

ERG

QUARTERLY



No.

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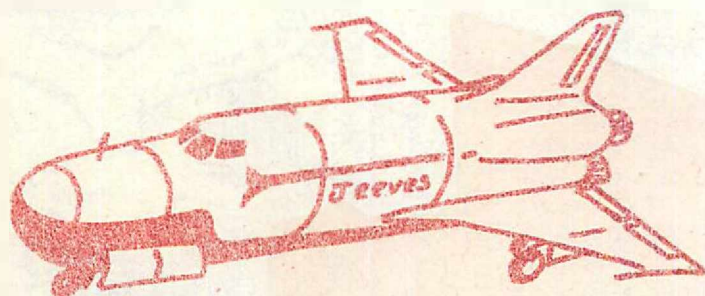
Jeeves

20th. Anniversary Issue

ERG
QUARTERLY

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.K. 4 issues for £1.00

USA. 4 issues for \$2.00

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This Issue... 30p

Editorial

ERGITORIAL that not only would ERG still be appearing in 1979, but that by then it would have become Britain's oldest regular quarterly. One or two fanzines started earlier (VAGARY, SCOTTISHE, and TRIODE), but are no longer on regular schedules. Given good luck, good health and a following wind, I can now start in on the next twenty years.

In all that time, there has only been one period when ERG looked like folding. I developed chronic asthma, typing became agony and operating the duplicator virtually impossible. Indeed, several issues were only put out thanks to the good offices of Brian Jordan (now GAFIate) who cranked the trusty old 230T for me. However, after five or six years of touch and go (for me, as well as for ERG), a drug was found which enabled me to live a normal life...provided I keep taking it. Since then, ERG has never looked back.

In the first issue, one interesting item of policy was stated... "For future issues, anything may happen. I'm not setting myself any sort of policy, but I do intend to do my best to see that ERG is a one-man show. Guest articles will be few and far between. Apart from that, the contents will vary as the mood takes me."

Well, I still devote ERG to things which interest me, but imperceptibly, guest contributors have crept in to such good effect, that the magazine would not be the same without them. My thanks go to all the generous people who have helped in the past and particularly to those appearing in this issue. Writing for fanzines is notoriously unproductive in both money and kudos so I deem it a great favour that writers, both amateur and professional should have come through with material for this 20th Anniversary Issue. Thanks a million folks.

Cover this time was lithoed in two colours from my black and white original, by my son Keith. It would have been done in FOUR colours, but I underestimated the amount of paper I gave him, and didn't allow enough for colour registration runs. Even so, I reckon he has done a grand job. Incidentally, Eric Needham bought the original art for No.64 and I all ready have a £1 bid for the original of this annish...so if you are interested, top that amount...even £1.10 could get it, so send in your bids (not cash)...closing date, mid-June. This offer also applies to readers in the USA...where £1.00 equals two dollars as near as makes no never mind.

Colour work is back in this issue as having used up all supplies of Gestetner black, that machine is being moved over to red, and the Ranco 750 brought into permanent operation for the black work. I plan to bring in the second (and maybe a third) colour as the fancy takes me...provided there is enough demand from out there??

Regulars will have noticed that over the last year or so, these Ergitorials have been used to allow me to sound off on any topic which happened to be buzzing around in my noddle at press time. This issue would have been the same, as people seem to like the idea. However, this time I thought I'd go over a few items of history, policy and general news...so...

Current state of my USA trip is that it will probably be hold over until Worldcon 1980 in Boston. I have been making some last minute efforts to attend the Minneapolis Minicon, but they hinge/ed on my getting my passport and a new visa, in time to book a Chicago flight..but knowing these high-speed Government institutions, I'm not holding my breath. The Boston trip IS a very attractive proposition. Val should be able to come with me, and at long, long, last, I'll meet up with all those great people who made the trip possible.

Dave Cobbledick has come up with some good ideas to help defray the crippling costs of fanzine production (mainly postal ones) by enclosing a leaflet with each issue of his fanzine TIOFART (advrt.) Fail to return the slip, and you don't get the next issue. He also suggests that if you enclose a 7p stamp, the action will be greatly appreciated. Not being one to miss pinching a good idea, I'll probably start something similar with the next issue...and that 7p stamp will be welcomed anytime..especially if your letter needs a reply. I mail several hundreds of items in a year..and the postal bill mounts up so fast, any way of keeping it in check is good news.

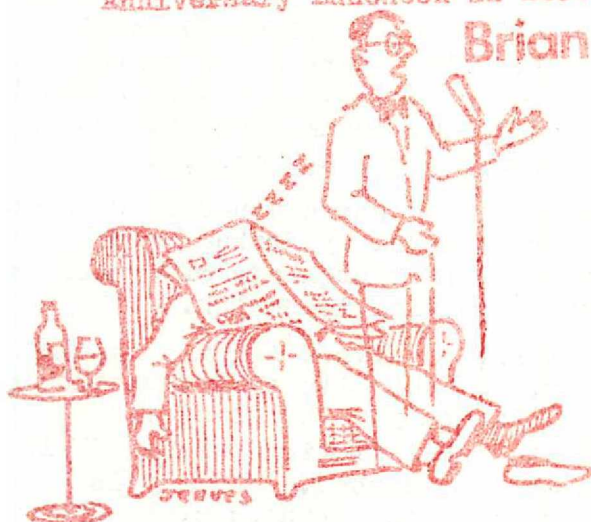
Another little scheme I have in my mind, is to dig back into the files and reproduce an early ERG item every issue or so. Comments on this little scheme would also be in order...as indeed are any other suggestions for improving things. I may not take you up on 'em, but they'll still be welcome.

CATASTROPHE struck (twice) since starting this Ergitorial. I started running off colour stencils on the Gestetner..perfect. Shifted to the Ranco for black and white. Chaos! Ink all over the place, paper jamming up in the feed mechanism every third sheet. I ended up with a completely ruined set of first ERGitorial pages..and have had to re-type the opening page...and will now have to re-run the colour heading. I hope that I shall get the trouble cured...otherwise it will mean back to the trusty Gestetner for this issue...and that machine has its silk-screen carrier springs about to break (each is now down to hal thickness). So if this issue is late....

CHAOS.2 came with the ice and blizzards which closed down England and completely isolated Sheffield, thanks to a road gritter's strike which left the roads impassable. (two feet of snow up our garden). A telegram from our Chamber of Commerce, to the P.M. requesting emergency gritting action brought a considerable amount of hot air from Mr. Callaghan..but this failed to melt any ice. After dragging his heels a couple of days, Jim sent his 'Snow Minister'..who produced more hot air..with a similar lack of result. Obviously, the policy is 'drag your heels long enough and it will sort itself out' Meanwhile, I haven't been to work for a week, and as I type, sledges whistle past the window. One nice touch..the Snow Minister got stranded here when his helicopter couldn't get out. Have fun, TJ

Being the text of a speech
delivered at a Yorkshire Post
Anniversary Luncheon in Leeds, by

Brian W. Aldiss



I fell asleep last week after lunch with a copy of the T.L.S. over my face. I had been reading a review of a book on German and American Scholarship from 1770 to 1773 - you'll be proud to know. Alistair Maclean's latest. The force of gravity dragged millions of learned words down into my brain. I was lucky even to reawaken.

I might be sleeping still - my God, perhaps I am sleeping still, like a victim of one of those terrible diseases which may only be named in Latin: encephalitis lethargica,

lonicora nigida; *canelone foetida*: which attack the grand canals of the digestive system after lunch.

Perhaps you have read reports of how victims of diseases like encephalitis lethargica, once known as sleeping sickness, exist in states of coma like living statues for as long as fifty years. Some of them have been brought back to life again by injections of a drug called L-dopa, which sets the patients rolling about the wards in a fine frenzy rolling, uttering hieroglyphs, behaving compulsively, cursing to make up for fifty years without action, and assaulting nurses for the same reason.

Don't laugh. If you wake up one morning with immovable dystonic rigidity of the legs, a severe torticollis, and a sensation that all life has ceased in the region of the breast-pocket, think of my words. You will understand then that I speak now in allegory, and am in fact contrasting the state of the ordinary English novel (sonnolent) with the state of the science fiction novel (manic). Rag doll or mad robot, both modes form part of the Jekyll-and-Hyde of modern letters, though neither cares to recognise the other.

I intend to say something about the state of affairs in SF, but first a word about modern fiction. Let's continue in our L-dopa vein. Those who are about to be stricken by sleeping sickness often suffer nightmares which are grotesque, terrifying and premonitory. The dreamers may feel that they linger for ever within inaccessible castles, or struggle through indefinable processes; or it may appear to them that the great going world has stopped, or entirely fallen into uneasy slumber. At the frontiers of the modern European novel stand books which exactly transcribe such encephalitic nightmares. I refer to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*, and Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*. *The Castle* was published in 1926, the year that the first SF magazine was published. Hyde started to take over while Jekyll slept.

From what I have said you might suppose that SF would be rather nightmarish in content, concerned with anything but everyday reality, yet prodromic, slumberingly aware of all things, teeming with symbols, and choked a-block with non-human entities. You'd be right. And for all these factors it is often condemned. Strange; the same factors when found in Joyce and Kafka merit praise.

The best of today's SF writers offer an experience which is parallel to but different from the modern novel. I'm referring to writers like Robert Silverberg, Philip K. Dick, Michael Moorcock, J.G. Ballard, Frederik Pohl, Ursula Le Guin, Ian Watson, Charles Harness, Frank Herbert, Arthur C. Clarke, Stanislaus Lem, Harry Harrison, James Tiptree and others.

No literary criticism has yet developed which can deal with Jekyll and with Hyde at one and the same time; with a novel by Graham Greene and a novel by Philip K. Dick. They represent two different kinds of consciousness, as do waking and sleeping. Both are essential to health.

