

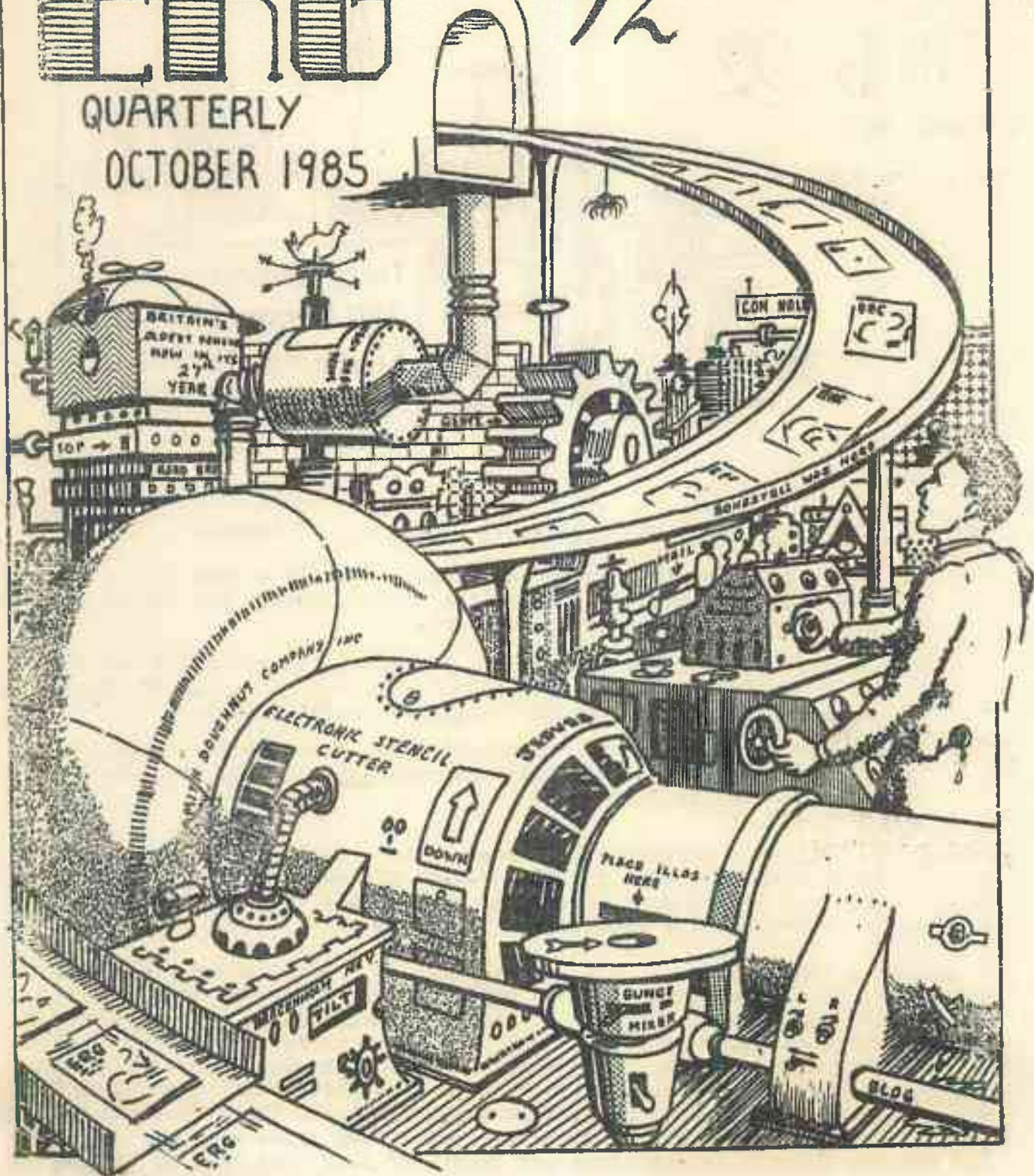
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ERG

92

QUARTERLY

OCTOBER 1985



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Now in its 27th
Year of Publication



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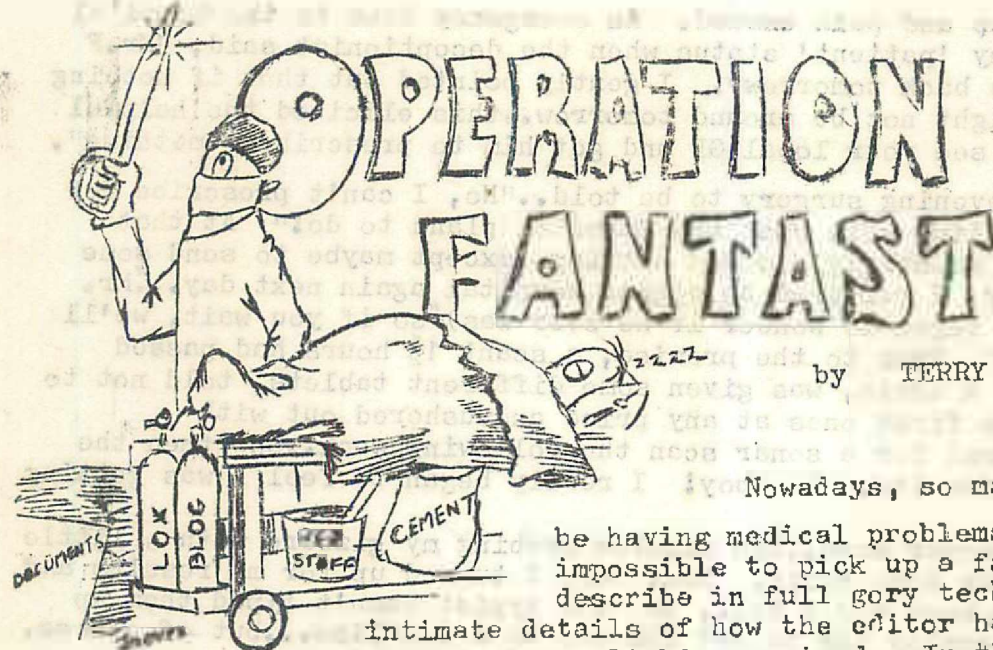
If You Want To Get The Next Issue..... Pick one of three..

1. Write a LOC on this issue and enclose two 13p stamps if you live in the UK..elsewhere, I'll waive the stamps..unless you happen to have any Space Commemoratives to spare.
2. By trade..not for your fanzine, I'm afraid I have all I can handle in that line..but back issues of M st American mags...SF, Pop. Sc., Aeromodelling etc. Drop me a line and we'll dicker.
3. If you must..cash subs are acceptable...2 issues for £1.00 or 5 issues for \$4.00 (Send bills please, not cheques, the bank rips off too much in 'charges')

Remember...mailing a fanzine (which represents a heck of a lot of WORK) into a non-responsive vacuum is NOT fun...so please respond in some way to this issue...and if you don't save your copies, I'd appreciate your passing them along to friends (or enemies). To folks.

To scotch a few rumours...I have no intention of folding ERG for quite a while yet..this issue marks my 63rd birthday, and I hope to hit 100 and my 65th in the same month. Then I'll think of closing down. Sad note though, starting this issue, I could only get 80gm paper as against the usual 85gm. So dwindling stocks of the latter will be saved for cover work. With Qto being driven from the scene...it's touch and go whether I can complete the 100 mark using it...but by heck, I'll try. I suspect the A4 has caught on sheerly by virtue of dealer laziness (why stock two sizes when one will do?) and fannish inertia in not demanding Quarto if they want it. Up to now, by buying 20 reams at a time...dealers have even cut A4 down for me!

Bestest, Terry



by TERRY JEEVES

Nowadays, so many fans appear to

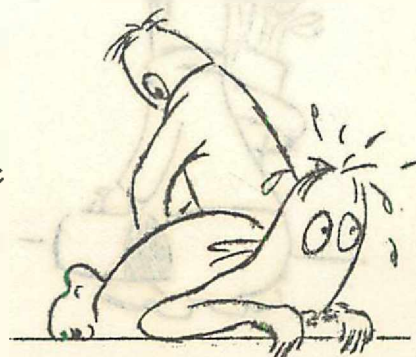
be having medical problems that it is almost impossible to pick up a fanzine which doesn't describe in full gory technicalour, the most

intimate details of how the editor had his or her.. usually her, plumbing rewired. In the true tradition

of investigative journalism, your editor decided to look into this strange world of white coats, drip-feed bottles, blœying CRT traces...and of course, miraculous recoveries.. as witness the incredible recovery of P.I. Matt Houston. Shot twice, clinically dead, our hero recovered within a few days, enough to indulge in a couple of hectic brawls. Phew! I had my op. six days ago, and right now copl'dn't fend off a rampant butterfly.

So what gives? Well, for openers (no pun intended), there are two ways to get into a hospital. The first is by becoming a doctor, nurse or other mystic person. By temperament I would never make a doctor..and I could never manage to make a nurse (though I have tried a few times). The second way is by becoming 'a patient'..so called because of the long times of just sitting and waiting. Naturally, a patient must have qualifications. They are very careful about that..not letting in any Tom Dick or Harry. (Ladies, please read 'Tomasina, Riccarda and Henriette'). I acquired my credentials when first a pain developed in my groin, followed by increasing difficulty in passing water. I duly toddled along to the Witch Doctor who prescribed a couple of rounds of ineffective tables before passing me along the line with a letter applying for an appointment with a 'specialist'. With incredible speed (compared with a glacier')

a mere four weeks saw me being inspected..not by Mr.F, but by one of his lesser cronies. This involved blood counts, blood pressure, several yards of form-filling and some rather personal probing by the deputy sheriff. The mighty man reached his decision..."Make an X-ray appointment and then we'll see". The glacier tore along, only four weeks to a series of 12 X-rays and three weeks awaiting results, and I was back before a different Deputy..variety is the spice of life, you know. This one prescribed tablets which so interfered with my innards that



'Personal probing'

4
my plumbing seized up and pain ensued. An emergency dash to the hospital earned me a bar to my 'patient' status when the deceptionist said, "Mr. F isn't in today, come back tomorrow". I gently pointed out that if nothing was done today, I might not be around tomorrow..this elicited the helpful advice to..."Go and see your local GP and get him to prescribe something".

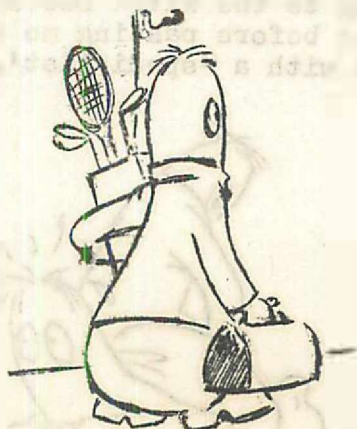
Round to evening surgery to be told..."No, I can't prescribe for you as it might conflict with what the Hospital plans to do!" At that stage, the Hospital seemingly planned nothing..except maybe to send some flowers. Eventually, I survived to attend Hospital again next day..."Mr. F isn't in today"(I began to wonder if he ever was)"so if you wait, we'll see who can see you" True to the promise, a scant 12 hours had passed before I saw Deputy A again, was given some different tablets, told not to take any more of the first ones at any price and ushered out with instructions to attend for a sonar scan the following week..and then the day after that for results. Hoo boy! I really began to feel I was getting somewhere.

Came the sonar scan..ten minutes probing my gizzard with a little probe, and I was back home again. Next day, I turned up for my results and had to wait another hour and a half, as "The typist hasn't typed them up yet." I wouldn't employ her to get ERG out to a deadline...but of course, she may have been practising to become a patient herself.

