobson \$3.75

Pete Mullion finds he has lost two weeks from his life and that a strange figure is keeping watch on him. He starts investigating..and loses two more days. Pete intensifies his hunt - and so do his watches. The tale moves quickly along to involve mental powers and alien investigators. Events build smoothly to a climax (and keep you guessing a lot of that time) but if you perm your SF with page against \$, this could be a bit steep at the price for 109 pages.

THE BARONS OF BEHAVIOUR

Tom Purdom
Dobson \$3.95

The 21st Century and psychology has been refined to a push-button science enabling political chief Boyd to use the techniques on his voters. Complete dominance of America and the Presidency are within his grasp when psychologist Nicholson sets out to use those same methods to set up his own candidate and party in opposition - a move which leads to his being kidnapped and brain-washed by Boyd's hirelings. Taut, fastmoving and with compulsive menace. I fancy there may be a sequel..and certainly hope so if it is as gripping as this one.



UNIVERSE THREE

Ed. Terry Carr
Dobson \$3.95

Third in a series of original SF stories by such well-known writers as Robert Silverberg, Edgar Pangborn and others. Themes include time-travel, mutants with esp powers, a future tyranny and even a strange isolated experimental satellite. All are written in the post 'new Wave' manner in which content is subservient to style and plot comes a bad third. Events flow but with no particular direction when the word is the message and there are no O'Henry twists hiding round the corner of the last page

OPERATION ARES

Gene Wolfe
Dobson \$3.95

After establishing a Martian colony, the USA has slipped back from its technological pinnacle into a near-agrarian society where science is scorned. Predatory animals roam at night (though they ease up after Chapter 1). A virtual dictator is in power, but small-town schoolmaster John Castle tries to join the resistance force ARES being raised by the Martians who seem to come and go just as they please (in Lifting Body Vehicles from a satellite). Plenty of movement and action, but lacking in plausibility.

THE THORBUURN ENTERPRISE

John Rankine
Dobson \$3.95

Commander Foreman of the frigate Phalarope is set the task of following the head of Thorburn Enterprises in his spaceship Leda, as it visits sundry worlds on suspect missions. Foreman has some hectic adventures (in the true James Bond manner) and things move along at a cracking pace until he uncovers the naughty secret. Not cerebral SF, but Rankine writes a smooth, entertaining and exciting yarn. If you like Retief or Dumarest, you'll like this...it's far better than those by a mile or more.

THE MANY WORLDS OF MAGNUS RIDOLPH

Jack Vance
Dobson \$3.95

Scrawny, goat-bearded, superior-brained Magnus Ridolph is one of those characters you love or hate. Here, in six tales from the 1948-52 issues of Startling and Thrilling Wonder, are six adventures of the super problem solver as he tangles with swindlers, chicanery, robbery, a society of thieves, holiday camp problems and even murder. Vance is at his best with impossible yet nearly plausible aliens (see his Durdane trilogy), and here he gives his imagination full rein.

UNIVERSE FOUR

Ed. Terry Carr
Dobson \$3.95

Hot on the trail behind number three in the series, and for my money, much superior, comes this eight story collection. Jack Vance gives us a long glimpse at activities in a future city. Silverberg has a psychiatrist-into-patient's mind item. Then there's a near incomprehensible Lafferty, a short by Waldrop, a nice tongue in cheek tale of future media action by Ron Goulart and a strange future devastation short by Pamela Sargent. Then a yarn by Ekland and Bonford about aliens coming to talk with our sun. (This one has I believe also been expanded into a full novel) and finally, Panshin turns in a piece about a would-be world conqueror. Plenty for all, and if you're thinking of collecting the series, don't waste time, as Universe 7 is now available in the USA from Doubleday at \$5.95.

SALE LIST

If interested, send S.A.E. for a copy of my list. T.J.

