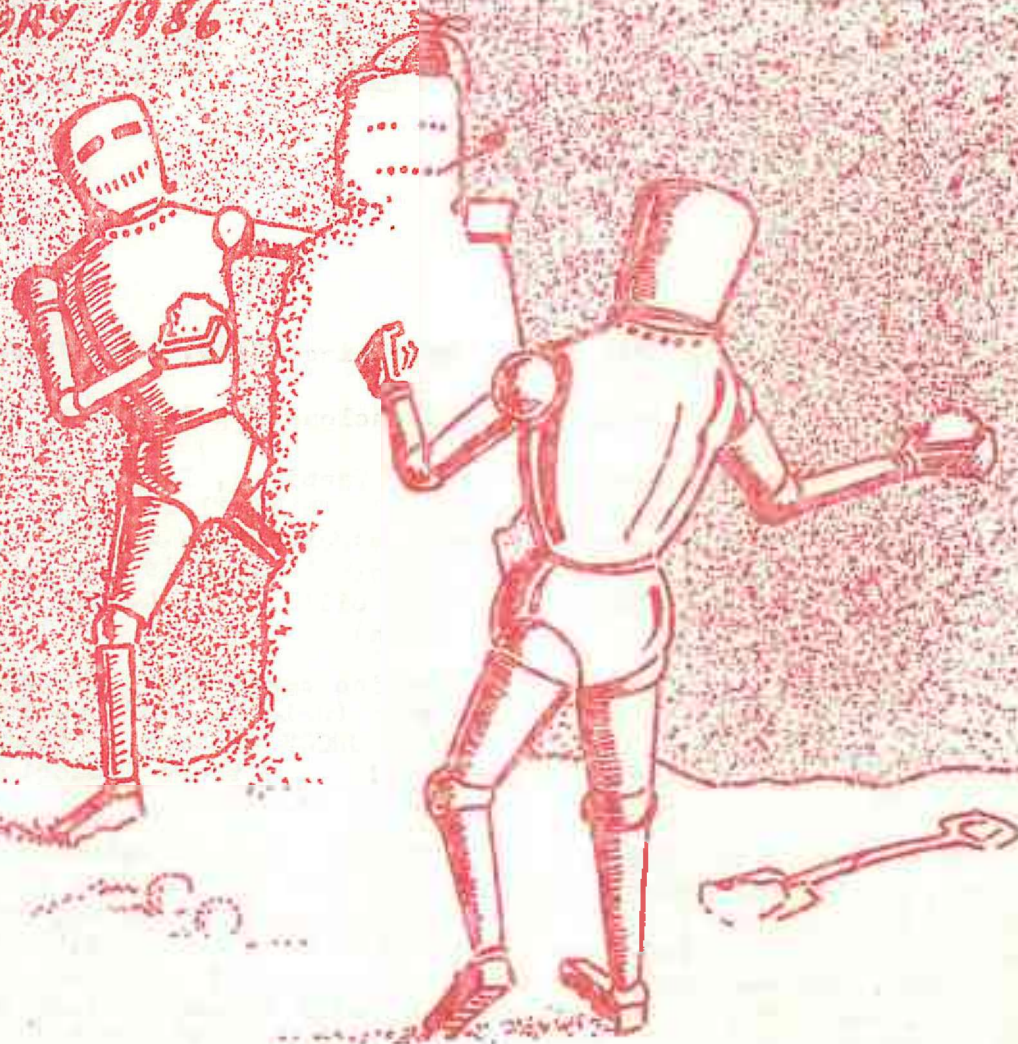


ERG 93

QUARTERLY

JANUARY 1986

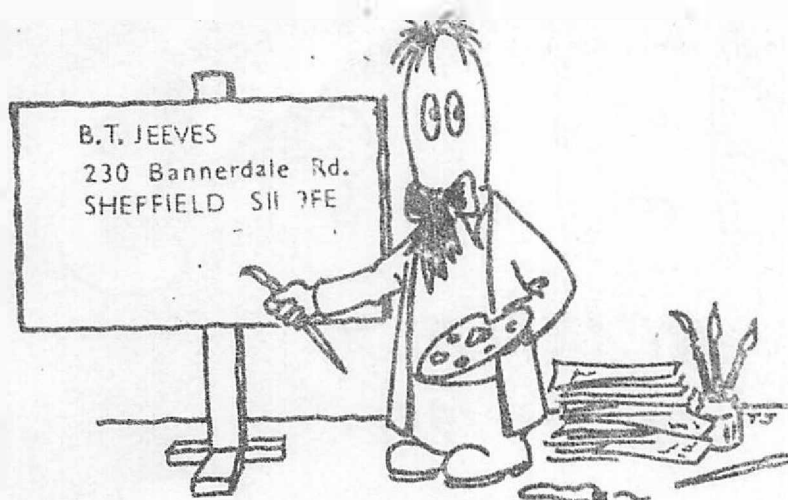


ERG 93

QUARTERLY

No.93 January 1986

Produced, printed &
perpetrated by,
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This issue completes
27 years of ERG, so
under our queer
counting system,
next issue, No.94
will be the 27th
annish, even though it

is the first in ERG's 28th Year. Quibbling aside, how can you get a
copy? Read on...

