

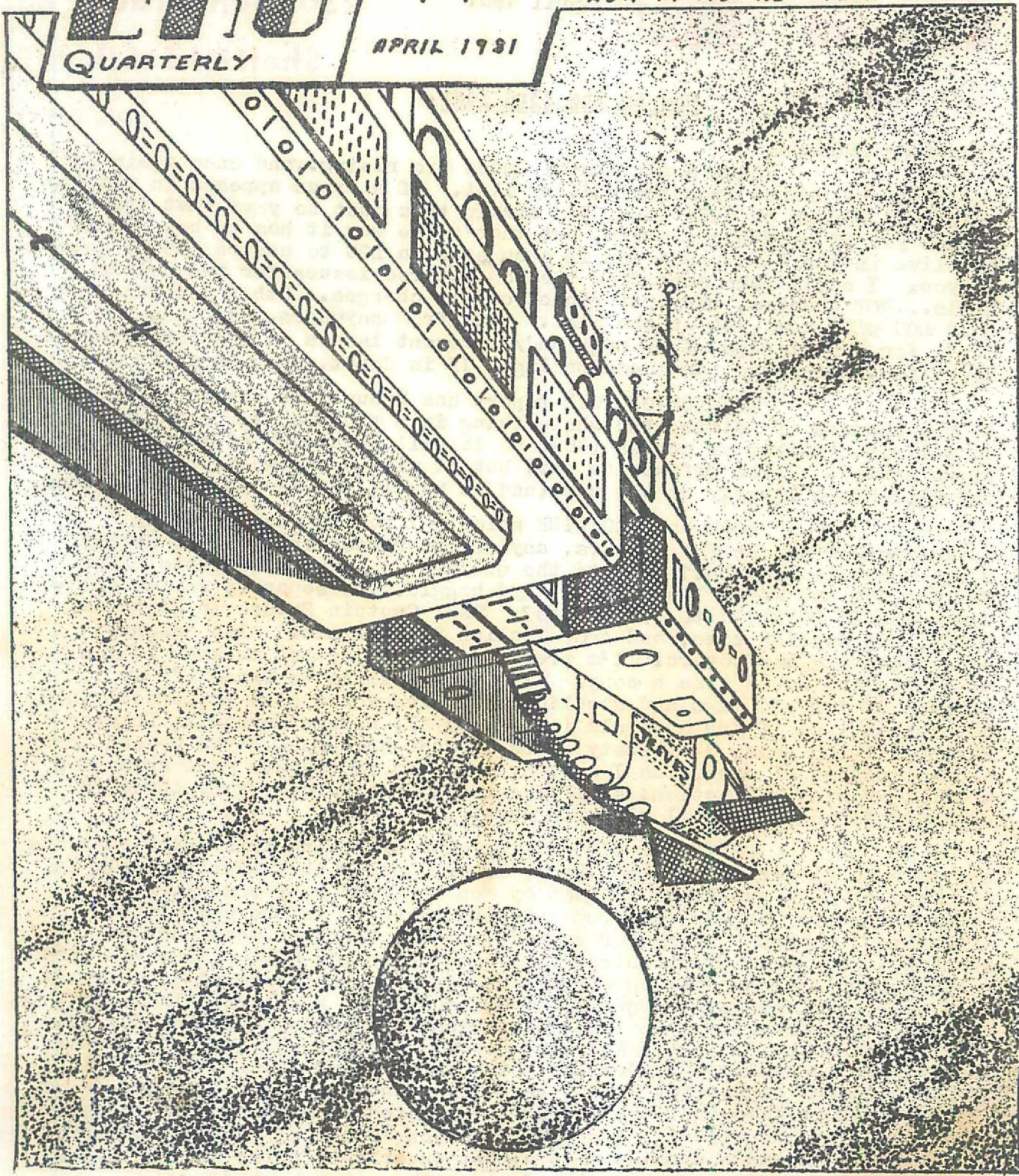
# ERG

QUARTERLY

#74

APRIL 1981

NOW IN ITS 23<sup>RD</sup> YEAR





**ERG**

Number 74

April 1981

**B. T. Jeeves,****230 Bannerdale Rd.,****Sheffield S11. 9FE.****QUARTERLY**Now in its 23rd Year.**Ph. 53791**

Greetings ERGbods,

Once again Postal Rates are rising..and once again dead wood must be pruned from the mailing list. If a cross appears in the top left hand corner of this page, I'm afraid this must be your last issue unless you DO something..sorry, but that's the way it has to be. Sp if you live in the U.K...send 30p in stamps and a LOC to ensure ERG 75 gets to you. I still take subs from the USA...three issues for two dollar bills...NOT cheques, they get ripped off in charges. Other countries, a good LOC will keep you on the list. And from anywhere..I'm open to trade for back issues of SF mags and/or recent issues of Popular Science/Mechanics, Aerospace, and modelmaking. If in doubt, drop me a line.

THE BOSTON TRIP report has brought in several queries as to the chances of getting the whole thing into a one-shot. I am making up a limited number of copies (46), so it will be a case of first-come, first served. Price unfixed as yet, but it will be between 50p and £1 and will hinge largely on the new (and as usual, top-secret) postal rates.

BOOK and MAGAZINE sales. I really must prune my collection of SF, so for openers, anyone interested in a set of Galaxy, U.S.A Complete from No.1 1950 to the mid 70s ? Make a sensible offer for the lot and we'll list the lot and haggle...no separate copies sold. Also..GALAXY NOVELS 1 to 17..offers? Also, Captain Future in Japanese! HAPNA, the Swedish zine, and some Italian SF prozines. Also assorted paperbacks and hardcovers. I'm preparing a list so let me know if you miss out, and would like a copy. I'm also willing to trade off my surplus SF for old mags and suchlike..and give you a good trade deal into the bargain..so if you have old (pre-1940) SF, Modern Mechanix, Popular Flying, Flying Aces, G-8, Dusty Ayres or what-have-you, maybe we can do a deal instead of cash. As I say, my main aim is to gain some space for a still growing collection, so if I get rid of a hardcover or three in exchange for one item...I win both ways.

'FEMINISM' I'm getting sick of seeing this theme rear its stupid head in various places..Radio Times, Analog etc. Particularly in the form of "You published X items by men and only y by women". Our local rag wants men banning from sales as they get in the way of the (fighting?) women. The writer seemed to think that men never bought anything. In Hobby Electronics, is a note that some 95% of Show visitors were men..which I suppose some rabid bra-waver would interpret to mean that only equal numbers of men and women should be admitted. In Analog, various characters complain (about the usual) including shouting the Ed. down for saying..."if he(or she)..etc etc." The complainant objected to the brackets..despite a readership which is some 85% male. I'm all in favour of equal rights for women, in home, business, school, law and so on, but I am NOT in favour of that being interpreted as meaning over every uncrossed t or undotted i. I seldom see such 'females' yakking about the education books and journals which almost invariably refer to the teacher as 'she'. That of course puts the foot on the other boot.

Best, Terry.

# NASA NEWS



This is a new column in which I plan to bring news of what is going on at NASA. Time, space and material available, I hope it will become a regular thing and thus help to keep ERGBods up to date with activities.

Of the space agency's seven launches during 1980, six were successful..the one which failed being the launch of NOAA-B on May.29..it was to have been an environmental monitoring satellite.

As 1980 drew to a close, Space Shuttle Columbia was being prepared for rollout to Launch Pad 39A. More than half of the nearly 32,000 thermal protection tiles had to be rebonded to meet specifications and ensure they did not work loose during launch stress. The flight engines have been recertified with 520-second firings and two more test firings are required in addition to the three successful tests conducted during 1980.

The next craft, 'Challenger' is under construction at Palmdale CA.,and is scheduled for completion in late 1982. Shuttle operation during the first four years calls for 74 flights (64 from Kennedy, 10 from Vandenberg), and the long range schedule calls for 487 flights through the mid-1990s

January.1980 saw the signing of a \$183,960,000 contract with the European Space Agency for the manufacture and 1984 delivery of a second SPACELAB. Nov.1980 saw the acceptance of the Spacelab engineering model in a rollout ceremony in Bremen. Spacelab will be a major element in the NASA Space Transportation System, and will have facilities and equipment similar to Earthbound labs..but adapted to zero gravity. The engineering model is for ground testing only...the first flight unit due to reach NASA during 1981

VOYAGER 1 photographed six new Saturnian moons, some that had never been seen before, others unconfirmed. Voyager 1 is now headed for the outer reaches of the Solar System and will be considered to have left the System on crossing Pluto's orbit in 1990. Sister craft VOYAGER.2 will encounter Saturn on Aug.25th 1981, then on for man's first close look at Uranus in 1986..with a possible Neptune rendezvous in 1989. Voyager is the last approved planetary mission until 1984, when a Space Shuttle launch will send a GALILEO orbiter and a probe to Jupiter for a long-term examination of that planet and its atmosphere.