ARRIVE AT BASTEEWINE

R.A.Lafferty
Dobson \$3.95

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A KTIISTEC MACHINE. As conveyed to R.A.Lafferty. That concludes the full title, but book spines not being elastic, I'll settle for the shorter version. The Institute of Impure Science sets out to create a group-man machine, a giant device incorporating a precis of each of its creators in its make up. However, other factors enter as well and the result is involved, promising and threatening in parts.. a device which though going its own way, avoids the chair-gripping horror of D.F. Jones 'Colossus'. This one has all the involuted unbelievability of Rafferty...and Rafferty is very much an acquired (or otherwise) taste.

MONSTERS IN ORBIT

Jack Vance
Dobson \$3.95

Two adventures in one starting with Jean Parlier being offered a million dollars if she will marry an ailing millionaire and then make the estate over to 'Fotheringay' when her husband dies. She gets to the millionaire's satellite and discovers his unusual hobbies whereupon things change rather drastically. In the second part, Jen sets out to trace her parentage, and ends up tangling with a mad scientist who used female prisoners as seed beds for his cloning experiments. Entertaining, but very lightweight and with no nail-biting incidents in the reliable Vance style.

DARGASON

Colin Cooper
Dobson \$3.95

Part-time music critic Franklin Digby attends a concert of modern music..and finds he is behaving strangely. At a second performance, he stumbles on the cause.. music by 'Dargason' and the fact that the military are interested.

In his attempts to expose the affair, he becomes enmeshed with spies, the forces of Military Intelligence and Special Branch..plus burglary, sex, mayhem and several other activities. Written in a low key (which means you can enjoy it without getting ulcers), and reminiscent of early British SF, I found this one held me..and moreover, entertained me from start to finish. Cooper succeeds in making unlikely events sound completely credible.

THE SURVIVAL GAME

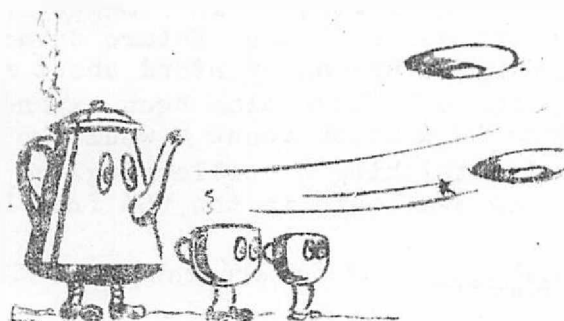
Colin Kapp
Dobson \$3.95

Two rival star kings set out to find which is the more powerful, one of their warriors or a Terran. They capture Colonel 'Bogey' Bogaert (and by accident, the queen and children of the mightiest star king of all) and set their players down on a 'Deathworld' style planet to see who survives. Events are complicated by the actions of a Pretender to the throne who comes to kill off the mightiest king's family. Exciting, fast-paced action with plenty of background details and an intriguing lost star race (room for a sequel?). Verging on space-opera, I personally feel this is one of Kapp's best.

