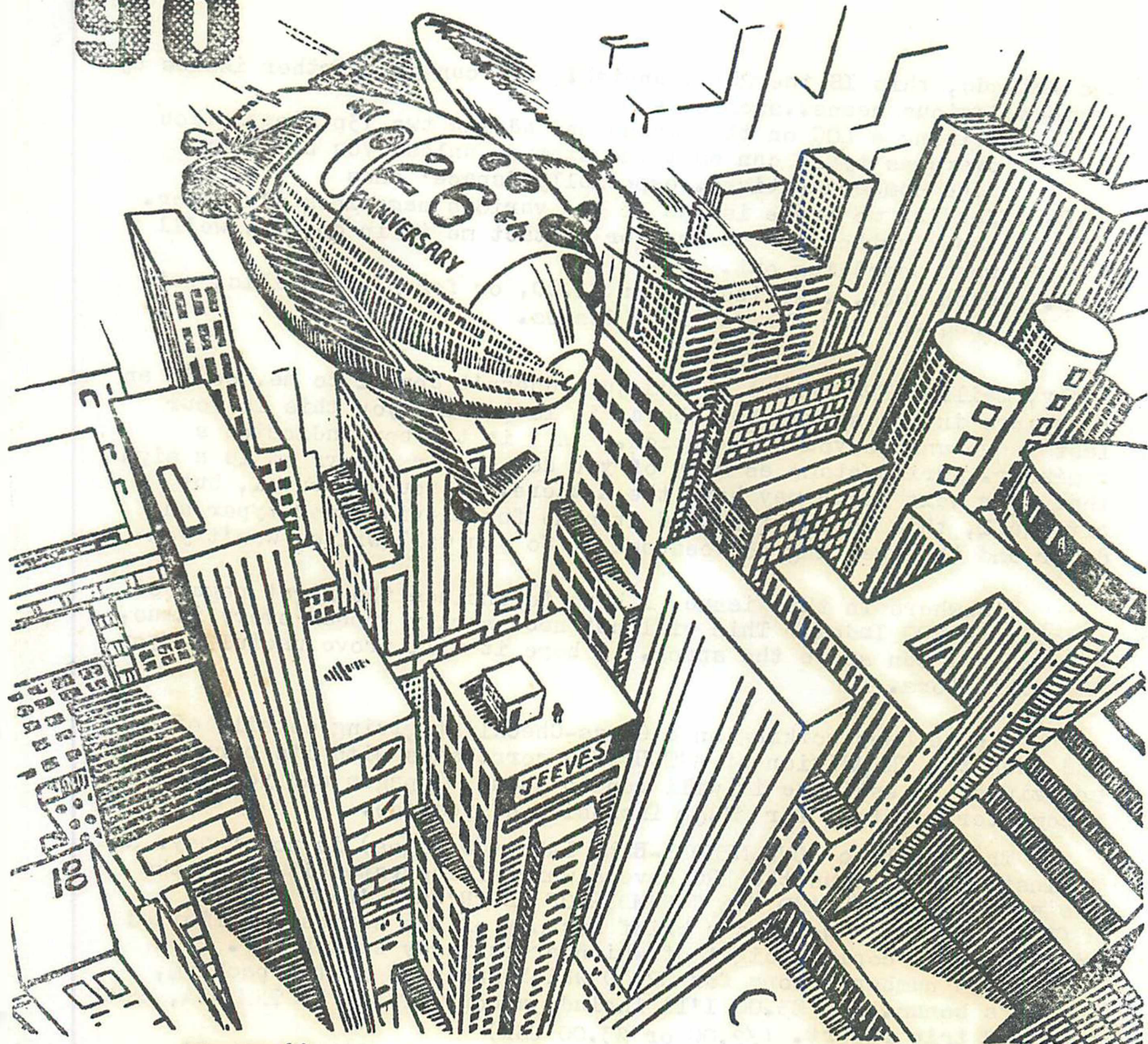


**FRG**

Quarterly

April 1985

90



26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue



ERG QUARTERLY  
No. 90 APRIL 1985

26th Anniversary Issue

Published, printed and perpetrated by:-

TEHR/ JEEVES

230 Bamberdale Rd.,

Sheffield S11 9FE

Phone (0742) 553791

..... Status Box  
.....

Yes friends, this IS the 26th. Annish! You can get further issues by various devious means..such as:-

1. Writing a LOC on this issue and adding two 13p stamps (You overseas types can omit the stamps..unless you have any nice commemoratives..especially 'space' ones
2. Sending me trade issues of the various magazines I'm after. Read further in the mag, or contact me if in doubt...we'll work something out.
3. Cash sub....two issues for £2.00, or for \$3.00 (bills, not cheques) you can get FOUR issues.

Sadly, mailing ERG into a vacuum just doesn't appeal to me, so if an X appears in the status box above, it is telling you this is your last issue unless you take action. A ? in the box indicates a reminder...write/stamp as many of you do..or for others it is a sign that your next issue may have the X there. Sounds brutal, but after all, this is for fun..and it's no fun slaving over typer and duper and then getting no feedback. So you will write, won't you?

Elsewhere in this issue, I hope to include the first pages of a complete ERG Index. This will not necessarily appear every issue, only when I can spare the space. I hope it will prove useful to you ERG Collectors.

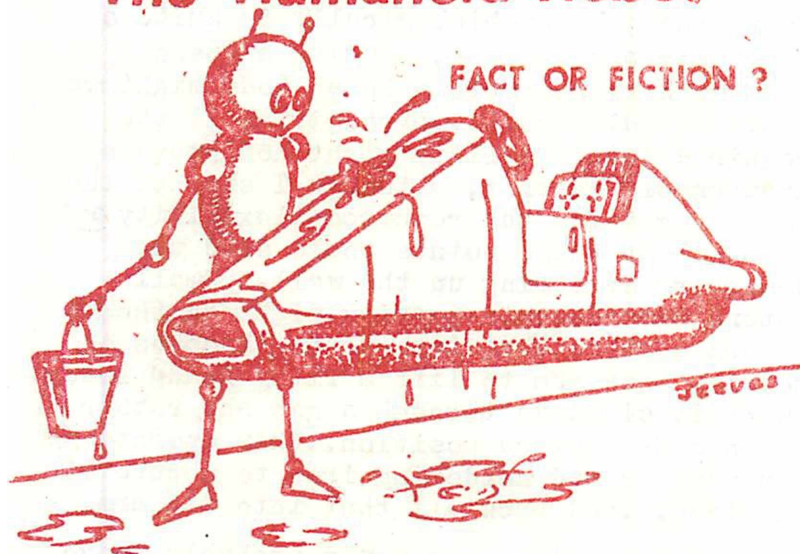
I have been working on a Cross-Checklist giving details of how and when the UK edition of ASTOUNDING correlates with its parent magazines. I estimate it will run to about 70 pages and you can have a computer printout for £1.00 inclusive of postage.

The Complete DOWN MEMORY-BANK LANE (80+pages) is now ready. ALL 12 instalments, plus the ERG covers which illustrated it, plus the two parodies, 'G-8 AND THE CUCUMBER OF DEATH' and 'LAST STAGE REFLECTORMAN' as well as a brief history of the series. A limited edition of 40 copies..eight of which are already spoken for. You can have a numbered copy for £2.00 which includes post & packing, and as a bonus..for £3.00 I'll include a copy of ERG IN THE USA, 1980 and 1982 trip report. (£2.00 or \$3.00 USA)

Remember, only 32 copies left...first come, first served!

BIDS are now open for all the original artwork used in the series.

# The Humanoid Robot



FACT OR FICTION ?

Science fiction is crammed with hordes of assorted and wonderful robots such as Adam Link, Jay Score, 'The Humanoids' and so on. Some are so superlatively made as to be indistinguishable from human beings..Helen O' Loy and Asimov's, R. Dancel Olivaw being prime examples.

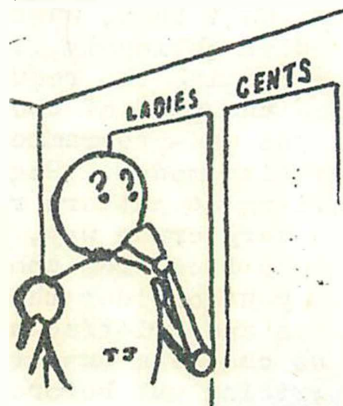
We cheerfully suspend our disbelief and accept such creations in our literature, but how likely is it that such beings will ever enter our real lives? No doubt a majority of fans would say. "Very soon". For confirmation of this they might

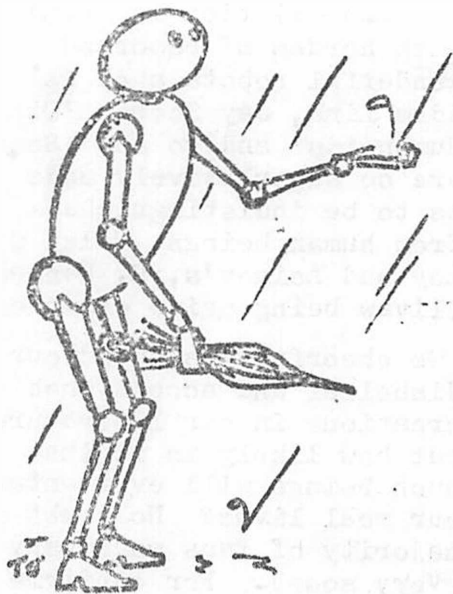
point to such modern marvels as computers, car-building machines, silicon chips...and of course that American 'domestic robot' which keeps getting in the limelight.