Whilst the ordinary novel slumbers, paralysed perhaps by the gibbous awfulness of the twentieth century, SF makes its cislunar excursions. Year by year, its progeny grow. I have to inform you that last year SF accounted for between ten to twelve percent of all fiction sales. SF is of tremendous importance, yet is rarely sensibly discussed. When it is reviewed, it is confined to little cemeteries on the fringes of book pages, semi-hallowed ground like the sort of places where suicides are buried; so that its novels lie narrowly athwart one another like disturbed gravestones. Too bad; many responsible reviewers consider SF may now be enjoying a sort of golden age. Tom Hutchinson is one such.

You're all looking very serious. But I didn't mean to make you gloomy. After all, we speakers are supposed to be served after the meal like indigestion tablets. You need a film star like Michael Rennie, don't you?

I should tell you about some of the special purgatories reserved for science fiction authors, no matter how serious their intent. For instance they are invited to appear on BBC TV with chaps like Uri Geller or Dr. Magnus Pyke. They have to endure conversations with people who believe in Flying Saucers and telepathy and Atlantis and the Bermuda Triangle and acupuncture and God-as-Cosmonaut and raw seaweed and transcendental meditation and pyramids which sharpen razor-blades. They are introduced at literary luncheons with jokes about their having two heads or green skins. The Yorkshire Post is more enlightened, Mr. Chairman - and are scrutinised closely by their neighbours for signs of android-like behaviour.

To festivals of literature, SF writers are rarely invited. They are looked at askance by ordinary writers, who suspect they earn either far more or far less money than they do. (Both are true, by the way.) Even poets are wary of SF authors.

All this might suggest that I dislike being classified as an SF author. On the contrary. Although my first loyalty must be to literature, I owe a great deal to a field to which I have been able to contribute a great deal. And I enjoy working in an area which has scarcely yet been brought under the plough and still rings to the woodman's axe.

I'm regarded, I believe, as a difficult author because I detest comic strips and occasionally write an unexpected book. Nor do I keep to SF, or even to fiction. But the readership of SF on its more informed

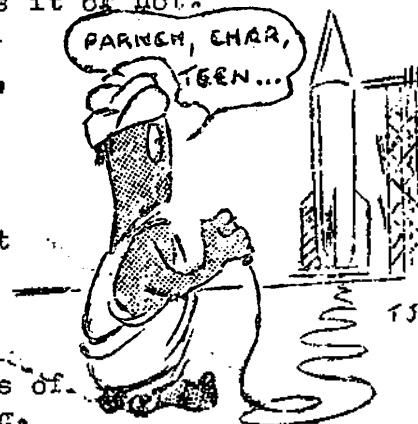
levels is remarkable patient, and will endeavour to comprehend what it at first finds incomprehensible.

These other great advantages of being an SF author must be declared. Firstly, it's so damned exciting. Over the last twenty years, SF has been a growth industry all round the world. Owing to external indifference from the Jekyll faction, SF writers and readers have remained close. I believe that bond is one of our greatest assets. Together, writers and readers formed their own audience, their own body of criticism, their own hierarchies; from them have emerged their own editors, reviewers and publishers in a truly remarkable outburst of activity. We have done it all ourselves, and given the world a new literature, whether the world wants it or not.

Secondly, that close relationship of interest spreads beyond mere Anglo-American realms, though there it is at its most powerful. I like travel, and my interests within the SF field have landed me as far away as Japan, the Soviet Union, Rio de Janeiro, Australia, and now Leeds. The University here, by the way, publishes an excellent amateur SF journal entitled "Black Hole".

There was a Third point, but my time's nearly up.

So I take some pride in the achievements of this extended family to which I more or less belong. Of course, if I were addressing that family instead of you, I should make a very different speech, caning them for how dreadful most SF is, how overloaded with gadgetry at the expense of thought, fancy at the expense of imagination. My armed state, my condition, not of guerilla warfare but guerilla affection, is more intense vis a vis the SF fraternity than it is with the general reading public. I mean, I behave slightly better here than I would at an SF banquet.



Someone asked me the other day what sort of a writer I was; I replied that I was just a popular novelist, but with ideas above my station. I believe that SF is the popular novel of today, with ideas above its station. Which is by no means the same as saying that it is stationary. SF has a long way to go yet, and I'd better sit down before I start telling you about that.

Brian W. Aldiss

and purely for ERG.....

Anything that endures is cause for celebration. The survival of ERG for twenty years moves me - who has survived twenty years as a professional author - to write a small crabbed acrostical verse, which I dedicate to ERG's editor.

O, erg is work's unit, while ergo lies

Between thinking and being in Descartes eyes-

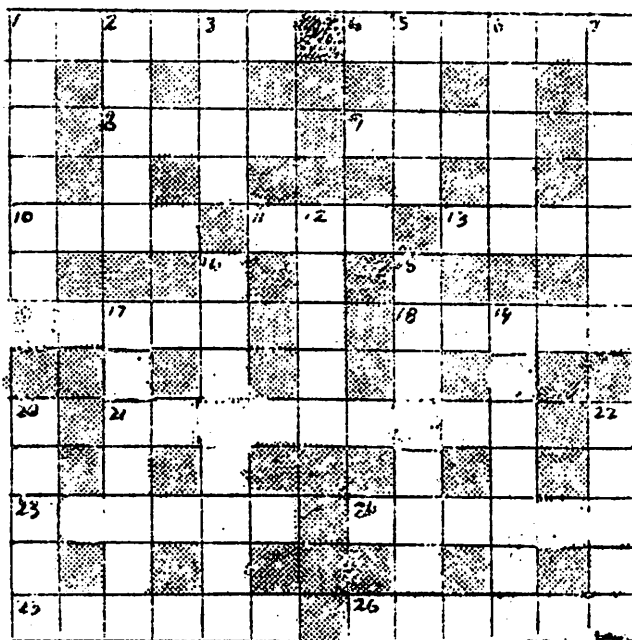
An ogre backwards. Long may energy

Sustain our thinking being, E.R.G. ,

A giant thrusting forwards o'er G.

Brian W. Aldiss

The EFG Crossword



Clues Across

1. One of the November meteorites
4. An backwards is an alkaline metal
8. Otto Olga and Olive hold implement
9. Author, Artist, and Fan now in USA
10. A world in arms
11. Arthur C. Clarke's fan nickname
13. Morlocks lured them for food
16. Au, Ag & Pt are called these metals
18. He was very common in 1984
21. Did Niven do it at Hoop-la?
23. Wears, of French held in love statue
24. Flashing light in best robes
25. African in Los Angeles produces a thin plate
26. Herschel found it.

CLUES Down

1. Optician in science fiction series?
2. A change of route may get you to these planets.. Jupiter, Saturn etc.
3. Half Safe Metal
5. A type of quartz
6. Weinbaum wrote, 'The
7. Campbell's was the mightiest.
12. Writer of 'One, Two, Three.. Infinity'
14. 'John Riverside's' real surname.
17. John Carter's name for ten across
15. A poor rate makes a worker
19. NOHJ? (3,4)
22. Its first two moves can be made in 400 ways.
20. The vanished race of 'Forbidden Planet'

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Through A Glass Darkly



Raising the glass to his nostrils the Tired Old Author took a cautious sniff. A little too much beetroot, he thought, and the treacle could have been a mistake but the jam gave body and the nettles added a touch of the unusual. In any case it was all he had and he sipped at the latest liver-burning vintage brewed in cobwebbed plastic containers in a moist and reeking shed. "Master !" His acolyte watched with wide eyes as the contents of the glass vanished down the pulsing throat. "Is it good ?"

It had alcohol and that was good enough. As Toa refilled the glass the lad said, "Is the quaffing of the magic potion the prelude to the construction of a mighty saga or does it help to rip away the veils of time and so allow your trained mind to study the shape of things yet to come ?"

Urine extracting ? Toa glanced sharply at the lad but the smoothly pimples face was bland and the eyes held no apparent gleam of malice. A dolt. A clod, why had the great scribe in the sky done him so ill ? Why couldn't he have had a lush and nubile maiden who would bend him

with fluttering grace ? A girl with pendulous breasts scented with jasmine and hips shaped like the curve of an hour-glass and hair rippling over rounded shoulders who would have been devoted to his welfare, dedicated to his needs, a humble worshipper at the shelter of his genius. Why -

"Master !" Toa sighed. A man had to take what he was given and, if that was damned little, so the cookie crumbled. "What is it ?"

"You were telling me, master, how to predict the shape of events to come." "I was ?"

"In the great sagas you promised to teach me how to write. The stories of other worlds and other races. The novels of the future when men had learned - you - promised, master. You promised !"

And he had too - in return for certain small considerations. But why couldn't the boy have been the nubile female he had described so often in the stories he had created ? Well, no matter, such a one would have caused his death in a week from acute frustration. But, by the Scribe, what a way to go!

"Master ?"

"All right !" Irritably Toa drank and poured and drank again. If he couldn't have the bird then he'd be damned if he'd forego the booze and if the little bastard kept staring at him in that way he'd wind up with a bottle in his skull. How had he managed to live so long ? In any decent civilisation such a snot would have been exposed on a hill for wolves to gnaw.

"What ?"

The acolyte repeated what the Tired Old Author had missed. "Another bottle master ?"

relocated, located and under 440 feet or

"Because for some God-knows what reason men seem to be convinced that they have to keep moving from one place to another. They could work round the corner, but no, they have to commute. The rich directors of companies, so-called intelligent men, go to great trouble, expense and inconvenience to cross the world to talk to their opposite numbers when they could sit in a chair and do it all by 'phone. Well that's the way the biscuit shatters - where was I?"