Work continues on.. SPACE TELESCOPE, launch date 1983. International Solar Polar Mission, also 1983. INFRARED ASTRONOMY SATELLITE,1982 and GAMMA RAY OBSERVATORY MISSION in 1985. Also 3 satellites are due to be launched in 1981... Cosmis Ray Isotope Experinent. Dynamic Explorer and Solar Mesospheric Explorer.

For the WHAT USE IS IT? Brigade, NASA's Aircraft Energy Efficiency Program plans to reduce fuel consumption by half in future aircraft, and is already providing fuel-saving advancements for current production engines. The Quiet,Clean, General Aviation Turbine Engine program was complotted with engines producing up to 60% less noise than current types..and with significant reductions in engine pollution emissions.



The Tilt Rotor Aircraft, in flight research, demonstrated about twice the speed and range of current helicopters, using the same amount of fuel. NASA is also funding research into propulsive lift technology aimed at quiet, short-haul aircraft operating from short runways. In addition, work is under way on solar cell power systems, automotive power systems, industrial gas turbines, solar heating and cooling, wind turbine generators, solar thermal electric conversion, energy storage, fuel cell systems and even nuclear waste isolation in space. When you throw in all the people and industries employed..and the jobs created in Europe, it sounds a darned sight more profitable than anti-this, that and the other demonstrations with their disruptive, anarchistic attitudes.

The first demonstration was completed of a 'hand-eye' machine for robotic techniques in space assembly. The system picked up a solar cell, inspected it for defects and placed it into a solar panel array, with the correct orientation. During the past year, nickel-cadmium batteries had their operational lifetime doubled by a new, deep-discharge reconditioning system, and NASA's new energy storing system REDOX promises major cost reductions, long term reliability and low environmental impact.

Out in space, PIONEER 6 is still turning out data after 15 years... after its original specifications had planned for only six months! ..and hopes are high that it may remain operation a further ten years. Among their uses, Pioneers are used to predict solar storms for about 1,000 primary users such as Federal Aviation Administration, commercial airlines, power companies, radio communications companies and organisations doing surveying, navigation and electronic prospecting. So next time someone says the space programme has only given us frying pans and electric toothbrushes, just put 'em right. (\* Solar storms can trigger circuit breakers in power transmission lines, thus causing expensive..and dangerous periods of 'Blackout'.)

#### STATUS OF VOYAGER SPACECRAFT. Jan.1 1981

	VOYAGER 1	VOYAGER 2
Distance from Earth	1,449,237,000	1,194,436,000 miles
Distance to Saturn	-----	742,188,000 miles
Distance travelled since launch	2,264,300,000	1,964,094,000 miles
Velocity relative to Earth	63,863 mph	45,917 mph
Closest approach to Saturn	Nov.12 1980	Aug.25 1981

NASA is currently accepting requests for news media to cover the SHUTTLE launch scheduled for March 17. Now I wonder if I can get accreditation for ERG to one of these shindigs? By the time you read this, launch date will have gone by. Here's hoping it is 100% successful. Apart from the fact that we need the knowledge, the capability, the power-satellites and all that goes with NASA...we also need to accept that we can't stand still, put out heads in the sand, and play 'ostrich' while reactionaries send us to hell in a (hand-woven) bucket. Standing still means stagnation, so I for one hope NASA gets all the funding it needs for each and every one of its space and Earthbound projects. Which means the VIKING FUND Presentation to NASA gladdens my little heart. On Wednesday, Jan.7th, The Viking Fund, a private organisation, will have handed over collected donations totalling \$70,000. I'd rather see my tax money going on that, than to provide sports halls up and down the UK when we all ready have plenty of parks, moors, and keep-fit facilities to hand.

Terry Jeeves



Of all the silly predictions made by that most silly of theories, Relativity, the dafdest is probably the Twin Paradox. It is usually stated thus..

Two twins, of the same age, decide they cannot stand each other any more. One therefore hops onto a spaceship and whizzes off to Tau Ceti at 90% of the speed

of light. The round trip, as he measures it on the clock people always consult during experiments on relativity, takes 11 years. But, when he arrives back home, he finds his twin brother fourteen years older than himself. Time dilation has struck again. There is always the problem of which twin gets older faster. The text book answer is that the travelling one slows down because he undergoes acceleration, and so is not in an 'Inertial Frame! We can overcome this excuse thus:- At Tau Ceti, the travelling twin happens to pass another ship headed back to Earth at 90% light speed. He signals it, "BRAKES FAILED. SEND MESSAGE TO BROTHER, SEND SPARE BRAKE LININGS" The other ship heaves a man out of the airlock to continue the trajectory to Earth, then decelerates to help our kinetic kin. When he left Tau Ceti, the messenger was, as he saw it, the same age as the outbound character we have followed from Earth...as they passed within feet of each other, he should know. Yet he finds the stay-at-home brother to be 14 years older than him as well. Is that silly ?

Yes it is. Consider the logic. Until the dispatch of the messenger, neither Terran nor travelling twin 'know' in any physical sense, whether the outbound one is to turn round, or the earthbound one is to accelerate after him to affect their reunion. So both parties must age at the same rate, otherwise each would age more slowly than the other..a ridiculous idea. If one did age more slowly in the synetric situation, we could deduce, by devious means, an absolute reference of motion, which was just what Relativity tries to avoid. So our moving man must arrive at Tau Ceti  $12\frac{1}{2}$  years after he left, not  $5\frac{1}{2}$  as dictated by Relativity, as that is how long it takes him to get there at 90% lightspeed. But he arrives back to find the 14 year age difference. Therefore, immediately on taking the decision to turn round, he must age in reverse by fourteen years. If he does not, the return journey, taking the same  $12\frac{1}{2}$  years, will see him arrive the same age as his brother.

This seems such a ridiculous idea that it is amazing that physicists have put up with it for so long, but it is mainly due to lack of careful thought. Now you have thought it through, you can ponder the related problem of 'length shrinking'. If a spaceship passes us at high speed, it will, according to Relativity, be shortened in the direction of motion and it will similarly consider us to have shrunk. So if two passing spaceships each see a 'standard rule' as being shorter by a factor  $\gamma$  on each other than on themselves as they pass, then the length of the rule, indeed of the whole



aposehln, must be zero. The equations  $L_a = T \times L_b$  and  $L_b = T \times L_a$  (Where  $L_a$  and  $L_b$  are the two spaceship lengths) are only valid for  $L_a = L_b = 0$  If they are zero, and if the spaceship is not to exceed what it thinks is the speed of light as measured onboard...i.e., so many rule lengths per second = zero metres per second, both spaceships must come to a dead halt. Thus Relativity confidently predicts that whenever anything passes anything else, they will both become infinitely thin and stop moving!

===== William Bains =====

EDITOR'S NOTE A lovely bit of red-herring work..but I can't resist putting in my two cents' worth. Fallacy.1 occurs with the two twins. One (call him A) applies acceleration to leave his earthbound brother so from their common frame of reference, A moves, and therefore A ages. (This time slow down has been experimentally verified). If A returned, he (or the messenger) would be older than the non-moving brother by a factor derived from  $\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}$  which at 90% lightspeed, is 0.44 appx. Fallacy 2, is the case of the passing ships... each sees the other reduced by this factor of .44. They themselves are totally unaware of their own apparent shrinking, as all their ways of measuring shrink by the same factor. AND, the factor satisfies your two equations.... as ship A sees .44 $L_b$  and ship B sees .44  $L_a$ , and since the ships rest length is identical...then .44 $L_a = .44L_b$  and no paradox.

===== T.J. =====

#### ODDS AND ENDS

The ANALOG ANTHOLOGY no.1 An assortment of 23 stories and articles from ASF's first 50 years. Three times the thickness of the normal magazine, you can get it (£1.85 + postage) and all your other SF wants, from Ken Slater, Fantast (Madway) Ltd. 39 West St., Wistech, CAMBS PE13 2LX...send Ken 25p in stamps for a copy of his catalogue.

ERGTape no.1 A C-60 cassette of ERG material and other items such as the tape play 'Streak Moron's Journey Into Void' and part of the never-used con tape 'BATULA', etc. £2.00 post included, from the editor.