But hang on a moment...each of these (and many other devices) may be the bees' knees - but try to bolt, nail, screw, glue and solder the best bits of each into one chassis and the result will bear less resemblance to a humanoid robot than to a mobile junkyard. So just what criteria should we lay down for judging a robot? Let's forget the human-look-alike version and settle for something more like a standard Asimov type..functional and only vaguely human...two arms, legs, eyes, a head, hands and feet will do for openers. Not likely to fool anyone into thinking it a human being, but able to pinch hit for one in most operating situations. I'd suggest the following requirements for such a device:-

1. General appearance and size to approximate the human form (It has to work in our environment and use our equipment)
2. Movement to be similar to the human body..with neck, waist, leg, arm, ankle and wrist joints as a minimum
3. Senses..touch, sight, hearing, speech..and an approximation to a pain sense to keep it out of incidental damage.
4. Mental abilities on a par with the average human.
5. Limited self-repair equating to our recovery from colds, broken bones etc.
6. Ability to operate at or near full capacity for around 12 hours without re-fuelling.

If all that sounds a tall order, remember a man and woman working together can achieve such a construct in nine months..though admittedly, it then takes many years to program the thing to a level where it can operate reasonably well.



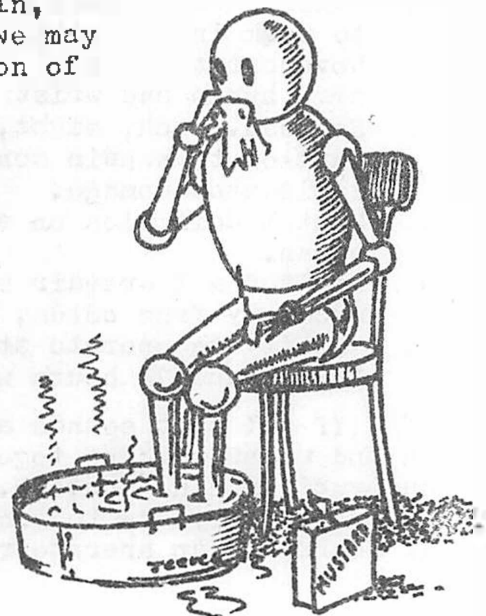


Doing the job non-biologically is quite a different proposition. Making a basic framework to resemble a human body might not prove too difficult...even giving it the required joint mobility might not prove an insuperable barrier, although I suspect the task of getting the required flexibility and strength at these points would send the designers screaming up the wall. Small motors and adequate gearing might do the job of arm muscles..but imagine the hassles of getting that arm to lift a fifty pound load, twist it sideways through a gap and rotate it into an awkward position..then operate a screwdriver and soldering iron to secure it in place...and pack all that into ONE arm.

Self-focussing eyes would probably prove easy..as would speech and hearing, but how about a sense of balance? Oh, you can fit mercury switches to tell the robot it is about to fall over, but what adjustments does he then make to avoid doing so? An in-built gyroscope perhaps? Not only would it have to be pretty powerful to keep him upright, the poor critter would have great problems if he tried to bend down..the precessing gyro would whip him round in a flat spin! Problems, always problems.

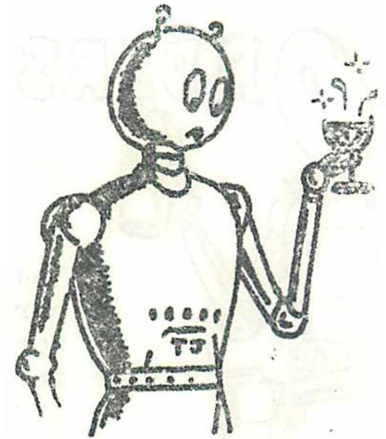
Powering up our robot would also prove a headache. Batteries (such as we have now) would never be up to the storage output demand. New plastic batteries are in the works, but even they lack the stamina of the human body and its demands over a working day. Offhand, I suspect one of those little nuclear reactors they use in satellites might be handy..but would they be light enough? Have enough power output?...and be sufficiently well screened against killing off everyone around via radiation? Again, their operating temperature may be higher than we may want...no fun sending the hired help for a gallon of ice cream if he brings it back in liquid form!

Well then, what about the brain? Fit a computer obviously...except that we are nowhere near fitting the required memory storage into a space the size of the human brain...let alone all the pre-programmed ROMs for various operating modes. Right now, computers are nibbling at pattern recognition, but except in a very crude way, they boggle at picking out one face from another. For that matter, when you consider the variety of writing styles and printfaces met in a day, I doubt if we can even expect our robot to read everything put before him. As for licking a stamp, driving a nail, or reversing a car whilst chatting up the passengers...there's still a long way to go...even despite the





fact that almost half the adult population of the country is below average in intelligence. Getting our mechanical man to operate anywhere near their level will not be easy. On a brighter note, that 'pain' feeling might not be so tough to simulate. thermocouples would warn our robot of excessive heat or cold and miniature strain-gauges would do for a sense of touch..but how do you manage to fit 'em all over the outer surface so that the robot knows he ought to pull a finger out of the door, or his toe from under a packing-case? By comparison a 'broken arm' might be easy to handle, just unscrew the damaged part and bung in a new one.



Then there's that 'domestic robot' Where does that fit in? Well, it can roll to and fro on a fairly flat floor (stairs, or even extra thick carpets are beyond it) It can lift a thing or two..or push a vacuum cleaner back and forth..if the appliance is first fitted into its hand and plugged into a wall socket by someone else ..Big Deal! Here in Sheffield, Professor Thring has made machines which can 'walk' upstairs, but their lumbering, gear-whirring and labourious ascent is a long way from 'walking upstairs', and anything like a spiral stair, or ladder would blow their fuses. Visitors to computer fairs and watchers of 'Tomorrow's World' will be familiar with the robot 'mice' which can (with good luck and a following wind) thread their way through a maze...and once having done so, can repeat the process with ease. Sorry, but these are the lowest of the low as far as thinking robots are concerned. Very limited modes of forward, back, left and right sums up their mobility..and the 'brain' just records contacts made by limit-switches on the mouse's perimeter.

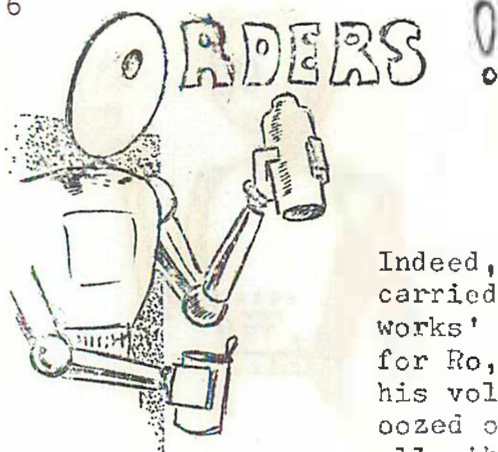
Probably the most familiar 'robots' are those featured in that superb Fiat commercial...happily (?) twisting, turning and spot-welding away at one car chassis after another before sending it along to the next 'robot' via a seemingly self operated truck. Sadly, wonderful as these machines are, they merely follow a set of instructions pre-programmed into them...move that chassis back or forth six inches...or replace it with a different model, and the robot would cheerfully weld thin air ..or ram its arm through the windshield (which according to its program, doesn't exist) in order to work on something which ought to be where it is reaching.

The plain fact is that whilst we may be able to simulate most (not all) of a human's activities..we are a heck of a long way from cramming all the simulating devices into a human sized framework.

Science marches on, but I'm willing to go out on a limb and say we'll not see a real humanoid robot in our lifetimes....

Want to bet ?





This item first appeared (c. 1958) in a Leeds based fanzine called 'Orbit'. It seemed appropriate to include it here.

Ro, the Bot, dozitronic automaton was happy. Indeed, he even ground his gears with pleasure as he carried out the menial task allocated to him by the works' foreman. Things did not always go so pleasantly for Ro, only yesterday, he had been given no currents in his voltage for making a simple mistake. Dielectric oozed out of his condensers as he thought of it. After all, the foreman had clearly said, "File These papers."

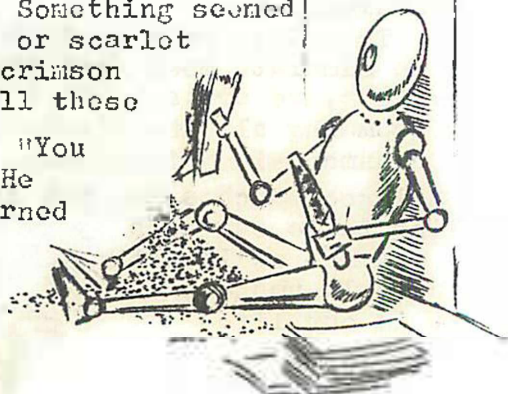
It was only later, when after Ro had been forced to pick up all the paper dust, that he had tried to make out he had meant Ro to put thm into some little metal boxes along the wall.

Such humiliation! Ro began to feel less happy. More dielectric oozed from his joints as he recalled a further ignominy heaped upon him. Another worker had stuck a placard on his back.. 'RO, THE BOT, PIXILLATED PISKY' Biassing a surge of current in his throat, Ro continued doggedly with his latest task. This time he meant to lo a really good job. The instructions had been absolutely straightforward when the foreman said slowly and clearly, "Go and fill me this vacuum flask", then, as an afterthought, he had added, "And to make sure there's no mistake, I want a drink of tea!"

Ro faildd to see any connection, but pressed on with monotonous rhythm. Lift..pierce..tip..discard, lift..pierce..tip..discard, Lift.... On and on he worked in his little store room, until he was interrupted by the ear-splitting tones of a hooter signalling the lunch break. Discarding the last container, Ro rose to his feet and went in search of the foreman. After searching all through the factory, Ro finally found the man in the very storeroom in which Ro had been working. He was standing amid the pile of discarded cans with a very benused expression on his face. To handed over the vacuum flask and to break an embarrassing silence, asked if the foreman had been able to get the cup of tea he had wanted.

