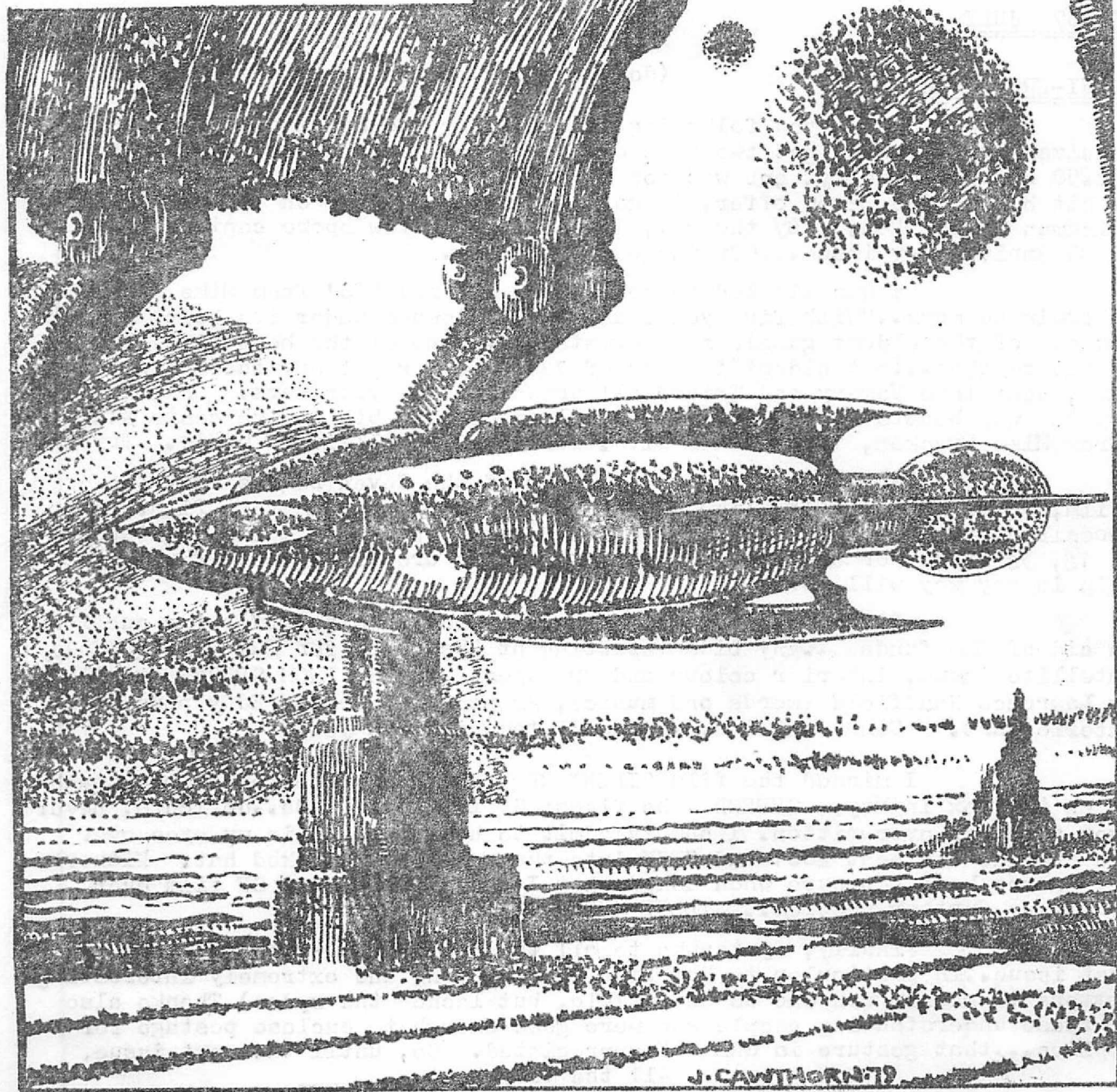


ERG QUARTERLY

No. 67 JULY 1979



ERG

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230 Bannerdale Rd.,
Sheffield S11. 9FE.

Ph. 53791

No. 67 JULY 1979

SUBSCRIPTION U.K. 4 issues for £1.00
RATES USA 4 issues for \$2.00
(dollar bills, not cheques please)

MINI-ERGITORIAL

Thank you folks for the bids for the original of the last Anniversary cover..I got two bids of £2.00 each, then a further two of £2.50 each...actually, one was for five dollars, and since that came in a bit before the £2.50 offer, it gained the cover...now on the way to Lynn Hickman in the USA. By the way, I still have a few spare copies of the 20th Anniversary issue...40p including postage.

I was tickled to get a copy of 'KNIGHTS' from Mike Bracken wherein he says.."With five years and twenty issues under its belt, KNIGHTS is one of the oldest genzines in existence"...one of the best Mike..I'll agree to that...but oldest? one of ?? Sorry right off the top we have ERG, Scottishe Vagary and Triode all around the 20 year mark. KNIGHTS, by the way boasts 40+ superbly produced pages..its 5th Annish costs \$1.50 from Mike Bracken, 1810 Ramada Blvd. Collinsville, Illinois 62234. Try it.

WANTED...the Marching Song of the Seven Dwarfs from the film, 'Snow White'. I'd like a recording to use on an amateur film..if possible, a vocal rendering..but music only acceptable. I can dub tape at 1/8, 3/4 Or 7/8 or cassette mono or stereo..so drop me a line if you can help in any way will you?

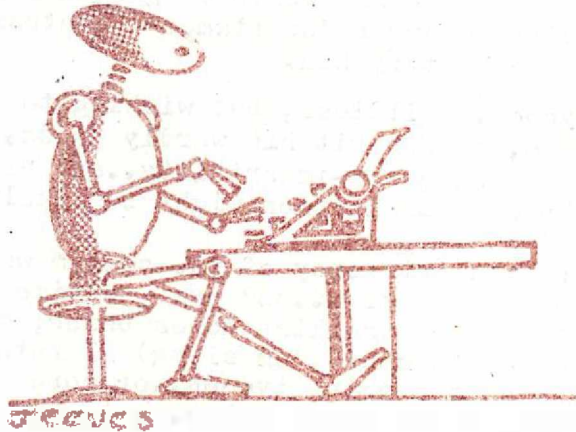
DOUG YOUNG has mailed me two old items to offer for auction in aid of ERG funds....any bids (starting at 25p each) for ERG 9 (Aug.1961) Satellite issue, interior colour and 20 pages. SONGS FROM SPACE, compiled by Lawrence Sandfield (words and music), 22 pages, cover by Eddy plus some interior art. Come on folks, you can't take it with you.

I missed the film SILENT RUNNING first time round..but caught it on the box in May. SUPERB..The finest SF film ever made..delicate, never over acted or overwritten. I humbly admit to having tears in my eyes over the ending. It bent 2001 and CE3K into the proverbial cocked hat. Hitherto I've never been too sure when asked what I thought the best SF film ever made...no further problem...SILENT RUNNING wins hands down.

Finally, my thanks to all the people who wrote in about the last issue..in particular to Rog Pile for two long and extremely interesting letters (I nearly ran one as an article, but lacked the space) Thanks also to those understanding people who were good enough to enclose postage for replies...that gesture is GREATLY appreciated. So, until the next issue,

All the very best,
Terry

EDITORIAL



Every so often one hears or reads some headline such as :-

'TEST TUBE BABY BORN IN WIGAN'

After a brief glance one passes on to the next item..such is the way in which the science-fictional becomes the commonplace. It is only a matter of time before test tube babies join manned space flight, atomic bombs, robotic devices and colour, satellite TV in the limbo of wonders no longer deemed newsworthy. After all, why waste time and space on such ephemera when there is always the great god 'Sport' demanding ever great sacrifices in the way of news time and print.

However, harking back to that 'test-tube' baby, it is interesting to look at what has been achieved so far and where high, wide and handsome speculation may lead us in the future... maybe even within our lifetimes.

Strictly speaking of course, a 'test-tube' baby isn't that..indeed, it would seem that test tubes play little or no part in the process. Pundits will no doubt shoot me down from all angles, but I gather that what has been done, is the removal of an ovum from the mother. This has been fertilised and then returned to her body for carrying to term. A marvellous achievement but apart from aiding that small number who want children, but can't manage things directly, where will it lead ? Not to a population explosion, that's for sure. Most people will still prefer the greater entertainment value of the normal method. I suspect that there will be a far greater demand for the technique in a slightly different form. The fertilised ovum will be replaced, not in the body of its proper parent..but in the womb of a host-mother! This idea has all ready been speculated on in fiction in Anne McCaffrey's 'The Greatest Love'..but here, it was only because the would-be real mother lacked the physical ability to carry the child. Suppose that the real mother just didn't want all that messy inconvenience ? There are always enough people around with plenty of money..and others so desperate to acquire it, that I fancy pretty soon, figure-conscious Mrs. Potsocash will pay little Mrs. (or Miss ?) Lacklolly to do the job for her. Simply a few days in hospital, and back to the social whirl, leaving the host-mother to soldier on for nine months before bringing a gene-perfect little Potsocash into the world.