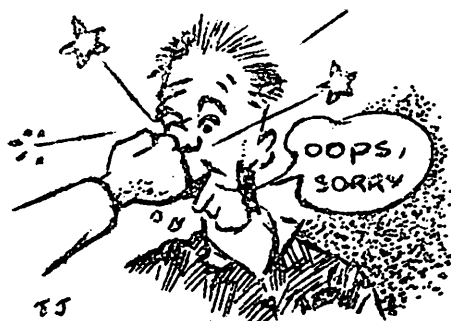
"The future, master. What will things be like in a hundred years time."

"Bloody awful, I guess." "Details?"

"Take your pick. One school shows that we'll be swamped in a stinking mass of pollution, the seas stagnant oil-slicks, morals down the drain, food short, noise everywhere, violence in the streets, no charity, care or concern. The cult of self rampant and up you jack I'm all right th slogan of government and -"

"Please master," said the pupil. "That's now. What about the future?"

"Moment." Another drink to sharpen the brain. The little bastard was smart - well, it rubbed off. I was just testing you. Remember what I said about extrapolation? Do that and we'll have a universal society in 2078 - everyone will be black or brown or stained to avoid being conspicuous.



Those mad enough to work will be taxed out of existence. Those making rules and regulations will be in there element. The time of the liberal do-gooder, when to be a victim of an act of violence such as mugging or rape will be to get prosecuted for the damage you've caused the attacker by bruising his hand with your nose, creating disappointment at not yielding him enough cash for his trouble, or causing pain and embarrassment by screaming or shouting for help.

The penalties will be severe for the disadvantaged and depressed and delinquent must not in any way be held to blame and you would have had no moral right to complain. In fact you are to blame for having provided an irresistible temptation."

"But, master, I was talking of a hundred years not a decade. We're almost at the point now. Another test?"

Another bottle would have been more useful. How to shut the slob up and at the same time persuade him of Toa's genius?

"I was pointing out the danger of simple extrapolation," said Toa with dignity. "Because of our association you, naturally, grasped the point quicker than the others would have done. The future, now let me see. Computers could play a part if they ever learn how to use them. Carry on as we are and everything will grind to a halt and the blame put on the machines. Food? What about food? I see the time when a firm will scoop the jackpot by using waste to make a sure-fire slimming food. Recycled shit, packed, flavoured, scented and shaped - it'll go right through. Or, no, maybe we've got that now." He reached for the bottle and tasted the stuff as it went down. Odd, now it seemed better than at first. At least he knew what was in it and that helped. "A hundred years."

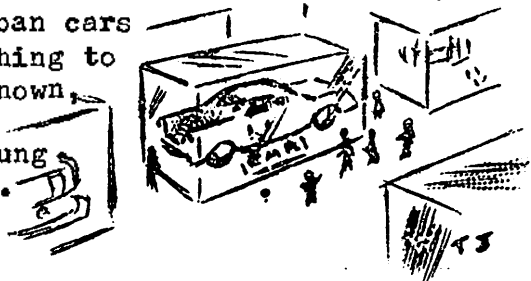
"Space."

"Space, master. What about the new space technology?"

"What about the Channel Tunnel?" The lad, he could see, was missing the point. "Look," Toa explained patiently. "We know how to build the tunnel. We have the machines for it, millions of unemployed who could provide labour - but we have no tunnel. Private enterprise could build it, but they aren't allowed to try. Politics, son, the old dirty game. No government will ever allow its captive taxpayers more individual freedom than they can avoid. Do you really think a government will allow some of its nationals to break free into space?"

"With the power we can win from the planets and solar energy and -"

"We've had the tides all the time, the winds too. How many tidal stations do we have? Windmills? Hydro-electric plants, atomic power stations? We've enough atomic explosives to kill everybody twenty times over but we can't use atomic power because that means we have to build an atomic power station and somebody might get hurt. So why not ban cars - they kill people too? Logic, lad, has nothing to do with prediction. Always there is the unknown, the unexpected factor. The invention of the internal combustion engine ended the horse-dung nightmare. Electricity, the soot spectre.... coal caused fogs... air borne acids... lung troubles - where's that bottle?"



As he handed it over, the acolyte said, "But don't you care? Doesn't it bother you what might happen to future peoples?" "No." "But, master, --"

"I won't be around," said Toa flatly. "That's the difference between us. You could, possibly, live to see it but never me. I'll be safely dead and the world can go to hell in a bucket for all I care." He sipped, swallowed, beamed. Maybe, the next time, he should add some bananas and maybe leave the drowned wasps in the brew - protein could help. "But I appreciate your concern, so let's do a little dreaming. Straight extrapolation is out so what have we left? Only the old faithful bricks on which to base our foundation. Greed, self-interest, ambition, hate and cruelty and the in-built lust for one man to tell others what to do. The power-complex which leads to wars and posturing and the piling up of guns while babies cry for milk and people go blind for the need of drugs the gun-pilers won't afford. You know what I think? Unless there's a plague of war to decimate the population - and I mean leave a tenth, not take one - we'll wind up with something from nightmare. One per cent will be at the top, eighteen percent will be seeing their orders are obeyed, eighty percent will be administrators."

"And the final one percent?"

"Will be doing the actual work."

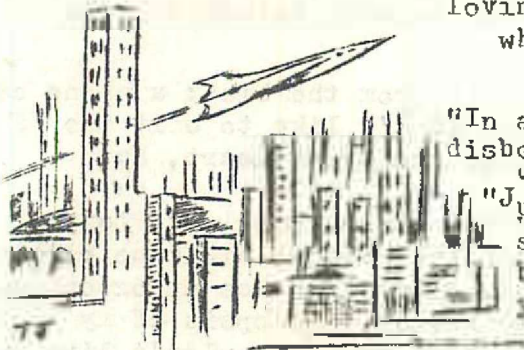
"Which won't get done."

"That's right." Toa took a refreshing swallow. The more he drank, the better tasting the brew became. "And they will probably be on strike anyway. Of course, there's an alternative."

"Master?"

"In a hundred years' time," said Toa solemnly, "the world will be a garden. The seas, clean, will be filled with aquatic life with coastal fish farms providing a wide variety of produce. The land will have healed itself and verdant foliage will cover the mistakes of previous times."

A world in which individuals will be treated as such, their dignity and pride recognised. All will work in harmony for mutual benefit and the concept of self will be alien as will the cruelty and mindless destruction of earlier times. No longer will living creatures be hunted for amusement; killed or tortured for sport, their skins ripped off to be used as fashion-apparel, their pain ignored for the sake of gaudy show. There will be no hunger and no waste. Medical treatment will be available to all with computers and electronic machines yielding all available information on request. There will be no stultifying authority, no need for lawyers, politicians, petty rulers, sadistic dictators. The land will provide and each will care for all. Love and concern will triumph. Space flight and technology will provide a fruitful harvest of invention and adventure, of romance and continual interest. Benign adults will breed loving and loved children. With no more than what we have at this very moment, the millennium will have, finally, come into reality."



"In a hundred years?" The acolyte stared in disbelief. "A single century?"

"Just that." Toa drained his glass and looked sadly at the empty bottle. "Of course those benign people won't be human - what the hell, you can't have everything!"

THE END.

E.C.Tubb

Followers of Ted's 'Dumarest' series will be pleased to know that No. 18 in the saga has just been released by DAW books for \$1.50. Titled, 'INCIDENT ON ATH', if you have difficulty in getting it, try Fantast Medway Ltd. of 39 West St. Wisbech, Cambs. PE 13 2LX ((Send SAE for their catalogue)) T.J.

ANTWERP CONVENTION. The SF Club of Antwerp celebrates its 10th anniversary with a Convention over the weekend, April 27-28 (Friday and Saturday) with Anne McCaffrey as G.O.H. All the fund of the fair, plus a limerick/poetry contest, war games, SF music etc. Write to Lou Grauwels, Lange Kievitstraat 27, 2000 Antwerpen. Ph. 031/31.15.84. Hotel is the Antwerp Docks Hotel. (Have a drink at the 'Cec'1' for me..and a stroll down the van Artevelde Strasse)

EASTWCON '79 If you're one of those happy people who can afford Worldcon AND another con, get along to the Dragonara Hotel in Leeds. Contact Alan Dorey, c/o Hermitage Woods Crescent, Woking, SURREY GU21 1UE. Con dates are April 13-16th. I might be able to pop over for the odd hour on Sunday.

FRAZZLED!

by
COLIN
LESTER

How did I come to think of putting together a Yearbook? Easy - I was asked to.

This was when I was particularly uncomfortable at the SFF, though leaving there wasn't easy. I was working for an M.Phil. there, was aware of the harm my leaving the research assistantship might do, and had all ready cancelled plans to leave, a few months before. Anyway, actual jobs in SF aren't that easy to find.

Towards the end of 1976 came a bolt from the blue: a phone call from Philip Dunn at Pierrot Publishing, asking if I'd like to edit the SF Yearbook they had in mind. Brian Aldiss, bless his great heart, had suggested me.

The arrangement I made with Pierrot wasn't ideal - a fairly normal author's contract for one issue, rather than the multi-issue retainer or salary a larger company might have offered... but this was an experiment, and I felt it was worthwhile doing. I showed Philip a synopsis of my ideas, he okayed it, and I started work. Literally, that is. I couldn't live on the advance, so took a part-time job publishing monographs for a learned society in Guildford. This wasn't such a good idea. The work was fascinating but poorly paid and tended to take over my life, edging out the Yearbook which was in a rather boring card-index stage, and a rather disappointing phase of discovering ~~by~~ many recommended foreign contacts didn't respond to my requests for information. By November I had to leave, so I bought a beat-up Minivan with the last of my salary and moved to friends at Bockenham to work full-time on ISFY.