ON Dick Turpin's Postal Robbery Inc. I sent 200 quarto pages to the USA for £1.62..and got back two huge parcels which had cost only £1.20. A news item said the US First Class Inland rate was to go up to 18c..which I work out at 8.3p As for telephone's..a few years back, we got a 'once and for all' £15 rebate when the Company made a naughty excess profit...now they propose the vast expense of cleaning the red paint off our phone boxes and re-doing the lot in yellow. I suspect they have made another and even bigger profit and are trying to plough it out of sight by using the lolly on this repainting boondoggle...after all, if they have to give another rebate it would be difficult to justify their next 15% cost rise wouldn't it?

YORCON at the Dragonar in Leeds. Val and I will be there, our first UK con in quite a while, so I look forward to seeing a lot of 'new ERG faces'. Please come and introduce yourself/ves so we can natter...I'll probably be wandering around as I try to avoid panels and the pontificating from the platform stuff.  
...and of course, heed the message on the right.....





Highlights from the mail-bag,  
with ERGitorial interjections  
marked thus.. (((.....)))

R.G.Faulder, Yanco Agricultural  
Research Centre,  
Yanco. NSW 2703 AUSTRALIA

"I'd like to congratulate Jim  
Cawthorn for cutting that magni-  
ficent illo, and you for giving  
it the reproduction it deserves.  
That reminds me of a question I  
wanted to ask you. One of our  
local faneds recently stated that  
your illos were cut directly onto  
stencil. How accurate is that  
statement, since I'd always  
assumed they were electrostenc-  
illed. (((For years, I seldom  
used electros. Nowadays, I use  
them nearly all the time...on  
this issue, I think two illos are

handcut, all the rest are electros))) Agree with your assessment of 'The  
Black Cloud'. One of Hoyle's better books (although I regard the Andromeda  
books as being at the top of the list). Actually, the direction of the  
Hoyle's writing seems to have undergone a change in direction lately, but  
without any clear sign that they know where they're going. (((To the bank?)))

BRIAN TAWN I rather enjoy reading TAPP reports, so this issue has that  
29 Gordon St., little extra for me. I'm also glad you let Mike Banks have  
Wasbach his two cents' worth on the subject too. The Book reviews  
Combs. PM13 2LW continue to be my first port of call though. Apart from  
enjoying reading the reviews, I still learn about books I  
didn't know had been published. (((And that is the whole point of 'Recent  
Reading'..to let people know what is on sale))).

E.C.TUBB Reading of your trip was almost as good as making it myself.  
67 Houston Rd., (((Did you catch a recent BBC 'Holiday' programme, showing  
Boston..and the Sheraton?))) ..maybe better for nothing  
eventful., romantic or memorable seems to happen to me when I'm travelling.  
(((Why not try Israeli Air ?))) No terrified blonde begging me to smuggle her  
over state or country lines. No enigmatic dispatch case left by some care-  
less diplomat, No interesting breakdowns forcing me to spend days isolated  
in a small cabin with a raving nymphomaniac. (((Lovely thought))) I guess  
travelling doesn't seem to appeal anymore.

IAN GOFFIN The ERGtape was all pure enjoyment except the radip play  
19 Edgewell Cresc. on side two. I couldn't make out some of it, but I  
Foxhill expect this is because of my wind it up and let it rip,  
SHEFFIELD S6 1FG equipment. (((ERG tape No.1, still available at \$2 a go  
all in))) I've a little suggestion to make concerning

ERGtape 2 (I do hope you produce one). Wouldn't it be interesting to have  
some synthetic music. ((( Yes, I agree with you, and have plans afoot)))  
Those Astounding Statistics. I was surprised to see how many of the novels  
I had read with the impression that they had first been published as a whole  
and not in serial form. I think the fannish Omnibus a great idea.



ARNOLD AKIEN  
6 Dunblane Rd.,  
Seaburn  
Sunderland  
Tyne & Wear

I read your con report after having returned from a typically grotty British restaurant. After that, your description of the handmaiden in cheong san was hard to bear. ((nicer to bare, I'd say))) You do seem to have enjoyed yourself. My admiration for your excuse for leaving your wife behind whilst you roamed around on your own - unguarded,

knows no bounds. The most original excuse for abandoning one's wife I've yet to hear. I see from Mike Ashley's column that I have good company in my fondness for the Lord Darcy stories. What good taste we all have. A brief word on one of your book reviews.. I'm afraid I can't agree with you on your opinion of the 'I, learth War' books. A friend persuaded me to wade through them - and wade's the right word. Covenant is probably the dullest, most insipid character I've ever come across (((Come now, haven't you read any of the 'Dragon' stories?))) ((Re your plea for more stereo effects etc. in ERGtape 1, where you say cheap Hi Fi gives good results. True..but TO DUB in stereo, you need TWO sets of stereo gear..one for playing the master and one for dubbing the copy. Rather expensive what? ..and again, almost ALL my source material..including the effects, originated in mono anyway)))

ALAN BURNS  
The Crescent  
Wallsend on Tyne  
Tyne & Wear

It is very hard to present accounts of those fannish trips to the USA done over the years by various people, in a new way. Which is to say that barring the changed names there is not a lot of difference between 'The Harp Stateside' by Walt Willis and 'Boston Here I come' by you ((( I can't make out of that is a complaint.. or a compliment))) No criticism of course, you carried the flag magnificently, and most important, you had a very good time. I find myself confounded as to the purpose of Mike Ashley's article. Surely, it is a mine long since worked out to compare ratings for stories in Analog. ((( For some, yes; but for Analog...egad, ASF buffs, it is nostalgia))) I wish you had made a regular practice of offering covers (originals) for sale, there were quite a few I would cheerfully have bid for. ((( I'll try and list those I have on offer...but it doesn't seem ethical to offer those by other artists without their consent))) The usual, useful book reviews, often the best part of the zine apart from your writings. Your fanzine column would be more useful if you could include some idea of who agents the zines. Most of us don't have dollars to send, and yet we'd like copies. ((( Good point, but very few fanzines list UK agents..as for dollars, I mentioned this in the same issue...you can either get dollars at a travel agent..or an International Money order at the Post Office)))

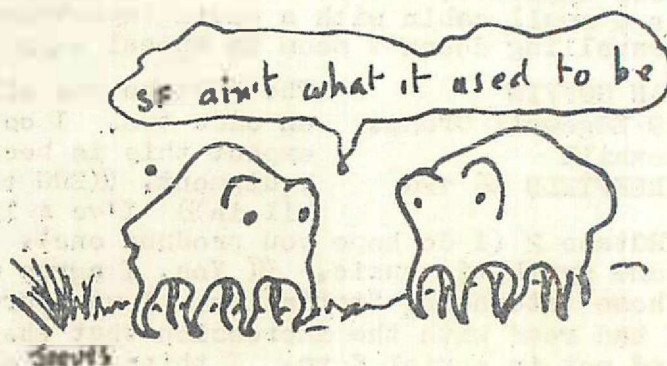
ERGTAPE No. 1 still available. Contains, a mixture of tape plays, items culled from ERG, etc.. Send £2..which includes post, packing and the C-60 cassette.

Cover originals on offer..make a bid of 50p or over. Highest offer gets the illo.

ERG 71..alien and starship  
ERG 66.. spacechild..litho master-  
ERG 60.. SPACEMAN and moon

ERG 62 Robot and aliens  
ERG 58 Spaceman shooting monster.

Some of the above (58 and 71) have no ERG logo on original.







### PRACTICAL ELECTRONICS HANDBOOK

Ian R. Sinclair

Newnes Technical Books £3.95

A brief mathematical introduction leads into five fact-filled chapters. The first covers resistors, capacitors & inductors, singly and in networks with worked examples and reference tables. Next come diodes, transistors, etc, bias circuits and a variety of circuit applications examined. With Chapter three you get a stack of more specialised designs, again with relevant calculations. (These three chapters alone, are worth the cost of the book), but there's more. 'Linear ICs' covers single-chip amps, timers etc., and 'Digital ICs' deals with calculating and computer techniques, gates, binary numbers, Boolean Algebra plus a stack of connection diagrams. To wind up two appendices and an index complete the package. I particularly liked the 'worked examples' and the profusion of clear, well-detailed diagrams. Aimed at student, hobbyist or professional, an ideal volume for getting into solid-state work.

### THE GLASS SCHOOL

Neville Kea

Hale £5.95

When 40,000 people vanish from a Yorkshire school, there are only 5 survivors. One of them, Alec Rayne firmly believes he is a woman and the other four also have strange delusions. In Rayne's home, a record is discovered telling of a childhood encounter with men of Atlantis who fled to another world when atomic war destroyed their home. The Atlanteans plant operatives who open a school and train Earth children in mental skills. The system spreads, Yorkshire gains independence and arouses Government wrath. Complicated but also light-hearted with never a dull moment, but somehow, it never hooked me.

### THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MIND

Gordon Rattray Taylor

Granada £2.50

Opening with a discussion of the brain's physical construction and how 'mind' can transcend computer operation, the author moves on to how the brain operates, electrically, chemically and even responding to magnetic fields! Unusual experiments with their bizarre results; hypnotic and psychomatic effects, bodily sensations and pain, dreams, optical illusions, E.S.P., memory, stigmata are all covered.

Written with interest holding anecdote and detail, yet factual throughout, you also get an extensive bibliography, a comprehensive set of source notes and a hefty index. If you hanker to know more about the ability..and strangeness of your own personal computer without ploughing through a dull and dreary medical textbook, then don't miss this...and if you want an extra bonus, you might still be able to find a copy of the author's 'The Biological Time Bomb'...writers, either of these titles will load you down with plot ideas.



A JUNGLE OF STARS

Paul Savage gets killed in Jack L. Chalker Viet Nam, but is returned Ballantine 95p to immortal life as an agent of 'The Hunter' in his star-ranging battle against the Bromgrev. Intricate as a vanVogt novel but far more tautly constructed with touches of 'Puppet Masters', 'Recruiting Station' and even a 'who-dun-it?' as Savage gradually finds himself pitted against The Bromgrev and The Hunter. Excellent, exciting and a gripper from the word 'go'.

OZMA OF OZ

L. Frank Baum  
Del Rey 85p

Everyone knows of Judy Garland's 'Dorothy' in Wizard Of Oz', Not so many are aware that there are other tales in the

series, and here is the third in a set of seven. On a sea voyage to Australia, Dorothy gets blown into the sea, meets Bellina, a talking chicken and comes ashore near a grove of lunch-box trees. Chased by Wheelers and aided by a clockwork man they head off into an adventure involving aiding Princess Ozma and the royal family against the Nome King. If you have any children around, they'll love the characters, settings and the delightful drawings (scores of 'em).

TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE

Harry Harrison  
Orbit £1.25

Climactic Studios needs a hit film fast, so a film crew is sent back, via time machine, to film a Viking epic on location in one day's subjective time. However, events fail to coincide with recorded history..and their glamour star shacks up repeatedly with a Viking warrior. Harrison at his hilarious best, so if you missed this in Analog, rectify your error now. It may not be pedantic hard core SF, but it sure is fun.

THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT

Joan D Vinge  
Orbit £1.25

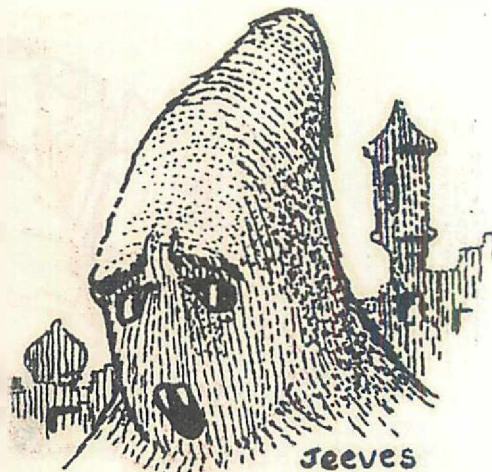
Another hit from Analog. This time, the starship Ranger comes from the failing colony of Morningside seeking aid and trade from the asteroid dwellers of Heaven Belt. Civil war has reduced the Bolters to existence level and they see the ramship's technology as their salvation, which makes it difficult for pilot Betha Torgussen to fulfill her mission. I found the timing in kilosecs mildly irritating, but otherwise this is a fascinating, hard-core SF tale, with living characters and credible situations. If you like the mainline, deep space SF theme, then this should rate high on your shopping list.

THE EDGE OF RUNNING WATER

William Sloane  
Ballantine/Del Rey \$2.25

Physicist Julian Blair retires to a remote house on his wife's death. He begins to build a strange machine and calls in his former student Richard Sayles to help in his experiments to contact the dead. Sayles is faced by a beautiful daughter, a hostile 'medium' house-keeper, even greater hostility from the locals, and a (not very) mysterious death of the daily 'help'. This is a yarn which takes the time to develop its theme with a slow, Lovecraftian, sense of strangeness building to a real and deadly climax. First published 1939, and (I think) Bookclubbed by the US SF Club circa 1960, this has all the atmosphere of a Gothic horror tale in a more modern setting. (No UK price given, but I suspect that like the OZMA OF OZ title, it will be about 85p)

(\*\*\* Just released in hardcover by Sidgwick & Jackson at £6.95..with illos)





THE ALIEN WAY

Gordon R. Dickson  
Hale \$5.95

Mankind has FTL and is reaching for the stars before its sociology matches its science. To prevent disaster a small group prepares for alien contact with the result that Jason Darther establishes mind-linking with Kator Secondcousin, member of a warrior race which dreams of conquering new worlds. Now they have a line to Earth, with only Jason to understand their mentality and fight them off. Despite a couple of implausibilities (such as Kator making a solo trip to sound out a top secret base), this one had me hooked throughout. Good characterisation, plausible aliens and the background well worked out. A good read from page 1..with only Human psychology as villain.

THE WORLD OF THE SOWER

Iain Douglas  
Hale \$5.95

Tourist pilot Wes e. is verging on bankruptcy when he and salvage man Dereux are hired by millionaire Storley and Barbara Trafton to find the girl's father, missing in deep space. The father is also the central figure in the Cult of The Sower and to add zest, the villain follows on to pick up any money that might turn up. Characterisation (particularly the girl) is woefully thin, but the pace of the story and the unfolding plot largely make up for that with the result that you are carried along with events and simply enjoy each new sequence. I suspect this might be the first of a series..could be.

THE VISITORS

Clifford D. Simak  
Sidgwick & Jackson  
\$7.95

Originally an Analog serial in '79, a gigantic black box lands near a backwoods town, crushing a Ranger's car in the process, and collecting him as a specimen. A local takes a pot shot at the box, and is incinerated in true 'War Of The Worlds' fashion. Meanwhile, an unidentified object is recorded in 'synchronous orbit over Iowa' (a miracle, since Iowa is around 40°N at its lowest...and synchronous orbits must be directly over the Equator). Investigation reveals the object is composed of thousand more of the black boxes. The one on Earth starts chewing up trees and the others descend to emulate it. Next, just as things seem to be slowing down, the boxes start to bud...a super efficient flying auto and soon after that, complete houses!

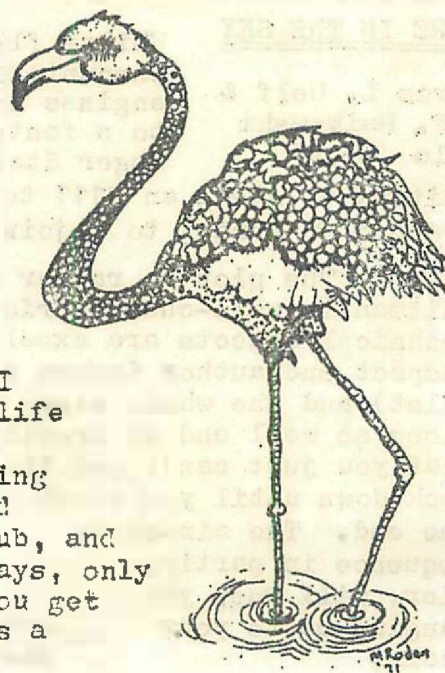
This is one of Simak's best in a long time, I put off all sorts of essential chores to get back to the story as seen through the eyes of newspersons, Government aides and others. Were it not for the (to me) unsatisfactory ending, I'd put this one down for all the Oscars, Hugos and suchlike that may be going.

THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT

Joan D. Vinge  
Sidgwick & Jackson \$6.95.

Yes, this is also reviewed on the previous page. By one of those coincidences which must make publishers tear their hair, Orbit have just issued the paperback version. It's still excellent hard core SF, and I much prefer the S&J cover..so if you want a long-life collector's copy....this is your chance.

One point of note...if S & J can keep on catching Analog serials in book form, it might prove a good economic proposition to drop your \$12.00 Analog sub, and just keep your eye on S & J's titles...as these days, only the serials seen worth the money..and this way, you get them beautifully bound in hardcovers instead of as a perishable 'pulp'.





THE SORCERER OF NARAKAAN

Despite the title, this is SF, not fantasy. The Ronald McQueen 'Magician' 'Sorcerer' is a master criminal, believed dead, but back committing even more audacious crimes. Hale £5.75

Jannard of the Federation Security Force is put on the track, but Jannard has personal problems..and a personal interest in the task. The mission leads into a full-scale plot to dominate a world and the Federation.