Eventually, and I know you will find this hard to believe, I actually got to see Mr. F himself, in person and no Doppelganger. He repeated the questionnaire, examined the sonar scan, examined me (in that not-in-a-family-magazine manner) and then told me he proposed OPERATION A and if that didn't work, why, bless my little cotton socks, 'We' would try OPERATION B. Did I want to come in National Health, or pay cash lolly?

Opting for NH treatment, Mr.F ushered me out after explaining that there was a 12 month waiting list, and I would be notified. Obviously, I was cut out (no pun intended this time either) to be a VERY patient.

Mills of the Gods grind...after only three weeks, I got a letter telling me to report the following Wednesday ("Ring first to make sure we still have a bed" Fancy a hospital that size losing its only bed!) and bring small-kit, pajamas, dressing gown, sports gear and hiking boots.



Came Wednesday. I rang...no bed, they would ring back later if one could be found; No, they didn't need me to come-and help look for it. I sat back and nonchalantly chewed off half a pound of fingernails. The doorbell rang..it was the plumber come to repair the shower which the Beams had caused to self-destruct during their brief visit a few weeks earlier. He set to work and got the thing in bits...and the 'phone rang."Come on in, we've found a bed!"

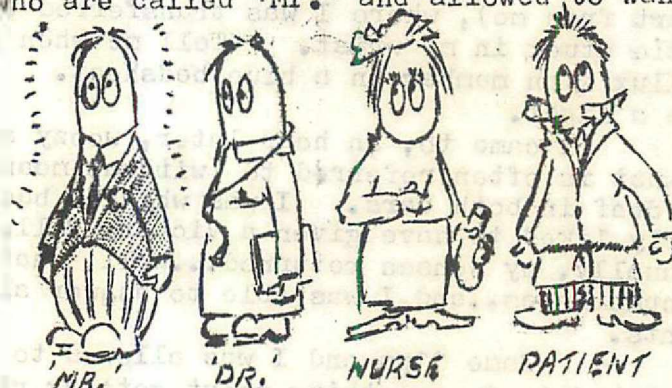
By this time (late August) the water works had almost cured itself since the original games began last March..but the pains persisted, so out to the car and off to the Hallamshire.

Naturally, the Car Park was full..and all surrounding roads tastefully

decorated with pretty little double yellow lines...they were a bit difficult to admire for all the cars parked on them, but we managed to find one small piece that had been missed (it had even nicer zig-zag lines) and parked there.

Off to reception where I had to give my Name, address, age, next-of-kin, allergies, favourite SF mag, and so forth...a procedure which henceforth will simply be referred to as (XX). Then a nice lady escorted me upstairs to deposit me in the 'Day Room'. I made a mental note to give her a ²⁵ note if I ever had one, and settled down to wait. After about 45 minutes, another angel of mercy came with a clipboard..to take down (XX) before escorting me to the ward...where I was told to change into pajamas. This of course is so that patients can be identified at over 300 paces as NOT being specialists...the exalted beings who are called 'Mr.' and allowed to wander around in civvies. Nurses of course, wear umpteen different outfits,,,usually surmounted by a strangely shaped piece of linen origami in their hair.

Duly reduced to the anonymity of pajamas and a dressing gown, I was presented to the other inhabitants of Ward I1 :- Tom, who walked around tethered via a delicate part of his anatomy to a plastic



collector bag. Mike whose wrist was linked via a long thin tube to an enigmatic machine which clicked, twinkled and metered drugs into his system, and 'Elephant Man' Sid...so-called because from his nose hung a short bit of tubing which held another of the ubiquitous plastic bags. Despite their pain and these handicaps, Tom, Mike and Sid were never at a loss for a joke or wisecrack. Nursing staff proved to be the same and really do deserve special mention. Without a single exception, they were superlative. The depressing surroundings, constant pressure and onerous tasks never seemed to dampen their cheerful banter and ever-readiness to supply whatever may be needed without delay or complaint. A marvellous lot indeed.

Their patience received a severe test one night when an elderly woman went bonkers, began throwing plastic water bottles around and yelling, "Help! They're Killing me!" at the top of her voice...other goms were, "The bomb is in the grocer's, it's under the carrots", and "Get the police". Her cabaret act ran from around 9pm to 11pm with capsule repeats around 1am, but those nurses never lost their cool. If the staff of Ward I1 are representative of the rest of the Royal Hallamshire, someone is doing a grand job of training.

Once I had been introduced around, it was time for a meal, which was followed by a lady who came around to take my (XX) and told me that my operation was scheduled for the following day, Thursday, at 1.35. That meant Thursday dawned (at 6-45am) with a cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter. An ample banquet which was to sustain me until the next day.

Sometime during the morning, the anaesthetist came round to check my (XX) and tell me what was going to happen...he was followed by a vampire who first wrote down my (XX) and then proceeded to draw off several gallons of my blood. I was surprised to see it wasn't blue after all.

Came 1pm. accompanied by a geezer who after first checking my (XX), proceeded to give me a shave with a rather blunt safety razor...and at high speed around unmentionable areas. Talk about the 'Grim Reaper'.

Soon it was 1-35, then 1-36, and pretty soon after that, 1-37. The mathematical progression held me fascinated..until 2-30 when in rushed a posse of nurses, porters and suchlike..checked my (XX) and pushed my bed out on that first giant step. I couldn't resist giving regal waves and nods to patients and visitors as I sailed out down to 'Pre-Op'...where I waited for three hours until they had re-sharpened their Swiss Army pocket knives, had a brew up and a good read of 'Touch Yourself Surgery'. Thus refreshed, they trundled me to the Theatre door (I never did find out what was showing) (Apart from me), where I was transferred to an operating trolley and a needle stuck in my wrist. "Tell me when you feel you're going" said a Ku Klux Klan member in a blue bedsheet. "OK so far," said I and went out like a light.

I came to, an hour later, woozy as hell, aching like the clappers in what is often referred to (without meaning Australia) as 'Down Under', and deaf in both ears. I was whisked back to the ward, where I would dearly liked to have given a Victory Roll..or whatever..but was too drowsy. Gradually, my senses returned...well, what passes for sense under normal circumstances..and I was able to answer all the questions with informative grunts.

Came 11pm and I was allowed to take a sip of water...came 5am and I had to do something about getting rid of it...which involved removing a hefty wad of bandages...Sellotaped in place. Let us draw a veil over that highly delicate experience...save it to say that beneath them lay what a cheerful doctor jovially referred to as 'something out of a Hammer film'. Now I know why I never like 'em.

That was Friday morning...On Saturday, 11am, I was discharged without a stain on my character and told to ~~get~~ ~~100%~~ come back in six weeks' time....I forbore to ask, "With my shield, or on it?"

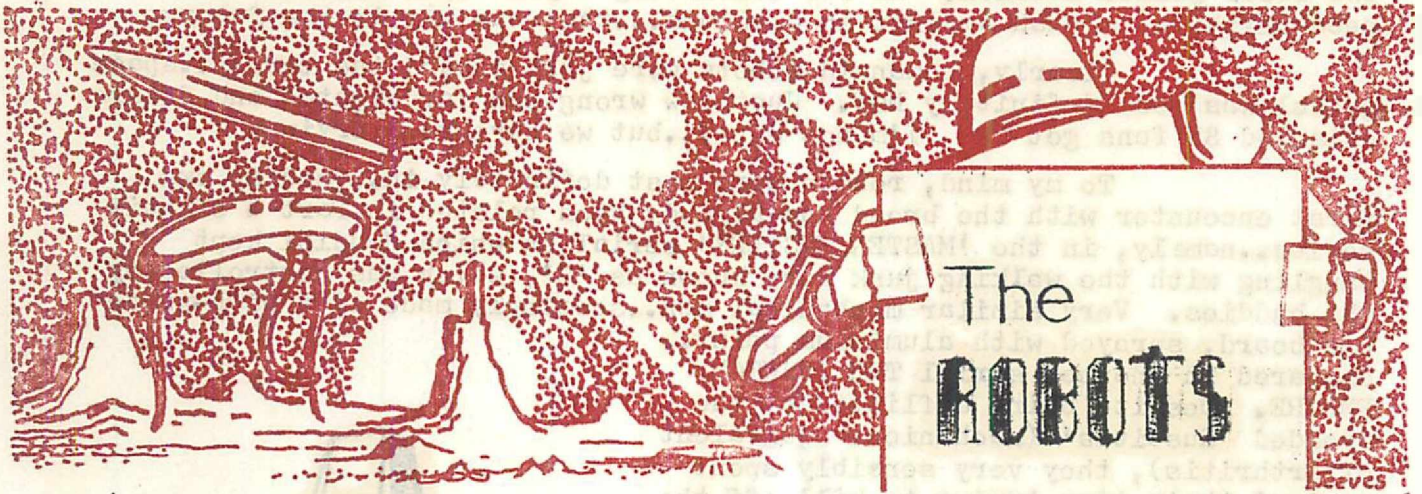
Results? Well the original problems are still with me, so it looks as if that second op may be required...ah jolly day, caloo, callay. What did they do? I'm not telling you, so there...it put it this way, I wouldn't be the odd one out in Jewish nudist camp. Meanwhile, like love-making hedgehog, I move...carefully.

So, if this issue of ERG reaches you a little later than usual, now you know why. Please don't be offended by any delay, or I'll be cut to the quick.

Hoping this finds you as it finds me.....bestest, Terry

SALE LISTS...I now have a bundle..as follows.. 1. Hardcover. 2. Paperbacks 3. Magazines 4. Magazines 5. Cigarette Cards 6. Aerospace 7. Fanstuff. Too bulky to run off and mail with ERG, but if YOU would like printouts, send an 8 1/2"x4" S.A.E.

The Full DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE.. Parts 1 to 12..plus Covers, Sock Davidge and 'G-8 AND HIS BOTTLE ACES'...80+ pages. Still available £2.50 inc. postage and packing. Shop early for Christmas.



Fifty years ago, I was a teenager already well-addicted to a regular fix of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION (or 'Tales Of Super Science' as it had been when I first met it. In those days, SF depended very largely on five main themes:-

1. Invasion..usually from another planet, but occasionally from either the 4th dimension, or the 'Asiatic Combine'
2. Time travelling...almost invariably, into the future
3. The events stemming from a fantastic invention (which could involve any..or all of the other themes)
4. Space travel adventure
5. Humanoid robots (in those days, they were the only kind)

No.1 was an unlikely-to-happen, but barely possible idea. No.2 an amusing impossibility, and No.3 depended on the invention and what the mad scientist did with it..apart from taking over the world. If any of us had been asked to choose which of those themes was likely to be realised by the end of the century, the answer would almost certainly have been the humanoid robot. Oh, we all believed devoutly that space travel would come, but it seemed unlikely in our lifetimes. Asked to bet on the most likely winner in that race, and all our hard-earned Saturday pennies would have been plonked down for robots. Which just shows you that if you extrapolate from the present, you may be caught by the proverbials. Heck, every week saw some sort of mention of robots...out SF was full of them, they appeared in films (of the kind we saw in 97 parts at the 2d rush, and even the real world kept plugging them. Every Trade Fair worth its rip-off featured some stumbling attempts at creating a mechanical man. Oh, admittedly, these could barely sit up, raise an arm and flash an electric-lamp eyeball or two. Voices came either from a built-in gramophone disc, or via a microphone cable leading to some underling concealed off-stage.