RECEIVED, but squeezed out until next issue :-

NIGHT OF DELUSIONS..Keith Laumer,
Dobson \$3.95

OX.. Piers Anthony
Corgi 85p



- ENCHANTED PILGRIMAGE Mark Cornwall, scholar, dwells in a parallel-time world populated by goblins, trolls and suchlike. He sets out on a pilgrimage spurred by the discovery of a secret manuscript. On the way meeting with harpies, witches, hellhounds, The Old Ones, a girl a weird robot, and a strange inter world investigator. Battles and hazards lose their innate cruelty yet retain their interest. Sheer fantasy, but a delightful romp which for me, held the magic I failed to find in Tolkein's Hobbits
- Clifford D. Simak
Fontana 75p
- RINGS OF ICE When an experiment misfires, Earth is subjected to torrential rains which flood all but the highest mountains and destroy civilisation. We follow the adventures of a small band of misfits, each of whom is either physically or mentally sick as they struggle to survive the floods, robbery, murder, cannibalism and a host of troubles. Improbable to a degree, but smooth reading.
- Piers Anthony
Fontana 65p
- APPROACHING OBLIVION An 11 story anthology culled from the 1962-1973 magazines, plus a foreword by Michael Crichton and a brief autobiographical piece by Ellison. Whatever takes his fancy, Harlan writes about, be it telekinesis, future sex practices, androids, or even the world awaking to its pollution. All in highly pyrotechnic vein, whether the themes suit you or not, there is more life and attention grabbing in this little lot than a bucketful of Bradbury. A lot I like, some was not to my aging taste..but all are highly readable.
- Harlan Ellison
Pan 60p
- WHO FEEDS MEN Britain is ruled by lesbians, birth is by parthenogenesis and the Exterminators are set to wipe out the last men, hiding out in Scotland. Rura is out hunting men when she is caught, gang-raped and apparently so delighted with her new role that she changes her allegiance
- Edmund Cooper
Coronet 75p
- SEED OF LIGHT Civilisation escalates its 'defence' deterrents into all-out war, but before the final dome city collapses, a generation star ship is launched with five couples in search of a new Eden. The bulk of the tale tells of their problems and disappointments. (First UK publication...USA ed. 1950)
- Edmund Cooper
Coronet 75p
- ALL FOOLS DAY An upswing in solar radiation leads to an increase in the suicide rate until the only survivors are the former misfits. Literally, all the fools have their day as they inherit the earth...a situation not entirely without its humour. The opening is reminiscent of 'Year of The Jackpot'..but a less downbeat ending.
- Edmund Cooper
Coronet 75p
- FLIGHT TO OPAR In the first of the 'Hadon' series (see ERG 59) from Avon books, this Tarzan-like hero and dweller in an ancient African kingdom, won the Games to elect a new king...but instead of abdicating the old one sent Hadon on a suicide mission and the story ended with him trapped and facing death. Here, the mighty Hadon outwits his attackers and is hunted by the soldiers of the tyrant holding the throne. Plenty of action and mighty deeds in a smoothly running, well-written yarn
- Philip Jose Farmer
Methuen Magnum 75p

CORONET have re-issued their Jack Vance, DURDANE trilogy, with a slight price increase to 75p on each title. :-

THE ANOME Young Mur, dweller on the strange world of Durdane which is ruled by the Faceless Man, runs away to become the rebel, Gastel Etzwane. He fights against the invasion of the Rogushkoi, throws off his explosive 'obedience collar' and begins to overthrow the rulers.

THE BRAVE FREE MEN Moves the story along as Etzwane raises a fighting force and meets the Rogushkoi head on

THE ASUTRA Reveals the truth about the Rogushkoi...and about the Faceless man and in the process he visits the enemies hom world.

The yarns are full of Vance's rich tapestry of alien customs and societies, oversimplified now and then, even a touch naive, but always entertaining and well detailed. If you missed it the first time round, get it now.

BRONTOMEK

Michael J Coney Pan.70p Every 52 years, Arcadia's moons line up and certain sea creatures produce the 'Relay Effect' whereby settlers start to suicide...the survivors desert the colony. To remedy matters, those remaining call in the Hetherington Group. They arrive with giant, earth-moving Brontomeks (one of which roves amuck, mainly off-stage) and shape-changing amorphs. Realising their mistake, the colonists rebel. Plenty of action, some good characterisation and a good yarn on all levels...apart from the deus ex machina wind up. (Nice twist though)

THE LOST TRAVELLER

Steve Wilson Pan.70p A post-atomic warfare era, and three Hell's Angels are sent out by their Fief on the Eastern U.S. seaboard to bring back a scientist who claims to know how to bring back the fertility of the dead lands. Their path runs through hostile territory and the perils, savagery and 'bravery' rituals are well shown. Not for the squeamish or members of the league of light and purity.

DR. FU MANCHU was one of those nostalgic figures remembered from boyhood in the pre-war radio series from Radio Luxembourg..I always pictured him as not unlike Ming The Merciless. Now Sax Rohmer's famous oriental criminal has been reprinted in a new series from Wyndham 'Star'. To hand are :- THE MASK OF DR. FU MANCHU..75p and THE MYSTERY OF DR. FU MANCHU 75p Both move along at cracking speed with sinister dacoits and lascars using poisonous scorpions, deadly gases and other forms of nastiness against Mayland Smith and his ally, Dr. Petrie as they work against Fu Manchu. There are ten more titles in the series so far. All rattling good goodies versus baddies material. Not strictly SF, but first rate fantasy..and after all, wasn't Hawk Carse's arch enemy Ku Sui modelled on Fu Manchu ? ..and Fleming's Dr. No ?