I was behind on schedule and worried: this wasn't helped when, around December, the mid-April copy-date was brought forward by a month to satisfy the American trade publisher. The process of finding information sources from fanzines, personal contacts, etc; indexing them by item (with a separate card-index for each Yearbook section) and compiling a name-and-address index; cross referencing where necessary; and sending out postcards for more and more-detailed information. This process continued to escalate from November onwards, until at the height I was receiving about 50 items of mail per day. To complicate the matter, each item normally included information for more than one section, and had to be shuffled from pile to pile as each section listing was typed onto manuscript.

By January I had three typists working like beavers on the minimal rates (all I could afford), and from the 2nd of that month until mid-April I worked an average of 16 hours a day, 7 days a week: hence the title

of this article. At various stages ambitions were modified: attempts at completeness were limited to four main sections; the coding system would not be as simple as hoped, as more and more data had to be fitted into all ready coded sections.. At one stage I discovered that I was 50,000 words over the limit set by Pierrot. Cutting back on listings was painful, especially on the List of artists which was cut by about 90%. I got into such a state about this, I left the final decision to the publisher. Reducing the extent of my introductions and notes to each section also took time, and partly accounted for my over-running copydate...the revised one, that is. I kept hoping to attend Skycon right up until the last minute, but on my one night there (Thursday), I checked what still had to be done, and rushed home next morning to try and get it done. I thought I'd done it, too - until Philip told me, as I handed over the ms., that it had been due Friday, not Wednesday!

Money was a problem all the way through. A contractual limit on claimable expenses meant I had to use up my small savings to do the job properly. Mostly these came from my work on the Visual Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, and Sodis Law came into operation here: two days after I'd run out of money..I got a tax claim on it! Prevarication kept the ghoul at bay until I managed to borrow the necessary, but not before one of their alarming red letters had arrived, threatening to "distrain your effects". Actually, they wouldn't have found much of value, except the Minivan (pretty clapped out by now) and a hired electric typewriter (could they have taken that, I wonder ?) ... and the ms of course.

At times I felt they'd be welcome to it, and so did my helpers. Sorting out letters and fanzines onto piles was bad enough: worse, was sorting them into alphabetical order, integrating them with index cards, then trying to sort out what the correspondent was saying..not to mention making sense of contradictory data. One letter received the scrawled comment, 'These people are all mad - or am I? Now and then they seem quite nice. No, it's them, it's them'. We all felt like that at times.

Still, in my present sybaritic state, living on the American sale as it dribbles in, plus bits of freelance work and van driving, working at my own pace (often for nothing) I still look back on the concentrated energy and excitement with some nostalgia. When the excitement splashed over into paranoia it had some damaging effects - after 8 years of clean lungs I took up cigarettes again. But, at other times it was pure thrill, with a sense of something really worthwhile being accomplished, and a feeling of being at the centre of the world as information poured in from its four corners.

So I have mixed feelings about a second issue. The material benefits have so far been small; but I know now how to correct the imperfections of the first issue, and would like the chance to do so. Besides, the idea is to keep the thing updated. So, although I haven't been offered a contract for a second issue yet, I keep hoping that something acceptable will be put forward, and I'll have the chance of getting frazzled in a good cause once more. There's nothing like it - Thank God!

Colin Lester, 1979

EDITORIAL NOTE.. THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK,

Edited by Colin Lester,

Pierrot Publications \$2.95

If you haven't got a copy...
get one NOW !



LETTERS

BRIAN TAWN
29 Cordon St.
Wisbech
CAMBS PE13 2LW

ERG 65 is another good one, with a very tasty cover from Mike Roden (who has drawn the next Scribe cover). Good articles as always (especially the one from Phil Harbottle) but it's still the book reviews because they are a great help at times when I only have time to read about one book per week and want all the help I can get in picking the best.

BERNARD M. LARF
21 Moorfield Grove
Tonge Moor
Bolton

"I did not put 'methane would solve all our problems and provide fuel for the Zeppelins', but... methane would not solve all our problems, but would supply fuel for the Zeppelins' (((Sorry on that one, Bernard, I got overroome with the CH₄ fumes))). First, the cover. I like Michaels style, and it's fun to look at, but he will persist in putting far too many objects (planets, planetoids and moons) in his skies. His work looks like the start of a game of Veliko vakyian cosmic snooker, with all the 'balls' on the table. Mini-Ergitorial...quite a bit lighter weight than the last one, not that I'm against a bit of fun-and those examples were, your one about the weights reminded me of the 'Great Egg Race' (((Eric Needham reduced the number of weights to four..but his solution involved putting a ~~mc~~ on the other side of the pan to act as 'subtractive weights'.. legitimate, but not part of the problem as linking with the chess board run))Q

Graham Ashley
86 St. James Rd.,
Mitcham
Surrey CR4 2DB

I've now had time to read ERG 65 and as usual enjoyed it, especially the long 'Recent Reading' section. The large number of short comments on current books is just what I need to be able to see what is available. It's for this reason I like Phil Stephensen-Payne's 'Paperback Parlour'

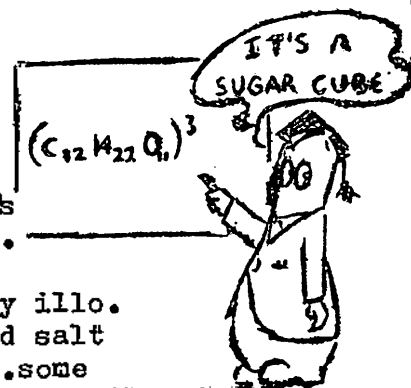
so much. (((Thanks a lot. This is precisely the reason I cover so many books in this way..to let people know what is available...NOT to produce a load of pseudo erudite rubbish on a few titles))). I was intrigued by Rog Pile's 'Flick Fantasies' and found myself unconsciously thinking of further examples. However, his comment that no SF novel is beyond the reach of the modern cinema seems slightly off centre with the cancellation recently of DUNE...it seems a shame after seeing some of the intricate designs Chris Foss had prepared for it. I suppose eventually I would have been over critical of the finished product; but somehow I still would have liked the chance to see what they'd made of it. (((This is one of the basic snags in transferring a book to the screen..one's 'mind's eye vision' often clashes with the producer's vision...and the inevitable reaction is.. "That's not how XYZ ought to have been". I'm waiting to see what they do with the Lensman series...some company is bound to snap that lot up for space opera)))

ERIC NEEDHAM
25 Lawnswood Drive
Swin t on
Manchester M12

Herewith some stamps for the cover of ERG 65 (((Now who wants to bid for the cover of this issue ???)) Very cheap

at the price too. It just makes me marvel when I look at it. I'd class it along with Arthur Thompson's robot with the riveted Christmas pudding, circa 1955.

As a change from all the pictures of flour dredgers in ERG (((Rotter))) I'm sending you an idea for a Soggy illo. I think it would make a change from sugar sifters and salt shakers. (((I wot not all these sifters and shakers..some esoteric American religious cult perhaps ? ..anyway, your illo is up there to the right...and your address up left for the brickbats)))



DAVE GRIFFITHS
43 Jacob House
Kale Rd
Erith
Kent.

ERG 65...varied, well written and readable. Only thing I wasn't too sold on was the length of the book review section. Would like to have seen a longer Ergitorial or a few more articles (((Economics..space is limited, and the reviews are very useful to most readers))) Enclosed is a short article along the lines you asked for. If no good, feel free to throw it away. (((Not likely, tis just what I wanted...and appears elsewhere)))

R.J. FAULDEN
P.O. Box 195
Coonamble
NSW 2829
AUSTRALIA

Sometime within the last twelve months (I think) Isaac Asimov had a short story-cum-article in which he described the world after the oil ran out. As you say, a frightening prospect. What never fails to amaze me is the short-sightedness displayed by so many people, for which there is no real excuse, given the amount of information available through the popular press..which isn't always accurate, but there is sufficient quantity to enable people to make a fair effort at sorting out the grain from the chaff. (((Unfortunately, too many prefer to bung their head in the sand and wait for someone else to solve such problems))) Petroleum is not just fuel, but also the raw material for dyes, pesticides, pharmaceuticals etc. (((A.C.Clarke advocates using it suitably converted, into a food protein source))) The Ashley and Banks pieces were fun but I hope they weren't meant to be taken seriously. Which White was Rog Pile referring to in his letter ? If James, how do I get hold of a copy of that letter. (((Yes, it was James White..but all issues have gone..but if some kind ERG reader would care to send their copy to Mr. Faulden ??)))