Decadent ? Most certainly, but when did that stop anyone with money to burn ? Pretty soon, it will be a competition to see who is first in the morning coffee circle to have 'mothered' such a child. Is anyone willing to bet me that it won't happen that way ?

A closely allied topic is cloning..in which several cells are clipped from the parent body, then grown in a suitable solution and environment, to maturity.... and a fully operational copy of the parent. So far, I've only read of this being achieved with carrot cells...I don't credit the recent

4
sensational newspaper reports of a human clone. Nevertheless, such a being will eventually be created...it is only a matter of time. Given such methods, we could see a population explosion...but maybe not in the family way to labour a double pun. Can you imagine the creation of muscular labour gangs, personnel for the armed forces, cadres of great men and women of genius such as Einstein..or Asimov ? No doubt there will be super 'sportsmen', statesmen or entertainers, all hatched like eggs from a battery hen.

Another aspect could be the aging tycoon, childless, but wishing to establish a dynasty of others, just-like-him, to inherit his worldly goods. A military dictator might wish to ensure his own quasi-immortality..and also supply him with doubles to send on jobs where assassination might be likely to happen.

The in-built drawbacks to cloning are the intricacy of the system when compared with the natural method. It is more expensive..and just as time consuming.(Our immortal dictator would have to endure his clones being, say, thirty years his junior at all times .. no way to speed 'em along) I rather fancy that only long-lived institutes..such as the aging tycoon..or more likely, governments..will find the technique of any great value.

Consider organ transplants. Once science has conquered the rejection-response and any body can donate to another...then what price the chances of Government clone-farms...whereby extra healthy bodies are reared in hundreds simply to ensure a steady supply of hearts, kidneys, liver etc. for those whose own equipment has packed up. Fantastic ? It's a rash man who says that about any scientific research these days. Unethical ? Ethics are what you make them..there is no universal ethic...and when the choice is transplant or die, ethics can get a bit blurry at the edges.

Doubtless, black market transplant houses will arise. There's money in it, so someone will have a go. Maybe via cloning, but a cheaper method exists for those willing to flout the law. Beware of dark alleys when this era arrives - you might wind up as replacement parts for half a dozen others.

All this refers to human clones...but how about animals ? I fancy this is a neglected (by SF writers) area which will really see development. One champion bull can clone-father hundreds..or even thousands in the same time he could normally sire a handful...and all the offspring would be of the same high quality. Log that up as a first step - an endless supply of high-grade food animals...and inevitably, another line of race horses.

Genetic engineering by way of tinkering with their DNA might transform them even further, possibly towards specific ends. Hornless, hoofless and excessively meaty beef cattle with short legs for instance. Horrible to contemplate, but so is starvation. Since man has transformed the bulldog, the Pekingese, the milk-cow and the battery hen I see little chance of him saying no to efficiency-designed cattle.

In happier vein, we might expect better drugs and medicines..and our life spans edging higher and higher..BUT, not actively so. As more and more live to the 80 mark, the more each younger person will have to shell out to support pensions, food, housing and suchlike for the octogenarians. Sooner or later some joker will find which hormone triggers off old age and death.. and a suppressant for it will bring immortality .. followed by a food shortage, a population explosion..and no doubt a war to end all wars.

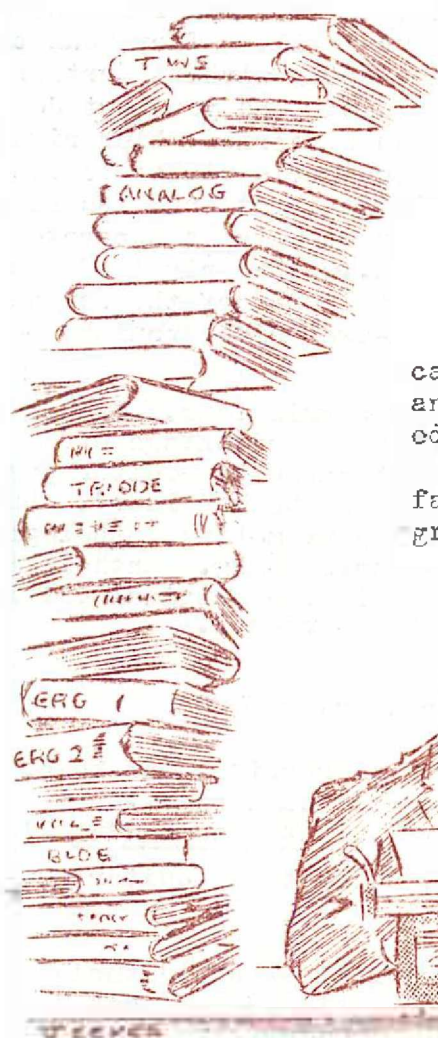
A cheerful prospect for our Brave New World, but we can rest easy. It won't happen in our lifetimes or will it ? It might be later than we think.....but after all, it's only speculation or isn't it ? T.J.

The Perils Of The

S-F ANTHOLOGY

(part 2)

by Phil Harbottle



In ERG 65, I described some of the pitfalls that can befall inexperience, would-be SF anthologists; and how they can be ripped off by unscrupulous editors.

But the picture is not entirely a sour one. The fan can get to edit his own book - and derive a great deal of pleasure therefrom. The encapsulation in one volume of some of your favourite stories, with some introductory material under your own by-line, does reflect some degree of creativity. Whilst this cannot compare with selling your own stories, it is a good substitute.

There are yet pitfalls to be avoided, especially those involving finance and economics. Some of the following points may seem obvious, but more than one would-be anthologist (including this writer in a more youthful phase) has been unaware of them..and come a cropper!

The book rights of individual stories published in magazines usually belong to their author (especially an established author). This means that before contracts for anthologies are signed, you should obtain the author's permission. This should ideally be done by contacting his agent, but you can also write direct to the author (who will then put you in touch with his agent). Sometimes the author will agree to your offer and pass you on to his agent to formalise matters. This can peeve the agent, because it prevents him haggling with you for a better offer (and more commission). Try and contact the agent first, if he is known to you - or ask the author to put you in touch.

You are then set to conclude individual deals - often by letter only - the form of which will be suggested to you by the author's agent. The larger agencies have a pro-forma letter which both parties sign. As a condition of such a deal you undertake to pay 2X for the use of their story in your book.

(There is a variation, involving royalties, which will be mentioned later on. But, you need to specify which rights are being taken. The most common approach is to take non-exclusive U.K. English Language Rights, which allows

you to print the story in your own anthology, but the author can still use the story again later (either in his own collection..or with some other anthologist). This means you must be careful of the contract you sign with the publisher. Usually, with you being a 'rookie', he will ask for "World Rights", or "All Rights"...and you sign that at your peril. They mean that the publisher can resell the books to any foreign country without further payment. There are various ways to compromise on this - and you must do something, because the publisher is selling individual stories which rightly still belong to their authors. One method is to cede world rights to the publisher (making sure you get a good royalty - 50% at least) and insert an additional clause making it conditional that you have to give a separate consent in advance of contract, for each new edition..with a right of veto. This enables you to go back to the author's agent, tell him of the new deal, and buy afresh the new permission needed...i.e. non-exclusive Spanish, Italian, usage etc.

There are two main ways of buying story permissions. One is to pay an outright cash sum for each edition. This has the advantage of simplicity. The snag is that it can be expensive, because the editor pays the authors himself, so that the publisher receives the book 'clear'. But, be warned: publishers will not, it seems, spend money promoting anthologies as they will with novels, and sales are usually disappointing. Anthologies often do not earn out their advance - at least, not in the original edition. Let's look at hypothetical cases :- Book with 10 stories...

Example 1. Publisher's advance £250 x 2 = £500
 Editor's payment to authors @ £50 per story = £500
 Cash balance to anthologist = NIL

The anthologist/editor would of course be entitled to receive, and keep, all royalties in excess of £500, but the odds are he won't earn any...

...Not Recommended !!

Example 2 As above, but only £40 per story paid, so that the editor gets at least £100 Better !