FLASH GORDON THE TIME TRAP OF MING XIII More nostalgia in the shape of another story in the 'Alex Raymond' series on Flash Gordon, written up by Con Steffanson. Our hero is once again aided by Zarkov and (hindered by) Dale as he clashes yet again with Ming in a caper involving Time Belts. This series will probably reap a whole new crop of readers, aided by frequent re-screenings of the epic serial. (You can get an 18 minute, edited version of the original 12 parts, on Super 8mm. sound film, for £22 if you're a real buff)

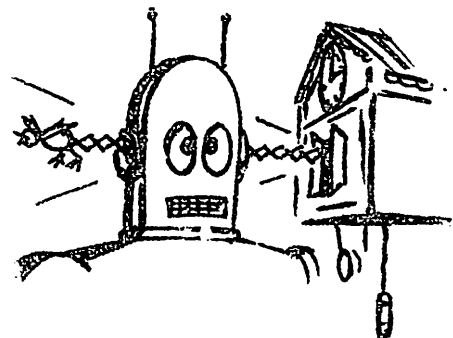
INFERNO

Larry Niven
 Jerry Pournelle
 Wyndham Star 75p

Allen Carpentier falls to his death from the 8th floor of a Convention hotel - and awakes to find himself in the Hell envisioned by Dante. His journey through the inner levels encountering a variety of monsters and menaces is a fascinating saga. Not being familiar with Dante's version, I'll take the accuracy for granted, but I enjoyed the assorted sequences immensely.. the compulsive boulder-rollers; glider flying in Hell; and of course, the Cadillacs in need of taming. I didn't find it as gripping as 'Note In G_od's Eye', the ending being a bit lacking, but even then, it is streets ahead of most contemporary writing.

OMEGA SF* 2 'Il Mondo Dei Sonnambuli'

Omega SF
 £1500
 di Gordon R. Dickson. Not being into Italian beyond the level of ordering a drink in a Venetian cafe, I assume this translates into 'The Sleeping World', and is second in a series. 176 pages, larger than the average pb in size, and produced (without illustration) by some photo process, this one boasts lovely covers (front and rear) and is ideal for Italian students ..OK, students of Italian. That 1500 Lira probably equates to a £1 sterling.

OUR CHANGING UNIVERSE

John Gribbin
 Futura 70p

A look at radio and X-ray astronomy and their correlation with optical work. Quasars, pulsars, tachyons, quarks and other strange phenomena are examined and the latest theories given. Hidden

among the material is the surprising theory that the lack of solar neutrinos may be due to the sun having stopped its solar Phoenix. Excellent reading, (and a handful of photographs) for anyone interested in the cosmos..and full of ideas for authors. Well worth the price !

THE EMBEDDING

Ian Watson
 Orbit 'Quartet'
 65p

A South American tribe gains a new world view via drugs; A research group in England raises a group of children to speak only an artificial, non-redundant language. Then star travellers arrive wanting to exchange information - and their chief need is the understanding gained by a

brain using an embedded language. I enjoyed this one until near the end when things became 'nasty-political-rotten' and the story line slipped.

PLANET OF JUDGEMENT

Joe Haldeman
 Corgi 70p

An original Star Trek novel in which is encountered a planet orbited by a luminous black hole and populated by a race of mental giants, who, preparing for an invasion, wish to learn from humans..and also use them to scare

off the invaders. This has much of the depth of action lacking in the TV shows (a new run of which is being filmed I gather..but without Nimoy). It also has a spot of Tuckerising with a character called 'Atheling'. However the gripping build up and problem posing is allowed to tail away into a rather sluggish ending. Even so, it is far better Star Trek stuff than many of the screened episodes...and should appeal to ST lovers of any age.