Against all this was a dim rumour that some Chinese mandarin had tied rockets to his chair, and then vanished Heavenward. A german bloke named Opel had careered around a race track with rockets attached to his car, and another idiot had narrowly missed joining his ancestors by fastening some to his glider. As for Willy Ley, he had only just got

around to joining the German VFR in dropping Repulsor 1 on to the roof of the local police station. As for convincing anyone that rockets didn't need anything to push against in a vacuum...that was way in the future.

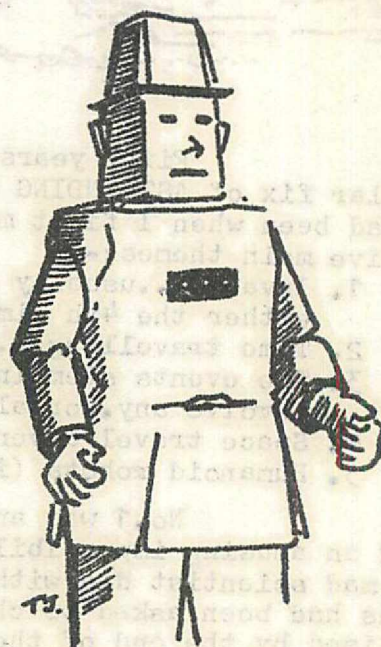
Clearly, humanoid robots were just around the corner..space gravel was most definitely NOT. Just how wrong can far sighted and future oriented SF fans get ? I'm not sure...but we sure keep trying.

To my mind, robots were most definitely in...and my own first encounter with the breed has already been related in Part 8 of this series..namely, in the 'MASTER MYSTERY' serial in which Houdini kept tangling with the walking junk heap known as 'Q', which was controlled by the baddies. Very similar mechanical men..seemingly made of a high-grade cardboard, sprayed with aluminium paint.. appeared in another serial THE PHANTOM EMPIRE. Despite being afflicted by the dreaded 'Rustitis' (mechanical equivalent of arthritis), they very sensibly spent most of their time trying to kill off the star of the series, Gene Autry, singing cowboy. Sadly, they never succeeded. How I wished that just for once, that slowly descending cutting torch held by one of automata, would catch him in the vocal chords..but it was not to be.

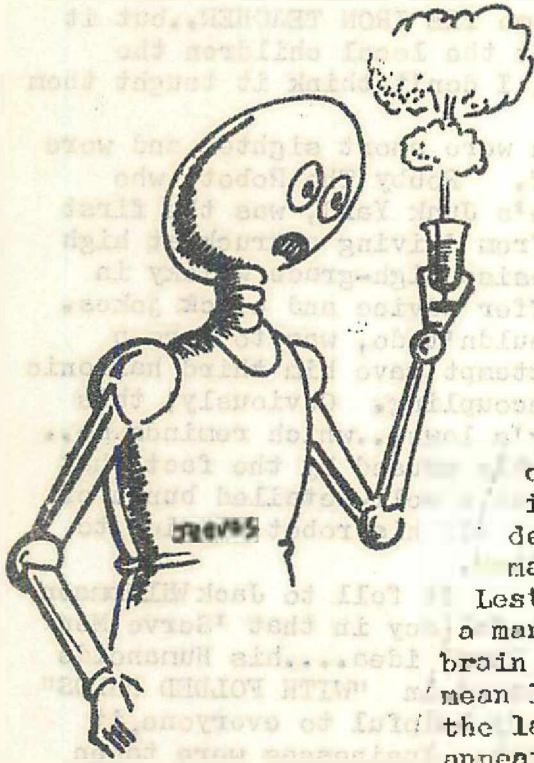
Fascinating as these filmic monsters were, they did little more than lumber unsteadily around in the background and try to look ready to spot-weld anyone daft enough to stand still for half an hour.

I fancy it was probably REX in a 1934 ASTOUNDING who first showed me a truly humanoid robot (as distinct from the products of smok-running Meccano sets. REX was .."...a thing of glistening levers and bell cranks, of flexible shafting, cams and delicate mechanical fingers, of vacuum tubes and photo-electric cells..." How could any 12-year old resist that? However, Rex got ideas above his station, began to operate on his creators and was in the process of taking over the world when he managed to give himself emotion. Thinking it hadn't worked, he got in a paddy and blew himself up..thus showing everyone that there are things best left alone by robots.

Such machines were based on the Frankenstein image which demanded they be a menace to everyone around. Some authors avoided this rut however. Robert Moore Williams gave us ROBOT'S RETURN..in which a crew of sentient robots come seeking their origins..only to be greatly saddened to find that humanity has managed to kill itself off in their absence. Another tin man with heart of gold was created by the writing team of Earl & Otto under their 'Eando Binder' name. ADAM LINK had an iridium-sponge brain (E'm, now I wonder where Asimov got his positronic-platinum-sponge brains from?).



Cardboard robot
from 'Phantom Empire'



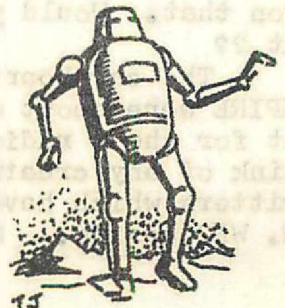
and was created by Dr. Link who reared Adam to help humans. When an accident made Adam appear a murderer, he was hunted, caught and brought to trial... convincing the jury of his gentleness by leaping between two skyscrapers to save a child from fire.

Before feminists sharpen their slings and afrows, I'd better mention the almost legendary HELEN O'LOY, an early female robot purchased by two young bachelors to cook, clean, wash and darn their socks. (OK, so this doesn't satisfy the ladies..some people are never satisfied)..however, one of the men improves her circuitry, they fall in love, and live to a ripe old age..on his death, she suicides. Rather maudlin, but it made a big hit in its day. Its author,

Lester del Rey also gave us REINCARNATE in which a man is terribly injured in an explosion..so his brain is fitted into a robot body...but it doesn't mean losing his girl, as she was stowing away in the laboratory, got blown up by the same bomb, and appears at the end, also fitted out as a mechanical marvel. No doubt the happy pair went on to produce lots of little dynamos. A very similar

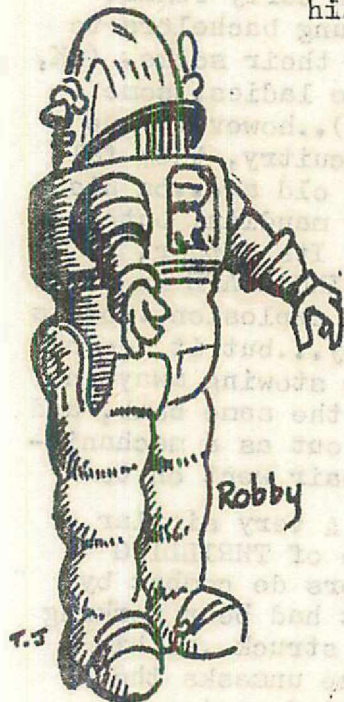
themes was used by Otis Adelbert Kline in the first issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES. This time, the scientist was rendered hors de combat by a poison gas bomb lobbed by a rival. Fortunately, Albert had been working on two robot bodies (one male, one female) when disaster struck..so his brain gets put in the male robot. In the grand finale, he unmasks the villain, then prepares to suicide as his fiancée has stopped seeing him since he had the operation. However, just before he can tap his glass-encased brain with a toffee hammer, she leaps to stop him...and reveals.. Surprise! Surprise! that she had bumped herself off leaving instructions that her brain was to be inserted in the female robot. Fade out to happy music and the soxy sounds of gears meshing softly.

Around this point, someone will no doubt holler.."What about Maria, the female robot from METROPOLIS ?" Sorry folks, I didn't see the film until around 1960..but as far as it goes, I don't really include humans playing the part of robots in my memory banks...otherwise, one could list Pat Roc playing one in THE PERFECT WOMAN. That sort of 'robot' always strikes me as a money-saving cop out by the film makers. No, I prefer the honest-to-goodness, metal and glass creations, even if they do play the heavy. One of my favourites was THE SMASHER who romped through the pre-war 2d 'bloods'...Virtually a domed cylinder with arms and legs, he survived dynamite explosions, direct hits by runaway vehicles, being shoved under collapsing cliffs or into rivers..with nothing foiling his baddy-directed carnage through



the Canadian timberlands. I seem to recall that this character reappeared after the war...suitably brainwashed.. to become THE IRON TEACHER..but it still cavorted in the backwoods where it taught the local children the important skill of long multiplication...nope, I don't think it taught them logs.

Another remotely humanoid robot (if you were short sighted and wore thick sunglasses) appeared in FORBIDDEN PLANET. Robby The Robot, who looked like an escapee from Joe's Junk Yard, was the first of the 'cute' robots. Apart from driving a truck at high speed, Robby could also synthesise high-grade whisky in his stomach, tote girders, offer advice and crack jokes. About the only thing he couldn't do, was to harm a human being. Any such attempt gave him third harmonic feedback in his anode decoupling. Obviously, this was inspired by Asimov's laws...which reminds me.. I have always been highly amused by the fact that Asimov first set up such a well-detailed bunch of Laws ..and then devoted all his robot stories to finding loopholes in them.

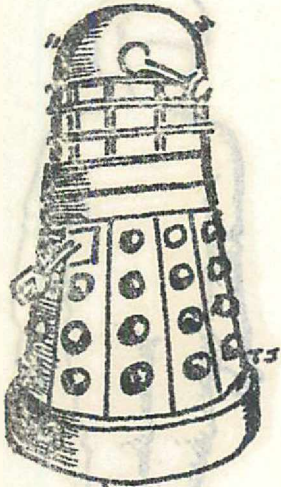


It fell to Jack Williamson to hit on the greatest fallacy in that 'Serve Men And Protect Them From Harm' idea....his Humanoids from Wing IV first appeared in "WITH FOLDED HANDS" when they were so bloody helpful to everyone, it proved the kiss of death...businesses were taken away..then eating knives, tobacco, spirits and so on, right down to dangerous games equipment and so forth. Their sinister 'Saving' spread even further in the sequel, "...AND SEARCHING MIND"..which not only saw them spreading more misery..but opposed by one of Campbell's favourite hobby horses...psi power.

SATURN 5 saw a variant of Robby in its lead character.... a space-going robot gets its brainbox mentally conditioned by a criminal's mind... a sort of blending of the wrong brain as featured in FRANKENSTEIN. Having been given a noddle full of naughty thoughts, what else can the poor thing do than rush off and try to rape the heroine? Yes, I know this was actually done in DEMON SEED, but not by a robot, but by a specialised Waldo operated by a crazed computer. As for Frankenstein's monster..well he was not really a robot, but an android..perhaps not even that. Would you accept a biological Build-A-Man kit ??

The cardboard robots of MASTER MYSTERY and PHANTOM EMPIRE were about as dangerous as a man eating sausage, but for sheer ridiculousity (Patent applied for), I can't think of any creations to outdo those non-humanoid critters which have repeatedly menaced humanity in the DR. WHO series. Sorry all you WHO addicts..but can





Dalek

one really take those croaky-voice DALEKS seriously. Oh I know they trundle hither and yon with jolly cries of 'Exterminate...Exterminate'...but their aim is so ruddy awful they NEVER get anywhere near the doctor.. and any hero worth half a pinch of his salt could foil them by laying a row of thick books across their path. Able only to travel in straight lines, even a 1" stop makes an impassable barrier for them...and I suspect a thick pile carpet would clog their bearings faster than it bungs up our Hoover. Funny isn't it that such aimless wights have proved far more popular and much more durable than several successive clones of Dr. Who.