The 'Magician's' identity is obvious from page 16..and the bank robbery he commits, so easy that it negates much of what has gone before. Apart from this, the yarn is fast-paced and gripping, with all the trappings of a Bond movie blended into space opera. One point to the author..again page 16...spaceships don't "coast to a halt" when the power is cut. Quibbles apart, and they are only quibbles, this one keeps you hooked all the way.

FOURTH GEAR

Simon Warstone teaches in a grotty little madhouse of a school and to solve his punctuality problem, buys a motor bike in a back street deal. The machine has some unusual qualities which involve Simon in dimension hopping, trouble with his fiancée, a missing girl, and powers of evil. Despite the latter, this is a light hearted comedy, almost in the Thorne Smith vein..with no trace of the Fletcher Pratt/Sprague De Camp prat falls..or Lafferty's total improbabilities. Real, if many people, a near normal setting and a deft touch with the humour blend with the continuous action to make this a ~~pure~~ pleasure to read. Hale £5.75

FANTOCINE

Master Thief, Marraign by-Granness is coerced by magician (Corbolan into attempting to steal the Fantacine a statuette of unusual powers. Marraign's mission leads him into a cross-country journey of epic proportions. (The geography of the place seems rather flexible..which probably accounts for Marraign's ignorance of his own land). He has to contend with a pack of giant hounds, a shipload of masochists, a troglodyte horde of frogmen, mindstealing aliens and a few other problems before the final confrontation with the evil Corbolan. An enjoyable romp, rather Vance-like in style, but the ending left me feeling rather cheated. Leigh Beresford Hale £5.95

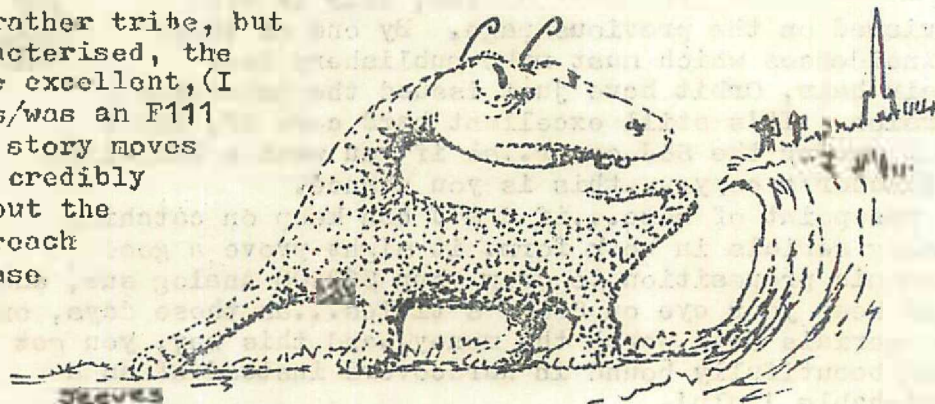
FIRE IN THE SKY

Whilst flying an F111 mission, Captain John Whitman encounters a damaged UFO which escapes after causing his engines to flame out. Years later, Whitman is brought in to a fantastic plot involving Clede, pilot of the UFO and Roger Stansfeld, a crippled aero engineer. They want Chris L. Wolf & M.F. Mairowski Hale £5.95

Whitman to steal an F111 to aid Clede, trapped on Earth, to rejoin her parent ship.

The plot is rather trite, but Whitman is well-characterised, the technical aspects are excellent, (I suspect one author is/was an F111 pilot) and the whole story moves along so well and so credibly that you just can't put the book down until you reach the end. The air-chase sequence in particular, will keep you hanging on to your chair.

CONTINUED on p.22





Part.  
two.

## The Boston Tea Party



dismaying habit of shattering like Prince Rupert's drops at the touch of a fork and scattering everyone with shrapnel.

Leaving Wauseon around 9-15, we headed off for the Neil Armstrong Space Museum at Wapakoneta (and if I got THAT spelling right, chalk up a victory over the Indians) We inspected one of the jet planes Armstrong had flown (it formed the centrepiece of the car park) before moving on to the museum itself. From the front, the place looked like something out of an SF movie...a large central dome flanked by two wings. We entered and began to absorb the wonders... The plane Neil had soloed on was hanging on a wall (These American Museums are NOT small), his bicycle rested against a supporting pillar. School books, flight helmets, goggles, photographs and a host of other memorabilia ranged around. A glass showcase held a miniature Airforce of models frozen in mid flight, while behind it a ramp led up to a landing bearing spacesuits, more photographs and a beautifully detailed model of a Saturn V launch complex. A movie scree was hung over the hall, and on it was a continuously running film on the history of flight. Moving on, we passed through the 'INFINITY ROOM' This was crossed by a catwalk which took us through the centre of a dimly lit room entirely walled in mirrors and separated from the catwalk by sheets of one-way glass. The result was that no matter which way you looked, all you could see was an endless array of star-like lights receding to infinity. The eeriness was compounded by 'space music' and the total effect has to be experienced to be believed.

Then came the planetarium..which was what the dome housed. It featured a programme featuring the mission of Apollo 11, with a particularly striking effect of the Command Module regularly orbiting the projected Lunar surface while three large screens carried sequenced mission photos. The final sales hall was also full of displays..including a case of scrolls, plaques and 'Freedom of the City' keys presented to Armstrong..among them were keys of steel and glass all commemorating that memorable..'One Small Step'.

Tuesday morning dawned much too soon, heralded by the much too cheerful chiming of my wrist watch alarm (no fan should be without one). Bleary-eyed, I staggered downstairs through the pulp tunnels, to a breakfast of bacon and eggs incinerated by Ray Bean. Ray seemed to have a positive theory on the correct way to perpetrate arson on innocent food, as he took over from Lynn who had sizzled the bacon for a mere ten minutes. Ray played happily with the skillet for another hour or two before prying the results of his labours from the pan and dumping them on my plate.. The stuff tasted all right, but had a



IS THIS WHY SO MANY AMERICANS WEAR SPECTACLES?



We finally left the Museum to make a pilgrimage (the first of many such visits) to a nearby "MacDonald's" for hamburger and French Fries. Since this was to be rendezvous point for Mike Banks, Lynn parked his buggy and we went inside..but had we been so minded, the facilities included a complete drive-around area with a preliminary stop to give your order over a two way intercom before driving round to a second window to pay and collect your food. (I often wondered what happened if some joker dropped out of the chain after ordering and thus disrupted the orderly sequence of events. On this system, the food came neatly packaged ready for you to drive and eat. Milk shake cartons nested into non-spill (in theory) racks, and the burgers in individual cases. All this enables the eating driver to lose minimum stopover time...in-and-out again to munch while he drives along the Thruway. What a contrast with the UK where I recall reading of a bloke being fined for driving along one-handed using an electric-shaver. "Not being in full control of his vehicle", was the charge. Oh well, when in Rome, be a Roman candle as 'Doc' Smith's Kinnison was wont to say.

Halfway down my 'Big Mac', we were joined by Mike Banks<sup>2</sup> ..i.e., 'Big' Mike Banks (who is over 6 feet in height) was accompanied by his son Mike Jr. Introductions and meeting natter went like a breeze. Mike and I had corresponded for years, as in the case with Lynn and I..and here again, a paper person was coming to living breathing..and very friendly, life.

Eating over, we loaded into the cars and headed off down the road to the United States Aerospace Museum in Dayton. If Wapakaneta was large, this place was V A S T! Literally hundreds of record-breaking, vintage and just plain famous aircraft studded the tarmac around the buildings..with the first and most imposing being the multi-Mach supersonic bomber the predatory B-70..the only existing one of the two which were built. (the first being destroyed in a mid-air collision during a formation photo' flight). Next to the B-70 stood the Enola Gay B-29. If you don't know what that one did then go to the bottom of the class. Ranged around like discarded kiddies playthings were missiles enough for a minor war...Atlas, Redstone, Bomarc, Minuteman, Snark etc. and etc. All there to be seen, touched, walked around and photographed. If you are an aircraft buff and get to the USA, whatever you do, don't miss Dayton.

Inside the building(s) we followed a complete set of models, posters, items, dioramas and full size aircraft depicting the history of flight. To list everything would require a book the size of the official catalogue...but for droolers...the X-15, a B-36 (yes they had that monster inside), a fuselage centre section from a B-29, but with pressurised tunnel blocked off so that visitors actually went through the bomb-bays. Mike took a photo of me along side one of the B-24 bombers which I spent several years radio servicing in India. I peered into a charred and pitted space capsule and in general felt like a little boy in a candy store. There was so much to see and so little time in which to see it. Mike knew what I wanted to see when he planned this part of the tour. It was wonderful..I only hope that I can get there again, with more time to spend.