Example 3. Payment to authors, £30 per story, against 6% of editor's royalty (i.e. a pro rata 60/40% split) This is the best deal for the editor, because he gets to keep 40% of all money received. In our example, at least £200. It is also quite fair, because if the book sells well (unlikely) or is resold for translation (possible), both editor and author continue to receive further payments

There is yet one more pitfall. ^U Just because your publisher signs a contract with you, it doesn't mean he will publish the book! Publishers can, and frequently do, renege on their anthology agreements (Often because another publisher promises to share production costs for a dual hardcover-paperback presentation - and then pulls out. This can really drop the rookie anthologist in it. Consider the following example :-

Hardcover publisher offers £500 for your book, £250 on signature, £250 on publication. He tells you that he can sell paperback rights to another publisher, on which he'll give you 50%. Sounds a good deal! So, you obtain your permissions - bearing in mind you are buying for two editions. The unwary editor then buys his ten stories outright at £50 each (intending to keep the paperback money for himself).

We have: Money received on signature....£250

Editor's cash outlay to authors...£500 DEFICIT...£250

Then the publisher tells you the paperback publisher has dropped out, and he isn't going ahead. He won't be paying the £250 on publication. There is nothing you can do about this, but usually a long time has elapsed before you are told, so you cannot readily ask the authors for their money back. Moral: Never pay out to authors more than you have received as an advance.

It can be seen that you can get yourself involved in one hell of a lot of paperwork and correspondence - quite possibly for little financial return.

But don't let me put you off! If you do have a book published, to the anthologist at least, it will look good, feel good - even if it doesn't actually do him any good. Also, along the way, you may be lucky enough to establish postal friendships with the authors (most of whom are modest fellows, pleased to have their work recognised). But, you'll never get rich.

Some anthologists, however, such as Mike Ashley, have used anthologies as a springboard to go on to write their own books. Whether you then go on to get rich depends on the quality of your book and the publisher involved. But there can be little doubt that picking your way through the minefield of the anthology is excellent literary experience.

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=====
Might I point out that Philip Harbottle is the proprietor of :-
COSMOS LITERARY AGENCY

32 Tynedale Avenue

Wallsend,

TYNE AND WEAR. And as such, not only knows what he is talking about...but if you have aspirations, might well help you to achieve them....and at the same time, avoid those financial pitfalls. T.J.
=====

HELP WANTED

Mike Banks writes..." Do you know anyone who works for a rock radio station in the U.K. ? ..or someone acquainted with someone who works for a rock station ??? The reason I ask, is that my friend Kevin Wolfe works for an FM rock station and would like to become acquainted with a british counterpart so as to possibly arrange some trades of studio records and suchlike. If you come across anyone, would you ask them to contact Kevin".....J. Kevin Wolfe

3661 Davenant Ave
Cincinnati, OHIO 45213. U.S.A.

CO-AX From Mike Banks ... 4 issues £2 seamail (£3 by air)

THRU BLACK HOLES 4 issues £2.50 ...from Mike Roden.

I'll agent for them if you wish to send cash to me (T.J.)..or direct to..

Mike Banks
P.O. Box 312
Milford
Ohio 45150

Mike Roden
982 White Oak Rd.
Cincinnati
Ohio 45245

Mike Roden has just started a new fantasy art packet system.. plus an excellent fantasy magazine....drop him a line for latest details.

LETTERS

DEEVES

With Ergitorial
comments in triple
parentheses..thus
((()))

We open the batting
with a word from,

Kevin Broxton
418 Leyland Ave
Leyland, LANCs.

The Colin Lester article proved that the days of the starving writer are still with us. The usefulness of the ISFY is obvious from the large crack in evidence down the spine of my copy, is there no hardback version? I didn't think much of the E.C.Tubb article - a bit simplistic, full of the sort of indiscriminate lashing out at anything and everything that is seen as a threat to the "hard working overtaxed individual". Not that I disagree with his vision of how the world should be, I just think the way to achieve that sort of society requires a different approach. I believe the much-maligned Trade Union movement to be a vital part of any move to create a just democratic society (((With its closed shops and 'the biggest clout gets the most lolly' attitude ?)))

A.M. FREEMAN

23 Adelaide Rd.,
High Wycombe
Bucks

I was really surprised to read Brian Aldiss saying that his first loyalty was to literature and not SF. This is really odd considering that the vast majority of his books are SF and those which aren't can hardly be called great literature. I think Brian has reviewed mainstream,

but it's his SF he will be remembered for. 30 years from now people will still remember and be reading 'Hothouse', 'Malacia Tapestry' and 'Report On Probability A' (maybe it should be 'trying to read the latter', though, while his reviews and Horatio Stubbs novels will long be forgotten. I liked Colin Lester's piece, but have been unable to find a copy of the Yearbook locally and not liking to buy things without seeing them first, haven't ordered a copy. Reviews are interesting as usual. Simak's style has been very samey for his last few books. I wish he would write something really different once in a while

Alan Mattingly

7 Burns Rd
Eastleigh
Hants SO5 5DW

I especially like the science based attitude and the attention to modern problems (The only 'zine of its kind in the country?) (((Thankie sir..I like to think so, but opinions differ on that.))) Your artwork was as usual, superb (well, some of it wasn't as good as the rest) I

especially like the pieces in red and those on pages 24, 26 and 27, plus the cover of course. I really thought the coloured ink made a vast improvement from the usual black and white. As to content, the variety was a refreshing change..two science based articles, Ted Tubb's fiction, The Aldiss speech transcript, 'Frazzled' and the short reviews. I hope ERG 67s as varied and well produced. I agree completely with you on starting 'heavy' research into alternative power sources now, as being essential. Not only that, but hopefully eliminating the inevitable overnight collapse of the petro-chemical industry 'in tot'. A lot more research should be being applied to alternative raw material sources. (((There's another little problem no one seems rude enough to mention...we now have some nice large oil fields..and a new huge coalfield...all coming into operation just as everyone else is running out. Now how gentlemanly do you think the 'have nots' are going to be..or will they simply take us over to protect us from the other side ?)))

Lewis Vickers
Goldspink House
Goldspink Lane
New castle on Tyne

Good Lord, have you been on the go for 20 years. The lithographed cover was good but in my opinion, not worth the effort. The cover is..or ought to be meaningful or symbolic on any publication except Exchange & Mart ((But it was symbolic..of ERG's creativity))). Brian Aldiss should write out a hundred times, "I must not apologise for SF. As for calling it the modern novel-- I bet for everyone reading SF there are a hundred reading 'The Happy Hooker' or some such. I may do your crossword sometime ((Good, I'll lend you a dictionary))) Ted Tubb's article. Thackeray will quote nicely here, "Dear Sir, Oh my dear sir." Colin Lester's article shows that the compiler of a yearbook is a failed author. Dave Griffiths gave interesting info on the space shuttle. I look forward to your compilation in ERG No. ? on the history of Space City No.1.

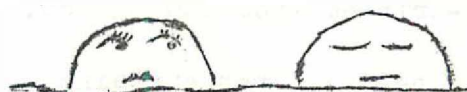
Eric Needham
25 Lawnswood Drive
Swinton
Manchester M27 1NH

A TV SF census! How can I fill in a form which includes Bionic Woman and 6M Dollar Man ((With a ton of cement, I hope))) I can't comment on the contents of ERG because

the contributors are unknown to me. ((I'd never heard of Heinlein until I read his first story..but that didn't stop me saying that I liked it))) I like to get ERG, but I still feel as I felt in the mid-50s, very much out of it. ((Eric also sent the idea for the cartoon on the right...send your bombs to him)))

girl
pebble

boy
pebble

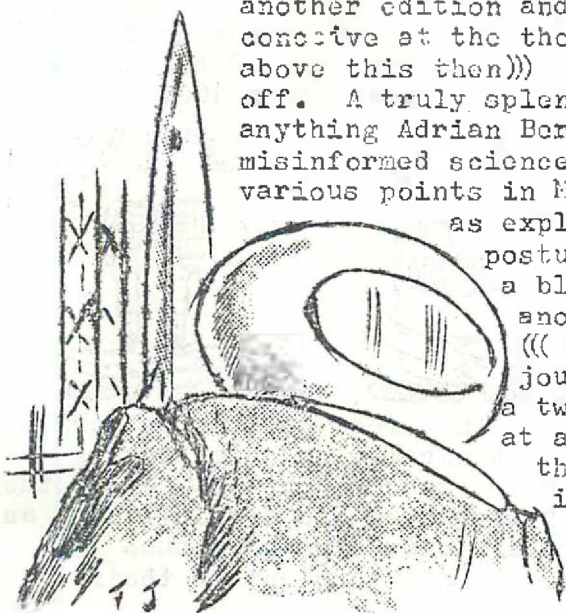


"Why can't you be a little boulder?"