THOUGHTS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT BY MICHAEL A BANKS THOUGHTS THAT GO BUMP

Thoughts That Go Bump In The Night

BY MICHAEL A BANKS

THOUGHTS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT BY MICHAEL A BANKS THOUGHTS THAT GO BUMP

Some morning I'm going to wake up with a West Midlands accent and demanding warm Guinness. Then I'll go to work and discover that the mains electricity has been changed to 250v 50cycles. A.C., elevators have become lifts and my paycheck (now a paycheque) is made out in pounds sterling instead of dollars.

Well, the transition won't be that sudden, but the change is coming. It's been in the air for years, ever since the Beatles and suits labelled 'Carnaby Street' became popular. (((Speak for yourself bub! T.J.))) Fish 'n Chip restaurants are outselling the hamburger joints; London taxis and doiblo-decker buses abound on the streets of America's metropoli (((Which is more than one can say for England))) ; apartment complexes and housing developem^{ts} sport names such as Chatham Square, Merrie Oldc Stonegate, and Surrey Square; even television is beginning to have some sensible content at times. (((We call ours the 'Close Down')))

Hell, there's even a Bannerdale Rd close by here. Sometimes when I drive by there, I can hear the clank of a duplicator. I'm afraid to stop and see though.... So, America is going British. Everyone knows that. I on ly mention it now because the full transition is so close, and those of you who want to see the States, should do it soon.

And how, you may ask, do I know that the time is close? Well, there's a new restaurant down the road and just yesterday they put up a sign. It read:

"BRIAN BURGESS' KENTUCKY FRIED PORK PIES" ...

I imagine a reverse trend in Britain. I hear that some of our TV shows are being imported, and that hamburger stands clot the countryside. If that's the case, I'd like to offer franchises to "Mike's Down-Home Western Texas Style Deep-Fried Southern Chicken Take Out Shops". They will sell hamburgers and hot dogs (not to mention apple-pie) on the side. We'll also organise baseball teams..you can't get any more American than that. Any takers?



Speaking of cons (((You weren't !))) if anyone is willing and ablo, can it be arranged to have 7UP on tap at SEACON? I work for 7UP and if it's known that the beverage will be available at the Con, maybe I can talk my boss into sending me over to keep the dispenser in working order... Someone has to take care of those things, you know. I will gladly award the lady from the 7UP commercials to anyone who can arrange this (I keep her in a can behind the fridge).

(Michael Banks, from the Wilds of Ohio)(((One of the Colonies)))

Thanks to an inflow of other items for this issue of ERG, letters get the short end of the stick this time..and poor old fanzines had to be missed entirely. Oh well, next issue may reverse the position, so on to the first letter. Ergitorial remarks in triple brackets (((Thus))) T.J.

Guido Eekhaut writes from :-
Diestestraat 54 bus 1
B-3000 Leuven
Belgium,

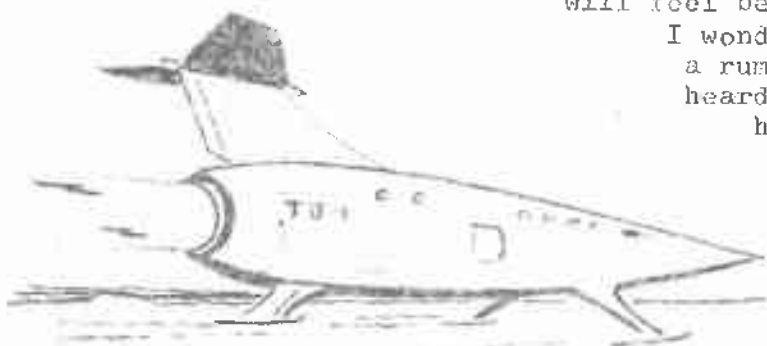
"I liked your capsule fanzine reviews. Gives the reader an idea of the market. A few weeks ago was Convention time : Beneluxcon in

Ghent (Sept. 9-11) GoH was Bob Shaw, who promised (and sent) a short-short story with comment, a witty piece, which will appear in Rigel magazine (in English) I try to make RM as interesting as possible for English and U.S. readers by including at least an English summary. The Con issue, No. 59 is available in December and can be mailed to the U.K. for £1.00 USA, \$2.00 That sounds a bit expensive, but worth it, I hope."