The foreman glared at Ro, boggled at the vacuum flask and Ro began to feel a bit unstable in his third harmonic. Something seemed to have gone wrong again. "What the red hades or scarlet nother regions isn't there any red tea in the crimson flask?" the man asked politely, "And why have all these tins been opened?" "Orders, sir," replied Ro. "You told me to fill the vacuum flask, so I did." He stooped and picked up one of the tins, then turned it to show the label to the foreman. "I used these to fill it..." The foreman went gently mad as he read the instructions....

'PIERCE LID TO RELEASE VACUUM'





# THE SUPERHEROES

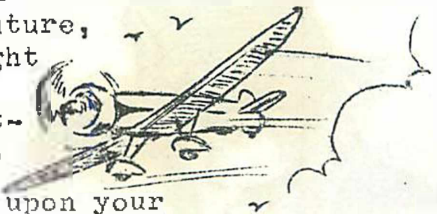


by Terry Jeeves

One can never recall the Pulp Era without waxing nostalgic over the many Superheroes as they fought with, and triumphed over, impossible odds. Some of them were so outstanding (and neck) that entire magazines were devoted to their deeds. No matter that such yarns are almost totally unreadable by today's standards... quite a lot of today's yarns are unreadable as soon as published if we're going to be picky.

Earlier in this series, I mentioned the sagas of G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ARMS... for newcomers, G-8 was the all-American masterspy, ably aided by the all-American Quarterback 'Dull' Martin and the all-diminutive 'Nippy' Weston. Occasional supporting roles were played by the manservant 'Bat' (taken all-Englishman) and the glamorous female spy, R1. This brave band fought flying werewolves, zombies, tiger men, voodoo witchdoctors, giant muscles and a horde of other ghastlinesses brought against the Allies by those nasty Huns...usually with the evil Herr Doktor Kreuger behind them. Every so often, when bested by G-8, the Herr Doktor would lose an arm, leg, eye or other insignificant portion of his anatomy... only to come back later nastier than ever, with yet another horrific weapon. In every episode, G-8, Dull, or Nippy (frequently all of 'em) would get bashed on the head two or three times with the butt of a service revolver...or perhaps get their skulls creased by a Luger (or Spandau) bullet...thus rendering them hors-de-combat for a page or two. At this point, we were often supposed to think, "Gosh..G-8's dead..woe, woe..etc"...but inevitably, he always came back and clobbered the opposition. What really puzzled me, is how none of the merry band sustained serious brain injury and became punch-drunk. Maybe medical science hadn't discovered this danger in those days.

Bill Barnes was an intrepid (post-war) airman who had his own AIR TRAILS magazine...which was drollingly illustrated in other magazines by way of adverts for the thing. For some strange reason, remainder copies never came my way in the 5d stacks of the local dealers, so I never had the joy of reading about his doings. However, I did acquire the odd copy of DUSTY AYRES AND HIS BATTLE BIRDS .. set in the near future, Dusty's plane could fly at 300 mph!! as it fought off the attacks of the Black Empire from 'the East'. A quote..."Let me be the first to congratulate you Captain Ayres," he smiled at the lean, wind-bronzed pilot. "I am sincerely happy that our Government has seen fit to place this trust upon your shoulders." Dusty's reply ??? "Gosh!!"

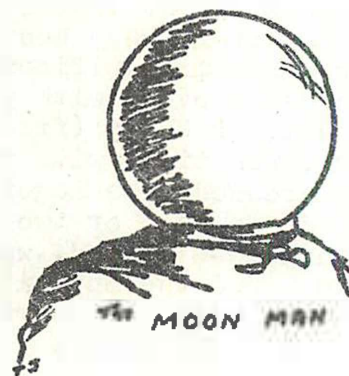




'DOC SAVAGE

Then of course, DOC SAVAGE had his own magazine wherein, thanks to inexhaustible funds from a South American goldmine, he was able to fight superhuman battles against incredible menaces. Not alone, he was aided by his henchmen..Monk, Han, Renny, Johnny and Long Tom...each of whom was the absolute top in his own field..with only Doc knowing more about it. Now and then, Doc's luscious cousin Patricia Savage was called in to add a spot of feminine interest. All women fell, hopelessly, for Doc, but since Pat led the field in brains and beauty..and was after all, only a cousin..one might dream of her finally capturing his heart..if he didn't do his usual scared-of-girls trick of blushing and vanishing into the background. Cluttering up the story line, and sometimes helping the heroes to escape some deadly trap, were the two pets... Habeas Corpus, a pig and the ape, Chemistry; both of which had more brains than any common hoodlum.

Thanks to a rigorous training programme (which must have consumed at least half of every working day), coupled with a superb physique, Doc coped with sundry pseudo-scientific attacks..that is, until 'Up From The Earth's Core' in which even his steel nerves were shattered by an encounter with the Devil himself..and his minions. This event caused even the fearless Doc to scream in terror, then flee in panic! It was an ignominious swan song. Not only did our idol have feet of clay (nothing like mixing up a mess of metaphors), but he even had to share that issue with another hero..in another magazine. Doc's final epic took up ~~half of~~ a Street & Smith's DETECTIVE MONTHLY, with the other section being an adventure of THE MOON MAN. This character was a beyond-the-law crime-buster, alter-ego of Detective Steve Thatcher who happened to be son of the Police Chief. The 'Moon Man' title came from his habit of cavorting around beneath a long black cape, with his face concealed behind the one-way glass of a large fish globe..presumably with the fish removed. Whilst detectives had to play by the rules, the Moon Man, once he had cornered his adversary, was quite capable of perforating him like a colander.



THE MOON MAN



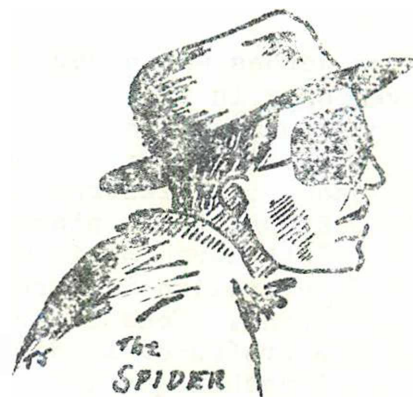
The Shadow

The gangster-ridden America of the pulp days saw many such crime-busters - a notable one being THE SHADOW. He..can you guess? wandered around in a long black cloak with his face hidden beneath the brim of a droopy black hat. This didn't prevent the occasional glimpse of his strangely glowing eyes..or muffle his hoarsely whispering voice. Nor did these encumbrances impede the use of his automatic pistols as they spat leaden death



into all the naughty gangsters.

Then there was THE SPIDER, master of men. By a rare coincidence, he wore a black cloak and kept his identity hidden behind a black mask. I reckon that cloak makers and the manufacturers of black dye must have made a good living even during the Depression. As with others of his ilk, when he removed his working togs, he was revealed as Richard Wentworth, socialite. H'm, now doesn't that remind you of the Scarlet Pimpernickle?



The clean-cut, brave, All-American Government agent OPERATOR 5 needed none of



these disguise gimmicks. His assignments always seemed to involve fighting off the many weird and often SF-ish threats to his beloved homeland. He also had a sidekick, Jimmy Christopher..as indeed did nearly all these superheroes. The gimmick was obvious. Older readers could identify themselves with the great man himself..and experience their vicarious pleasures without any of the danger. Those too young (chronologically or mentally) to see themselves as Operator 5, could of course picture themselves in the role of his trusty aide who got lured, trapped and threatened at least once in every issue...and who occasionally saved the bacon for his chief when the latter was in a

particularly nasty situation..such as strapped to a chair and immersed to the neck in a swimming pool..with the water level gradually rising. Oh, I knew Superman would drink all the water..but Operator 5 was (almost) human.

Of course, not all the 'one-man' magazines featured heroes. THE MYSTERIOUS WU FANG was a sinister Oriental Criminal mastermind bearing considerably more than a passing resemblance to Sax Rohmer's FU MANCHU. This character had his long finger-nails into all sorts of unsavoury pies, with unpteen sinister-slant-eyed minions lurking in every dark corner. Strangely enough, WU FANG was written by Robert J. Hogan, chronicler of G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES. When Wu Fang finally bit the dust, the publishers resuscitated a clone..DR YEN SING who survived for an even shorter period. One of these days, someone will do a doctoral thesis on the sinister Oriental criminal in fiction..hope he remembers Dr. Ku Sui the opponent of 'Hawk Carse', Fleming's 'DR NO' and one or two others.



I mentioned 'Hawk Carse' back there..he was the space hero buckin'-child of 'Anthony Gilmore' (A Bates/Hall combination)..he had many a clash with space pirates..and of course he would often brush back a forelock which he used to cover a scar on his forehead..put there during one of his clashes with the Sinister Oriental Criminal Ku Sui. The 'Hawk' was one of

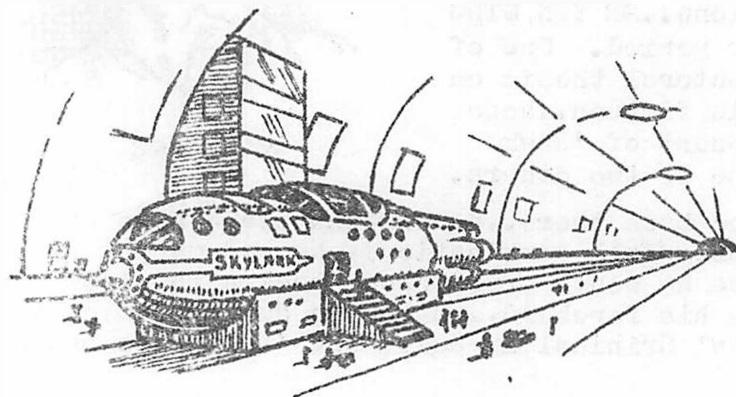
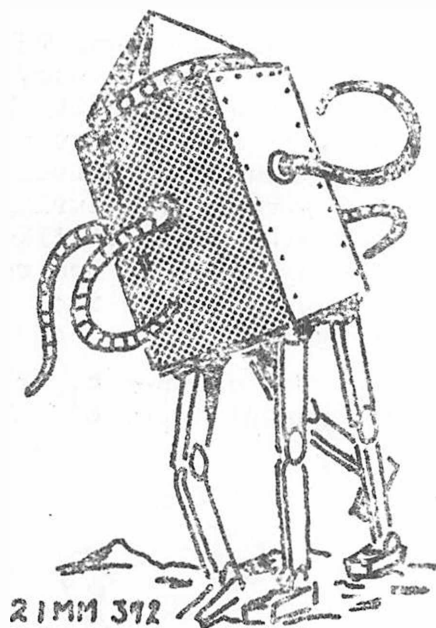
those heroes who never got his own magazine, but lived only in the pages of ASTOUNDING. Another famous series hero was PROFESSOR JAMESON who was created by Neil R Jones for AMAZING. The professor left instructions that on his death, his body was to be placed into a rocket and fired into Earth orbit where it would be preserved forever..(an idea recently re 'invented' by an Italian). Eons later, all humans are dead and the Professor is discovered by a nomadic race of machine-men, The Zoromes. They bring him back to life..as machine man 21MM 392 and off they roam through space having adventures as they go.