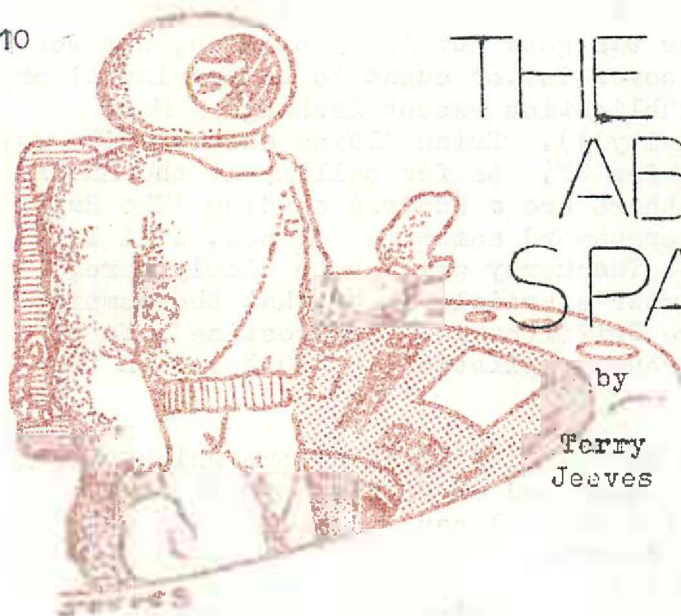
William Bains
Crowland Lodge
100 Galley Lane
Arkley
Barnet. HERTS

Brian Aldiss' Piece was interesting I always like hearing other people's ideas of where SF fits in with the rest of the world. Especially when those ideas are so well written down (but then, what else from Brian Aldiss ?) Through A Glass Darkly had me convulsed in barely suppressed

laughter. (hysterical shrieking at past midnight is not appreciated by my landlady ((So give her a sub to ERG))) You out a pun like 'sugar cube' in another edition and... no words fail to express the tortures I conceive at the thought ((Better no read the caption just above this then))) A lot of lovely book reviews to round it off. A truly splendid issue...Aaaagh. Ruined! Never believe anything Adrian Berry says. The Iron Sun is a classic of misinformed science reporting ((Here William disagrees with various points in Mr Berry's book..and of Einstein's theory as explained by the author....))) Mr. Berry's theory postulates that relativity proves that entering a black hole causes instantaneous travel to anotherplace...i.e. it predicts FTL travel. ((Would you say that making a two minute journey through a mountain tunnel to avoid a two hour detour 'proved' you had travelled at around 500 mph ?? If you can skip thro' the continuum instead of going right round it, then this isn't necessarily FTL.)))



THAT'S ALL THE SPACE WE HAVE THIS TIME
FOLKS... best wishes, Terry



THE TRUTH ABOUT SPACE-TRAVEL

by

Ferry
Jeeves

Satellites and planetary probes are being launched almost daily. To the layman, whether they stay up or not, remains a mystery. To throw some light on the topic, the full facilities of the ERG have been bent to straightening out the matter.

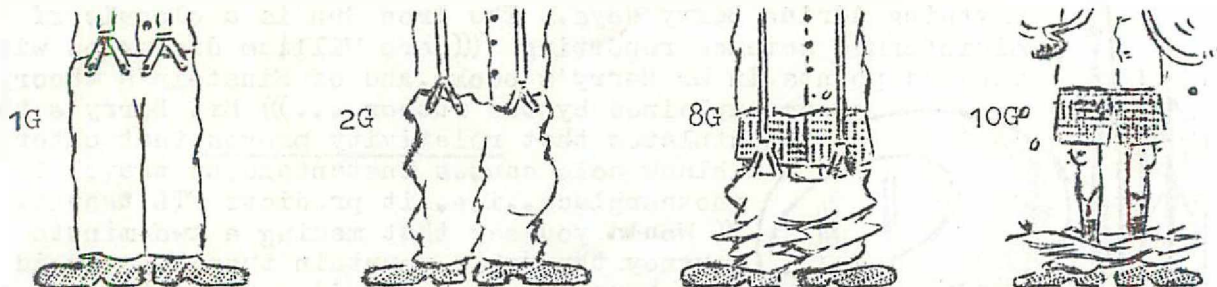
Here then is ERG's fearless expose of what has been done and what remains to be done. Veils of secrecy have been ruthlessly

((Re-printed from ERG 3 Oct. 1959))

ripped aside. Iron curtains rusted to ruin. No expense has been spared to bring you..... THE TRUTH !

Even the layman has come to accept that jet engines and airscrews are not much use in a vacuum. But still puzzling is, "What does a rocket push against when there is no air ?" Let us settle this point once and for all. A burning rocket is damned hot; the flaming gases shoot out like crazy. The heat would burn up the rocket in no time. To avoid this, the craft moves off in the opposite direction at high speed as Newton's fifth law states.. "Speed is proportional to exhaust temperature" (Discovered when a rocket fell on his head.)

'G' force is even more simple to understand. 1G is the standard pull of gravity exerted on the seat of one's pant. 2G if kept up for half an hour will give you a neat crease. 4G will do it even faster. At 8G the threads crease within a few seconds. Very few trousers can stand over 10G.

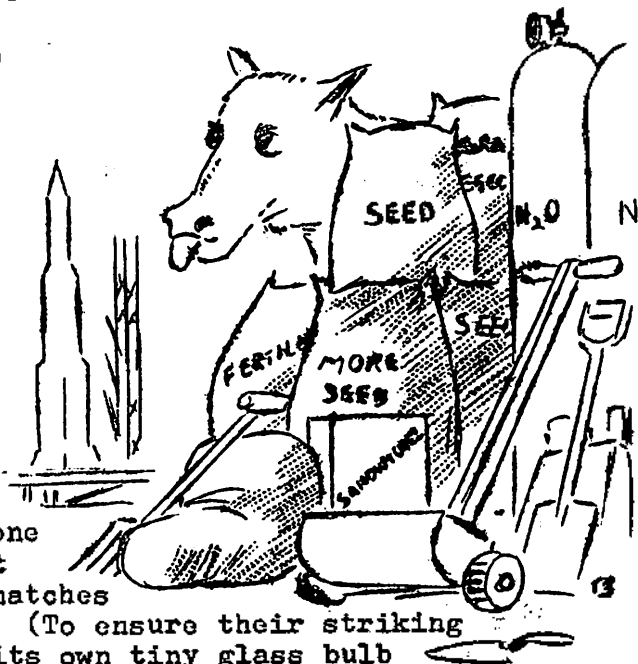


In the above diagrams, the spaceman is in the erect position, a very poor one for withstanding G forces. Note the physical elongation taking place with increased G. In 1., trousers drop in graceful curves. At 2G the fabric starts to strain. 8G shows material approaching its strain limit, and at 10G, there is total failure of all support systems. To avoid such embarrassment, astronauts lie in a prone position and thus retain their dignity.

Starting with these two facts, we can now investigate an actual moon flight. How fast should our rocket travel? Obviously, it cannot be allowed to exceed an acceleration of 10G or the pilot's trousers will collapse. Being limited in this way means the trip will take longer. This means that more fuel will be needed and this demands a larger rocket. To make for convenience in building, this is made in several steps (otherwise a very long (or tall) factory would be needed). Let's suppose our man is to employ a three-step rocket. This will cost a lot of money, so to economise, builders arrange for bits to drop to be collected and used again, rather than send all the lot to the moon. Sometimes, unintended bits drop off, this is called 'an operational hazard' and explains why all the ground staff wear steel helmets. Not that these will stop a falling rocket, but they do keep the head warm and look dramatic.

Now we have our three stage rocket, limited to an acceleration of 8G and a man (wearing strong trousers to ride. Since space is airless he will need a pressurised cabin in which to breathe. Early experiments tried to avoid this by placing the pilot in an airtight cylinder. Each day, a little of the air was pumped out. Eventually, it was hoped the subject would adapt completely to living without air. Near the end of the first week, the pilot was starving to death and had to be released. A second attempt was made in which he was given a packet of sandwiches. This time, success was in sight when the subject's lungs exploded. It was decided to return to the idea of a pressurised cabin.

The air problem was finally solved in brilliant fashion by the use of plants to convert the exhaled CO_2 into O_2 . Thus, to maintain his air supply our traveller must carry a full set of gardening tools, two sacks of manure, a load of grass seed and a lawn mower. Profiting from the air tank experiment, scientists also decided that the man must also have food, so edible plants were added to the air supply. To add variety in the form of meat, it was decided to include a live cow in the equipment, thus avoiding the weight penalty of a refrigerator and adding milk to the astronaut's diet plus a further source of fertiliser. Since the cow might object to supplying regular slices of meat a complete set of anaesthetic gas, surgical equipment and a tin of 'Elastoplast' were added.