STEVEN J. GREEN
33 Scott Rd
Opton
Solihull
Warwickshire

Intriguing how your Ergitorial on world resources has escalated into discussion; I can't think of many fanzine editors who'd have taken the time to bring up the point in the first place let alone many readerships broad enough to respond. Regardless of how long we have before there's a loud slurp-slurping sound from the North Sea, the resources we depend on so much are NOT UNLIMITED. (((True..too true...but you try to get people to accept that fact. They burble about energy from windmills, pushbikes, donkey-powered treadmills..and never equate the power we use now with the power available from such starvation supplies..and even those won't help us if we don't develop 'em NOW))) Getting back to ERG..there are a few SF films I'd like to make...one of them all ready is STAR TREK (yes I'm a trekkie. (((Don't blame you. ST is still THE best (only) decent TVSF)))

Dave Kirkbride ERGitorially you came up with another poser, but as I don't
 Belle Vue possess a calculator I'm afraid I didn't appreciate it quite
 Carlisle as much as I might have. Now, FLICK FANTASIES touched on a
 Cumbria subject I love, and that is, dreaming up celluloid interpret-
 ations of some of my favourite books. Yet as Rog Pile

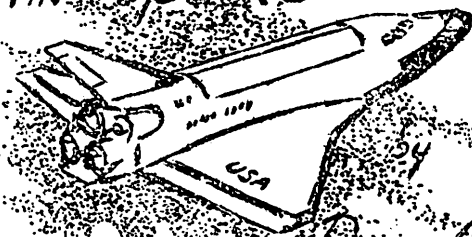
suggests, those SF books that could be made into excellent movies never seem to get considered. How on earth do you get through such a mountain of reading (((Combination of fast reading, and using every spare moment))) ..and oh what goodies I came across in ERG 65. Never let anyone talk you out of doing your 'RECENT READING' column. It must rate as the most informative in fandom. I suppose I should apologise for my comments listed on the wrap-around report sheet you sent my ERG in. (((Not at all, yours is only the second time someone has done that..and I enjoy it))) I must say, Terry that I could have read a few more LOCs this issue..then again, you is de editor, therefore de boss. (((Well, three pages of 'em this time. I don't like taking up too much valuable space on letters...balance is the old problem)))

Kevin Broxton (((Kevin has been dipping his toe into fanzine fandom by
 418 Leyland Lane trying out a few assorted fanzines..so I was delighted to
 Leyland receive the following from him..)))
 Lancs About a dozen fanzines have now arrived and very strange
 reading one or two of them make! The bottom of the pile
 seemed to plumb real depths of crudity. However, by way of compensation I found a couple of zines which really did give me a new angle from which to observe the SF field. Although TBH wasn't quite to my taste, I found ERG to be well worth the effort, the best of the bunch in fact, (flattery). The only thing I found objectionable in ERG 65 was a comment by Alan Burns in his FUTURE PERFECT where he refers to the increased crime rate being inspired by "bearded trendies that haunt our schools". It seems common practice these days to use the word 'bearded' as an insult, and as someone in possession of a beard for the last 10 years or so, I find this at best irritating and at worst, grossly offensive. (((Funny thing, one always talks of a bare-faced-liar, so the insults are not all one-sided are they ?))) Now that I have that off my chest, I must say that it is a pleasure to read an SF zine without stumbling over a dozen obscenities on every page. (((Which is just how I feel about it, hence their absence in ERG))). I was also pleasantly surprised at the variety of articles .. I enjoyed Phil Harbottles look at the SF anthology business in particular.

Alan Burns Many thanks for ERG 65. The cover reminded me very much
 19 The Crescent of the sort of thing one used to see in Amazing, pre-war,
 Off Kings Rd., nice shading work even if it was done with a Gestetner
 Wallsend On Tyne plate (was it) (((No, Letratone..or the US equivalent)))
 I know of now more rabbit starting thing than maths, wish I could do them. I was surprised that you didn't go into geometry and say that every naturally occurring curve in living things is an element of a logarithmic spiral. (((Now that reminds me of the oozalum burd which flies in ever decreasing circles.. and finally.....er, well))). Re your notes on my article. It has been observed that it would cost less to ship coals from Niagara Falls to New York and convert it into energy there, than it costs to send juice by wire. (((Coal in Niagara Falls ??? Seriously though... it depends on how far you have to send the juice by cable. Like ~~met~~ things, there is an optimum transmission distance, after that it's cheaper to move the energy source)))

S.T.S.

AN update



Dave Griffiths

Funding and technical problems have moved the original launch date of NASA's Space Transportation System (STS) from March to June, to September and now finally to a date within sight of Christmas or early 1980. The main problems are occurring in the Space Shuttle Main Engines (SSME's). With the exception of a rocket engine under development as part of an interim upper stage (to be launched from the cargo bay of

the Shuttle Orbiter) the SSME's are the most efficient chemical rocket engines ever developed. They will also be the first rocket engines to have a life expectancy of fifty missions before refurbishing has to take place.

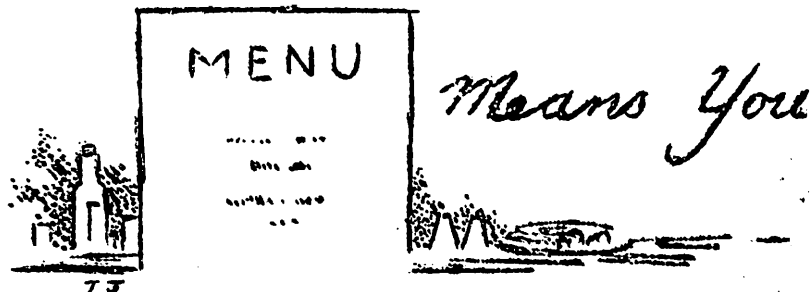
Two of the problems with the SSME's came to light last December. During a static test firing, an engine's heat exchanger failed. This is of some concern to Rocketdyne (the engine contractor) and NASA, since the heat exchanger represents a possible 'single point failure' in the Shuttle system. This conflicts with NASA's philosophy of redundancy to minimise risk. (The general concept is that no single failure will result in the loss of the mission and no two failures will result in the loss of the crew).

The purpose of the heat exchanger is to convert liquid oxygen to its gaseous state to pressurise the Shuttle's external oxygen tank. The precise cause of the failure is undetermined at the time of writing. Rocketdyne's vice-president and SSME program manager Dominick J. Sanchini, has said that they have been unable to find anything wrong with the heat exchanger from a design standpoint. The suspicion is that the problem occurred in the fabrication process, or in retrofits done in the area of the heat exchanger and which may have damaged it. In an attempt to reveal any further problems of the kind that caused the above difficulties, Rocketdyne is expanding its tests of heat exchangers prior to the initial static firing tests of each engine unit.

The second major problem in December occurred when an SSME suffered destructive failure in a test at the National Space Technology Laboratories, Bay St. Louis, Miss. Early indications of the problem which resulted in the loss of the SSME, point to a failure in the engine's main oxidiser valve. The design changes necessary to prevent a recurrence of the problem are viewed as 'minimal'. A more serious result of the failure will be felt, not so much in terms of flight safety engineering but in the time it will take to redistribute the limited key engine components, along with the modification and retesting of the oxidiser valve. As of December 1978, Shuttle engine tests have accumulated 34,810 seconds in 394 firings. D.G.

===000===

Lewis Vickers rides again...



by
Lewis Vickers

The shortage of food in the future is best discussed over a plate of succulent steak with all the fixings, washed down with a bottle of plonk and finished with coffee and Southern Comfort. Inner man satisfied, there comes the breadth of vision necessary to consider the matter of food or the lack of it in the future. I have noticed that the prophets of doom in this field are almost invariably thin, there could be a moral here somewhere.

But to get back to food. Recalling my childhood, which was a very comfortable one for the thirties, we had nothing like the food we have today. Instead of lots of carbohydrates and low proteins, in those times we stuffed into sirloins, great steak and kidney puddings, bacon and other meats, getting them down willy-nilly simply because, particularly in summer, it wouldn't keep. My people wouldn't entertain a fridge, and home freezers were yet to come. Now I put up ready meals in precise quantities that I know I can eat and thus, allowing for inflation, our food bill is lower.

This then, is the future, food I like. Consider what people like. Give a Hindu a great plate of steak and if he is true to his religion, he won't touch it. In the East, milk is taken as a laxative, mainly because it is sour almost before it is out of the cow. So the people there thrive on an almost meat free diet. Beast protein is expensive and wasteful, but since there are huge areas of the world where it isn't eaten, then we can have it for ourselves and enjoy it without being conscience stricken. But what of the starving ?...

Well, without doubt there will have to be a huge scaling down of population particularly among the classes which now have large families. Sex, it has been said, is the opiate of the poor, so to leave enough for everyone, the poor will have to be (a) found something to replace indiscriminate sex, and (b) made less poor.

This is not difficult really, use mass labour to replace machines. Five thousand people working on a dam mean five thousand wage packets to take home and spend. Money is only relative really, it needs no more in natural resources to use people, than it does machines, because if the people are going to eat anyway they may as well do something useful rather than sit around waiting for handouts.

Just lately, to violent protests from the distaff side of the family I've been experimenting with meat substitutes. Providing there is a bit more flavouring than normal I can detect no difference to my Chili con Carne... except that when I use real mince, it is cheaper! But there seems no valid reason why those who are poor can't have synthetic meat --- made in

bulk it would be cheaper. Those better off would be able to obtain real meat, thereby laying themselves wide open to an early demise from coronaries. On this point I recall a visit to a brewery I made some years ago. While still sober I tasted the product from the yeast drying machine. It had a land wafery taste and with a little butter and jam I could happily have eaten it for tea. So there is yeast to work at. In fact, the only problem stopping the hungry being fed tomorrow is money for research, partly into making yeast and soya products, but mostly into persuading the poor to use more contraceptives.



Howl, howl, howl, go the trendies and the Communists. Why is it always the poor to be reduced? Of course, the average poor will accept any government as long as the food is there and thus the Commies and fellow travellers hope to rule the world. But, oddly enough, we of the decadent West have the technology to provide this food. We filled the Russian bread-basket, foolishly forgetting to tie it up with seventeen ICBMs destroyed for every ton of grain sent to the comrades and their proletarian parasites.