No less a person than John W. Campbell Jr jumped on the series wagon..not once, but several times...he opened with the large-scale, Smith-like space operas of Arcot, Mowey and Wade...then with his Twilight/Night/Machine series in ASTOUNDING..and moving over to THRILLING WONDER STORIES, he came up with the two accident-prone space travellers, PENTON & BLAKE. I must admit for a sneaking love for this happy pair as their ability to stumble into trouble was only exceeded by their skill in escaping it again.

Stanley G. Weinbaum created VAN MANDERPOOTZ, a crazy inventor who preceded Kuttner's inebriate GALLEGHER by inventing such odds and ends as PYGMALION'S SPECTACLES..which allowed our Wooster-like hero to create his ideal and fall in love with her. I was greatly annoyed when one of these yarns copped the cover of WONDER..to show a giant machine eating up cars...on reading the story, it turned out to be a little model which growled when it saw a photo of an auto...cheat!

Another great series producer was E.E.Smith PhD..opening with the sga of Messrs Seaton and Crane in their SKYLARK series of spacecraft...each one bigger and better than the last. Their arch enemy was a character called 'Blackie' Du Quesne...and so popular did he become that Doc actually named the final Skylark story after him...and has him more or less reform to aid the fight against an even bigger menace.

Indubitably, Doc's greatest contribution to SF and the superhero field in general is in the creation of KIMBALL KINNISON and the Lensman series. It is now almost 50 years since I lashed out all my pocket money to a stall holder and carried home in triumph, all six episodes of what was then, the first in the series..GALACTIC PATROL. That cost me 1/6d (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p) for the lot. I got them home







and had a terrific weekend with the fight against Boskone, and later, as sequels (and prequel) followed...with Floor and Eddore.

Sadly, it has become fashionable nowadays to denigrate the Lensman series...largely because the writing style does not match up to current (and often pointlessly bland) fiction. Admittedly, it was space opera...admittedly, it was hack in that dialogue was feeble and the characters pure black and white. So what? That is what people read and enjoyed back then. It was head and shoulders over most of the contemporary pulp SF. How many of you can read Shakespeare, Chaucer, Shelley's 'Frankenstein', or Swift's 'Gulliver's travels' with enjoyment? Doc wrote for his day...so let's stop bad-mouthing him because his days isn't alive now...OK? I wonder how many copies of 'Dragondreck' or 'Saga of The WitchWot Gesswot' series will still sell as well in 50 years.

Nope, Kinnison was tops...and with him came some of SF's greatest 'inventions'...the Black Hole like 'nogasphere', the 'Sunbeam' and of course the BERGENHOLM. In Micholls' mammoth Encyclopedia Of SF much is made of the 'spindizzy' and its rationale...but not a word is given to the Bergenholm and its superbly worked out background of inertialess flight and 'intrinsic' velocities...plus the 'Nutcracker' weapon it logically created.

The transition to 'modern' SF proved too tough for Doc...he made numerous attempts, but none was memorable in any way. However, so familiar his name, they even unearthed one of his earlier yarns... 'Lord Tedric', put it through the mincer and refurbished it as a novel. It bore little resemblance to the stories which sparked it...which may have been why the ghost writer (Gordon Eklund??) dare not sign his name to the thing, but let it go out as 'by E.E. Smith PhD'. Tedric, and another spin-off, the Family d'Alembert hacked away, but can never be counted as even 'Mini-heroes'.

A.E. vanVogt took his separate short stories and united them to create THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE...and also did a similar job with his WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER. Isaac Asimov united his robots around Susan Calvin and his FOUNDATION stories also made up into a hefty collection...but none of these epics produced a superhero. We had many minor ones though...Slippery Jim DiGriz, 'Old Doc Methuselah', 'Gerry Carlyle' and so on...but the passing of the pulps seems to have put paid to their ranks. A great pity, as I can't raise much of a head of steam over today's anti-heroes fighting off threats to dolphins, menaces to our ecology, or beating their bosoms over the current state of the world's affairs.

At which point, that lady at the back will burst at the seams if I don't face up to the question... "WHY NO SUPERHEROINES?" Well, as we all know, that is one of those questions which has a variety of answers, each of which explains part of the missing distaff side. For openers, even now, after 50 years of magazine SF, most SF writers are males...and most of SF is read by men. Naturally enough, the writers find it easier and the editors find it better for their sales, if most of the stories hinge around

men. After all, there are herds of women's magazines on the newstands, and I don't see their readers and writers hollering for more men-slanted tales. Another facet, is that despite all the tub-thumping, our world is still largely geared to certain tasks being done mainly by men...front-line service, ship's captain, airline pilot, space exploration, prize-fighting and so on. Because of this, it might even seem ludicrous if a writer had his heroine fighting off the hostile dolphins, taking maternity leave and then zooming off to Alpha Centauri. Oh, it might come...but at the moment, our mental sets (chauvinism if you like) are against it.

Having said that, one must in fairness point out that we have had some notable female heroines...Jirel Of Joiry was one, Weinbaum's 'Black Flame' another (not to mention his earlier, 'Red Peri'). Good old John Russell Fearn created THE GOLDEN AMAZON and nearer to the present day, we have the TELZEY AMBERSON stories of the female telepath. Then of course Dr. Susan Calvin had a good run with the robots and Heinlein has made one or two of his chief characters into women.

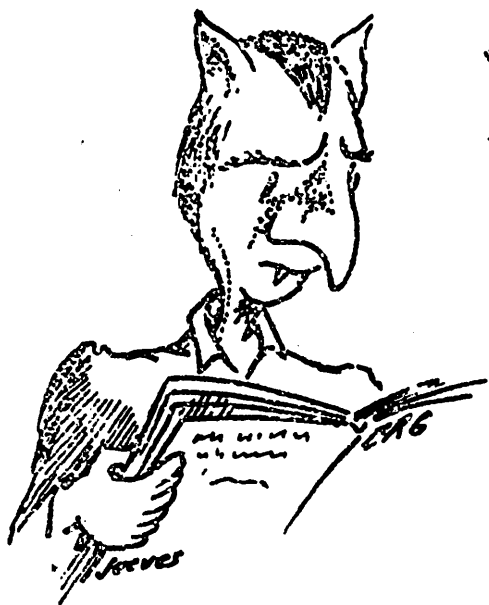
So much for men and women...but we mustn't forget that in SF, one can always have other central characters...how about in robotics? We had Adam Link, one of the first robots to be both altruistic and idealistic and to break the Frankenstein mould. Eric Frank Russell produced Jay Score for his 'MEN, MARTIANS AND MACHINES' (assembly of yarns from ASTOUNDING). There were the Humanoids from Wing IV, not to mention oodles of Asimov robots and Grog from the Captain Future yarns. Then of course, I think it was John Beynon who gave us 'The Lost Machine' wherein a robotic creature from Mars is so put upon and harried by locals that it runs into a barn and melts itself into a pool of molten metal.

Aliens also abound...there was 'Old Faithful', who jumped on a comet to make the trip to Earth, Worsel, Tregonsee, Nadreck and a host of others were lesser heroes of the Lensman series. We mustn't forget DARLENNAN, that tough little centipede-like creature who crawled into our hearts with MISSION OF GRAVITY...or the character Ken-something or other who featured in the same author's ICEWORLD. Eric Frank Russell gave us 'DEAR DEVIL' with its gentle, helpful and ghastly-looking alien...and dozens more. Heck, even computer programs are hogging the spotlight...first we had the one which planned to take over Earth in Hoyle's A FOR ANDROMEDA...and now Analog has run two (or three??) yarns about the intelligent program 'VALERIE'...I must admit to enjoying the first...and hating the pot-boiling follow-ups...but kind lady at the back...wouldn't you class Valerie as a female heroine?

One thing about all the superheroes...and their diminutives...we remember (and love?) them for one very good reason. Before all else, they entertained us...passed away many a happy, if idle hour and left us with pleasant memories. If, after that, they also impressed us with some great truth or hidden message...so much the better, but one thing we seem to lose sight of these days, is that SF is FICTION and one of the prime purposes of fiction is to entertain. If you want a message, emulate Sam Goldwyn and call Western Union...or subscribe to Newsweek, Hansard, Red Star and all the other tracts, pamphlets and news-sheets floating around....but hands off our SF...that should be for fun.

THE END





# LETTERS

((With Editorial comments marked thus...))