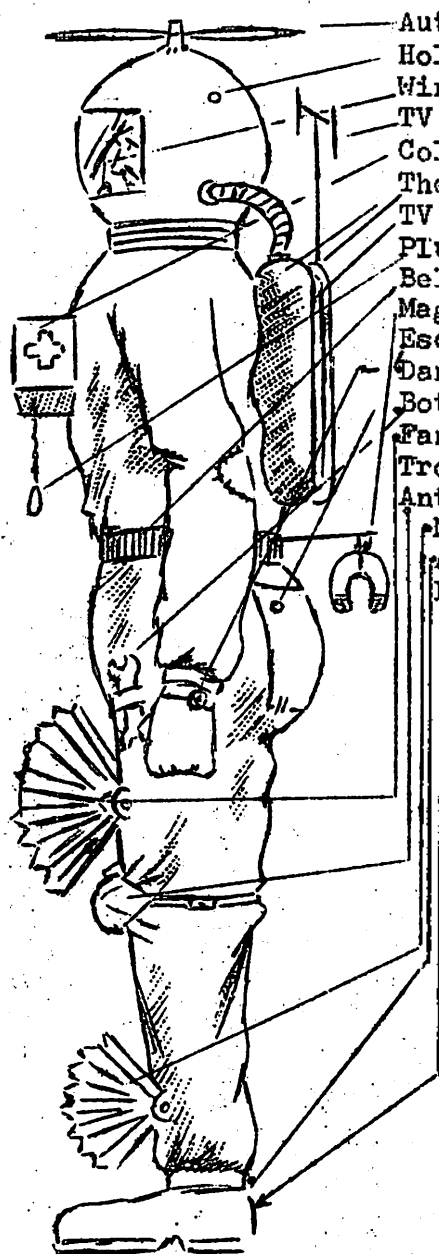


A water supply posed problems until one genius fabricated the nose cone from a block of ice. Thus the astronaut merely needs an ice-pick and a box of matches to be always sure of a drink of water. (To ensure their striking in vacuum, each match is enclosed in its own tiny glass bulb complete with air supply).

For cabin lighting, candles will be carried. These have several advantages. In an emergency, they are edible, whereas light bulbs are only palatable with special training. Candles can be pulped to plug air leaks, they will stiffen the pilot's moustache if he wears one..or his upper lip if he doesn't. Furthermore, they will give reliable warning of air leaks, as they will immediately go out.

For entertainment, and to avoid boredom, a pack of cards will be provided to allow the astronaut to play Solitaire. By leaving only 51 cards in the deck, there is no danger of the game working out too easily.

Artificial gravity, long thought to be impossible, will be supplied by magnetising the decks of the craft. Then all the astronaut need do, is to sprinkle his food with iron filings. Twin howitzers mounted in the nose will blast meteorites out of the way and should a journey outside the ship for toilet purposes become necessary, a specially designed spacesuit solves that problem. A diagram of the Paulsuit Mk.VI is shown on the left.



Auto-rotating propeller-cum-parachute
Hole to prevent excess pressure build up
Windscreen wiper
TV aerial
Collecting box for Red Cross
Thermos flasks
TV and radio (with commercial filter)
Plumb line for orientation
Belt tested to 10G
Magnet to remove drawing pins before sitting down
Escape hatch-cum-relief area
Dan Dare plastic compass (non magnetic)
Bottle opener
Fans for keeping cool (courtesy F.R.Paul)
Trousers (tested to 10G)
Anti-rattle knee padding
More fans
Ankle socks
Boots (advertisement paid for)

Not shown in the diagram are the special braces (suspenders) calibrated in G units. The undershorts embroidered with a message of Universal Brotherhood and the wallet of Social Security and Credit Cards

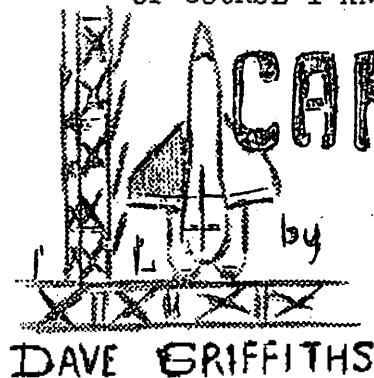
~~~~~ Terry Jeeves.

Since the above article was written for ERG, its prophecies have been proved by numerous manned space flights and many actual moon walks. While these may have differed in detail, the broad picture has remained as forecast. T.J.  
~~~~~

This has been the first of what I hope will be a regular (or otherwise) series of reprints from early issues of ERG

Plastic coated replicas of this article, printed on high-grade plastic waste bin liners and suitable for attaching to deep space probes may be obtained from the ERGitorial offices on receipt of much money or a reasonable working facsimile of Sophia Loren.

"OF COURSE I KNOW WHAT NASA STANDS FOR. IT'S...ER...! LONG SILENCE.



Over the past few months it has become apparent to me, through various newspapers and periodicals, that the press has come up with a game to play whenever NASA is mentioned.

For several years now I have lived under the impression that the initials NASA stood for 'NATIONAL AERONAUTICS and SPACE ADMINISTRATION'. If I'm to believe what I'm reading these days, this is not the case. The game appears to centre around various reporters jotting down what they believe

NASA really stands for, and popular guesses so far include 'NATIONAL AERONAUTICAL & SPACE AGENCY', and 'NATIONAL ASTRONAUTICAL SPACE AGENCY'. Personally, I'm putting my money on the entry from the Victorian Water Authority in Australia - 'NORTH AMERICAN SPACE ADMINISTRATION'..it must be the best so far (unless you know different).

Multi site, sample return missions to Mars are being investigated by NASA which would take advantage of a 1988-1990 launch window. It is without doubt, the most expensive NASA planetary mission under consideration, but is also recognised as being the most cost-effective type of Martian exploration in terms of scientific return. Current plans call for the multi site return programme to consist of four landers, each of which will be targeted at one of the major geologic areas on Mars. Each lander is expected to include a roving vehicle for sample collection away from the landing site.

The rovers will contain instruments for sample selection and collection tools, and an ALSEP (Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Package)-like package which will be placed on the surface to perform network science. In Addition, landers will be complemented by a science orbiter instrumented to obtain global chemistry, mineralogy and magnetic and gravity fields. The orbiter should also give us an increased understanding of the composition and dynamics of the Martian atmosphere.

Mobility range tradeoffs for the rover are being investigated from an engineering standpoint, by the Mars Science Working Group. At the moment, there is little agreement as to the mobility range required. Current ideas range from a few metres, to hundreds of kilometres. The range of the vehicles is critical to the design, since each increment in mobility range must be supported by increases in rover mass, power and autonomy. These capabilities in turn increase the total mass to be landed on the Martian surface. The net result of this would be a reduction in the mass available for the Mars ascent vehicle, thus substantially increasing total mission costs. With these points in mind, the Mars Science Working Group has been attempting to determine the mobility range required to assure the proper sampling of the most abundant rock and soil types in the vicinity of each lander. It is hoped that the mobility range question will be resolved fairly soon in order to make the findings available to the spacecraft design team.

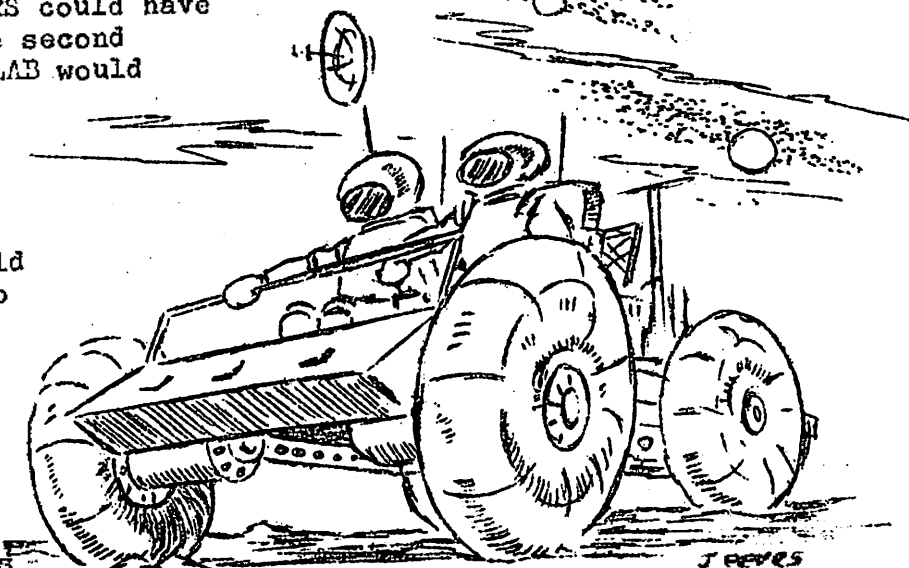
Between July and September of this year, the abandoned SKYLAB should hit the edge of earth's dense atmosphere about 50-60 miles above the surface. As it does so, some of its smaller parts will break off and create spectacular displays of sparks along its meteoric trail - expected to cover an area some 4000 miles long, by 100 miles wide. The main body of SKYLAB should deposit between 400 and 500 pieces of debris weighing a total of

25 tons on the surface, with impact speeds up to 300 feet per second.