Not totally unlike the Daleks in appearance, but much cuter, cuddlier and captivating is that animated dustbin, R2-D2. Once he rolled on the scene in STAR WARS, it set a new category for type-casting. Once upon a time, his (its ?) part would have been given to the mandatory coloured actor whose duty it was to roll his eyes, shake his hands, tremble at the knees and show all sorts of fright. Race relations laws chopped the ground from under that one (I wonder how long it will be before they start censoring those old Bob Hope comedies and the like to remove such characters??)...but riding to the rescue comes the 'cute robot'. Barely had the dust of the destroyed Death Star settled to the ground, than along came Disney's BLACK HOLE to give us another equally cute (and totally ugghish) robot. By comparison with these little monsters, the more humanoid C3PO was just one more 'real' person wandering around. For my money, those weird little two-legged robots in SILENT RUNNING had several gallons more charm and audience appeal than anything in STAR WARS or BLACK HOLE.

Fans of Eric Frank Russell will no doubt recall his series in Astounding...later combined into one volume..'MEN, MARTIANS AND MACHINES'. In one of those yarns, it becomes necessary for the ship to make a close solar pass. The temperature is going to be too hot for the crew members....save for Jay Score who pilots them past perihelion...at the cost of hair, some skin, and his eyes....which since J-26 turned out to be a robot, were fairly easily repaired. One thing always puzzled me though, and that was why was a pilot needed in what was essentially a free-fall orbit. Don't tell me, the story probably explained it as a need to fire the de-orbiting rockets at just the right time .. nowadays, they'd load that job on the computer.

Strictly speaking, one shouldn't include Fred Saberhagen's BERSERKERS in a memory-bank lock at humanoid robots. After all, these monstrosities (for which I had a sneaking liking) were giant battle-ship-computer affairs. However, I seem to recall that in at least one yarn, the Berserker ship constructed a humanoid robot to fool its human captives into co-operating...or am I on a different track? Reluctantly, one must also ignore one of my favourite SF yarns...COLOSSUS by D.F.Jones. Some of you may remember it better as THE FORBIN PROJECT in the movie version.

Returning to Asimov for a moment, who can forget R. Daneel Olivaw, the robot detective of THE CAVES OF STEEL and THE NAKED SUN..but sadly, he was really one of those characters so beloved by Hollywood film

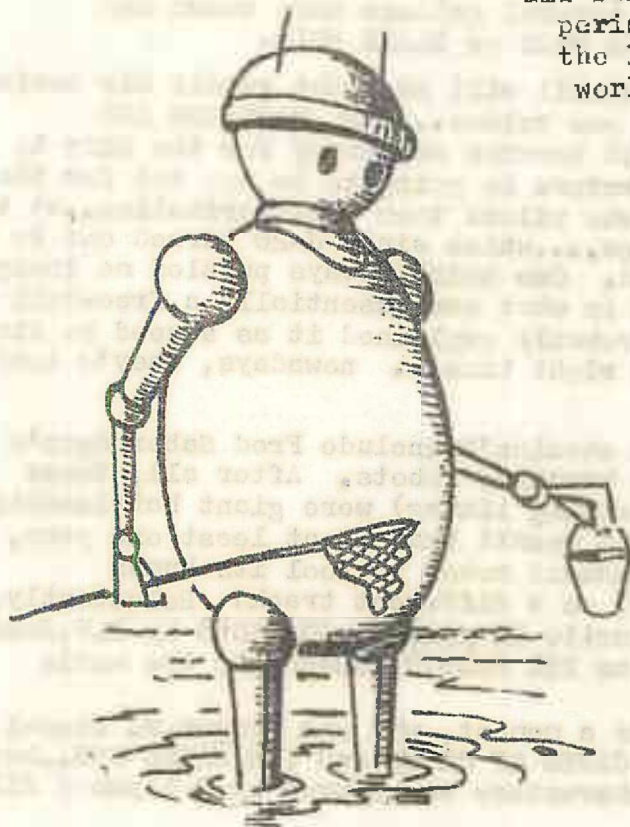
makers... a robot which can be played by a human actor without the need for any special effects. WESTWORLD and FUTUREWORLD both employed this system..admittedly with the occasional establishing shot of a 'robot' having its face renewed or a new battery fitted, just to prove that it wasn't really a human. Come to think of it, just how many so-called 'stars' act out their screen roles in completely robotic style? Maybe they are robots and of so, will cost far less to operate (a spot of oil and a re-charge now and then) than the high-salary demanding human they replace.

However, not all screen robots were dressed up humans or cardboard-covered stereotypes. When Harry Bates (Tremaine??) wrote his memorable ASF yarn, FAREWELL TO THE MASTER, he doubtless had no idea that it would eventually come to the big screen..changed into a semi-propaganda film and with its famous punch-line..."I am the master" dropped to leave the robot Gort as little more than a foil to Michael Rennie who played Klaatu. What really got up my nose was a recent series of articles in..I think FANGORIA, but maybe elsewhere..wherein some idiotic (and sensibly pseudonymous) lady, set out various 'languages' as used by the inhabitants of various fictional worlds ... naturally, 'Klaatu, borado nikto' or whatever it

was, got fully explained..along with all sorts of musical communications and the like. I'm all for enjoying my SF be it filmic or on perishable paper...but when people go to the lengths of believing in their dream worlds to this extent....Yecch!

Of course, I had to exclude non-humanoid robots when saying that Space Travel came in first..if not, I'd have had to cede the field to those Japanese robot-operated factories and those superb car-building characters in that Fiat TV commercial... and many others such as remote stock-handlers, waldo-arms and even computer controlled 'mice'.

OK. man got to the moon before he got robotic servants. Care to bet which will come next...Man on Mars, or your morning newspaper (or copy of ERG) served with your brekkie by a tin-plated Jeeves ?





This is where I natter about this, that, and a bit of the other. For openers, Marty & Robby Cantor's **HOLIER THAN THOU 21**, which at 126pp must be one of the biggest regular fanzines around..with a 4 colour cover! Articles, comment, argument & a huge lettercol. Too much to list it all here..and some will probably incite you to mayhem... \$2.00 or 7 I.R.Coupons, from 11565 Archwood St. Nth. Hollywood, CA 91606-1703 USA.

Not the biggest, but the most varied in size (it seems to change every issue...and thus plays hob with your filing system) us Brian Earl Brown's **STICKY QUARTERS.11** which this time, comes back to back with his **WHOLE FANZINE CATALOGUE.26** for a total of 36pp. SQ is mainly letters and response, WFC lists the world's fanzines with capsule notes. I was tickled to see ERG included in a natter on 'Best' fanzines. Get SQ/WFC from 20101 W.Chicago No.201, Detroit, MI 48228. USA for 75c,

trade, LOC, Contributions and stuff like that...and the same address and price will get you a copy of Brian's **MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST** which is a hilarious compendium of items on Mad Scientists, Mad Science and crazy ideas with a writer line-up including..Bob Shaw, John Berry, Dave Langford, Sam Long, Eric Mayer etc. I'm there with a segment of Down Memory Bank Lane.

SCIENCE FICTION Vol.6 No.1 & No.2 (Both numbered 16) has 34pp near Qto. printed pages, two colour card covers and costs A\$15.00 for 3, from Dr. Van Ikin, Dept. Of English, Univ. Of W.Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009, AUSTRALIA. 6/1 has a critical examination of Wells' 'War Of The Worlds' for Biblical & Classical content.. a gnat-chasing dissection of the kind which ruins 'literature' for so many. After 10 pages it concludes,.. "...it does not seem to me that we can make any sense of this complex and ambiguous work.... by considering it simplistically and in isolation as an aesthetic nonad" H'm. Then there's a 1983 Checklist of Aussie SF, in-depth reviews, plus (neat idea) capsule comments extracted from other reviews..three or four to each title, and finally, a lettercol. 6/2 has an editorial, a 'Sexuality in SF' piece, the Blackfords (who they?) interview each other, reviews and letters. Very s&c, enough indeed to make Vector look faintish. If you like carving SF into tiny pieces, try this for size, it's a near-professional affair...but why, oh why do literati try to treat pleasure fiction like an onion and peel off all the layers? It may reveal what the thing is made of..but kills it stone dead in the process.

Phone call last night...Ray Beam (First Fandon's Sec/treas) and his wife will be visiting with us tomorrow, so I got on the blower to Ted Hughes (ERG's Xmas cover..and many stories in F&SF) and he can come over as well, so a goodly natter should be had by all...stay tuned for next stencil.

ONOMA 3 has 60 photolith, A5 pp and comes from Jef Bryant, Rue Jean Pauly 121, B-4300 ANS, Belgium. Editorial on writing, one on gesture, another on the NASA comet mission, and others, verse, LOCs, reviews. Excellent little zine (better than Vector) reckon you can get it for some sort of response. GOTHIQUE..20th Annish, 28 litho(?) A5pp from Stan Nicholls, Flat 2, Allison Court, 43 Parkhill Rd. LONDON NW3 2YD..editorial against censorship, an account of an interview with Lon Chaney(?), Horror Films, art folio and one or two letters..two colour card cover and this issue supported by a BFS Grant...60p a copy.

The Beams (Ray and Mary-Ann) duly arrived here last Wednesday, but sadly, Ted Hughes couldn't make it. We had a goodly natter, visited a local Industrial Hamlet, toured Derbyshire and dined out before visiting Fox House Pub which Jane Eyre is reputed to have visited. Enjoyable two days, nice people...come again Ray and Mary-Ann.

Later.... After three months of waiting for appointments, umpteen X-rays & a host of other indignities, I finally got a word out of the specialist at the hospital (after an hour and 25 minute wait)...I have to go in for a small operation...and if that doesn't pan out..another to follow..so if ERG or letters seem delayed, you'll know the reason why. 'Sometime in the next twelve months' is the forecast, and meanwhile, I have to live with the pain. Let us on to happier things....NO BNF ZINE, of 16pp/A4, excellently duped, from Eckhard D Marxwitz, Postbox 1524, D-2070 Ahrensburg, W.Germany..dated for 1984, but just out...letters, capsule fmz reviews and not quite perfect English..but a nice friendly zine. Faunching may get you a copy.

THE MENTOR 53 is a massive 66pp/A4 affair from Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. \$2.00 an issue, which I think is about equal to £1..and worth it for the various articles, art folio, letters and reviews. Some good illos..and a Julie Vaux cat person or two..but one can't have everything.

RUNE 72..36pp/A4..mim from Minnesota SF Soc. PO. Box 2128, Loop Stn. Minneapolis, Minn 55402. Good art, golf (?), Harry Warner on baseball, arenas, road lines and of course..letters, fmz rreviews etc....funny thing, it's dated 1983, but you can always drop 'em a line. RUNE 73 Apr. 85..42pp..shaggy dog story/opera/fmz rev./Books, LOCs etc etc. \$1.00 an ish and well worth it. ..and you CAN get this one!

BUDDING WRITERS and those who churn out that other stuff...~~Wp/sg~~, er, I mean 'verse' may be delighted to know about WRITER'S MARKET.. a 36pp, A5 sized, offset mag from AMAZING TALES BOOKSHOP, 10 Southwell Rd., Sneinton, Nottingham NG1 1DL £5 for six, or £1 a sample. In addition to listing new & forthcoming publications, you get details of umpteen competitions for writing and poetry..they even run one themselves. The current starts a series taking the lid off 'Vanity Publishing' and the winning entry..plus crits of other entries in their latest contest. Well worth a try if you have hopes...and do mention ERG.