Eric MAYER "I don't know that there are two fandoms, but there are two ways to approach it. One approach, yours and, until recently, mine, is to worry only about the fans you like, your own readers and correspondents. However, there is a larger fandom. Those who vote for overseas trips, for Hugos, and for con GOH positions are more numerous than one's friends can be. I've observed in my brief fannish lifetime, that at any one time a very small, periodically changing group, because they are active, have inordinate

power to hand out these perks. It's a political game, has nothing to do with creative fun or friendliness. Consider your case. 44 years a fan, 26 years pubbing one title...and never a GOH (((Too true, sob, sob))) I couldn't believe it, especially in the light of the do-nothing, or do-negative politicians who are regularly GOHing. Let's face it, it's because you've done your own thing. ERG has always been one of my favourite fanzines, yet none of the current British critics, the TAFF and DUFF types, ever mention it. They'll go on and on about fanzines which haven't published as many issues in 5 years as you publish in one. All the current British BMFs haven't published 88 issues put together. It would be nice though, if someone like yourself could be a GOH, based on accomplishment rather than being in the proper group. (((Being an interested party, all I can say is.. 'Have suitcase, will travel'))) By the way, I notice you miss by a year having ERG 100 coincide with Halley's comet. (((Trust a damned comet to come early and upstage me!))) No Calendar this year? I've gotten a kick out of the 1984 edition which is over my typewriter at work. (((I caught a cold on that one..before the event, everybody wanted one..when I produced it, I was left with 30 spare!))) Though your cover this time is quite good, it isn't quite Jeeves either (((Not surprising..88 was done by Eddy Dean, 89 by Tod Hughes....have faith, I did the vertiginous cover for this issue..No.90)))

TED HUGHES ERGitorial interesting, almost a pocket DMBL with you going on about 'Cities In Flight' and The Dean Drive'. I enjoyed the genuine DMBL, Part.11 even more. It covered the period of my SF apprenticeship, showing me what I missed in the fannish world of those days. Loved 'Last Stages Reflectorsman' - a perfect bit of ersatz Smithsonia. Gave me the shivers to read of those 'hard-driven, ravening screens'. You don't need to apologise, Doc Smith would have had difficulty telling it from his own work. Took me right back to my first reading of 'GALACTIC PATROL'..which proves the old magic is there if you wanted to invoke it seriously. As a matter of fact, I believe Dave Kyle did a 'Worsel' novel which I was never able to get hold of. (((('Dragon Lensman'..he also did one about Tregonsee, and another on Nadreck...and if I know Dave, another will be in the works)))

PAMELA BOAL  
4 Westfield Way  
Charlton Heights,  
Wantage, OXON.

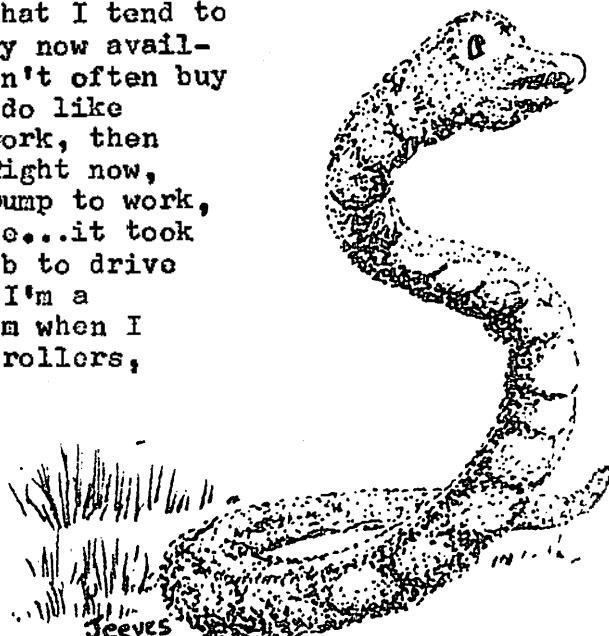
I'm always grateful for 'Recent Reading', this edition no exception. I assume 'Broken Symmetries' had its origin in the various power plant and chemical plant disasters of recent years. Recent events in India have made such stories obscenely apt.//For some years I've had mixed feelings about Cons, on the one hand I have regretted missing the opportunity to meet with the people I talk to through gines. On the other hand, when I have read reports, I've wondered if I really want to go to such events - were they really my scene? Your report has cheered me no end, yes, at least Novacons are still the kind of gathering that some of my fondest memories are made of..and yes, it would be worth my making the effort to start going again. (((One thing to check on Pam..at Novacon, the fan room was only approachable via a long staircase when the book room was locked..and several steps when it was open)))

IAN COVELL  
2 Copgrove Close  
Berwick Hills  
Middlesboro,  
Cleveland

It is nice to read your reminiscences of British Fandom and the developing world it evolved parallel with. It's somewhat odd to think that some fans, small names among the thousand names of fans, have become the names I only think of in terms of novels and short stories. Nicier to see that once upon a time, people parodied (deliberately) E.E. Doc' Smith where today, they write novels and pretend they are homages (Goldin & Klund). While I again disagree with your method of parody (destruction and death), at least it was honest. (((Disagree all you like, Ian, but that's what those yarns dealt in..large scale fighting...maybe you would prefer writers to let their characters fight with cream-puffs at 20 paces??)))

ERIC LINDSAY  
PO Box 42  
Lyneham  
ACT 2602  
AUSTRALIA

Alas, for memories of magazines that might have been. Still, your 'Future Times' is certainly rare. Dare I suggest there might be a career in producing "destined to be rare" SF magazines? (((Yes, if you could produce thousands of highly coveted one-shots, and then sit back and wait for 50 years))) A 'Man Of Copper' novel, and so cheap! I'll rush out and buy them at the local newstand. Maybe he uses the various exercise gadgets you mention on the following pages. Perhaps he would be willing to do testimonials. I must admit that I tend to enjoy reading about all the various gadgetry now available; I am an unashamed gadget freak. I don't often buy (after all, I'm not entirely stupid) but I do like playing with them (except when they don't work, then they infuriate me). (((Right on, cobber. Right now, I'm struggling to get a Beeb/Epson Screen Dump to work, but I'm badly handicapped by sheer ignorance...it took me two weeks to find out how to get the Beeb to drive the FX80 for simple printout. Must admit, I'm a gadget-lover myself, but prefer to make them when I can...thus we have umpteen drill speed controllers, film animation rostrums, clock controlled appliances and my pride and joy, a bedside clock/console (home-made) which controls lights, clock, bed lamp electric blanket and the TV!)))



Jeeves

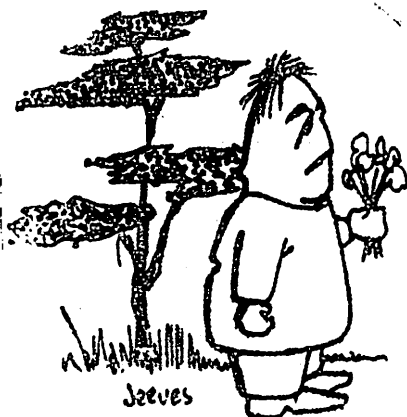


KEN LAKE  
115 Markhouse Ave  
London E17 8AT

I wouldn't call myself a perfectionist, but typographical errors DO bug me, and fanzines are full of 'em - but then (ERG89 p5) you tell me that a gyroscope 'moves along the line of pish' and all is forgiven. (((Ah, you spotted the deliberate test mistake, did you?))) DMBL introduces me to Fanzines As Was - really neat, keen publications like the BSFR, FR, OF and similar Great Creations of the past, and I wonder whether fandom can indeed totally have lost that generation of fen - erudite, tidy, thoughtful, unbiassed by a decade of trendy leftie 'teaching' (come on now Terry, you were a teacher in those days how come the whole educational system became irradiated by loathsome militants?) (((As a teacher I was taught NEVER to inflict my political and other beliefs on the children..THAT has gone now..indeed, here in Sheffield, the Left Wing Council has started writing their views into school documents and head teacher's orders..to make sure the next generation knows what they ought to think...talk about Big Brother! Thus, they can plug their views ..but when I try to root for my side in ERG, I am accused of being a fogey, reactionary, stupid, solid etc etc. Nowadays, fanzines can plug the left, but woe betide any freedom of speech trying to plug the Right))) Is there indeed, any hope of a return to the sanity of the fifties? Or are we doomed to the unending flood of Joseph Nicholasites and Joy Hib'ertisms? Is ERG indeed, the sole remaining mirror of Times That Were, the only hope for what most fen seem to regard as traitorous fascist racist tendencies, chauvinistic obscenities and generally degenerate antipopularist laissez-faire Ricardo capitalist Capitalism? (((Ah, you never know. Personally, I don't want to use ERG as any sort of platform..but nowadays, so many fen pimp the Cruel Thatcher/harsh Government..save the starving work-shy that I just have to cheer for my side.)))

Jacith BUFFERY  
10 Southam Rd  
Hall Green  
Birmingham

I went to see DUNE this holiday. All the professional critics I read classed the film as 'incomprehensible'; in particular, they said they couldn't understand why the spice was so important. They must have been asleep during most of the performance, as the significance and effects of the spice melange were explained very clearly in a prologue spoken by the Princess Irulan. To be fair, Dune is such a big and complex book that something has to suffer in order to get it on film (((The audience ???))). Some characters disappear, while others like Chani and Feyd Ratha are reduced to cyphers. Large chunks of the plot are also missing. The ornithopters are converted into dull little flying wedges that sound like a Buck Rogers' ship without the sparkler. But, all things considered it is a tremendously good effort. Some things are even better than the book, like the marvelously mutated Navigator in his tank and the peculiar method of space travel, (or should I say Spice Travel?). Kyle MacLellan certainly looks the part of Paul and does a decent enough job, although I felt he could have been a little more haughty..and less ready to smile. The still suits are excellent, but for the sake of clarity, the hoods are missing. I was sorry they saw fit to do away with the flowing desert robes too; and for some reason they decided all the Reverend Mothers had to be bald, but even with this disfigurement, Francesca Annis is quite stunning.