The largest parts of the spacecraft to survive re-entry should be the film vault and an airlock shroud...weighing 4000 and 5000 lbs. respectively. Some predictions indicate that they might hit in the same area.

Plans to rescue SKYLAB for re-use, by attaching a remotely controlled booster called the teleoperator retrieval system (TRS), were abandoned last December when delays in the Space Shuttle programme and various problems with SKYLAB lessened the chances of a successful reboost beyond practical limits. By the earliest Shuttle launch on which TRS could have been carried (probably the second orbital flight test), SKYLAB would have sunk too low for the booster's limited capabilities to reverse.

An alternative scenario, whereby TRS would have deorbited SKYLAB into an ocean and detached at the last minute for recovery and subsequent reuse, was dropped as it was considered too chancy.



Unlikely suggestions from outside NASA have included asking the Soviets for help (which ignore the fact that Soviet docking techniques require a co-operative target) and simply blowing the spacecraft up (which would permit a greater amount of debris to reach the earth over a wider area).

Whatever plans are eventually decided upon, one thing is sure. Before the year is out, SKYLAB will be coming home. Perhaps not in a blaze of glory as the Apollos did... but certainly in a blaze.

..... Dave Griffiths 1979

EXTRACON !!

Dave Cockfield, Janice Maule, and Ian Maule are trying to arrange a mini-con..on the lines of Silicon etc. It will be called the PICACON (I prefer my own title for it) and will be held in London over Easter weekend, 1980. Deadline for helping to firm it up was May 23rd. Erg is too late for you to help make sure it takes place..but assuming there is enough support...send your £1 registration fee to Janice Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd. New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HY. Your money will be refunded if the idea flops..but if it goes ahead, then you pay another £1 when you attend. Seems a good scheme to me even though all my cash is earmarked for Boston in September.

AUSTRALIA in '83

is another worthy cause...see the footnote in the review pages for further details...and requests for donations of cash, etc..

THE WORLD'S BEST SF 3

Edited by D.A. Wollheim
Ten tales from the 74/75
period opening with a
look at an alternate uni-
verse where German
science is triumphant and

her Zeppelins moor to New York's
skyscrapers. A hibernating pedlar
(10,000 years at a time) emerges to
help a repressed rural society.

Then the sole survivor of a
spacewreck becomes the captive of
giant, intelligent bees. Maybe
you'd prefer flying on artificial
wings on the 'Storms of Windhaven'
or the robot executioner sent to destroy
the threat of biological experiment on a
hollow planetoid. Elsewhere, in an

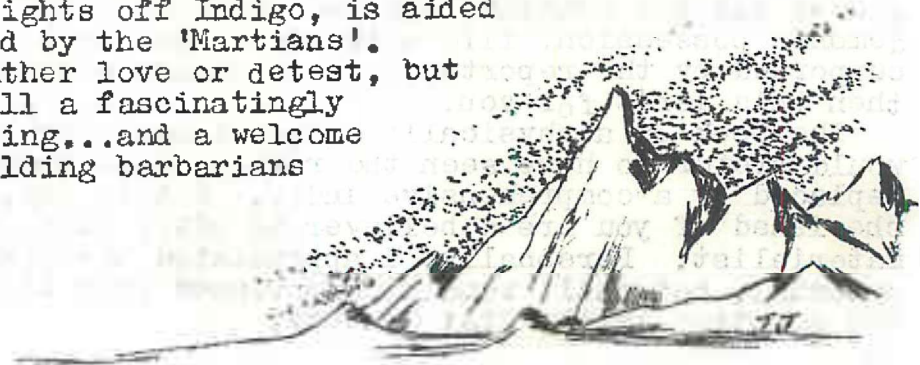
America overgrown by wild vines, an under-
ground society sends out a mission and meets
a couple of aliens. There's the solitude of an
immortal girl; the less than triumphal return of
Helbent 4 after fighting off the spacethings. A
computer holding dirty government secrets needs
debugging and finally the end of the world seen

through a monastery's time nexus. All different, all good even if you
can always quibble over the title. My rave may be your flat tyre, but
personally, I enjoyed every one of them. DENNIS DORSON £4.95

EARTHCHILD

Doris Piserchia
Dobson £4.25

Millennia have passed, Mankind now lives on Mars but
desires to rechristenise an Earth covered with multi-
layered jungle, strange plants and weird animals.
Fourteen-year-old Tee, sole surviving human on Earth, and protege of
the strange amorphous Emeroo fights the flora and fauna and also the
huge protoplasmic mass Indigo which not only eats everything in sight
but can also grow humanoid creatures with which it also plans to take
over Mars. A weird fantasy world of strange events
and actions as Ree fights off Indigo, is aided
by Emeroo and captured by the 'Martians'.
This is one you'll either love or detest, but
either way, it is still a fascinatingly
different bit of writing...and a welcome
change from sword-wielding barbarians
among the stars.

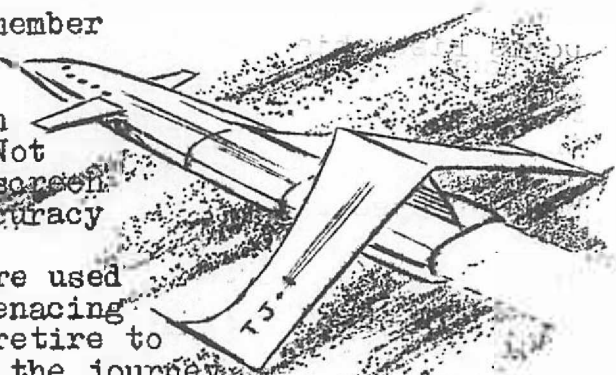


THE PRISONER

Thomas M. Disch Some readers will remember
 Dobson £4.25 this as the renowned
 TV series in which

the lead was played by Patrick McGoochan
 (whose picture appears on the jacket. Not
 having had the pleasure of seeing the screen
 version I can not vouchsafe for the accuracy
 with which it follows the TV version.

The Prisoner..No.6..no other names are used
 for characters, and this adds to the menacing
 atmosphere..is an ex-agent wishing to retire to
 a Welsh village. He is intercepted on the journey
 and awakes..in his dream home, but as a captive of 'The Village' From
 here on, the story concerns his repeated attempts to escape..and
 whether or not he is experiencing reality as attempt one is foiled by
 a Guardian, robot operated sphere and each succeeding attempt only
 complicates the puzzle. Disch achieves a Kafka-like sense of
 unreality and menace as you follow the struggles of No. 6 in his maze.
 Compulsive reading from start to finish.

CIRQUE

The far future, and Cirque is Earth's remaining city,
 Terry Carr beautiful and harmonious. Through it flows the river
 Dobson £4.25 Fundament carrying all the city's waste into a giant
 fissure - The Abyss. The story follows the intertwined lives of a
 small group on the day when monsters, born of the refuse in the Abyss,
 emerge to threaten the peace. We meet a giant millipede from Aldebaran
 whose ability to see the future has brought him to experience the
 emergence. There is Nikki, varying between four drug-induced states;
 Gloriana the Guardian, Gregorian, a fire sculptor; Ansalie the monitor
 telepath who supplies the news service. All these, and others meet and
 interact against the background of the menace.

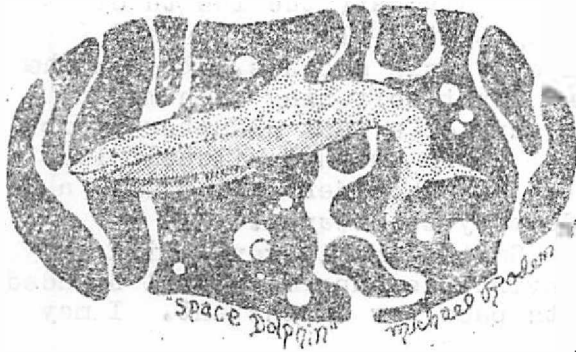
Delicate, beautifully written. A fantasy free of any viciousness as
 it gradually blends all the multiple threads on this crucial day.