So to summarise, this is what the future holds in my opinion. The better paid will eat better. This is part of the rewards of cleverness and hard work. The poor eat adequately but not excitingly unless they are able to do as I did during a brief period on the dole and produce a lot of tasty and filling dishes for next to nothing. There are of course, laws to regulate these matters. If you don't work through opting not to, you don't eat.***

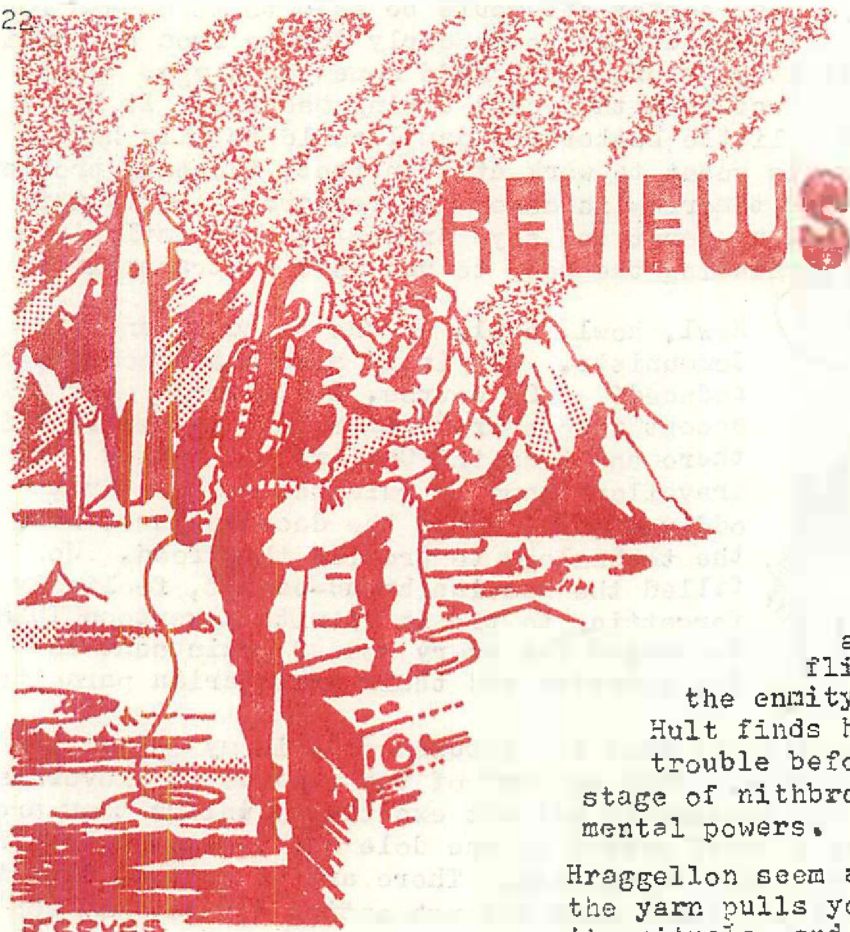
The food producers are regulated by government law and interference with distribution of food is punishable by life imprisonment. Oddly enough, I'm a great believer in social eating in canteens and restaurants, though mind you, the best meal is of course, toast by the fire on a winter's day as you discuss food and the future.

Lewis Vickers. 1979

*** (Unless you're striker. ED.)

((I lived in India for four years, and never saw milk drunk only as a laxative.. As for 5,000 workers...men and women built our new aerodrome in that way... it took ten times as long, and the food, housing, toilet and transport logistics were fearsome...as was the problem of dispersing them all afterwards.. T,J.))





FROSTWORLD AND DRUMFIRE

John Morressy
Sidgwick & Jackson 04.50

The Onhlang are a three stage life form on the ice-world of Hraggellon. Then aliens bring the 'shaking disease' which wipes out all save Hult who has just moved from his bestial stage into maturity. Legend has it that some Onhlang moved to another planet, so he sets off to find them, and a mate. This leads to an alliance with star-trader Dunan of the Sternverein and then to an interstellar flight during which he earns the enmity of an ambitious youngster.

Hult finds his bride..and a load of trouble before moving into his third stage of nithbrog and achieving enhanced mental powers. The planetary conditions of Hraggellon seem a bit suspect, but otherwise the yarn pulls you into Hult's saga with all its rituals, and strange creatures as it moves steadily - though never predictably, to the unexpected climax. It lacks the pace and panache of an Award winner, but is still a darned good yarn.

moves steadily - though never predictably, to the unexpected climax. It lacks the pace and panache of an Award winner, but is still a darned good yarn.

CATFACE

Clifford D. Simak
Sidgwick & Jackson
24.95

Asa Steele has a small farm on which is the hollow left by the suspected crash of an alien spacecraft, while in the local hills its occupant roams.. a being capable of opening roads in time. Then there is Hiran, a local

character who can talk with animals, and Rila, Asa's newly returned girl of twenty years ago.

Contact is established with Catface and roads opened to enable hunting safaris to operate in past ages. A new country, Mastodonia, is created to promote time travel and avoid the Inland Revenue Service. Just as the money starts to roll in, complications arise... trouble on a safari, religious pressure groups and Governmental immigrations plans get in the way.

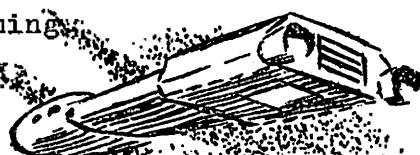
Simak has crammed more literary 'hooks' into the opening chapter than an angler normally packs in his tackle box. As usual, he leans heavily on the idyllic, pastoral life, painting the picture of a slow, sleep community in which there are no 'baddies' other than the background threats of big business, Government and suchlike. If you like Simak's peaceful prose, then you will enjoy 'Catface'.

Incidentally, this appeared in the USA under the Ballantine imprint, as 'Mastodonia', just in case you may already have it in your collection under that title. Personally, the S&J one seems much more appropriate.

MIRKLETH

Poul Anderson
Robert Hale 24.25

High space opera, spaceships zooming
in all directions and Nicholas
van Rijn pulling the strings
when the Baburites lay claim to



the super-heavy elements to be found in the post-nova core of a super-Jovian planet (According to latest theory, anything this size would be a sun.). Numerous other companies, groups, planets etc want a piece of the action and all seems set for a multi-cornered space war. van Rijn's troubleshooter Falkayn moves in. As is usual with Polesotechnic League adventures, the names, places and people are so numerous and involved, with long pauses while Anderson tells you what is happening and why, that half way through you have to backtrack to check up. However, van Rijn lovers can rush to add this one to their collections.

FUTURELOVE

Robert Hale
24.25

A Science Fiction Triad. Three authors have each chosen to explore an area of love, impossible as of now, but which might arise in times to come.

Anne McCaffrey's THE GREATEST LOVE concerns Cecily Kellogg who offers to carry her sister's baby to term once the husband has fertilised the ovum. Exogenesis is only a step beyond test tube babies...but in this case complications both legal and moral arise because the father is Cecily's brother. PSI CLONE by J. Hunter Holly tells of Minor, the world's only psionic Counselor, beset by loneliness and self doubt..and then faced with his 18-year old clone brother. What should have been happiness becomes horror when the youth plans to take over the world. Finally, LOVE ROGO is about how Janice and Jonathon save their marriage by adopting a B-mot pet from Detelgeuse. Love flowers...then changes its direction. All three are good, with McCaffrey and Holly neck and neck...but I felt PSI CLONE was just a shade ahead. Happy thing...each one holds the interest throughout

THE WORLD ASUNDER

Ian Wallace
Dobson 24.25

RP is a fleet of ships with the status of a nation and the self-imposed task of ensuring world peace - now threatened by the actions of Kali, a strange figure with supranormal powers who is working to destroy Earth by use of REM, the ultimate weapon. Psychiatrist, Lilith Vogel joins Policeman Dio Horse in a hunt for the latter's wife, conjured away by Kali. Their hunt leads them into a time-hopping mission as together with RP fleet commodore Mallory and eventually with Dior's wife, they fight to prevent Kali achieving his monstrous ends.

The action is complex and richly-detailed, with a strong romantic theme. It intertwines elements of time travel, multiple personality effects and even demonology; all of which are deftly crafted into one of the most compelling novels it has been my pleasure to read for quite a while. Definitely SF, but with that soupcon of fantasy which lifts it beyond the common rut and makes what I feel could well be an Award winner in short order.

FORTHCOMING TITLES.. STAR TREK PUZZLE MANUAL by James Razzi. An abridged edition of the large format edition. 128 pp. Corgi 85p

UNDERKILL.. James White. An extra-terrestrial plot aimed at curing Earth's terminal illness. Corgi 95p

THE MEASURED CAVERNS

James England
Hale. \$5.75

Sanctuary is one of several secret underground research establishments (it isn't quite clear who set them up), and 14 year old John C has been immured there in his educational cell since the age of four.

The only contact he has with any other being is with a mysterious 'Father' on his educational TV screen. John is happy with his lot until he manages to establish contact with another solitary student. By a freak accident he is released to the outside world which he finds to be not quite the way he had been taught. His problem is how to react to these wider horizons.

The tale moves smoothly and one hardly queries the basic situation or how it arose in the interest in John's unfolding life. However, there are quite a few implausibilities and his 'escape' is rather simplified, as is his return. This yarn really needs either a sequel, or a further hundred pages covering John's return to Sanctuary, even so, I found it very enjoyable reading and far superior to most first novels.

THE TOLKIEN SCRAPBOOK

Ed. Alida Becker
Grosset & Dunlap \$17.95

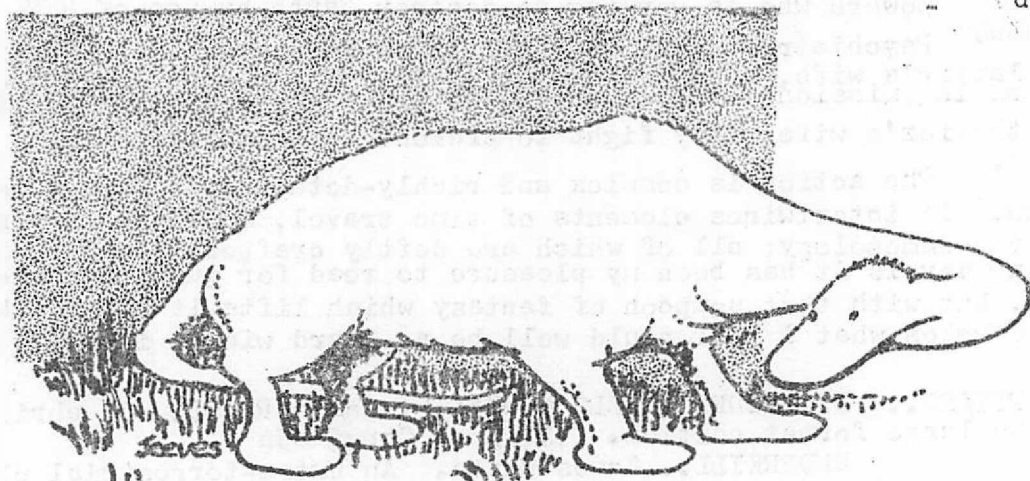
190 pages, coffee-table book size and beautifully illustrated throughout..mainly in black and white, but with 8 SUPERB colour plates by Tim Kirk which rival the works of Rackham or Dulac and completely capture the Hobbit spirit.