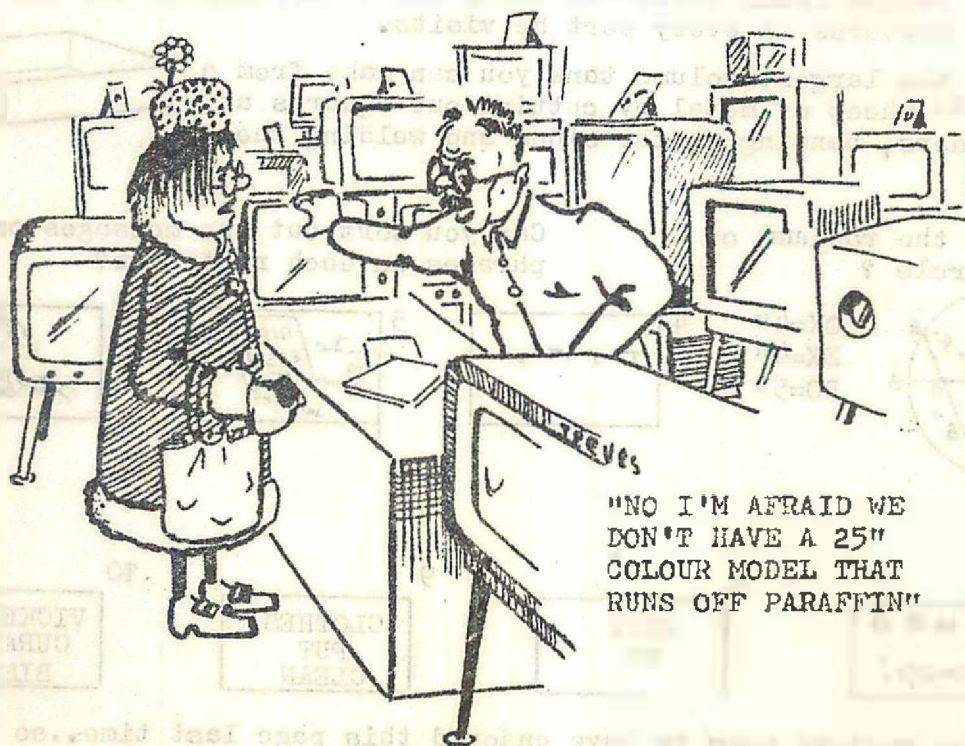
WALLBANGER 11 From Eve Harvey 43 Harrow Rd., Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3QH runs to 40 impeccably mimeed A5 pages...with nattering about tussles with the DHSS, New York ramblings, Yorcon.3 (concerned mainly with clothing), travels in Egypt, D.I.Y and of course, letters. Good variety, nice friendly zine.. try pleading for a copy..or maybe contributing...sadly, no illos bar the excellent Atomcover..which made me think Scottishe had been revived.

GNOGGY 25, 22pp ditto from Eric & Kathy Mayer, 1771 Ridge Rd.E. Rochester, NY 14622. USA Multicolour cover (and paper) ..music, Tinkertoy, Rama Krishna (or should that be Hari ?), food, John Berry in South Africa, a lively letter-col, and a photopage. Yes, Eric, I go along with you, the human voice (as in classical singing) gives me a pain too...can't abide sopranos, tenors and the like.

TRAP DOOR.4 has 36 1/2 p.scap pages, comes from Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442. USA and is crammed with all sorts of fannish articles, reviews, comments, letters and suchlike esoterica. Plenty of nice fillo art, and no doubt a faunching letter might get you a copy.

STAMPEDE 6, has 18, A4 pp, from Owen Whiteoak, Top Floor Left, 112 Polwarth Gdns, Edinburgh EH11 1BT. An incoherent (to me) Albacon 85 report plus several pages of letters. Sorry Owen, but I can't raise much steam over what people ate, drank, said to each other whilst sitting out the Con. I much prefer to hear about the Con itself...and what people DID.

COUNTRY ROADS..two un-numbered, consecutive copies..6ppes from Joni Stopa, Box 177 Wilmet, WI 53192 USA..neatly offset natter about weighty points..cats, gardens, exploding pressure cookers..and whatever happens to, around or interests Joni. Nice friendly affair...try scrounging a copy if you like general neighbourly chuntering.



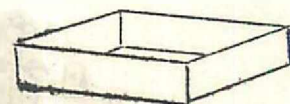


PUZZLE CORNER

1. Alf, Bob, Tom and Pat are married to Ann, Jan, Ina and May. Each reads exclusively..SF, Detective, Western, Sport, their hobbies are writing, chess, painting and jogging. Their professions are, teacher, sailor, builder, and banker...but all these items are NOT in respective order. Given the following information, can you sort out men, wives, hobbies and jobs?

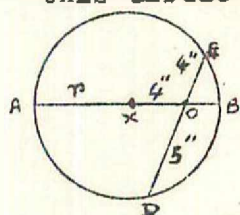
- (i) The SF reader plays chess with his wife May and does not like the stuff the banker writes
- (ii) Tom got a bank loan from Alf, built three houses and sold one to the jogger and another to the painter.
- (iii) Jan doesn't like her husband's sports stories, but likes the jogger's Westerns.
- (iv) The banker reads detective tales and is married to Ann and Bob buys Westerns in every port he visits.

2. What is the largest volume tank you can make from a 15" by 8" sheet of metal by cutting out squares at the corners, bending up the sides and welding the joints?

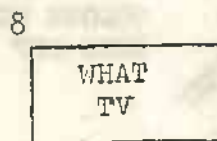
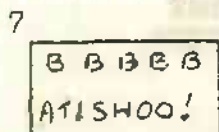
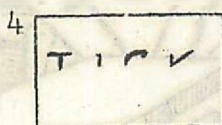


3. What is the radius of this circle?

Can you sort out the messages or common phrases in each rectangle?



OX=4"
EX=4"
DO=5"



Quite a few readers seem to have enjoyed this page last time..so let me know if I should batter my noggin in keeping it going?

Answers at foot of page 19

LETTERS



IF YOU'D LIKE THE NEXT ERG...
...WRITE IN ABOUT THIS ONE!

((For newcomers, my own deathless prose replying to letters may to be found inside these stylish triple parentheses ...just in case you were wondering. First to bat this time is....)))

Ving CLARKE
16 Wendover Way,
Welling
KENT DA16 2BN

"That's an interesting article on artistic clangers. It was a great pity

that the guy who did the RINGWORLD boomed, as he had the other elements OK..Sun surrounded by shadow squares, etc. Another outstanding one is the Del Roy.. 'INHERIT THE STARS' (J.P.Hogan) beautifully drawn, a space-suited skeleton found on the Noon..on the wide open spaces...whereas the story explicitly stated the figure had been dragged into an excavation 10 feet deep. And, I'm surprised you didn't mention the famous astronomical cover of ASF.Nov.38, showing Jupiter..which Campbell 'noticed', but let through for its 'reader interest', even though it showed the wrong shaped shadow.

((Forgot all about that one I'm afraid))

Something went astray with your

depiction of the widget on bottom right P.4. (((See next letter, Ving)))

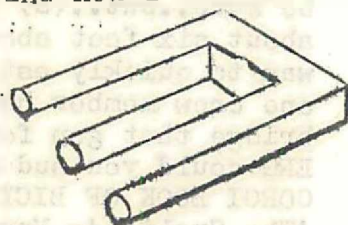
DON FRANSON
6543 Babcock Ave
Nth. Hollywood
CA 91606

"The main reason for writing so promptly is to point out your drawing of the 'blivit' on page 4 is incorrect. This was printed in Analog many years ago, and now I see it lots of places. Since then, I have

seen other illusions and enclose some drawings.

Perhaps you can publish them in ERG (As a correction, in case someone really tries to construct your version). (((Well of course, both you and Ving spotted the 'Caliberate mistake' ..well, to be honest, it was an article on artistic clangers...and to be really truthful...I drew the darned thing from memory, being

too lazy to go hunt a copy...serves me right. Meanwhile, thanks for the 'blivit', and the Logo of LASER (newsletter of the S. California Skeptics)))
(((Don also ask me to mention the N3P short story contest (remember, I won the very first one, Don??) Entry fee is \$2.00 (N3P/BSFA..\$1.00) for a short story SF/Fantasy, under 7500 words...1st Prize \$50.00,,write to Don for full details, as this year's contest closes Dec.1st, you may prefer to get in early on next year's competition. You may not have sold more than TWO stories to promags. Type, double spaced, A4 paper, title on each page + SAE for return if required. Photocopies acceptable..but do not put your name anywhere on the Ms to preserve impartiality. Good luck, TJ)))



ROB GREGG

103 Highfield Rd
Romford
ESSEX RM5 3AE

I liked the varied selections of books reviewed, some of which I've purchased of course. Don't like the computer books (Can't understand 'em). Have to try and pick up 'Ghastly Beyond Belief' - sounds like fun..also the Philip High novel. I gather he had quite a following in the sixties, though he's new to me ((He wrote a lot for Authentic and Nebula.)) In recent months, Analog has shot to the top of my favourite fiction over the other two which I buy. Although expensive, I reckon they're good value in comparison with 'Interzone' which is largely incomprehensible, or full of needless gore and violence. Don't you agree if you have seen it? ((One issue was enough to sour me of that load of rubbish))) Colin Grubb's LOC was an amusing aside after the serious comment of many of your earlier LOCers. One gets the impression that all ERGmail is sercon-ish. ((Heaven forbid! Eric Mayer was light enough, surely..and I fancy that 90% of ERG readers prefer to write in a 'friendly' vein on topics rather than descend to the barren and boring ghetto of the way out serious and constructive analysts who do their best to kill sf and fandom...without realising it)))

MIKE ASHLEY

4 Thistlebank
Walderslade
Chatham
KENT ME5 8AD

I found the latest ERG possibly one of the most entertaining of recent ERGs. There seemed an even more lively tilt to it than normal, betraying perhaps that extra bit of fun you had putting it together. ((Summer was approaching and several cheques had come in.)) There have been some marvellous artistic clangers + not just in paintings either. For all that Destination Moon was hailed such a classic in its day (I could never regard it as anything above average) ((Surely, it was the first SF film to treat an SF theme in an adult way?)) I never fail to chuckle at the scene shortly after they've landed on the moon and a ladder is lowered which only reaches about a third of the way down. The intrepid lunanauts clamber down to it and then have to jump the rest of the way which seemed to do away with the need for a ladder in the first place. ((Without running my copy(yes I DO have one) I can't be sure..but..(a) I thought the ladder reached to about six feet above the surface. (b) The jump down was to quickly establish a lower g force. (c) Didn't one crew member have an extra extension to hook on to bridge that gap for climbing up again?))) Only in ERG could you suddenly come across a review of the CORGI BOOK OF BICYCLES AND BICYCLING ((How about in 'The Cyclist's Magazine?'))

ETHEL LINDSAY

69 Barry Rd
Carboustie
ANGUA DD7 7QQ

When I used to mail out fanzines, I used to wander around Surrey popping a few into each box with what I considered to be the correct amount of postage. Saved a lot of argument. ((Exactly what I have always done, Ethel. Great minds and all that...)) Have patience, Terry. Ted will finish that Dumarest saga one day. ((Wanna bet?)) Like your reviews which are helpful. However, the best books I've read lately are non SF ((Traitor!)) Just went through the whole series by Anthony Price ((Who he?)) re-reading them in order of publication. I can highly recommend them.