ETHEL LINDSAY  
69 Barry Rd  
Carnoustie  
Angus DD7 7QQ

I visited Phil Rogers just before they moved, and helped with the packing. The first thing was to help pack his Astounding collection. The work kept getting halted as I stopped to admire some of the early covers. (((I know just what you mean, I had the same trouble when working on the 'Complete Astounding/Analog Index')) I really enjoyed your zine memories, but of course I share them, which gives the article extra zest. (((Remember the law suit of Ashworth v Lindsay? I still have my copy tucked away))) I do wish you had made your Con report longer..I have decided to skip the Leeds Con next year, (((Yep, the starting price plus a two hotel venue is a bit off-putting))) but am being quite tempted by Albacon, as I can get there quite cheaply with my BR Railcard. ((('Freid I don't qualify until Oct.1 1987)))

JOHN MILLER  
75 Viewforth  
Edinburgh 10

A 'Matter Of Gravity' is an interesting article with its mention of science..and even better, science fiction. My compliments for including this sort of article on a specific SF theme. I liked your wind-up Scargill cartoon, but if memory serves me correctly, there are fewer LOC pages in ERG 89. My own opinion is that I'd like to see four pages of LOCs (((Your wish is my command..herewith page 4))) 'Recent Reading', I like reading about new books/editions that are available. EYE OF CAT by Zelazny sounds good, but I didn't know of its existence before reading ERG (((Which of course, is the whole point of Recent Reading... to let people know what's around)))

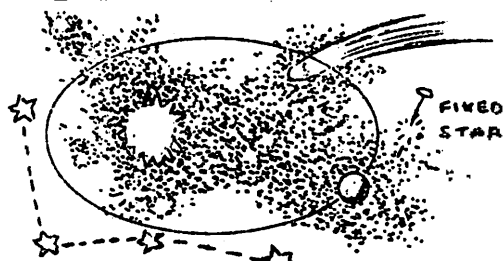
ROGER WADDINGTON  
4 Commercial St  
Norton, Malton,  
Yorkshire YO17 9ES

It's a relief to turn to the saner pages of ERG, and that's an unsolicited testimonial! Found the feature on fanzines particularly interesting. It made me realise that when so many people did so much to establish this curious thing called Fandom, can I do less than give my all as well? I've been tempted to corssfandom and fanac off, then along comes a zine like ERG or CRYSTAL SHIP, to show me what it's all about. Didn't chuckle so much over 'Last Stage Reflectoraman' with that feeling of 'Who used to read this guff?' (not the least for feeling you might suddenly appear behind me with a big hammer saying, "I USED TO") because I still have fond memories of the original. (((So do I, but I can still get a kick out of sending it up))) There's only one thing you don't mention in your review of the Shinden kit, whether any came off the production line. (((As far as I know, only ONE was built, and after a total flying time of less than four hours, it wound up in a Museum in the USA)))

R.J.FAULDER  
P.O. Box 136  
Yanco  
NSW 2703  
Australia

I was surprised to hear that Charles Chilton was still productive (((Of crud))). I'm too young to have encountered Jet Morgan. Perhaps it would be best not to bring the radio serials back. I find that Star Trek, which inspired nostalgia for my early high-school days, does not bear re-viewing well. (((For my money, I'd rather re-view ST than watch for the first time, such drab as 'Battlestar Galactica', 'Logan's Run', 'Mork & Mindy' and all that other dross foisted on us as 'Sci-Fi'..a term as bad as the material which it is used to describe))) Like you, I remember the Popular-Science mags, but my editions must be later than yours. Rather than buying them, our library had bound editions available. (((Shows the UK is a long way behind Australia doesn't it..our library has no such manna. I must admit though that the modern ones are dull..and jam-packed with details of the latest Detroit autos, campers, and how to cure their faults and foibles)))

# GUIDE TO THE



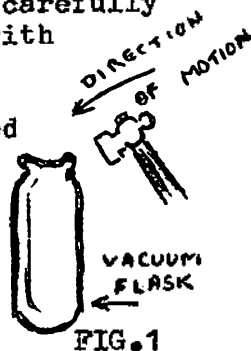
# SOLAR SYSTEM

(Being the text of a 1962 manuscript found floating in an empty oxygen bottle at the back of our coalhouse)

In view of the recent advances in space exploration it is the duty of every citizen to become acquainted with a knowledge of the vast realm surrounding us. Having attended a lecture on this subject (even if hearing it slightly imperfectly), I feel qualified to aid those who have been scared by the textbooks, bewitched by

words, boggled by mathematics and bewildered by the concepts involved. A minimum of mathematics is required and the merest smidgin of scientific knowledge...with but these tools, what follows may be understood by the average moron. First of all, forget all previous ideas. A totally empty

brain is an ideal starting point. Mindless idiocy would be even better, but one can't have everything. Now, take an old vacuum flask, carefully extract the fragile, glassy inner part and belt it gently with a hammer as shown in FIG.1 Look inside the remains of the double lining and if you look carefully, you will see NOTHING. This is really a vacuum, but we technically-minded people refer to it as SPACE. If you have good eyesight, you will be able to see SPACE even better. Now imagine lots and lots of this stuff stretching away in every direction. Some experts call this 'outer space', 'empty space', or even 'deep space' Hold this concept firmly in your mind and at the same time envisage a huge chunk of pre-war coal (the kind that burns without being soaked in paraffin). Picture this flaming away like crazy, right in the middle of your dollop of space. That is the SUN, a dirty great ball of fire entirely surrounded by NOTHING. Astronomers call it a 'G type' Sun, this is most likely to facilitate re-ordering if ours ever gets lost or runs down. It has a whacking great diameter of ever so many miles and is exceedingly hot, but so far, nobody has ever been there to verify this. On a clear day, the Sun can often be seen from the British Isles - sometimes, for minutes on end. If we were to approach it very closely (after first putting on plenty of sun-tan cream) we could see the long jets of fire which it throws out. These are known as 'PROMENADES' and I recall quite clearly that they reach as far as somewhere-or-other, perhaps even further than that. So you can see just how big they are.

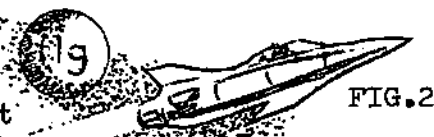


Having learned all about the Sun, let us now imagine we are in a jet plane flying away from the SUN at a Terrific speed. To avoid higher mathematics, I'll not tell you the real velocity which is probably Top Secret anyway, but you

know how fast those things go. Well, if we travel at top speed for a long time..hours, months, weeks or so, we shall eventually reach a black line which goes right round the Sun. Looking a bit like a squashed circle it is called ORBIT and is one of those imaginary lines (like the Equator) which people like to draw on maps. This particular orbit belongs to Mercury because he found it first, but since Mercury isn't a man, but a whacking great chunk of rock, it's difficult to see how it could find anything.



FIG.2 Shows our jet plane passing Mercury. The planet is made of rock, not ice..if it were ice, the Sun would melt it and we should be passing water. Anyway, Mercury is smaller than the Sun and may even be smaller than our Earth..unless it is bigger. Almost certainly, it is one or the other ..that is if it isn't the same size. Being near the Sun, it is probably a good spot for holidays, but we mustn't hang around its orbit for too long or it may come speeding along and knock us for six (very simple mathematics)



Heading on outwards, sooner or later, but I'm not sure which, we come to another black line marking the orbit of Venus. This is another planet, and since it is bigger than Mercury, it is probably bigger than the Earth..unless Mercury is so small that Venus can be bigger than it and still be smaller than Earth. Not that it matters much as nobody lives there anyway. The books can tell us a lot about Venus..how it is hot, dry and arid with a rain soaked dusty atmosphere above the hard-baked oceans. However, the clouds of boiling steam make it impossible to see the surface so we move on again..this time, until we reach an ORBIT which has a wiggly black line spiralling around it.

This means we have reached the Earth, and that spirally line is the orbit of the Moon as it travels around us. No need to study this set up, since we live here, we know all there is to know about Earth, and the moon was visited by Jet Morgan many years ago, and more recently by an EGYPTIAN called Nasa. So, on we go at full throttle and after quite a while, maybe even longer than that, we reach MARS

Mars is sometimes called the RED PLANET, possibly because of its colour. In any case, it must be very wet as it has ice-caps and canals. No doubt resembling Venice on a Bank Holiday. I gather there is quite a long of drinking on that planet as one hears of Mars bars. On the other hand, maybe Mars bars something or other..if Mars bars drinking then they won't be boozers after all. The orbit of Mars is really in a mess, as it has TWO moons twisting around it. They are called Damon and Pythias..which is Martian for 'Abbott and Costello' I believe. Both are much too small to be of much use to anyone. Indeed, the smaller one is much inferior to the larger one and the converse is equally certain unless proved otherwise.

Our next trip must be with Prudence (or Mabel, if you prefer) since this area of space is littered with a load of junk called ASTEROIDS. Not to be confused with HAEMORRHOIDS, these are chunks of rock left around by the builders when finishing off the Solar System. Another theory is that they are the debris of a planet which exploded..which is daft, how could ANYTHING make a planet explode ?

Leaving the Asteroids, we come to a thick black line with simply oodles of others piralling around it...it looks rather like the field diagram for a bar magnet in a solenoid and tells us that er have reached JUPITER and its cartload of moons..maybe even more than half a dozen (more simple maths) This is only right, since Jupiter is the biggest planet and has lots of Methane which must be very nice for Jupiter. I'm not too sure just what Methane is, but it must be important as all the books mention it. Jupiter is also noted for its high 'G'..an obscure point which probably means that it has its own private Sun, thus making it very warm and cosy..apart from the measles, as it has a BIG RED SPOT, poor thing.

Our next stop is at Saturn, a very happy world, as it is now engaged..at least, it has a ring. It must be a nice place for Saturnians to live, assuming there are any Saturnians in the first place. They also have Methane hanging around, so the stuff must be pretty important..maybe for lighting fires..wasn't it Shadrach, Methane and Abednego who used the stuff to light a fiery furnace?