Brian Aldiss,
Southmoor,
Nr. Abingdon.

I was delighted to receive your letter and ERG. I must admit I construed from something you once said that you disliked my role in the SF world. So I was glad to get ERG as a friendly token. (((More than that Brian, I honestly can't recall ever commenting adversely on you, as I have always thought (and often said) that you were one of the nicest pro-writers around. I'm pleased to be able to repeat that here, so may I apologise for any inadvertant error on my part))) I'm amazed if Wilson Tucker is coming to the U.K. I gathered last year that he felt unfit to travel when I wrote asking him over to Dublin to receive the Retrospective J.W.Campbell Award from THE YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN. I'm hoping to persuade the BBC to film QUIET SUN and other goodies next year. (((Good luck on the project..and I hope Bob will feel better in '78)))

I wonder if you wrote because you heard a rumour I was dead. That's what I heard in Poland last year, and Stockholm last week. The rumour is based on precious little evidence. (((For which we are all extremely sorry)))



Bob Shaw Many thanks for ERG 58. I thought the Tucker interview was
 Ulverston really funny. What a novel idea for a fan article. I wonder
 Cumbria would anybody mind if I stole it and did an interview with
 myself so that I could be straight man for my favourite jokes.
 ((Help yourself...but can I plead for you to let the result be published in
 ERG))) I enjoyed your account of the '47 Con. It was fascinating to see
 the differences between how they did things then. The notion of using a
 tube station as a reception point is so logical that nowadays nobody would
 even think of it ((Not with today's fares))

I'm surprised that you as a science fiction fan interested in technology should suggest an antiquated method like glue for binding fanzines. The best way to do it is by the use of electrostatics. Put an LP on your record player and hold the spine of the fanzine so that it lightly brushes the surface of the disk for 30 seconds. Not only will the pages pick up enough static to bind them permanently, but you get your record collection cleaned at the same time. ((Seems a shocking procedure to me))

Roger Waddington Liked your cover of last issue anyway. I thought it
 4 Commercial St., had echoes of THE HIGH CRUSADE though I don't know where
 Norton the dinosaur came from. ((Out of an egg)) I quite liked
 Malton the cover of the current issue as well, the composition,
 the placing of the various features, all except the face of the spaceman.
 I'm not too sure of the mechanics of reproduction (have I got problems)
 ((Let nature take over and relax)) but could you have brought it out more
 and made it more lifelike. ((Possibly, but it never occurred to me))

Nice to see Don Malcolm interviewed, I bought a novel he did for Laser, THE IRON RAIN.. it's certainly time he came into the public notice. I don't go all the way with him on illustrations for stories though I would agree on SF in the comics of the 2001 or Unknown Worlds of SF variety where however innovative the artist's technique may be, he still usurps the power of the imagination. Just what sort of collection do you have that you have to note it on file cards? ((A large one....some 100 feet of shelving or more))

Paul Frazer Thanks for delivering ERG 59 so promptly. Your wish that I
 51 Ivanhoe Rd., had plenty to read was unfulfilled I'm afraid. I read them
 Aberdeen in about half an hour. The main fault (as I see it) in your
 zine is that you are almost completely redundant as a reviewer. Example of
 your crummy review department. I have read Mindbridge, Haldeman's second
 SF novel and it just isn't as good as you make out. The main fault I find
 with it is that after half of the book, Haldeman goes at a complete right
 angle to what his book has been going even though it is tied up with the
 second part. Also the book was too short, far too short. Had it been, say
 250 pages long he would have been able to work on the characters far more
 than he did in his short chapters. ((OK, but I still liked it))
 I remember writing to Glimpse (deceased) saying how your art was rubbish.
 ((Gee thanks.)) That's not quite true. Your 'serious' art succeeds in being
 like something out of "Thrilling Wonder Stories" but your humorous art is
 a quantum jump better (That I do like) I love those people without the
 nose and mouth. ((I like people like that too.)) ((Mine are called 'The
 Soggies'))