PHIL WILTSHIRE

2 Chiltern View Rd
Uxbridge, MIDDXX

I haven't visited the Jorvik Museum, is it worth a visit? (((Yes, if you're in York))) My eldest daughter is left-handed, perhaps she could get in for nothing. (((Maybe if she walked in backwards, they'd think she was coming out??))) On the story theme, it always puzzle me that in 'WAR OF THE WORLDS', how come all the Martians died at the same time? (((They didn't have National Health Cards maybe? Seriously, this was one of those bits of artistic licence I suspect...incubation periods must have varied, even if only slightly..but to have 'em dropping only occasionally wouldn't have been so dramatic))) Well done on Puzzle Corner, we all enjoyed fathering (((????)) them out, though I had to cover the answers. (((This time, the answers are on another page, so they can't cheat...hope you like this little lot)))

CHUCK CONNOR

C/o Sildan House
Chediston Rd
Wissett
Nr.Halesworth
Suffolk

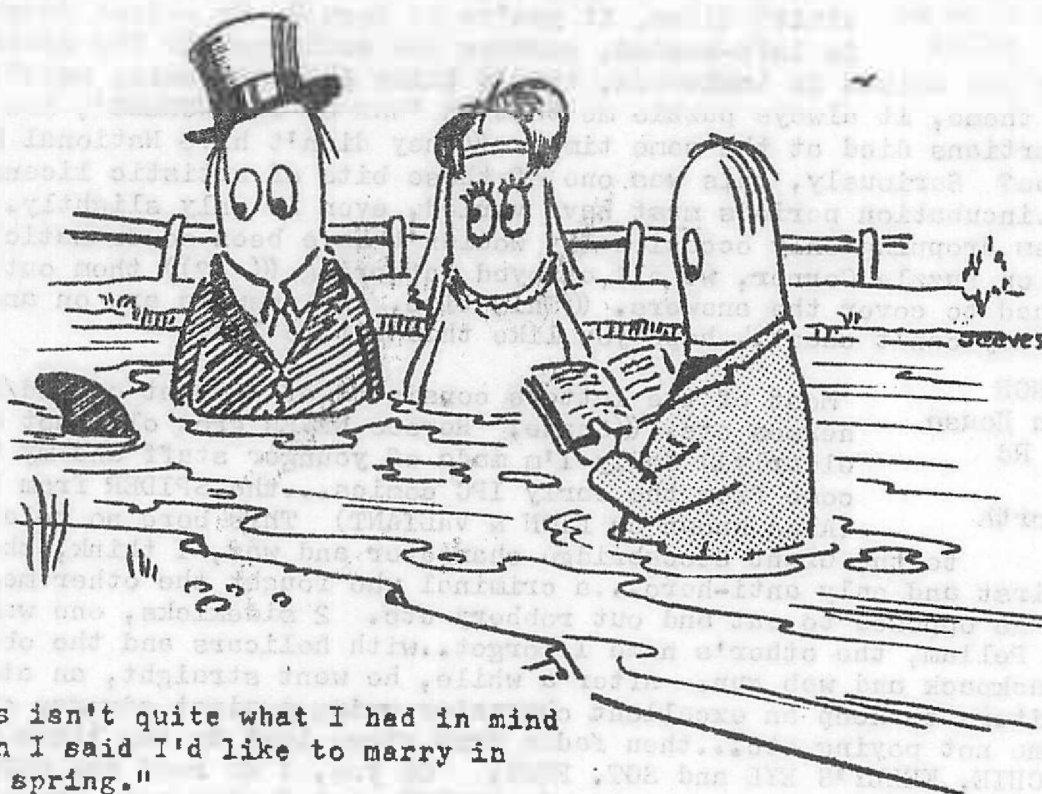
Most of the letters consisted of comment on old/elderly heroes etc. (((Shame! Heroes NEVER grow old, not even elderly))) Sadly I'm made of younger stuff and my heroes come from the early IPC comics...the SPIDER from LION, (Also known as LION & VALIANT) This bore no relation to the Grant Stockbridge character and was, I think, the comic's first and only anti-hero...a criminal who fought the other mega-criminals as opposed to out and out robbery etc. 2 sidekicks, one was Professor Pellam, the other's name I forget..with helicars and the obligatory jet backpack and web gun. After a while, he went straight, an attempt by the writers to keep an excellent character going against adverse crit about crime not paying etc...then faded from view, lost to the likes of ROB OT ARCHIE, KELLY'S EYE and SGT. FURY. Oh yes, I do read the OAPs of Herc-dom, SAVAGE, SHADOW, Stockbridge's SPIDER, but I also read Byron Priest's WEIRD HEROES series (I'm only short of Vol.4 'DR. PHOENIX' and cannot stand to read Doc Smith..so does this restore my social standing in ERGian eyes. (((Blowed if I know, Out of all those, the only one I read was DOC SAVAGE...plus of course, good 'ol Doc Smith))) Before I go, what happened to the illo on pgge 26? All I have is a black thing (((Better see a Doctor, it may be serious))) It may have fallen out, not wanting to be connected with that icky-icky review of THE ARTIFICIAL KID. (((Actually, it was a Letratone tint..so black that the ink just oozed through all the holes and left a black blob.))) Re Judy Buffery's letter, I'm sure that TAFF stands for Trans-Atlantic-Fan- Feud (((You could be right))) How come this issue's instalment of DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE was pt. 13, yet the ad on page 22 says...'All 12 parts are now ready in one volume for £2.00??' (((V. Simple..all 12 parts are ready and of offer. Part 13, 14 etc will be in the next volume if I get far enough to compile one. Meanwhile, any readers wanting the 80+ page first volume which contains parts 1 to 12 of DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE...send £2.00 for your copy.....)))

=====

1. ALF-Det-writes-banker-ann
BOB-Western-Jogger-sailor-Ins
PAT-Sport-painter-teacher-Jan.
2. Largest vol tank if the corner squares cut out are $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.66") on a side..thus length must be 11.66" and width, 4.66"

3. Radius = 6" (The products of the sections of intersecting chords are =)
4. Half a tick 5. Dead Easy 6. Not for nothing 7. Bees knees
8. What is on TV 9. Put on clean under clothes 10. Clearest errors

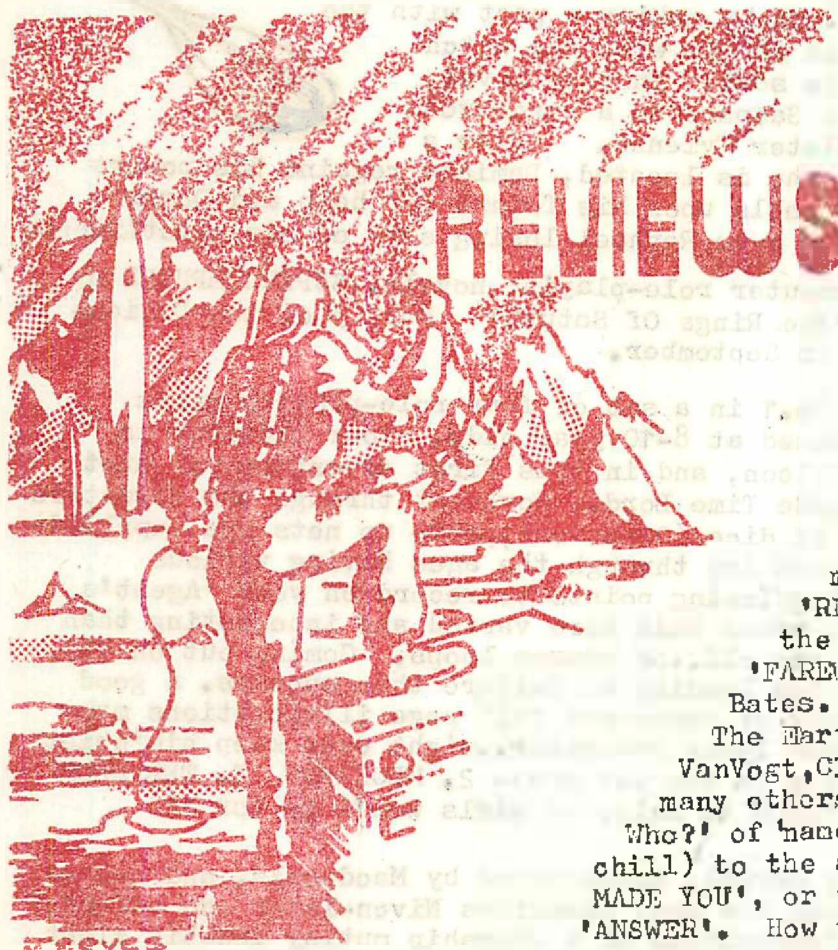
If you want explanations of any of the above... send SAE with your LOC.



"This isn't quite what I had in mind
when I said I'd like to marry in
the spring."

S.F. DEALERS

From time to time, people write in and ask..."Where can I buy back issues, hard-to-get books and so forth...so now read on;
FANTAST (MEDWAY) LTD, Ken Slater, PO Box 23, Upwell, CAMBS PE14 9BU sells most forms of SF and can get you overseas subs. Too busy to write many letters, but why not send 22p. for his latest BIG catalogue..or specific requests for any particular items you want..old, or current.
DREAMBERRY WINE, Mike Don 233 Maine Rd., Manchester M14 7WG has a 12pp photolith cat. Not many mags, but plenty of pbs, hardcovers, media stuff etc + forthcoming titles and some reviews.
JOHN WINDER, 'Ruby Villa', 170 St. Osyth Rd. Clacton-On-Sea, Essex CO15 3HD offers a hefty listing of pulp magazines etc..plus paperbacks.
NORMANSHOLT BOOKS C.R.Ellis, 20A Mayor's Walk, Pontefract, W.Yorkshire WF8 2RR Cat. 8 lists 178 assorted fantasy & SF hardbacks.
M.F.HONE, 21 Green Hedges Ave. East Grinstead, Sussex RH19 1D2 is good at locating older hardcovers and paperbacks and has a hefty catalogue.
PULP PRESERVERS 57 Norfolk St., Cambridge CB1 2LD is run by fan Mike Collins and has a catalogue listing loads of old and new SF mags
ANYTHING NOSTALGIC 35 Northcourt Ave, Reading, BERKS RG2 7HE handles books, mags, records etc etc...and is good at locating off-beat titles.
TERRY JEEVES..and of course, as noted elsewhere, an 8"x4" SAE will get you printouts of my various hardcover, paperback and mag lists etc.
WHOEVER YOU WRITE TO...enclosing a couple of 13p stamps is a nice idea, as producing catalogues costs MONEY.
Happy hunting, Terry



MACHINES THAT THINK

Ed. by Isaac Asimov,
Patricia S. Warrick and
Martin H. Greenberg
Penguin £4.95

Now available in paper back, and an even better bargain. 28 stories, an Asimovian Introduction and a bibliography are crammed into the 600+ pages of this oversize volume. Tales of robots, computers and A.I. machines culled from 1932 to 1973. Opening with Wyndham's

'LOST MACHINE' and one of my earliest sf memories, 'REX', other goodies include the poignant 'ROBOT'S RETURN',

'FAREWELL TO THE MASTER' by Harry Bates..which became the film, 'Day The Earth Stood Still'. Asimov,

VanVogt, Clarke, Leinster, Ellison and many others give you a stellar 'Who's

Who?' of 'name' writers. Thrill (and chill) to the amok battle machine in 'I MADE YOU', or the master computer of

'ANSWER'. How the editors have managed to avoid the much-anthologised pot boilers, I

don't know, but if you like real SF, then beg borrow, buy (or steal) a copy...but never lend

it out, or you will most certainly NOT get it back.