Next comes Uranus, about which most books seem to know very little, probably because having got so far, the writers are getting tired. It must have some moons, either that or it is a very lonely place on a dark night. No doubt there is some Methane kicking about, but not very much, or Jupiter would have come and pinched it. Uranus (the people are called either Uraniums or Urinals) is either very hot or very cold..the books are a bit doubtful about this, but all are firmly agreed that it certainly one or the other, they are willing to bet on it.

On we travel to Neptune, which obviously must have plenty of water for that bloke with the trident to muck about in. The inhabitants when any are found, will be called 'Nephews' and will breathe Methane II which can't be as good as the ordinary sort, or Jupiter would have got it instead. Not much is known about Neptune as by the time authors reach this point, they're ready to knock off for lunch, so rush along to the next world.....

...which is called Pluto which means 'Lord of The Something Or Other...not Lord of the Rings, as it doesn't have any. I believe it is over-run by funny little dogs and that some sort of fuel pipeline was first discovered here. I suspect that Lassie lived here once..on her way back to Scotland after being discarded by her cruel Uncle. But she didn't like the Methane. Letters take an awfully long time to get here, so Pluto can't be very much different from England.

So now you know everything about the Solar System. Nine planets (more simple maths), some wandering chunks of rock (lettered through the centre) and a whacking big Sun. Simple really, anyone could have thought it up.

In addition to this little lot, there are other things named 'COMICS'. These are balls of fire (Harrison Copyright) with long tails sticking out the back and only come along every three weeks, or three centuries or some similar period. When caught, they are made into such fireworks as 'HALLEY'S COMIC'.

So far away that you can't see them, so you'll have to take my word that they exist are dollops of stars called NEBULOUS after a Scots SF magazine. They also include clouds of hot gas like the tag end of a Party Political Broadcast. Occasionally, you may meet a RED GIANTS which are I fancy, exiled Communists or clapped out baseball players. WHITE DWARFS may be found clustered around SNOW WHITE (A laundry). Then there are NEW TRON stars (who acted in the recent Disney movie), QUASARS, PULSARS and SEYFERTS may also be found if you know what to look for. Many of these things are joined together by dotted lines (to avoid confusing them with ORBITS) and these form CONSTIPATIONS. Some famous CONSTIPATIONS ARE Orion's Belt, the Lonsdale Belt and the Endless Belt. For convenience in folling idiots, many of the CONSTIPATIONS have been put in boxes called SINUS OF THE ZODYAK and can be used for making prophecies which never come true. Many of these objects move away from us at high speed, this is called a RED SHIFT because of its resemblance to people escaping from Moscow. A man called Epstein made a model of it all and called it RELATIVITY after his family. No doubt about it, Astronomy is a fascinating subject.

ERG QUARTERLY

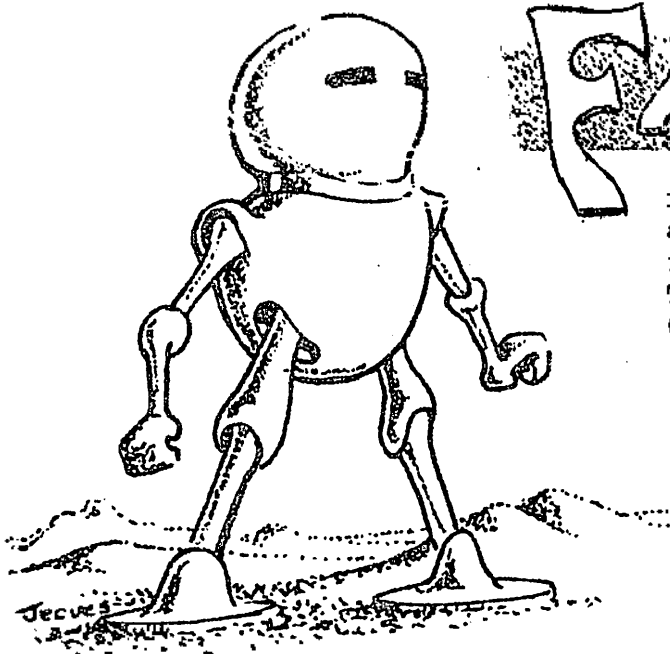
## INDEX

All material by the editor unless otherwise credited.

- ERG.1            Cover: Aircraft & BEM in 'Walkcar'    TJ  
 Apr. 1959       KORNAN THE DOLD                            Humour/satire  
 16 pages       THE SPACE AGE AND ME                        Personal views and news on spaceflight  
                  MAJOR MISSILES                        Scale drawings of missiles/launchers  
                  UP, TO DATE                            Satellite launching dates  
                  OMPAVIEWS                            Mailing comments
- ERG.2            Cover: Soggy with upraised sword        TJ  
 Jly. 1959       TAKING UP TAPE                                Notes on recording and equipment  
 14 pages       TAPEFEN LISTING                                List of fen with recorder & interests  
                  CROSSWORD  
                  OMPAVIEWS                                Mailing Comments
- ERG.3            Cover: Spaceman on moon, hauling cable (Brush stencil) TJ  
 Oct. 1959       THE TRUTH ABOUT SPACE TRAVEL                Humour  
 12 pages       OmpavIEWS
- ERG.4            Cover: Surrealist castle/hills/witch/rocket    TJ  
 May. 1960       ERG by Ken McIntyre                            humour & cartoons  
 8 pages       THE QUESTION by Ken McIntyre                joke story & cartoon  
                  OmpavIEWS
- ERG.5            Cover: 'ERG incorporating 'wench'' 2 women & Soggy    TJ  
 Aug. 1960       WET SUNDAY                                        humour a la woman's mag  
 16 pages       THOUGHT FOR TODAY                                fillo vesre 'manilla Hemp'  
                  MRS FULLALOVE'S COLUMN                        Advice to readers  
                  YOUR FUTURE IN THE STARS                        Horoscopes by 'Tipsy T Jeeves'  
                  DO IT YOURSELF                                    Convert a dressing table into a tea chest.  
                  OmpavIEWS
- ERG. 6            Cover: Shipwrecked soggies on desert island    TJ  
 Nov. 1960       HOW MUCH IS THAT SOGGY IN THE INKWELL?        Cartoon sales news  
 10 pages       JULY 26th AND ALL THAT                        Wedding announcement & coverage
- ERG.7            Cover. Two soggies, one holding up '7'        TJ  
 Feb. 1961       General natter and OmpavIEWS  
 6 pages
- ERG.8            Cover: Soggy on moon meets Slurps            TJ  
 Jan. 1961       IN TOUCH WITH SPIRITS                            Humour  
 24 pages       General natter and OmpavIEWS  
                  Bacover cartoon by Ken McIntyre



- ERG.9            Cover: Atlas rocket taking off    TJ  
 Aug 1961       UP, TO DATE            Satellite launching details  
 24 pages       SATELLITE SKETCHES       Two-colour drawings  
                  HIGHLIGHTS OF SPACE SHOTS       Commentary  
                  SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLES  
                  FUTURE SPACE PROJECTS  
                  OMPAVIEWS & other fanzines
- ERG.10           Cover:    Father Christmas cover by Eddie Jones  
 Nov.1961       THE MURDER OF SEXTON BLAKE by Tony Glynn  
 16 pages       OMPAVIEWS & other fanzines
- ERG.11           Cover:    Thumb on rocket-firing button    by Eddie Jones  
 Feb 1962       AS I SEE IT ... by Ted Tubb  
 20 pages       AS I SEE IT ... by John Rackham
- ERG.12           Cover: Futuristic city..TJ  
 June 1962       HO FOR THE LIFE OF MIRTH       Con Report, Sid Birchby  
 14 pages       LOOKING ROUND    by Brian Ball  
                  THE RULES FOR BLIND FLYING       Humour, Anonymous  
                  CROSSWORD                       OMPAVIEWS
- ERG.13           Cover:    'I RESIGN'..space rocket going awry    TJ  
 Oct 1962       THE LABEL ON THE CAN    by John Rackham  
 24 pages       NEW USES FOR OLD BODIES       Humour...TJ  
                  RUSSIA - STEPPE BY STEPPE       Travelogue by Alan Burns  
                  ALL THAT JAZZ       Hmour,send up of New Orleans    TJ  
                  THE CHROMIUM-PLATED WILDERNESS    by Ted Tubb  
                  CROSSWORD                       OMPAVIEWS
- ERG.14           Cover:    Ruined castle & sunrise    TJ  
 Jan 1963       ERGONICS FOR AMATEURS    TJ  
 12 pages       CROSSWORD                       FANZINE REVIEWS
- ERG.15           Cover:    Alchemist at work       TJ  
 Apr 1963       PROF. ETTIC    Cartoon strip    TJ  
 12 pages       AERONAUTICAL DOODLING    TJ  
                  SIGN OF THE DYNE       Eric Bentcliffe  
                  CROSSWORD
- ERG.16           Cover:    Robot and Spaceship.    Brush stencil    TJ  
 May 1963       PETERBOROUGH IN PIECES       Con report  
 16 Pages       CROSSWORD                       FANZINES  
                  FOCUS ON THE INFERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE    TJ  
                  IT PAYS TO DECREASE YOUR WORD POWER...1    TJ
- ERG.17           Cover:    Jet plane shooting up rocket base    TJ  
 Oct 1963       ALISON POGWORTHY'S 'BUY-LINES'    TJ  
 16 pages       THE GENTLE ART OF STENCIL-DESECRATION    How to cut stencils  
                  IT STILL PAYS TO DECREASE YOUR WORD POWER...2    TJ  
                  THE LAST WORD       Valerie Jeeves  
                  OMPAVIEWS                       BOOK SALE LIST



# FANORAMA

is where I natter about this, that, and a bit of the other...opening with a fanzine from down under...

THE MENTOR 51 46pp A4 mim. from Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd. Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Items on Soviet SF, 'poetry', reviews (2 dollops), Fiction, letters, and some good artwork (and a tepid portfolio) Nice, varied and friendly..and not as with so many Aussie zines..too in-groupish. \$A.2 per issue..or the usual and/or contribution.