YOU CANNOT DIE

I think it was John Campbell who first postulated that
 Ian Currie a man born in this era might well live for ever..well
 Hamlyn £4.95 the author of this work takes a different angle with
 the contention that one can survive physical death,
 that conscious persists after death, and that reincarnation is a fact.
 To prove his case, he examines ghosts, apparitions, astral projections,
 and many other psychic phenomena. Each chapter covering one aspect
 with numerous reported accounts and short linking paragraphaphs.

As in all such 'investigations' the key point is whether or not you
 accept all the evidence offered as being infallible. In this work,
 demonic possession, life after death and even rebirth are well
 supported by the reports,,oif, as I say, you wish to believe..&f not,
 then this isn't for you.

The book is a physically large, handsomely produced work, but I
 would prefer to have seen the rather amateur chapter illustrations
 replaced by a comprehensive index. Either way, this is a book to be
 cherished if you are a believer in after life..and ignored by the
 materialist. Personally, I appreciated the wealth of research
 material..but still remain unconvinced that I'll be back to publish
 ERG sometime in the 21st Century.



STELLAR ASSIGNMENT

E.C. Tubb. Robert Hale #4.25

On the strength of his book on how to survive Kevin Blake is hired to bring back a rich man's star-roving daughter. He finds the girl easily enough, but getting her back presents numerous problems among a variety of aliens, all of whom speak English and behave with the utmost gentility even when trying to swindle Blake out of his back teeth. The action is lighthearted and very

reminiscent of Sprague De Camp's 'Zamba' stories, but with a defter touch of humour and many complex aliens in the style of P.K. Dick. This isn't 'Award' material, but just a highly readable romp among the stars with everyone out to make a dollar and with everyone humanoid under their skins..or scales. If you like humour in your SF, then like me, you'll enjoy this one.

A DOUBLE SHADOW

Frederick Turner
Sidgwick & Jackson
£5.95

Mars has been terraformed. Its thickened atmosphere permits the New Martians to fly. Their society, vaguely Grecian, is bored, decadent and immortal by means of brain implants aided by a guardian computer. When two young 'Bloods', Narcissus and Michael, affront each other, a status-war is declared. This involves the participants in involved point-scoring tactics, seductions and even intervention by living gods before the duel climax is reached. In this, the contestants, armed like fighting cocks, engage in aerial battle on artificial wings. An involved, fantasyworld story, made tedious by the use of: - "He says this".."She does that" a conceit which is sustained throughout. The background of perverts, sex-changing gods and other characters does little to enliven what is essentially a rambling account of a quarrel and its results. It may appeal to fantasy lovers, but as a hardcore addict, it was not a hit with me.

METHUEN CHILDREN'S BOOKS have issued two new titles at £3.95 each :-

STEPS OUT OF TIME

Eric Houghton

On moving to a new district and house, Johnathan Hill has difficulty in settling into his new school. Then, going home on a misty night he finds himself stepping into a house of the future..through his own front door. Each time the transit occurs he experiences more of the other world, even entering into the body of Peter, an artistic lad of his own age..twelve years. He learns to draw and paint, a technique which enables him to solve his own problems. There are numerous line illustrations accompanying the text and these will help to set the stage for young readers. The author tends to give Johnathan more maturity than one would expect, but again, this should give him greater interest to any youngster wishing to identify with the adventures.

THE RAINS OF ERIDAN

H.M. Hoover

The colonists on Eridan are troubled by a strange fear. Biologist Theo Leslie is out on a solitary field trip when she finds Karen, a young girl fleeing from her parents' murderers. They trek back to Leslie's base, on the way, discovering strange mummified creatures - Then the rains come and life gets deadly for the colonists. This is a Heinlein quality juvenile..but less pedantic. There is a delicate trace of sentiment and an equally delicate hint at a love interest. There is no 'writing down' and the story never flags..perhaps the 'menace' moves off stage too quickly, but otherwise, this is a rattling good yarn and more truly SF than the near fantasy of 'Steps Out Of Time' Very good.

THE CHAOS MACHINE

The Weapon is 250 Km long (roughly half the length of England), is focussed by a ring of ten black holes and powered by consuming one sun every six seconds. From another Universe, the invading Ra are first softening up humanity by using it to distort the fabric of causality and so effect disasters which are killing off key figures in the Federation. Space Marshal Wildheit (who carries an invisible..and unexplained..'god' on his shoulder) joins with a young female Sensitive to oppose the Ra and destroy the weapon.

Space opera on a scale undreamed of by 'Doc' Smith, and leavened with a number of strange powers and a touch of the invincible superman. All blended into a rattling good yarn which never loses its pace for an instant. I may be a low brow, but I enjoyed it immensely.

NEXT STOP THE STARS

Six early Silverbergs from the 1956/7 era opening with R.Silverberg the purple-prosed 'Slaves Of The Star Giants' in which a man, hauled into the future to free an electronic Brain' and civilisation's remnants from 500 foot tall aliens finds he likes the place. 'The Songs Of Summer' is neatly told from several viewpoints as (another) chap from the past tries to organise the gentle people. 'Hopper' (Later expanded into a novel) sees a regimented future where the Crime Sec has his own illegal hideaway, and people defect into the past. 'Blaze Of Glory' concerns a character who maltreats aliens and becomes a reluctant hero. Finally, Warm Man! deals with an empath who absorbed other's troubles..until he got an overload. I'd rate this 5 hits out of six on the entertainment scale, with an extra bonus as Silverberg has not yet reached his 'death-fascination' kick in any of these.

THE FINAL CIRCLE OF PARADISE

Ivan Zhilin enters an un-named town in an equally anonymous country with the mission of investigating an upswing of unusual deaths among natives and tourists. He finds a decadent, hedonistic society (Party line view of the West ?) and numerous perverted, secret groups. Attempts to contact other agents prove they too have succumbed and one even sends Ivan on a death mission before he locates the source of the psychedelic electronic devices which cause the deaths. The society is reminiscent of a Jack Vance world, with a touch of Kafka. Occasionally, one loses the thread of who is saying what - or who is actually 'onstage'. Otherwise, an entertaining 'spy' mystery and much more readable than the authors' earlier 'Hard To Be A God'.

THE SHEEG

After an ice-age and descent into barbarism, Earthmen again venture into space, where Agent Quinn discovers the lost colony world of Hammon. Planning to enter the Federation of Planets, its representative, Lord Mycaal (descendent of an alien-human union) visits Earth to put his case. He is kidnapped by the Sheeg, ancient beings of evil, dwellers in a timeless dimension. Quinn and sociologist Freja follow to rescue him. First story in a new 'Star Lord Saga' while rather long on action and short on background detail, the swiftly moving story was rather marred for me by the arrival of the incongruous Sheeg. However, if vanVogtian intricacy and action is what you crave, you will find this an entertaining, if rather lightweight, novel.

Second in the saga, where Freja has been killed and Quinn leaves his infant daughter in the care of Mycaal and his wife. Saffron completes training on Earth, then seduces Mycaal's son Amaal, followed by the War Lord himself. She flees the planet with Amaal in our suit, then after a spell on a plague world, both are captured by Space Bandits. As before, background is vague; but the 'as-it-comes-to-mind' writing style makes for an entertaining yarn if you don't want too much meat in your reading diet.

SAFFRON

Judith Buffery
Dobson £4.25

A DARKNESS IN MY SOUL

Dean R. Koontz

Dobson £4.25

Every so often, a story grabs you with its first paragraph..this is one of 'em as Simeon, the world's only telepath, result of gene manipulation, carries out loyalty checks for the Government. As the world moves into war he is detailed to investigate the mind of Child, another genetic experiment and a mad genius capable of devising super weapons. Torn between Governmental pressures, his own neuroses (treated by an electronic psychiatrist), and a budding love affair, Simeon enters the Child's mind and finds chaos...and godlike power. Events wind up to a fitting climax with an ending literally 'Deus ex machina'. Koontz is a writer to be reckoned with, and here he gives a story which is almost impossible to put down before the end. Structurally, it may not be 'great science fiction'..but by gum, it is downright entertaining.

GABION

Julia Riding

Hale £4.35

Alan Leonar escapes from the island orphanage where he is studying atomic and astro physics. He sets off for Gabion, the land from which his father came. Avoiding helicopter patrols, hitching rides in steam cars and with numerous brushes with the inept searchers, he makes his way across various agrarian countries until he reaches Gabion..only to find it oppressed by a war-hungry tyrant. Leonar joins the resistance movement and with one little skirmish, all is put right. I failed to understand how a bastard child in a rustic society (which uses oil lamps, yet operates steam cars) could wind up learning advanced science..in a society which has never heard of it. Ignore petty details, and you have a slow pleasant story of a lad's search for his origins, written very much in the style of Jack Vance.