DEMON IN THE SKULL

Frederik Pohl
Penguin £1.95

An expanded and up-dated version of the 1962, 2-part Galaxy serial which opens in a world decimated, not by atomic warfare..but by the machinations of 'possessors' who can take over control of anyone's body, then do with it whatever they will.. and depart leaving the unfortunate to face the consequences (if still alive). Chandler was forced into rape and murder, and on release, tried and branded. Fleeing to nowhere, since nowhere is safe he winds up at the heart of the menace..and in a position where he just may be able to do something about it. Tautly written, frightening in its menace, this is Pohl at his narrative best. Oh yes, the original title was 'A PLAGUE OF PYTHONS' running in Oct./Dec. 1962 Galaxy...and it beats 90% of the modern breast-beating stuff into a cocked hat.

The complete Parts 1 to 12 of DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE, plus G-8 and HIS BOTTLE ACES..and 'SOCK DAVAGE..Man of Copper' 80+pp Copies still available for £2.50 or \$3.00 Postage included.

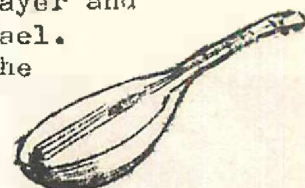
DAMIANO'S LUTE

R.A. Macavoy

Bantam £1.95

Part 2 of the trilogy. Damiano, lute player and part-sorcerer, has a guardian angel, Raphael. He saved his town by making a pact with the devil, and also fought with the witch

Saara, who now holds part of his soul. In this novel, Damiano travels with the urchin Gaspare to a rendezvous in Avignon with the latter's sister Evienne. After a series of episodic adventures, she is located, Damiano regains his powers but disaster strikes. Gaspare calls upon his friend for help and Damiano must pay a terrible price...with even Raphael losing some of his saintliness.



Also due from COR 1/BANTAM...computer role-playing novels...SUPERCOMPUTER by E. Packard and TIME MACHINE 6 'The Rings Of Saturn' Part 3 of the Damiano trilogy...RAPHAEL' is due out in September.

FALCON 1 THE RENEGADE LORD

Mark Smith & Jamie Thomson

Sphere £1.75

No. 1 in a set of four role-playing games aimed at 8-10 year olds. Your codename is

Falcon, and in this first adventure you must

seek out a renegade Time Lord. Movement through the adventure is by multiple choice or roll of dice (2 cut out, paste up nets are supplied) this allows you to shuttle to and fro through the ages having various adventures as you go and gaining/losing points to record on your 'Agent's Profile' A labyrinthine maze makes this more varied and interesting than usual, as you seldom regress into old...or common loops. Coming out on top, however, is NOT easy...more routes leading to failure than success. A good scene-setting opening and plenty of excellent full page illustrations make this an ideal Xmas gift for some lucky youngster...might even keep him quiet for an hour or so. Other titles in the set are:- 2. MECHANON 3. THE RACK OF BAAL 4. LOST IN TIME (* FALCON is male, so girls won't go for it)

THE INTEGRAL TREES

Larry Niven

Futura £1.95

The Analog serial, hardcovered by Macdonald, and now at a price even the most penurious Niven-lover can afford. Survivor-descendants of a starship mutiny inhabit giant trees free-falling in the gaseous envelope surrounding

a neutron star. There is inter-tribe rivalry and when members of Quinn tribe are captured they manage to take over a still functioning module. This arouses a cyborg computer in the 500-year old starship, still in orbit and waiting to change the situation. An excellent background developed in painstaking Niven-style, excellent characters, dialogue and future slang. Also included (at the end, where it would have been handier at the front) is a 'Dramatis Personae' and glossary of names, slang and technical terms.

THE BLUE SWORD

Robin McKinley

Futura £2.50

Angharad (a lady who prefers to be called 'Harry') has moved to the mountain frontier of Demar where she is kidnapped by King Corlath, possessor of strange powers and who needs aid against Northern invaders. Similar powers

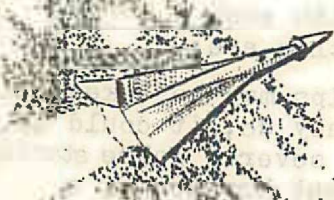
awaken in Harry, she evokes and is protected by, the long-gone Lady Aerin, and using the Blue Sword Ganduran, becomes a formidable warrior to fight alongside Corlath against the Northmen. First in a new fantasy series which has strong overtones of 'The Sheikh' and/or the British against the North Indian hill tribes. The main characters are fair enough, but the story development is rather slow. Without wishing to be labelled 'sexist', I'd say 'Robin' must be female, as the yarn is basically a fantasy romance with most of the nastiness kept 'off stage'. The cover illo depicts Harry wielding, one-handedly, a four foot sword...nice illo though.

ACROSS THE SEA OF SUNS

Gregory Benford
Futura £2.95

This is Part.2 of the trilogy beginning with 'IN THE OCEAN OF THE NIGHT' in which a starship was intercepted, whereupon it beamed a message to the stars.

This time, astronaut Nigel Warnsley is aboard Starship Lancer as it nears the star Ra on a mission to investigate radio signals which come from aliens on Isis, a world devastated millennia ago by a 'Watcher' satellite..which proves to be still operative. A malignant machine-guided network is revealed...and back on Earth biological attacks are gaining ground as strange life forms appear in the seas. Complicated it may be, but Benford brings everything together in a gripping yarn. Even if you missed Part.1, this yarn is complete in itself, so don't let that put you off. Let's hope Greg doesn't keep us waiting so long for Part.3



DENT PAPERBACKS have just issued two hefty (appx.A5) paperback anthologies:-

TOP SCIENCE FICTION

Ed.J.Pachter £2.95

340pp holding 25 top-quality yarns on future society, computer menace, time travel, robots, aliens, space

travel and indeed, just about every facet of the genre.

The 'name' line-up reads like a SFnal WHO'S WHO..Aldiss, Bester, Bradbury, Brunner, Bova..indeed, name any well known writer and he/she is almost sure to be in here. The yarns range from 1929 to the eighties without a single sub-standard item. At less than 12p a story, it's a steal...and on top of all that, each tale is prefaced by a personal comment by its writer.

INTERZONE 1.

Ed. J.Clute £3.95

205pp holding 13 items selected from the UK magazine,

so you get 'New Wave' from the start..a yarn telling of a group of women-enslaved homosexuals who have the job of killing off train loads of men. Then there's a boozy biography of Poe, life inside an A bomb, stormkite riders, President Marilyn Monroe brings peace by sleeping with Breznhev and so on. All seem to start in the middle and end before the finish..you accept the set-up and think up your own ending. The Editor says of early SF..'it was a literature for children...some of whom grew up..' Well, for my money, I'd rather stay in the nursery with TOP SCIENCE FICTION and a real yarn. However, if you LIKE New Wave, then by all means, get INTERZONE 1 and rejoice...but if you prefer tales with beginning, middle and ending (i.e. a plot) get the excellent companion volume and your rejoicefulness will be terrific.

THE EXPLODING SUNS

Isaac Asimov
Michael Joseph £10.95

Once again, in his inimitable and highly readable style, Isaac Asimov has turned to Astronomy. The work opens with a brief history of star-watching before moving on to the mech-

anism of main sequence stars followed by novae, red giants, white dwarfs, supernovas and pulsars. His explanation of 'black Holes' is a model of how to convey a complicated idea in simple language. Asimov moves on to the idea of an expanding universe and the 'Big Bang'. Formation of elements planets and stars leads into the appearance and conditions for life and the good doctor winds up his tour-de-force with a chapter on 'The Future'

An ideal, layman's language text for anyone wanting to know how our Universe works..and how it came about. One quibble, the handful of black and white illustrations cries for the addition of some photographs. That apart, I'm delighted to have this alongside his 'COLLAPSING UNIVERSE'.

DEMON

John Varley
Orbit £2.95

Third in the Cirocco Jones/Gaeen trilogy.
Gaea is both a 1300Km Ringworld orbiting
Saturn and its ruling (crazy) goddess.

Nuclear war rages on Earth (incited by Gaea) so Robin, her daughter Nova and baby Adam flee to the Ringworld, whereupon Gaea's zombies kidnap the child to be raised as Gaea's successor. Cirocco sets out to raise an army as a diversion to rescuing Adam and killing Gaea...but how do you kill a Goddess? Even better than the earlier parts, plenty of side events to sustain interest and excellent characters... I was tickled by the in-joke 'bolexes and arriflexes'. Rate it another win for Varley.



THE HEECHEE Trilogy by Frederik Pohl comes from Orbit with each volume costing £2.50 and running to over 300 pages. Titles are:-

GATEWAY

The star-base of the long-gone Heechee means ships may be taken out to random destinations. Crews may not return, but if they do, it could be to a fortune. Robinette Broadhead tries his luck after several false starts, makes his millions, but loses his love, Klara in the event horizon of a Black Hole. BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON sees Broadhead married to Essie, but still thinking of Klara as he funds an expedition to a Heechee Food Ship. The crew encounters castaway Wan whose spells in a Heechee dream machine are causing waves of insanity among humans. Also met, are the Older Ones and the mechanical Oldest One who awakens to further millennia-old plans. HEECHEE RENDEZVOUS ties everything together as a Heechee ship emerges from its hideout to find that humans are operating the devices left behind and are about to stumble on the menace of the Assassins who first drove the Heechee into hiding. Aiding Broadhead in his problems are two fascinating aides...both computer simulations...Sigfrid Von Shrink and Albert (Einstein). The whole thing knits into a wide-ranging space-opera without the usual cliches of raygun battles or goodies v baddies. Plenty of colour and sustained interest. Recommended.

VOYAGER IN NIGHT

C.J.Cherryh
Methuen £2.50

The scene is the Deep Space of the 24th. Century and the trampship Lindy collides with and is scooped up by a strange, gigantic alien craft. The aliens are in conflict with each other, but one experiments on the three humans from the Lindy...dismantling them and then creating endless 'programs' of them and we follow their sufferings as other aliens interfere. This one is complicated as can be, with symbolical alien names and eventually it became too involved for me to follow what was going on. You may do better.

THE BLACK BEAST

Nancy Springer
Corgi £1.75

King Abas is father of Prince Tirell and ostensibly of Prince Frain. When Tirell flouts his father's wishes, the mad king slays his love Mylitta. Tirell and Frain flee the land and are joined by The Black Beast and the goddess Shamarra. They seek help from King Fabron, Frain's real father, Frain becomes a Healer and events escalate to a strange climax as Tirell gains a hollow revenge and Frain reaches a strange destiny. Fighting galore, though I wonder at an iron sword cleaving a brass breastplate 'as through butter'. Magic as well, so for Fantasy lovers..here is your mixture

THEM'DARA HOUSE

Marion E. Bradley being 'The Shattered Chain' and 'City Of Sorcery')..The House is H.Q. of the 'Free Amazons' to which Darkover-

reared Magda goes to fulfill her oath as a Freewoman and to promote understanding with the Empire. Her Oath-Sister, Jaelle goes to the Terrans, where she marries Magda's ex-husband, Peter. Both women have great difficulties in adjusting, but as events progress, each begins to develop the laran power. Darkover women are chattels and must win free. This is the all-pervading theme..which rams all men firmly into the stereotypes of brutality and self-interest which women's libbers have created for them.. whilst ignoring any faults of the women..thus, Jaelle is astounded at signs that Earthmen regard themselves as superior to aliens..yet she is ready to kill rather than admit to being brought up in a 'Dry Town'. You'll love or hate this one, depending on your attitude (and prejudices)

SPITFIRE

Jeffrey Quill Not so much a biography of the immortal 'Spit', as Quill's own autobiography..with emphasis on the great fighter and its descendants. Quill's early RAF days were evocative of my own entry 10 years later (as a Wireless Mechanic, not pilot)..with the occasional illegal flights which included a couple of anti-sub patrols in a D.H.Rapide! The book is crammed with aircraft, flying, incidents, the action behind the scenes, faults and triumphs as various aircraft are put through their paces...not always in the ways intended by the designers. No dull as dust catalogue, but an exciting account of one man's experiences as a test pilot...and a very nice helping of photographs. If you're ex-RAF or an aircraft buff, rush out and get a copy.