Eventually, we staggered (the temperature was in the high 80s and remained there the whole time I was in the USA) back to the cars, waved farewell to Lynn and watched him depart Wauseon-wards in a cloud of smoke as he went to catch up on the backlog of beer cans which must have piled up in his absence. Then it was off to Cincinnati and its suburb of Milford where Mike lived...but he did manage a special slowspeed filming drive past a huge filling station sign bearing the legend "HI VAL" When that came up on the cine once we were home, it really creased Val. Reaching Mike's home, a long, long trailer we were met by Mike's wife Roas and daughter Susie, both of whom greeted me and made me as welcome as if I'd lived there for years.



Much nattering took place before we all headed out on a refuelling trip to a nearby hostelry. Marvellous system they have in these places. First you select your order from the menu (also displayed photographically), pay, and receive a numbered ticket. You place this on the end of the table you sit around...and the waitress knows just where to bring the order. Saves a lot of messing about, and the food is piping hot when you get it.

Naturally, we had another late night..I don't think I had a normal bed time for the whole of the stay in the U.S.A. This was brought home to us on the return to the UK and started to drive home. However before turning in, I did manage a 'phone call to Sam and Mary Long, in Springfield and a quick shower in the unit Mike had installed in the trailer. Have you put the floor in yet Mike?

Wednesday morning proved really hectic..while Rosa did the packing and very kindly did my washing, Mike and I drove out into and I drove out into the



wilds of Ohio, where we fired off a variety of model rockets..each with a careful 'count-down' to ensure safety. I got some excellent shots on cine of the whole procedure..but the dreaded Lurgurgle jinxed them..as will be revealed later. Then, after hoovering up the debris and pacifying six State troopers and some locals, we tootled back to the trailer to rendezvous with Mike's brother Jim..another very tall, and exceedingly friendly character. He ferried us down to Cincinnati to pick up the hire-car for the 1000 mile drive to Boston. I was tickled to see (and film) a cowboy sitting nice and easy in an arm chair..in the middle of the main street! Oh yes..there was also a policeman, Christmas-treed with nightstick, whistle, holstered gun, handcuffs etc, walking ponderously towards an illegally parked car..and gleefully de-pencilling his notebook and opening it to a blank page.

The rental company had snafued the car booking, so for no extra charge, they supplied Mike with a better quality car, power windows, cruise control, six-seater and all sorts of other gubbins such as an electric toothbrush or something equally essential. What burned me up was not the low rental of \$129 for the week...but the fact that this beauty cost LESS than the new Opel Kadett I had bought a few weeks earlier! Mike handled it as if he had been driving it for ages...no sweat at all as he nipped us over the bridge



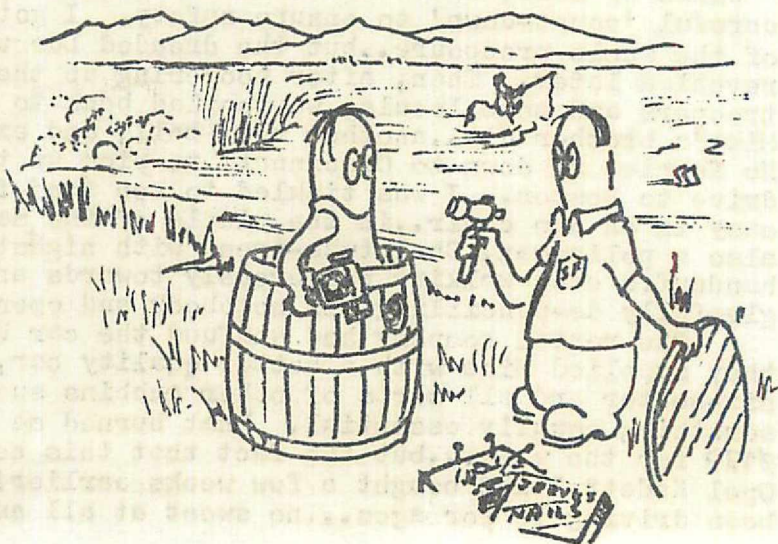
across the Licking River...or was it the Ohio? Anyway, it took us into Kentucky where Mike was able to get cheaper cigarettes...at a dive-in kiosk, no less! Then it was back to Ohio and a much too brief visit to Mike's wonderful parents before we shot back to the trailer, collected Rosa, the children, tons of baggage and headed off to pick up Betty Otis who was also going to the Con with us. She and Mike shared the driving as although Mike offered to let me play with the shiny new car..and I did have an International licence, I chickened out at driving on the right hand side of the road in a totally strange car...with automatic shift. Never having driven a magic-box car before, I didn't think it seemed a sound idea to practice that and 'wrong-way' driving on Interstates 71 and 90.

Only a few miles out of Cincinnati, we passed an amusement park which numbered among its delights, no less than a half-scale model of the Eiffel Tower in Paris..and as far as I could see, a perfect replica. We also passed numerous futuristic style water towers and fleets of giant trucks..with trailers! which zoom majestically along the Thruways at the statutory 55mph...which seemed a very sedate pace after the 70+ of British motorways..however, it did give me ample time to watch (and film) much of the scenery along the route..including three huge road signs advertising SANTA'S CABIN, FRONTIERLAND and TRAILER HOME which almost totally hid the Adirondack mountains behind them. I gather there is an ordinance which prohibits signs too near a Thruway..so they simply plonk the signs on any available hill and make them BIG! Rather unusual, because everywhere else the roads were bordered with a forest of signpoles, adverts and suchlike enhancements of the environment.

Eventually, we reached our first pit stop..Ben Jason's home in Cleveland. Ben proved a merry, friendly character..he needed to be, to take in six tired and hungry travellers. After listing our food wants, Ben disappeared to return later, laden with a bucket of chicken, a minor mountain of French fries, onion rings, hashed brown potatoes and coffee..and he wouldn't accept a penny for it. Thanks again, Ben, it was very kind of you.

Thursday morning, we left Cleveland on Route 90 which kept giving us brief glimpses of Lake Erie as we sped along. Buffalo fell behind and we entered Niagara Falls. I was surprised to find how close the actual Falls are to the city centre..virtually in it. The sight..and sound is overwhelming..and thanks to a busted fence, we were able to get right to the very brink of the cataract. Ignoring the 'KEEP OUT' signs, I shot a superb reel

"OH COME ON, MIKE. IF YOU KEEP THE  
CAMERA HARD AGAINST THE BUNG HOLE  
NO WATER WILL GET IN."





of the torrent racing to the edge, the falling water, the spray, the tiny boat, 'Maid of The Mist' which carried oilskin-clad tourists right to the foot of the falls, even the high tower restaurant on the Canadian side which had its elevator cage moving dizzily up and down the outside of the tower! Out of all the reels I shot in the USA..wouldn't that be the one to be ruined by accidentally getting put through the camera twice! Still, it does make a good talking point to see model rockets and traffic zooming through the waters of Niagara. By the way, that little craft, 'Maid Of The Mist' must be several ships along its family tree, as way back in the early 1900s, it was there when Blondin performed some of his spectacular tightrope crossings of the Falls...and on one trip, Blondin held out his hat to allow a marksman on the boat's deck to put a bullet through the brim!

Reluctantly, we left Niagara and headed off for Lake Oneida and a rendezvous with Richard Wilson and Carol Pohl. It was all ready dark when we located them at a roadside eatery..and Dick insis<sup>st</sup> on buying a meal for everyone before leading us off into the wilds and his 'cabin' right on the shore of the lake. Talk about luxury... in addition to a 'frig, TV, bathroom and shower, we also had a bedroom each! In the morning, we had a quick drool over the superb sight of the mist rising from the lake to reveal a solitary fisherman in his boat. Mike loaded Susie and little Mike into a skiff and took them out for a brief row before we hit the road WEST.



SANTA'S  
GROTTO

Yes, I said West. Despite a message from Ray Bean, Mike had somehow reversed his bearings, and for a few miles we headed away from Boston until we got to a turnaround point. Eventually, the visible portions of the Adirondacks hove in sight... apart from the areas hidden by the giant billboards mentioned earlier. As had happened all the way along the route, we were running behind schedule, despite a valiant law-breaking run by Betty Otis on the earlier Buffalo section. Spot on the dot of

three hours late..or around 7pm, we reached Buffalo..and for the first..and last time of the trip, I was able to guide an American round an American city and into the parking lot of the Boston Sheraton. Up to my room, a quick bag dump, wash and brush-up, and it was off to see who was around. One thing about that thousand mile trip stood out in my mind, and that was Mike's wonderful calm under all sorts of difficulties and temper-fraying situations....wrong roads, behind schedule, children on his neck, inability to make 'phone contacts along the way. He took 'em all in his stride with never a cuss word the whole of the time...and I know for a fact that he suffered from headaches and stiffness for at least two legs of the trip. Betty was just as good, so if ever I have to do another long run, I hope it can be with them along to handle the tough bits.