The text takes the form of a collection of scholarly articles and essays assembled from a variety of sources - including such Fanzines as 'Triode' and 'I Palantir'. The first half of the book gives a Tolkien biography followed by pieces examining his works, personality and aims. Then the Kirk portfolio makes an excellent half way breathing space before plunging into Part II.

This section is devoted to an examination of Tolkien fandom in an assembly of fanzine pieces, poems, puzzles and recipes for Hobbit food. There is Elvish writing (do people really write, read and understand this script?). Included are lists of societies, fanzines and books for further reading.

Layout is clear, attractive and the material of such pleasing diversity that no matter where you open the volume, a treat lies in store. While not a Tolkien fan myself, the sheer enthusiasm pervading this book could well

make me into one. Without doubt, a feast for Hobbit lovers so get your order in quickly.



THE DISASTER AREA

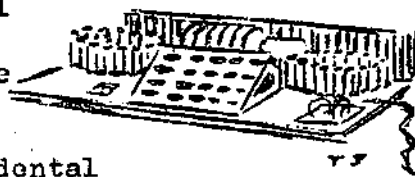
J.G. Ballard
Panther Triad 95p

In this nine-story collection, Ballard opens with a look at a volunteer/conscript (he is both, on consecutive pages) fighting an invasion of giant birds. Then a student finds he is living in a Mobius Megapolis. Next, the horrors of large-scale subliminal advertising and on to involuntary time travel; psychiatrists denying the reality of a missing patient; regression to infancy; a multiplying personality; a sleep-deprivation experiment and an aspect of organ transplantation. While disliking Ballard's longer works for his method of ignoring implausibility and ploughing on with the story, I found the ~~system~~ acceptable in these shorter yarns giving them added pace, sparkle and continuing interest.

THE MAN WHO BROKE PURPLE

Corgi 35p
Ronald W. Clark.

Col. Wm. Friedman came as near to being indispensable as one is likely to get...and found it didn't lead to wealth and power. This is the factual biography of the American master cryptanalyst and describes in fascinating, but not overly technical detail of how he was first attracted to cc** and cyphers (a ~~bizarre~~ story in itself). From there he moves on to cracking the top secret messages of the Great Powers and eventually the Japanese top level cypher, 'PURPLE'. There is plenty of incidental information on various cypher machines..but ~~say~~, only the mere mention of the British Typex machine which I had the fortune to work on in 1943. One doesn't really get to know Friedman, but the glimpses behind the espionage and intelligence scenes make this more gripping than any fictional work.

THE STARLESS WORLD

Gordon Klund
Bantam 75p

Not an episode re-write, but an original STAR TREK novel in which the Enterprise is hailed and boarded by 'Jesus Christ', then drawn within a Dyson sphere by the powers of a God. Once inside, Kirk and his men encounter a race of aliens, mysterious 'undead' strangers and a band of Klingons, trapped like themselves. The latter have no real part in the story other than to add a touch of menace. The story builds up smoothly with each puzzle piece adding to the mystery, but somehow the ending lacks the power of the opening. A pleasant read, but nothing to lock away in your nitrogen-filled vault.

DAY OF THE DOVE

Bantam 95p

STAR TREK Fotonovel No. 7, in which the crew of the Enterprise answers a distress call only to find the colony which sent it has been wiped out. Klingons arrive on a vengeance mission for a similar assault. Each side blames the other and beaming back to the Enterprise Klingons and Kirk's men find their phasers changed into swords. Bloody battles ensue before an alien force entity is found to be at the root of it all. One or two of the 'shots' are repeated, and the overall editing is not as tight as in earlier Fotonovels...but once again, it allows you to put a favourite episode in your pocket.

MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Robert Silverberg
Panther 75p

Roy Walton of Popeek (Population Control) uses his authority to save a child from euthanasia..then in fast order, his boss is assassinated; Walton becomes Popeek Director, a star ship returns with news of alien life, Venus terraforming is introduced and Walton's brother sets out to blackmail him. Plenty of coincidences and improbabilities, but the yarn moves along so smoothly that they do not detract from one's interest in Walton's circumstances. Very good reading and with a better cover than that which adorned the hardcover.

ACROSS A BILLION YEARS

Robert Silverberg
Methuen Magnum 95p

In some ways, this reads like one of Heinlein's better juveniles. Tom Rice is on his first archaeological dig on Highby V when films showing the lost race of 'High Ones' are found. These lead on to a bigger 'find'..and this in turn leads to another. Things pile up so quickly and so easily, that there is considerable wonder piled on wonder. Read this one for fun and maybe a bit of the old sense of wonder...and give it to nephews, or other people you want to interest in s-f. (resemblance)

CAPRICORN GAMES

Robert Silverberg
Pan, 80p

Silverberg in his more normal (and slightly morbid) vein with a collection of eight yarns. He tells of a young girl yearning for immortality; the chaotic mind of a reader of SF; an equally chaotic piece on time travel, and a third on the time/space wanderings of a story teller. In happier mood is telepathic interstellar communication; reincarnation problems in a Jewish colony...and on to curing mental illness (or trying to) and a future city/stage facing death when its computer programme is filched. I'd rate this 50-50 (Half new wave..half normal story) When Silverberg disciplines his writing, the result is excellent...with this collection I reserve judgement.

THE VIEW FROM SERENDIP

Arthur C. Clarke
Pan 95p

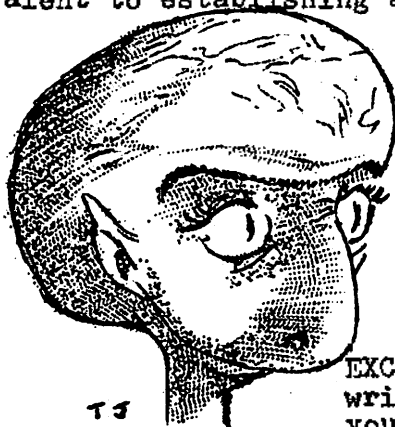
Giving me a Clarke book is rather like putting food before a hungry man. I snap it up and can't wait to finish the lot. This one proved an even better treat with some 25 articles culled from a variety of sources. Sunken treasure/space pioneering/2001/Mars/Satellites, Prophecy/Ley and Bohestell, etc and etc. Mr Clarke may not write with the depth of his rival Asimov, but he outshines the latter in readability and if you think the theme of article anthologising has been done too often..this one goes a stage further by interspersing..and linking, each item with fascinating biographical details of the author..and his life in Sri Lanka. Jam-packed with ideas, trends attitudes and possibilities.... VERY highly recommended

THE IRON SKY

Coronet 95p
Adrian Berry

Basing his thesis on the idea that the speed-of-light barrier only applies in 'normal' space suggests that a rotating black hole would be forced out to a flat, ovoid-section disc and that a spacecraft could enter this edge, avoid the singularity and emerge via a white hole, in another galaxy. The process sounds equivalent to establishing a synchronous orbit around the moon, then easing gently to the surface!! and in the case of a black hole would involve a velocity of 116,000 mp.sec. Apart from tidal and radiation effects, I would imagine the 'real' g forces would suck in the craft, even if the rotation cancelled most of the star's own mass effect. Nevertheless, Mr. Berry makes a good case - including details of how we would fund such a project and make our own Black Holes. In addition you get appendices on Black Hole calculations, on Einstein's theories, also a comprehensive glossary, reading notes, a bibliography and an index.

EXCELLENT reading, thought-provoking, and mandatory for writers of hard core sf. Very much worth while even if you disagree with many of the ideas expressed.



THE DEADLY YEARS

Star Trek Fotonovel 11
Bantam 95p

Kirk and Co.
land on Gamma Hydra IV
and find their bodies are
suddenly starting to age
rapidly. A race against
time to find a cure is
mounted, and Kirk even

loses his command before the problem is solved. 300 or more 'Star Trek
stills tell the story..and to those who know the quality, no more needs to
be said.

UNDANGEL

James White
Corgi 95p

Picture a future of rationing, overcrowding, pollution and mob
violence, with energy supplied by 'powerwalkers' on treadmills.
The Malcolms work in a large hospital and unearth a strange plot
mounted by aliens, to kill of millions of people in order to
cure Earth's terminal diseases -- overpopulation, depletion of natural
resources, food shortages and xenophobia. The author (keenly interested in
medicine) compares the 'cure' to the removal of malignant body-cells. The
medical detail abounds. This is not another 'Sector General' medical problem
but a chilling look down the road we seem to have chosen.