DEVIL ON MY BACK

Monica Hughes
Magnet £1.50

After the Age Of Confusion, Arc One is an underground city in which the ruling class have implants allowing them to access huge computer memories. Those who fail the operation are made into slaves. Fat, autocratic, Tomi, son of the ruler has barely graduated when he finds himself torn from a life of ease and forced to adapt to terribly different conditions before he finally learns the difference between knowledge and wisdom. One of the best juveniles in a long time..pity there isn't a girl character to match up to Tomi's developing personality and thus make the yarn unisex. However, if you know a lad in the 10-15 year old range...Christmas is a-coming.

DRIFF'S GUIDE TO ALL THE SECONDHAND
& ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSHOPS IN BRITAIN

Not 'ALL' by a long chalk..F(M)L, Andromeda,Pulp Preservers and several others showed up missing on a very cursory check...even so, this handy pb lists umpteen shops, plus ratings and prices. Very lightheartedly written (with such spellings as 'Copywrite' and 'Meglomaniac') and opening with a lovely account of how a set of books was hiked around the shops to gain an insight into a dealer's honesty in making offers. An alphabetical index doesn't help much, unless you already know of a shop's name and existence. Locating shops in a particular area is done by a near random search..for instance, Sheffield appears after the heading 'CUMBRIA' Some crude line maps help..but a real geographical index akin to that used in the Sheppard Press Book would BE A BOON (Hint to publisher). £4.50 from bookshops, or £5 direct from BCM Drifffield, LONDON WC1 3EX...well worth having!

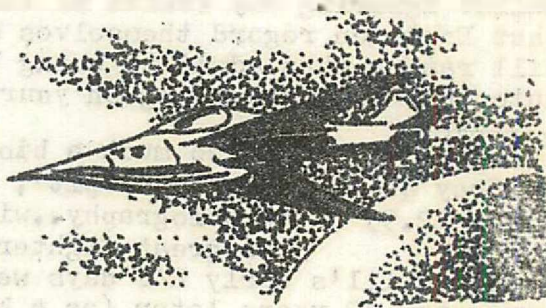
MINDKILLER

Norman is saved from suicide; Karen is saved from a similar fate by burglar, Sam..who has occasional lapses. Spider Robinson The stories begin to intertwine as Norman seeks a missing Sphere £2.25 sister and Karen & Sam begin to zero in on a common enemy menacing not only them, but all humanity..by virtue of an unopposable power to manipulate minds. Characters are way over the top and the sex scenes don't help...but the story itself grips you from the word 'Go'. One of the best 'who-is-doing-what, and-to-whom' I've come across in the SF field for too many long moons. If you don't mind the naughty bits, this is a real blockbuster.

THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

===== The 692pp
Gordon R Dickson climax of the
Sphere £3.95 Dorsai saga.

Decades after Donal Graeme vanishes into space, The Others (Supermen cross-breeds) are taking over the Galaxy with only a handful of Dorsai and Exotics to oppose them... until space-foundling, Hal Mayne who has been specially trained from infancy escapes their swoop and flees from world to world..with his powers being increased along the way. Gradually the power struggle between him and the Other overman, Bleys Ahrens reaches its climax and Hal's own incredible origins become clear. A terrific yarn, with virtually all the battle scenes etc coming early on and leaving the bulk of the yarn for some rather incomprehensible manoeuvring. There's also a rather lengthy (and near incomprehensible) Afterword by Sandra Miesel..but ignore that and enjoy the saga. The 'Final Encyclopedia'? Oh, that's an immense satellite computer complex which happens to be around and to which Hal keeps returning for various reasons.

ENCHANTED PILGRIMAGE

===== Mark Cornwall lives in a parallel world along with Clifford D. Simak goblins, trolls, etc. Discovering a secret manuscript, Methuen £1.95 he embarks on a pilgrimage accompanied by several of these creatures. Besetting his path are Hellhounds (Of the Cosmos??), the Old Ones, a girl, a weird robot and an interworld investigator. A delightful adventure told in the inimitable, folksy style with battles and hazards losing their innate cruelty whilst retaining their interest. This was one of Simak's first..and to me, best 'search/trek' yarns.

WHERE THE EVIL DWELLS

===== Another parallel world of elves, wolves, trolls, Clifford D Simak fairies (real, not the queer kind) and so on. Seven Methuen £2.50 years ago, 'The Evil' sacked the abbey and besieged the castle before being driven back into the Empty Lands. Charles Harcourt, the Abbot, the Knurly Man and the strange Yolanda set off into the wastes to rescue Harcourt's long-lost love, Eloise and to regain a magic prism which imprisons a saint. They encounter unicorns, dragons, monsters akin to Sturgeon's 'IT', spirits, ogress and suchlike before reaching the end of their quest..only to find a few truths and that things are not as Harcourt had hoped. Simak's standard trek story..folksy, gentle and entertaining without introducing any great surprises.

SAGAS OF THE DEMONSPAWN

Bk.3 'DEMONDOOM'
 Bk.4 'ANCIENT EVIL'
 by J.H.Brennan
 Fantana £1.75 each.

Last December, we reviewed 'FIRE*WOLF' and 'THE CRYPTS OF TERROR'...here are the next two titles in the role-playing game series involving the reader as Fire*Wolf, armed with 'Doomsword'.

As before, physical attributes, spell-power and other parameters are set by dice-roll...but you also get multiple-choice decisions allowing entry to different event loops, most of which usually cycle back to a common junction point...or death. Death is not always final however..you may win Reincarnation - and if stuck, there are mirror-image hints at the back (Bk.4 even has a dungeon map). Ideal for the lonely but devoted game player..and computer buffs may care to try converting these labyrinths into standard maze games. Oh yes, and you also get some nice scene-setting illos. Interested ??

SOLD FOR A SPACESHIP

(Venture 7) To avoid a comet, Philip E. High monkind has gone underground..and Hamlyn £1.75 awakens 1200 years later to find a totally changed surface..inhabited by two varieties of life...'Squealers' and 'Clickers'. One man can receive and interpret their thoughts and warns of a coming attack as a base is established and the Squealers move in...then the Clickers take a hand. Radiation begins to introduce telepathy and other 'wild cards' when to cap it all, another menace turns up. Action adventure of the old pulp school, complete with escalating inventions popping out of the hat. Ideal stuff to while away a long train journey.

SOFTWARE

Now a 70 year old hippy with a bad heart, Cobb Anderson created the robot 'Ralph Numbers' which taught other robots how to circumvent Asimov's laws...and after revolting, to settle on the Moon. Then, seemingly out of gratitude, they offer Anderson a form of 'immortality' by entering his 'software' into a mainframe which can then operate a robot simulacrum. Accompanied by drug popper 'Sta Hi', Cobb goes to the Moon.... However, friction is developing between the smaller robots and the mainframe 'boppers' planning to freeze them out - which puts Cobb and Sta Hi smack in the middle. Some nice ideas in a yarn reminiscent of the late P.K.Dick..but I found the 'bopping/hippy' dialogue rather wearing. Nevertheless, the novel gets by on sheer pace.

BOOK OF DAYS

A collection of no less than 18 short stories, plus an Introduction including another one (my favourite). Wolfe brings to vivid life, such varied themes as:- Penitentiary prisoners hired out as slaves; the ultimate computer dating; civil disturbance; an Irish fable; car-breeding; assorted warfare; the tail-chasing of Big Business; a bear hunt; walking houses and many more. Each yarn is loosely linked to a 'special day'..Valentine, Mother, etc., - but be warned; with the exception of my favourite (in a library), each is open-ended leaving you looking to see if a page is missing. Pity, because each yarn grabs you right away. However, if you like celebrative fiction and 'design-your-own-ending', then this collection is a winner. Old fogeys stuck in the 'Golden Age'...keep away.

WITCH WEEK

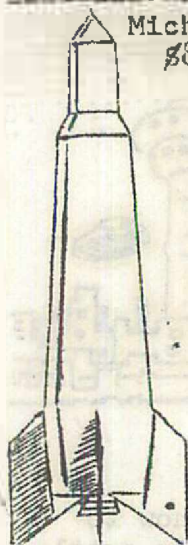
Diana Wynne Jones
Magnet £1.75

A school story set in a time track which permits witches (and their burning)..with one hidden among the pupils of class 2Y in a strict boarding school. Young Charles discovers his wild talents which cause assorted chaos throughout the school...then other witches (why not wizards?) begin to appear and events get even more involved as a being is conjured up from an alternate world. All very Thorne-Smith and ideally balanced between the boys and girls as characters, so that it should appeal to either. With Christmas approaching, this one will make an ideal stocking filler...and help to ensure a bit of peace during Xmas Day.

ADVANCED MODEL ROCKETRY

Michael A Banks
\$8.50

From the Kalmbach Pub. Co., 1027 North Seventh St., Milwaukee, WI 53233, U.S.A.



In 1980, I had the pleasure of visiting Mike and launching some of his models. I even have some cine film to prove it, so I know he isn't just a 'paper rocketeer'. For those who missed my article in ERG 69, model rockets are (mainly) scaled down versions of the big stuff..Saturns, Shuttles, and even X Fighters and SF craft. Powered by electrically fired solid cartridges which may be stacked or clustered. In this 64pp, Qto sized book you get a general introduction to modelling, rules and regulations. Next, a chapter on motors, parachutes, timers, etc. Then aerial photography (yes, cameras can be airborne!). These goodies are followed by 'Contest Scale' and how to design for it. Launch Control systems are covered, also telemetry..(with circuit diagrams), Atmospheric Sampling, a Power Test Rig, Altitude Determination..(gear, tables and how to do it). You even get a set of computer programs to aid in your design calculations..plus 'Further Reading' and some useful addresses. Sadly, UK authorities still dither over the legality of the hobby..pity they don't follow the U.S. State Firework Law which whilst limiting fireworks, states clearly..."..'fireworks' shall not include model rockets. A fascinating and informative book, and a MUST for devotees..so get a copy. To clinch the deal, the work is crammed with excellent photographs, superb line drawings, and even plans for a basic model to aid your debut.

WANT LIST I'm interested in buying or trading for, the following:-

ASTOUNDING..certain pre-1935 issues. ORIGINAL SF (UK) Nos. 2 & 12
SATELLITE SF (USA) 1957..Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct 1958 & 1959..all issues
SPACE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE..USA Aug.1957
SPACEWAY USA..any 1954 or 1955 issues SF DIGEST UK May, 1954
ORBIT SF USA Vols 1/2, 1/3 & 1/4 for 1953/54
WORLDS OF TOMORROW USA Vol4/3 to 5/3 inclusive..1967-71 inclusive
SF YEARBOOK USA No.2 & No.4 GALAXY NOVELS No.29
DOC SAVAGE paperbacks..5, 22, 26 to 30, 34 to 53 and most after that.

~~~~~ Contact the editor ~~~~~

P.S. Don't throw this copy away..pass it to a friend (or enemy) Ta.