ONOMA 2 78pp/A5/offset comes from expatriate 'Jef' Bryan residing at 92 Rue de l'Arbe Saint-Roch, B-4480 Oupeye, Belgium and is crammed with fiction ('Sea Change' is excellent)

verse, Con rep, medical items, reviews, beers, a neatly edited/sorted snippet lettercol..and lots more. No price given..but the editor wants contris, especially artwork..and a faunching letter will probably get you a copy.

NYEKAS 32 104pp/Qto/litho Excellent artwork, Columns, Reviews of books, films etc., natter, fiction, verse, cartoons. Lots of something for everybody and a good lettercol. A mammoth and superlative issue, but what do you expect with a production team of about 20? Get it for \$2.50 from Ed Meskys, RFD.1 P.O.Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226, USA.

I also keep getting oodles of fanzines, letters and one-shots designed to make me join up with one faction or another on a TAFF-harming fan-feud. Pity, TAFF was one of fandom's best ideas..it still is, even though..as is inevitable, it has thrown up a few travellers who like the moving finger, moved on..and kept moving without being lured back to write any sort of trip report..indeed, some even gafiated. That's life. Let's support TAFF by getting back to plugging it everywhere (NOT just collecting or making Con-kitty donations)...and by nominating fen who are well known on both sides of the pond for more than a year's worth of controversial writing and anti-pubbing. Let's not hassle over WHO is nominated...if we don't care for Joe Nearfan, then let's not vote for him. Simple as that..no need to organise a minor riot as a protest. As for this silly howl that the U.S. fen will monopolise TAFF..Rubbish! In the first place, since they supply most of the lolly, votes..and interest, why shouldn't they have a goodly say on who they send..just as we have a good say in who we nominate..and in that context, have our past selections and programmes been so pristine? Forget the squabbling and support TAFF, not more fan politics of the kind which has debased the 'Doc Weir' Award. If you really want a windmill to tilt at..why not the closed-shop, all pals together Book Awards?

MAKING BETTER MOVIES should have appeared on the newstands in February, along with a regular Soggy cartoon..you are going to buy jillions of copies aren't you? Meanwhile Movie Maker has now ignored 3 letters asking for

the return of a dozen or so unused cartoons (going price, about £120+) which seems pretty shabby treatment after having appeared in the mag for 25 years. Stay tuned for further instalments of this thrilling saga.

A TARABLE MISTAKE (or DNQ 34) is another mammoth affair of 90+ Qto. pages of mimeo work enhanced by excellent artwork, most of it by Taral Wayne, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave. Willowdale, Ontario, M2N 5B4, CANADA..and a copy will cost you \$5.00. Columns, Fanzine Crits, TAFF natter, a 'movie script', DNQ's publishing history, and a 45 page fiction item. This is the last issue..BUT a response will get you in Taral's good books for his next production.



THE METAPHYSICAL REVIEW.2 18pp/A4/mim from Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001 Australia. Bruce talks about his job situation..or lack thereof, experiences with a leaky tear duct and a chaotic medical system. Then a page or three of letters and to wind up, two lengthy reviews of Aldiss' 'Helliconia Spring' and 'Helliconia Summer'. A nice tidy balance between friendly and serious lit-crit. Try LOC, stamps or sheer flattery...or trade if you publish anything.

TRAP DOOR.3 c22pp/1A4 from Bob Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glenn Allen, CA 95442 for the usual or \$2.00 an issue. An editorial on fan feuds (and an article) a jaundiced look at cops and a political rally, general nattering and a very good lettercol, neat production and good illos. Lighthearted, but not gcsh wow faanish, just a friendly read.

What have 'ANNALS OF OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE', Messrs I.C.I. and BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS got in common? Answer, my cartoons. After I sold two lots to Monsanto Chemicals, they were used by their safety officer for a paper in 'Annals'..which led to both ICI and BNF (Good initials, what?) to write and ask where they could get some more...so right now, I'm waiting to see if they will pay the going rate I'm asking. Fingers crossed.

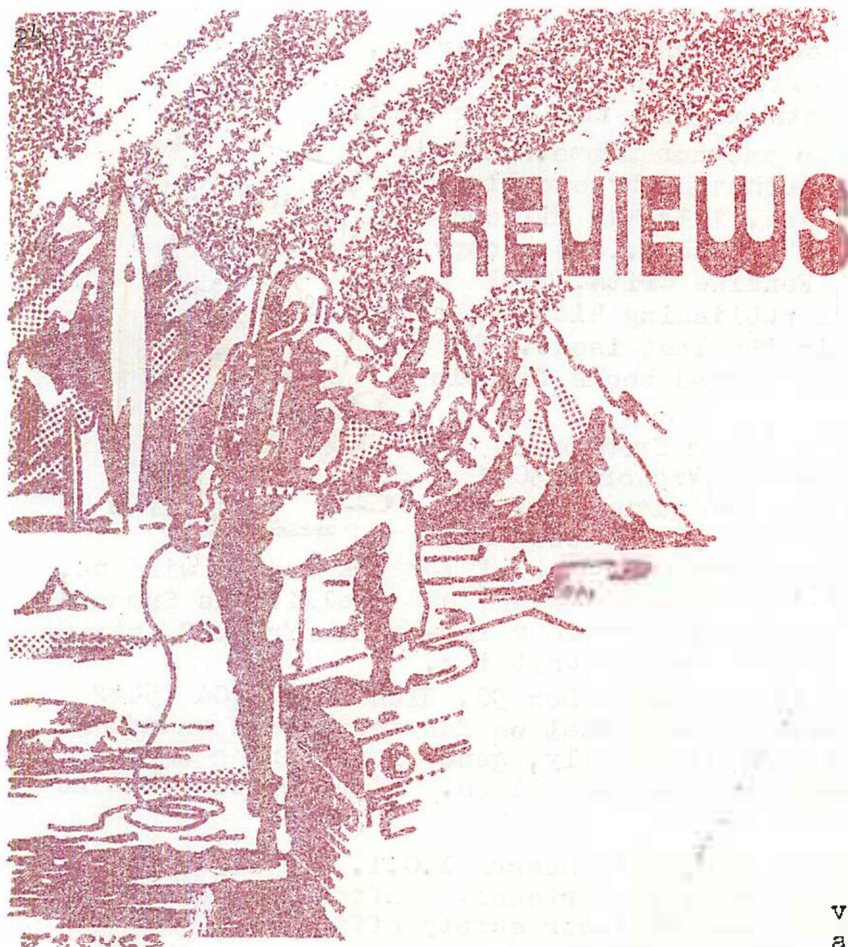
LATER..Letter to the Managing Director of Movie Maker's publishers came up trumps..got my stuff back (well, some of it) TWO letters of apology..one from Publisher, one from Editor...and a complimentary copy.

KYSTER 8 (which is pronounced 'Kyster') boaz's 50 A4, iconoclastic pages with umpteen illos..original and stolen from 'Chums' and the like. You get Dave Wood(1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7QA) on trips to Yugoslavia ..and other sinister affairs. The text of Dave Langford's hilarious Novacon speech (this alone is worth the price of admission) plus items by Mal Ashworth and Hazel Ashworth as well as a whole raft of letters. Not faanish/Gosh Wow, but if you're a serious cove, then this isn't for you as it dares to make fun of SF, sacred cows and people, egad! Good 'un.

MAINSTREAM 10 48pp/Qto from Suzanne Tompkins, 4326 Winslow Place North, Seattle, WA 98103, USA is crammed with entertaining pieces..Bob Shaw, tour bits, hand stencil cutting, a radio poetry reading, a Con-bid 'joke' that went sour and excellent illos. If all that sounds trite..IT ISN'T, as each item is so well written as to grab and hold your interest. One of the best zines I've read in quite a while with NOTHING dull in it. For trade, LOC, stamps, contribs, whatever. Mention ERG and you might get one thrown at you.

DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE Two sets only of ERG79-90 containing all 12 episodes of the series. First two orders gets 'em. £6 or \$6.00 a set.





## THE SOLAR SYSTEM

D.W. Jones  
The Open University  
Pergamon Press  
£11.75 paper  
£24.25 hardcover

This hefty (352pp 125 illus.) volume opens with a chapter explaining basic astronomy, orbital elements, ephemeris, planetary laws and terminology.

Then follows an exhaustive look at the Earth, its composition, tectonics, radiometric dating and other facets too numerous to mention here. This leads to similar inspections of the other planets, their moons (ours included), the asteroids, comets and even the various ring systems. Close attention is given to physical make-up, chemistry, plus any relevant orbital and/or landing missions along with current ideas

as to origins and formation. In that line, there is also a chapter on the rise and fall of planetary formations; a Bibliography guides you to further reading and an index helps you find everything. A nice touch is the inclusion of clearly marked explanations of the more technical parts and the inclusion of revision questions (sadly without answers). Not easy going, but of very high information content as this IS a textbook, not a cheapjack popularisation. Ideal for reference or study, and indispensable for all you would-be writers who want to 'get it right'.

### THE SLITHERERS

John Russell Fearn  
P. Harbottle £2.00  
(32 Tynedale Ave.,  
WallSEND,  
Tyne & Wear)

An Introduction gives a brief biographical note on Fearn, and how this long-lost novel, previously only published in shorter form, was acquired.

The story tells how an innocently intended (though stupid) Martian act leads to a terrible menace being loosed on Earth. The small, flying, lizard-like

Slitherers move at fantastic speed, attack on sight and acquire the intelligence of their victims. Not only do they defeat moves against them, but begin their own attacks on civilisation. There's a nice sting in the tale, which despite a certain naivete reminiscent of the forties conveys a strong sense of escalating menace. Recommended to all JRF fans who remember him fondly as 'The Cover Copper'..or more recently, as 'Vargo Statten'