How can you drop clangers in a lift? Simple, get in the same one with Harlan Ellison, natter to him for 23 floors, and part without realising until afterwards that you hadn't gripped him to write for ERG. Our first fannish contact was a meal date with Ron Salomon and his mother Doris..and they upheld the 100% record for the trip, of proving to be two more very warm, friendly Americans..to be honest, we never met any other kind, both in and out of the fannish scene. Which of course is one of the reasons I want to visit America again.



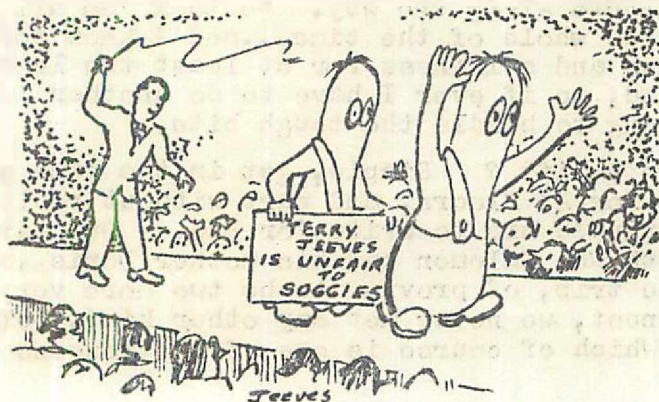
Quite frankly, I don't recall much of NOR-EASCON 2. So many people, so much happening, so little sleep. I enjoyed every minute of it, but the sheer immensity of the whole thing, unmyriad thousand people..and meeting all those characters, some of whom had been names-on-a-pedestal for no less than 40 years. It was overwhelming...so how to encapsulate it all?

Damon Knight's GOR speech..as a kid he had evolved a theory of flight for humans...jump into the air..and again, and again. Trouble was Knight explained, he never could manage to make that second jump fast enough to stay airborne.// The time T O'Connor Sloane, Amazing's octogenarian editor rejecting a cover painting..until the artist went away and returned with it upside down // The writer answering his psychiatrist's "What do you do?" query by explaining that he wrote about.. "SF, rockets, monsters and things like that". The psychiatrist's response was, "Oh, we'll soon cure you of that" // Speaking of the Hynes auditorium and its prohibitions, Knight said, "No animals, balloons, nails etc. Imagine the panic if I brought in a lizard hanging from a balloon and carrying hammer and nails!" He spoke for half an hour and kept us in stitches the whole time. By contrast, Kate Wilhelm read a 45 minute speech. His thesis was 'SF is reality fiction'. The explanation of this was so complicated that I never did find out what she meant..although I gather reality has different meanings for different people, and that Indians knew that a volcano would erupt even when nobody else did. Most important that..unless they had sneakily dumped dynamite into the crater first.

Then there was the FIRST FANDOM party where I met the dapper Sprague de Camp and his wife. Sprague insisted in telling me a collection of jokes in a British accent...and they were all good. A great fellow. There was Bob Nadle, Dave and Ruth (who sparked off the idea for my trip) Kyle. Art Saha, Ray Beam, Lester Del Rey, Fred Pohl, Carol Pohl, Don Wollheim and his wife, Bob Pavlat, Don Ford and so many others I can't recall 'em all. Beaming delightedly over us all, was wheelchair-bound Lou Tabakow. Forry Ackerman was there and he insisted on making an immediate donation to the Jeeves Fan Fund. I said a few brief words of thanks (for once, I was speechless...or nearly so). Somewhere along the way I got elected as First Fandom's European Representative..I hope that involves an expenses-paid trip to the USA once a year to report.

On Saturday, after breakfasting at Brighams, we caught a showing of 'Watership Down'...one of the scores of films on show..would you believe TWO film halls showing SF from morn' till next morn'. Somewhere in the evening, the younger Kyles suckered me into joining their entry for the

Masquerade..well, Kerry did. The girls had devised a pair of wonderful 'Soggy' costumes and my task was to chase them along the catwalk above the audience while whipping them back to the inkbottle. It went down well, but I wish they could have won a prize for originality. However, the competition was of a fantastic quality and of such quantity that we had a two hour wait in the queue.





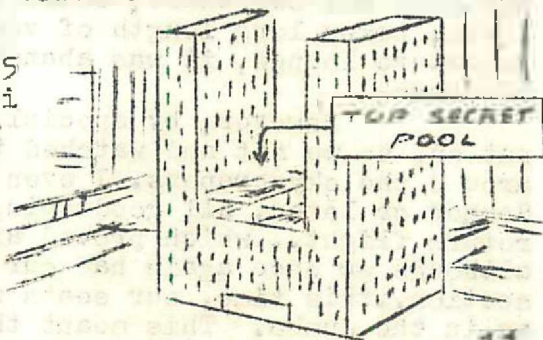
Elsewhere and when, we encountered Dave Langford preparing to host a 'Meet The Sonebody' shindig. Eddie Jones guided us through the labyrinth to the Art Show where I sold five of my six paintings. George Scithers of the IASFI met me in the lobby (another nice guy). Asimov was in the gigantic huckster room, but I hadn't the nerve to tackle him so we all went to lunch in the 'Kon Tiki Ports ..or was it dinner..or breakfast ?

The elevators were beginning to show signs of advanced clappedoutitis by this time, I entered one, the doors opened and closed like a waterless goldfish and the thing remained firmly jammed on the 23rd floor, so I moved to another and had better luck. By the end of the weekend, two of the six elevators in the main block were out, and one of the four in our tower had also gone on furlough. Not surprising really when you consider the logistics involved in shifting X,000 ton down one tower and up the next at the start or end of each programme item. Bit of stupid hotel design really to need such up/down transit. The agony was NOT helped by the brainless twits who thought it fun to monopolise the cages for poker or booze parties.

Sunday night we spent searching for 'The English Party'...and the 'American Party', having received invites to each. No luck, after half an hour of fearlessly brave elevator in-fighting, the designated rooms were as devoid of party-throwers as a Nun's prayer session. Possibly the party-givers were lost in the lift shafts somewhere.

Another highlight of Sunday (see, my time sense is getting out of synch) was a dip in the hotel pool. For some reason, this event rated high on the TOP SECRET list..no mention on brochures, sign boards or suchlike information centres. We finally ran it to ground (metaphorically) on the fifth floor...the flat area linking the two towers. It was worth the hunt.

Not only did the large pool boast an equally large sun-deck area (ideal in the 85 or over Boston heatwave), but also a Jacussi pool where you could lounge in a warm water pool with built-in seats and have your chassis gently massaged by skilfully-aimed jets of water beneath the surface. Very relaxing. After a spell in the Jacussi, then the main pool, and finally a light broiling in the sun, Val nipped across to the hamburger/drinks stand to get us some refreshment. Having left most of our wash in the hotel room, this proved a bit of a hazard. The tab came to \$4.20, so Val gave the attendant \$1.20 with a grand gesture and told him to keep the change. Peace was restored by putting the charge on the hotel bill.



Somewhere around this time, a mysterious 'phone call from Mike Banks shot me up to his room to meet a surprise. On arrival it proved to be my old friend Hector Pessina from Argentina. We had corresponded for ages, and somehow lost touch a year or two ago. Hector speaks perfect English, so we had no language difficulty..and I hope that this time, we can stay in contact.

Did I mention the unpty-seven channel colour TV in room 2357 ? Naturally, we tried out the various programmes available ...something like ten helpings of the human mayhem the Statesiders call 'football', four dollops of news...one of which was the 'Black News Programme'..which to me seemed a sure way of aggravating the racial tensions despite its excellent presentation...and shoals of 'Commercials'. At the risk of offending my American friends, I must comment on the programme quality and of these advertisements. But I would stress that the TV was the only part of America



which didn't get the Jeeves seal of approval. Here and there between the morass of sport, would be sandwiched a typical formula comedy show...we have the thing over here too...TAXI, RHODA and suchlike. These you can take or leave...but over here, although we only have a choice of three channels, only one is bedevilled by commercials...and even then, only every 15 to 20 minutes on average...and they do give you time to make tea or head for the loo. The American variety crop up about every ten minutes...and their quality...gad, it wouldn't sell a lifejacket to a drowning man. One such slot featured Lloyd Nolan simply telling us how to stop seeds getting under our dentures (which we haven't got anyway) by sticking the choppers firmly down with GUMMO...or sonesuch. Bad enough...no slick tricks, animation or attention catchers...just the plain fact that GUMMO keeps your molars in line. Worse was to follow...the camera panned back to Lawrence Welk the bandleader...who continued...."So there you are folks, if you have denture trouble, use GUMMO, and now we're going to play you another little number from the show...." I kid you not...the entertainers have to get behind the plugs and give them an extra shove. To rake in the lolly, the 'Prestige' Channel solicits cash pledges from the viewers...."Next week, our Prestige Channel brings you 'South Pacific'. I rest my case.