THE HUGO WINNERS Vol.3

Ed. Isaac Asimov

If anybody out there doesn't know that the 'Hugo' Awards are for stories chosen by the attendees at each Worldcon as the cream of that year's science fiction. Here, Dr. Asimov has compiled his third anthology for the 1970-75 Conventions. I believe the Doubleday edition got them all between two boards, but over here (where we seem to use better paper and a bigger typeface, Messrs Dobson have had to split the opus into three parts -- each priced at £4.95.

Part.1 (1970-72) crams 3 novellas and 2 shorts into its 220 pages. You get Lieber's 'Ship Of Shadows' and 'Ill Met In Lankhmar'. Sturgeon's 'Slow Sculpture'; Anderson's 'The Queen Of Air And Darkness' and Larry Niven's 'Ipconstant Moon'

Part.2 (1973) 'The Word For World Is Forest'..LeGuin; 'Goat Song'..Anderson; 'The Meeting'..Pohl and Kornbluth; 'Eurema's Dam'..R.A.Lafferty.

Part.3 (1974-75) 'The Girl Who Was Plugged In'..Tiptree; 'The Deathbird' by Ellison; 'The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas'..LeGuin; 'A Song For Lya' by George R.R.Martin; 'Adrift Off The Islets Of Langerhans'..Ellison; 'The Hole Man'..Niven

Each volume has a full list of that Year's Awards, plus biographical sketches on the writers. In toto, the triple distilled, top-level choices of several thousands of readers. Scratch any of the three and you'll find a winner¹¹...literally. If you are in the market for material to which you can return again and again, here it is. Together, they will form a pretty good cornerstone to any collection...and if you're trying to build up a school or college SF library, what better place to start ?

THE HUGO WINNER Vol3. Ed. I Asimov. In 3 parts. £4.95 each. Dennis Dobson

STARDANCE by Spider & Jeanne Robinson

Published in the Quantum series by:-

Sidgwick & Jackson £5.95

Futura £1.10

Those of you who read Anzlog, will recall the novel and the follow-up serial (Stardance.2.) Here they are blended together into one novel.

Dancer Shara Drummond is too tall to become a famous dancer, but gets a chance to perform in 'free fall' (Don't ask me how one dances in zero 'g'). Thus, when aliens who only understand body language arrive, she is qualified to contact them. She manages to send them packing, but dies in the act. Following in her method, sister Norrey forms a group of Dancers. When the aliens return, the members are co-opted to make the long trip to Saturn as translators for the diplomats...and as prolonged free fall produces irreversible results, there is no way back to Earth....

One can quibble over 'dancing' in a reactionless medium..but I dig my heels right in at the idea of 'conversing' by dance at other than a basic level..very basic. Since this is a basic element of the story you either accept this..or go elsewhere. If you can, and have no objections to a society which uses 'soft drugs', then you will find this excitingly different and gripping...and of course, thanks to the Quantum programme, you have an immediate choice of hard or soft covers

WORLD WITHOUT END

Joe Haldeman

Bantam 75p

In this new Star Trek story, the Enterprise encounters a magnetic anomaly, which on investigation proves to be a huge spacecraft in the form of a hollow asteroid. Kirk and company beam inside and are captured by winged aliens.

A force field prevents their escape, the power banks of the Enterprise are being drained, and its distress call has brought a Klingon cruiser which sets out to destroy both ship and asteroid..however, the latter is not quite what it seems and once again, Kirk emerges on top of the situation.

WONDER WORLDS

William F.Nolan

Corgi 95p

After a brief autobiographical introduction you plunge into the stories..all twenty-one of 'em! There is enough variety to satisfy the most jaded reader, my own favourite being the lovely send up of computer dating whereby the young

hopeful gets himself engaged..and married to a fat, middle aged repairman. The overall tone is light, a touch of Rad Bradbury - a dash of O.Henry. This collection, thanks to the shortness of each yarn, makes it an excellent bedside reader..take one a night for the best enjoyment. Incidentally, the author is partly responsible for 'Logan's Run'..but don't hold that against him..in this assembly his writing is much more deft and enjoyable.

VICINITY CLUSTER

Piers Anthony

Panther £1.25

First in the 'Kirlian', or Cluster series sees dwellers in the Andromeda Galaxy setting out to filch energy from the Earth Sphere of operations. To combat this, Flint, a Stone Age genius is conscripted into carrying out a series of

mind-transfer missions with the aim of alerting others to a united effort. Well-written, but rather fragmentary as Flint shuttles to and fro..but always finding sexual action along the way..with more luck than in his prime mission.

THE WINDS TWELVE QUARTERS

Ursula Le Guin

Panther 85p

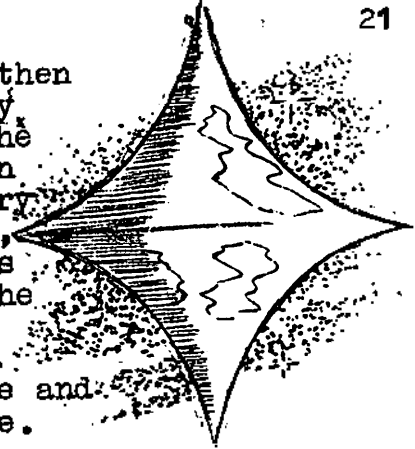
Vol.1. Readers familiar with Ms. Le Guin's work will need no other introduction than the name..for others,

here is a scintillating, nine-story collection. Among other gems you will find, 'The Word Of Unbinding'..or if you prefer the nearer hard-core writing of 'Nine Lives' as it investigates clones, you will find it here..(and I'm delighted to see a writer citing 'Biological Time Bomb' as an inspiration source, as I recommended this a while back). Once again, the writer scintillates on all levels..and no wasted wordage. I enjoyed Vol.2 (which somehow got here first)..this one is even better.

INVERTED WORLD

Christopher Priest
Pan. 85p

Plot the graph of $y = 1/x$ and then rotate the result around the y axis and you get a solid of the shape on the right. This is the world on which Helmut Mann lives in a mobile city where every activity is geared to pursuing the optimum. Ahead, time runs fast, behind it moves slowly. Forty miles back, centrifugal force will throw you off. How the city is moved, Mann's life and the events in the saga, first appeared as a Galaxy serial in 1973. Here you get it in one volume - original, inventive and in my estimation, one of the best tales in a decade.

SHIP OF STRANGERS

Bob Shaw
Pan 80p

The survey ship Sarafand explores the universe encountering assorted life forms and problem situations on the way. This will inevitably be compared with van Vogt's 'Space Beagle'-- indeed, the first incident is an attempt to take over the ship by a shape changing creature called Candar (in vV's yarn, it was Coeurl). How Candar got to the planet is detailed, but not explained. The chief character here is Surgenor (as against 'Grosvenor'). Accept the similarity and simply enjoy the linked adventures which encounter the crew.

ASIMOV'S CHOICE

Methuen Magnum 95p

'COMETS AND COMPUTERS' An editorial on SF, a Martin Gardner puzzle, a Commander Grimes adventure, and then Brian Aldiss. There's a Williamson bit on ivory towers and sf; a tale of raising the dead, another on robot investigators; strange doings on an archaeological 'dig'. You get time travel; a tale of space survival; a sports story; and lastly, the birth of a star child. An excellent assortment, but in case it seems familiar, readers of the Isaac Asimov SF Magazine will find it is the March '78 issue in toto (less adverts and book reviews, presented in paperback format. and no warning. I'd be annoyed to have paid for this and then made the discovery..so why not say so ?

THE COMPLETE HOME VIDEO RECORDER BOOK

Len Buckwalter. Bantam £1.25

Profusely illustrated with many excellent photographs and line drawings, you get a quick resume of the uses and reasons for using video recorders; their background and history, then on to a complete coverage of how to operate them. There are chapters on cameras, microphones, lighting, producing your own shows plus some brief fault-finding tips and a glossary. Filling more than half the thick volume is a very comprehensive catalogue of available commercial tapes along with a classified index. It is only fair to point out that this is very much for the U.S.A market and does not include European machines such as the Phillips VTR. Also, copyright regulations seem less stringent over there. Otherwise, if you want to learn (painlessly) about VTR, then this will make an excellent beginning.

AMOK TIME

Bantam 95p

Vulcan marriages are arranged in childhood, performed in adulthood. When Spock's comes due, his bride chooses Commander Kirk to champion her against Spock in a duel to the death. Only McCoy's quick thinking averts tragedy in this twelfth novel in the Fotonovel series where favourite episodes are re-created in 'still' with dialogue captions. How Mandala keep the price down and quality up, is a wonder to me..but they do, and this one is as good as any that have gone before.

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