THE GLOADES

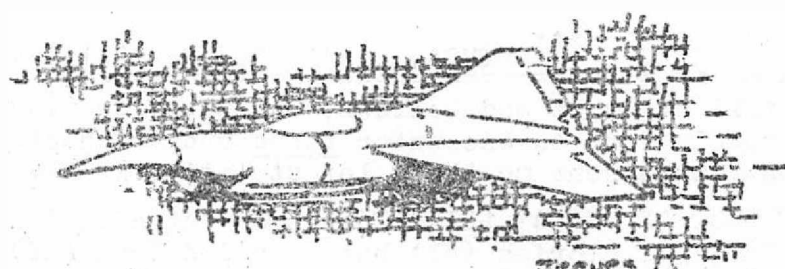
T.M.Disch
Panther 85p

First published in 1967, this is a powerful post-disaster
novel in which a small group of survivors, headed by the
Anderson family struggle to eke out an existence. The
disaster mechanism takes the form of aliens fire-scouring the
planet, then seeding it with giant plants. Roaming incendiary machines seek
and wipe out surviving groups and three of these uproot the Anderson colony
driving it to an underground existence. Not for the squeamish, but still
compelling reading for those who don't want everything
sugar-coated and tied up with pink ribbon.

SECOND FOUNDATION

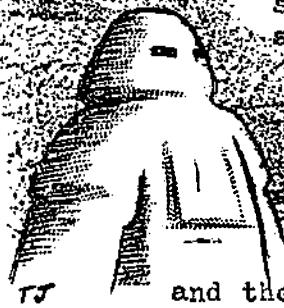
Isaac Asimov
Panther 75p

Just in case there are any ERG
readers who have not read and
enjoyed the 'Foundation' trilogy,
this is the third in the series
wherein the independent Traders unite with the
Foundation against the telepathic Mule who appeared
in Foundation and Empire. His actions and mind
control powers as he sets out to pacify the Empire,
threaten Seldon's great plan to shorten the
Interregnum. Well worth reading again..but if you
haven't read it before, then it will be worth your
while to buy 'FOUNDATION' and 'FOUNDATION AND
EMPIRE' first. I guarantee you'll not regret it.



FUTURA...BALLANTINE, 'Del Rey' Books
 =====
 The road to Nirvana is full of lumps and hollows, but with few pinnacles of delight - so it is extremely rare to encounter three such pinnacles at one time..as happened when Futura sent me their latest titles in the 'Best Of' series.....

THE BEST OF MURRAY LEINSTER has an introduction by J.J.Pierce, followed by 13 stories (all but 3 culled from Asf). There's a solution to how should man react should he meet aliens; the harsh realities of space travel; a computer which details the perfect murder and an alchemist's brush with a time traveller; gorm warfare, an immortal man and many other top level tales.



THE BEST OF LESTER DEL REY has a Pohl introduction, 16 stories and an author afterword. You meet the female robot, 'Helen O'Loy'; a wandering gnome in the 20th Cent.; life after death, A Martian exploration, and the lovely tale in which robots create humanity. There's a young ghost and the sadness of the last Neanderthal, plus other delights.

THE BEST OF L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP sees Poul Anderson introducing 18 tales and a word by De Camp. What happens when humanity goes hairy; a fact article on 'Language For Time Travellers'; a reporter who can live underwater; an immortal; a mermaid in a swimming contest; fantasy and magic, all blended with De Camp's unique blend of humour and imagination.

Priced at 85p each and boasting superb covers (Look out for R2D2 lurking in a corner) they represent superlative value. Close your eyes and pick any of them..you'll be sure of a winner, but be even wiser and get all three for a real reading treat...or gift for anyone you want to hook on SF.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Larson & Thurston
 Futura 90p

After 1000 years of warfare, Cylons and humans meet to sign a peace treaty but a treacherous attack wipes out the human fleet apart from the giant Galactica and the survivors limp off in search of a haven in which to rebuild their forces. Again, they are ambushed and are forced to fight for their lives before heading off into space...and a future return.

The space battles come straight out of 'air war' tales. The spacecraft not only 'bank' but are even referred to as aircraft. Otherwise, though not great SF, it will acquaint you with background and characters ready for when it hits your screen...and there is the bonus of an 8 page colour section

THE LONG RESULT
 John Brunner
 Fontana 85p

Roald Vincent is happily plodding along as Assistant Head of the Bureau of Cultural Relations when things start to go wrong. A starship is sabotaged, then a ship from Starhome dumps some alien visitors into his care and an attempt is made to kill them. Next comes an attack on Vincent himself. All the events are linked with the xenophobic 'Stars Are For Man League', with further complications in the shape of a colony which has now surpassed Earth and an alien race which is not quite what it seems.

A fast moving yarn, always intriguing with never a dull moment. The author not only juggles several plot lines, but brings them all together in a highly satisfying conclusion.

THE GRAND WHEEL

Barrington J. Bayley
Fontana 60p

The Galaxy is officially ruled by the Legitimacy, but the gambling syndicate of the Grand Wheel has almost equal though undercover power. To aid them in their battle against the alien Hadratics, the Legitimacy coerces randomatics expert, Cheyne Scarne to infiltrate the organisation and secure the secret of the Luck machine. Scarne finds himself a player in a fantastic gamble when the Grand Wheel's leader puts life and empire into the pot in a game against the gambling syndicate of another galaxy..the play involving a cosmic contest with variable rules. A fascinating yarn, quite lightweight but lively and entertaining throughout.

STALKING THE WILD PENDULUM

Itzhak Bentov
Fontana 61.25

The title is obtained by extrapolating from the microcosm to the macrocosm since if we can never know with accuracy both position and motion of a particle (Heisenberg), then what happens when a pendulum reverses. From here, the author links universal and biorhythms to magnetic and static fields to develop a new theory of meditation, psyche and consciousness.

Illustrated throughout by the author's own amateur but highly informative line sketches, I particularly liked the summaries at each chapter end and the opening section on sound waves and vibration is one of the best popular explanations of holograms I have ever encountered

THE FUTURE MAKERS

Ed. Peter Haining
Methuen Magnum 90p

Eight stories, the first or early work of today's big name authors. Leinster tells a hilarious tale of a device which duplicates money..and people. Asimov has a weapon too terrible to use..but it is of course. Then Sturgeon has a bulldozer leaping time and space; Bradbury describes how music frees Mars of a Jovian yoke. Heinlein looks at the reactionary attitudes of tomorrow's citizens and a rare Clarke tale is of a being composed of radiation. Shockey has a lovely item on mind-controlling aliens and Aldiss winds up with a high speed bit of alien v human blood and thunder. All good reading with black and white characters in evidence. Much of the fun lies in seeing how each writer has developed (or failed so to do)

ECHO ROUND HIS BONES

Thomas M. Disch
Panther 75p

When Captain Hansard takes a vital message to Mars via matter transmitter, it seems a routine task..until he finds himself

also recreated back on Earth as an ethereal 'echo'. He encounters two groups of 'ghosts' before he finds that his message was an order precipitating nuclear war. The problem is how can an impalpable ghost prevent the holocaust. Apart from the writer's irritating habit of stepping aside from the action to make omniscient comment, I found this a pleasing and nicely paced novel

MUPPET fans may be interested to know that FONTANA have also issued THE COMIC MUPPET BOOK at 99p in the Lions series. Presenter is Graham Thompson and the advance note says..'Large format colour illustration throughout'. Aimed at children, but don't let that stop you..after all, you can read it before making a present to someone.



EXILES ON ASPERUS

John Wyndham
Coronet 75p

Three tales originally written under the 'John Beynon' name and appearing respectively in 1933, '51 and '52. 'Exiles' is about a revolt by Martian prisoners which leads to their ship landing on Asperus, encountering castaways, and a race of winged aliens. 'No Place Like Earth' has Bert, a tinker on Mars after Earth's demise, joining Venusian colonists, but opting out because of their cruelty. 'The Venus Adventure' sees explorers encountering two tribes, offshoots of an earlier expedition. The stories are rather dated..Venus is a tropical planet, and characters lean strongly to black and white, with strong overtones of colonialism. Nevertheless, if your taste is for high adventure and clashes with aliens, then you can try your luck with this collection.

THE RED LIMIT

Timothy Ferris
Corgi 21.25

A factual look at current cosmology opening with a look at the background to stellar astronomy, then on to Einstein's prediction of an expanding universe. The book's title stems from the fact that the farther a star is away, the faster its speed of recession as evidenced by the Doppler 'red shift'. At the limits of observation speeds of 90% of light have been estimated, and this marks the 'Red limit'. The writer examines this and other theories of cosmology, in prose which if not as lucid as Asimov's, is more poetic. I wasn't too happy about 'several telescopes of 200" or larger have been built"..offhand, I think only one 236" exceeds the Palomar reflector. Some nice anecdotes and a photo section round out an excellent volume.

AND TO FILL this page..comments on some titles which I bought over the counter.. Not necessarily current releases, so I include dates.

EYES ON THE UNIVERSE

Isaac Asimov
Quartet 2.75 1978

260 pages (13cm x 20cm) with a short photo section. Traces the history and techniques of astronomy from the Greeks to the present day ..with a glimpse into tomorrow. Coverage is understandable and comprehensive with some fascinating details on reflectors, refractors, radio telescopes, particle research, pulsars, quasars black holes and even a section on how space travel has contributed to astronomy. Highly recommended to anyone interested in astronomy.

THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES

Isaac Asimov
Panther 60p 1975

Two collections of articles from F&SF. This one knocks the stuffing out of Velikovsky and astrology (Hooray), then moves on to Newton's laws, how the mass of the Earth was estimated, the elements, scientists, Nobel Prize work and a few others.

THE LEFT HAND OF THE ELECTRON

Asimov.
Panther 75p 1976

Parity, polarisation, planetary life and population are followed by prime number theory, Shakespeare, conditions for life, crystallography and a look at how Archimedes came to shout Eureka.

Both collections are highly entertaining, and not the least as a result of Asimov's habit of commencing each essay with an autobiographical anecdote.

AND FOR COMPLETISTS..Edward Arnold have brought out a new series of Remedial Reading Books... 'VARDO'..a bionic man. 4 titles so far, written by David Wood and Phyllis Edwards.