Oh wel, time flashed by...and after a final nosh at Brighams we carted our bags down to the lobby to get a taxi out to Logan airport. "Would you care to share a taxi to Logan?" came a British, cultured Liver-Pudlian accent. It was Bruce Burn and his American wife off back to New York. We shared the ride...and the natter and finally separated on arrival at Logan International. The internal flight lounge on my Detroit flight had been all sweetness, comfort and light. Not so the International.. a dirty, pokey long length of verandah...and once through into the final departure lounge, it was abandon hope of going to the toilet until you get airborne.

However, by special arrangement, a hefty thunder storm had been put on, so we sat and watched the terrific flashes of lightning bouncing around the skyscrapers...I even managed to get a couple of 'em on film. Sooner or later, all good things come to an end. We boarded a DC-6 for the return flight...which proved an improvement on the outgoing Jumbo, as although we once again had our requested window-seats in the non-smoking section...this time, our seats were just a pair...instead of a set of three as in the Jumbo. This meant that we didn't have to climb over the third man (Harry Line) to get to and from the toilets...nor did we have to make humble apologies for pouring tea and gravy down his shirt front when the meals arrived.

Take-off took a mere 38 seconds and Captain Palmer essayed to calm any anxious hearts by informing us that we were cruising at 33,000 feet at around 600mph, and the time in London was 1-45 so we could adjust our watches. Some anxious hearts must have been even more disturbed, as five minutes later he came on the speaker again to apologise for his 'first mistake' as the time should have been given as 2-45. We all began to wait for the wings to fall off as 'mistake number two.'

Happily, they didn't and after some cat-napping, we touched down in Heathrow at 8 am. Coach to Reading, and a 'phone call to Keith Freeman brought him out to collect us. Back to our car, and by 10am we were on the road to Sheffield. We lunched in Banbury...and then parked down a side lane for a snooze...and went out like a couple of lights. Sheffield was reached by 6pm and was followed by oodles of sleep.

A tiring trip, yes; but one we wouldn't have missed for all the tea in China. Once again, Val and I send renewed and heartfelt thanks to First Fandon who made it possible...and to the Freemans who made it so effortless in the bits where it could have been nasty.

NOW...to save up for 1982.







CRISIS ON CONSOLE TEN

Monica Hughes  
Methuen 'Magnet' 90p

Kepler stumbles across 'gillmen' and an independence plot which endangers his life before it is resolved. An excellent juvenile in the Heinlein style, (although I winced at moon dwellers being 'Sellenites'). Ideal for Junior.

AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN

Ben Bova  
Methuen 'Magnum' £1.25

When huge alien machines are discovered operating on Titan, mankind begins to worry about an attack. The theme follows Marlene who has two lovers, O'Banion in sent on an exciting Jupiter Mission, and Dr. Lee joins her on the star mission to trace the aliens. Constructed from two shorter stories (and it shows), the yarn is well-characterised, the Jupiter sequence is gripping and overall, an excellent bit of reading, which one has come to expect from Ben Bova...namely well-constructed hardcore SF

EPIDEMIC 9

Richard Lerner M.D.  
& Max Gunther  
Corgi £1.35

Imagine a small, furry, spider-like growth spreading across your body at a rate of half an inch a day, with cases increasing in geometric progression. This plague, starts in a small American town and rapidly threatens the whole world. Its carrier, Billy Trump is hunted not only by the Government authorities, but by the hit men of a large combine. Tautly written, excellent characterisation, edge-of-the-seat stuff. One of the best marriages of mainstream and SF I've ever come across..and ideal movie material. It makes the 'Doomwatch' series sound like Noddy.

THE DESTROYER 35. 'Last Call'

Richard Sapir & Warren Murphy  
Corgi 95p

Presumably a series, Remo Williams is a Kung Fu/bionic man type superman. When Project Omega is triggered by an inept CIA chief's economy cuts, assassins move in on Russia's top men. To prevent World War III, Remo and his Chinese mentor have to stop the killings. A tongue-in-cheek send up of the genre. Lightweight, but amusing although a bit slapstick in parts.

THE ROSE

Charles L. Harness Granada £1.25

Music-composing psychiatrist, Anna van Tuyl has contracted a body-deforming ailment. She encounters Roy Jacques who suffers from the same complaint and capable of strange powers. They plan to produce Anna's new ballet, but Jacques estranged wife seeks the power of the Rose which is linked with Anna's ballet. To fill out the book, there is a tongue-in-cheek yarn of an chess-playing rat, and another about a madman who plans to change reality by slowing down a single photon.

All extremely well-written, but I preferred the two shorter yarns to the longer fantasy. However, if you go for 'speculative fiction', then you'll really enjoy this trio.





# VINCENT DI FATE'S CATALOG OF SCIENCE FICTION HARDWARE

Vincent Di Fate & Ian Summers

Sidgwick & Jackson, £8.95 hardback \$4.50 softback

Essentially a showcase for Di Fate's spectacular, 'reality-as-it-will-be' artwork, containing some sixty or more paintings mainly from magazine and book sources. Each has an excellent descriptive text by Ian Summers giving background, story details etc. One might quibble at a single planet in the Grey Lensman's 'Nutmacker', or a rather unwieldy Martian Life Wand from 'Double Star', but these are merely quibbles. The paintings are sheer enjoyment, with the text, unlike similar books, enhancing the colour work instead of making it appear trite. There are additional bonuses in the form of 'engineering plans and drawings' linked to the art and an invaluable index which enables you to locate a painting by looking up the story author. Whichever edition you buy, you'll find this one of the best art books to come along in a long, long time.



## A COLD WIND FROM ORION

Scott Asnin

Ballantine/Del Rey 95p

Solar activity has expanded the atmosphere and made it denser (???) so that a satellite containing a virulent, mutated biological experiment is coming back to strew its contents across the world. A

desperate, two-edged attempt to avert the danger is begun involving a Space Shuttle on the civilian side, and an illegal space weapon launched by the military. Pace, action and characterisation are well blended into a gripping yarn in which only the flaccid ending spoils a terrific, "it-could-be-true" mix of spaceflight, bureaucracy and military ambition.

## HORIZON ALPHA

Douglas R. Mason

Hale £5.95

The four-level Horizon city has been built on the Wirral peninsula, its sections are rigidly segregated with the lower level inhabitants subservient to the ruling androids. At this stage, Gunnar Holt, a throwback,

discovers he can defy the machines and accompanied by another throwback, Shesha Haddon, sets out to escape the city - a process which involves a series of running battles with androids and the secret rulers before the androids themselves revolt. Hectic, often amusing and never profound. Characters are flimsy, but the whole is enjoyable escapist entertainment.

## WIZARD

John Varley

Orbit £1.75

Sequel to the block-busting 'Titan' set seventy or so years on. Chris'fer (from Earth) and Robin, (from an L2 station) have come to petition Gaea (the god/satellite) for relief from their different varieties of mental seizure. Their cure

involves a long trek around Gaea in the company of Titan characters, Gaby and Cirocco..the latter having become 'The Wizard' and altered by Gaea so that only she can fertilise the Titanides eggs. Gaby and Cirocco have their own plan to overthrow Gaea. Less hard-core than 'Titan' and at times reminiscent of a Simak 'trek' story, but still a worthy successor and as jam-packed with pace and incident as its predecessor.

WANTED by the editor: Back issues of sf, aircraft, aerospace popular mechanics magazines etc. Willing to trade if we can come to an agreement....what have you got ?

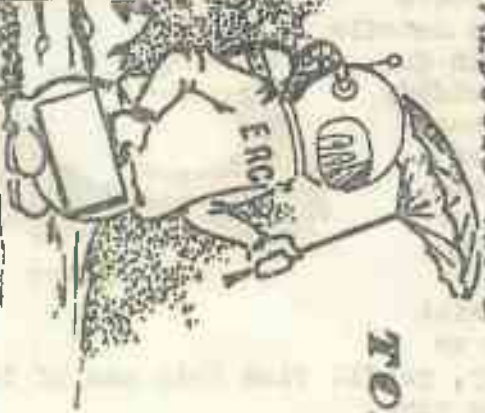


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