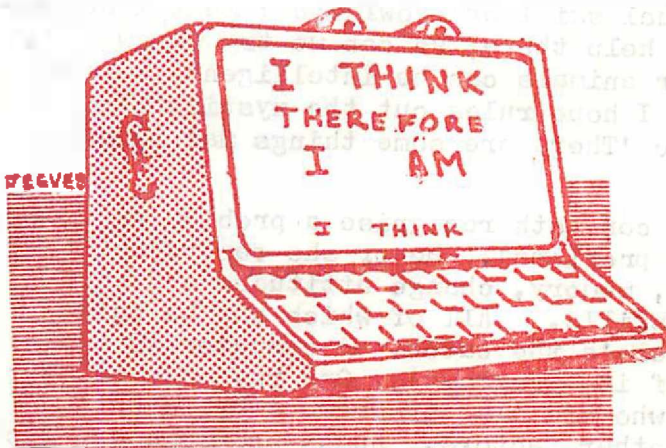
1. Write a LOC on this issue and enclose 30p in stamps if writing from the UK.
2. By trade...but not for any more fanzines, I have all I can handle in that line...but if you have SF mags, Flying Mags, Popular Science mags...even Doc Savage paperbacks...let's haggle.
3. If you must, cash subs are acceptable....2 issues for £1.00 UK, or 5 issues for \$4.00 USA (Send bills, not cheques as bank rates rip off the latter down to zilch)

Producing and mailing a fanzine costs time, effort and money, so to avoid my mailing it into a vacuum (which I won't do for long), I humbly urge you to pick one...and if a CROSS appears in that circle in the top left hand corner.. do it quick! A ? there indicates I'd like some response from you to show you still want ERG.

Seeing the Post Office's cunning ploy in reducing 2nd class rate to 12p, one or two LOCers have asked if ERG will go down on the stamps trade. Have a GOOD look at the new rates, and in the UK, Parcel rate has gone UP, Only that 2nd step (under 60g) has gone down..the rest stay as they were. However, Overseas rates have shot up! ERG USA goes up by 5p a copy...over 17%. In other words, a hefty all-round increase has been hidden beneath the smoke screen of a 'reduced letter rate'. Now if you throw in increased paper costs, stencil costs, a HUGE hike in ink prices you can see why (a) I'm upping the stamp charge..and (b) cutting out all 'dead wood' from mailing lists...and sad to say friends..this must hit overseas reader's sharpish...unless of course, all you nice people out there DO SOMETHING to keep ERG coming...and hit that 100 mark.

Bestest, Terry

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



"Can machines think?" is one of those questions which have been hanging around for longer than one cares to think at all. Certainly, the idea of some sort of artificial intelligence is an old one, Jewish legend has the golem, Roger Bacon is reputed to have created a talking head, Mary Shelley gave us the Frankenstein monster..and of course Science Fiction has come up with many more fictional examples.

However, it wasn't until man began to enhance his calculating powers that the question appeared Other than mere fictional musing. Then Napier devised his logarithms and came up with his 'bones'. Close on his heels, Oughtred invented the first form of circular slide rule and the game was afoot. In 1642, Pascal devised a calculating machine to help his tax-collecting father...it was a gleaming collection of cogs, cams and toothed wheels. It wasn't a financial success, but it set the way for others to follow. Charles Babbage laid the groundwork for the first true computer with his 1822 'Difference Engine' which was to aid in the preparation of complicated Tables of figures..tidal, actuary and the like. Spurred on by this, he began construction of an even larger and more complicated 'Engine'..then changed direction to begin work on an even more complicated 'Analytical Engine' which never got built. Later, the Jacquard loom influenced him, as its thousands of punched cards programmed the machinery to weave intricately patterned cloth.

All these early machines were purely mechanical gadgets..hence the name 'Engine' used by Babbage for his computers...but, with the advent of electronics, ENIAC appeared on the scene in 1945. A monstrosity stuffed with 18000 valves and requiring 150Kw of power to run it...more time was spent in valve replacement and programming than in the actual operation, but it was a start. Nowadays, most desk top micros can outperform it..with greater reliability and on less power than is needed to run a domestic light bulb.

In a mere forty years, computers have not only grown faster in operation, but more efficient, capable of more work on less power..and occupying less and less space as miniaturisation proceeds apace. Looming on the horizon is the very real possibility of a device with a storage capacity approaching that of the human brain -- and operating at many times its speed (which helps a smaller memory to achieve as much as a bigger one) The average human brain has around 10^{10} cells, involves go/no-go neurones and synapses...all in bewildering interconnection...but with nerve impulses limited to speeds of less than 1000 times a second as their switching rate.

Modern computers can perform 400 MILLION operations per second, which goes a long way to redressing any imbalance in other directions. With 1000,000 components on a single chip, storage capacity is nearing that of the human brain.

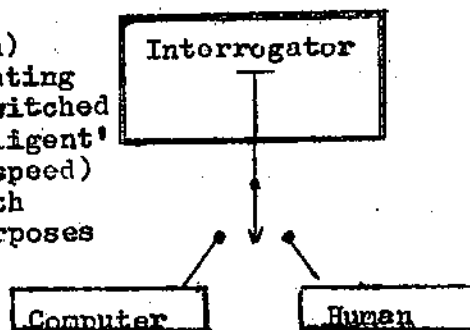
So what are the chances of a super-computer becoming 'really intelligent'? Well, for openers, what do we mean by 'intelligent'? My dictionary describes it as 'Intellectual skill or knowledge : mental brightness' and so on. Not a great deal of help there, so can we try a few conditions of our own. Dogs and other animals can be intelligent, so the idea isn't confined to humans...which I hope rules out the mystical 'no soul' arguments...which are akin to the 'There are some things man is not meant to know...' oldie.

An intelligent person (dog) can both recognise a problem and work at solving it, (Dogs may have simpler problems). He or she can adjust to the environment, experience sensation, memory, change attitudes and have a wide range of abilities and acquired skills. All of which can be built into a computer. 'Ah!' you say, 'There's the catch. A computer is only able to do things within the bounds of its programs' One response to that is that the same applies to humans...who are also programmed by parents, peers, environment, society and many other factors. Human programs are much much wider in scope and allow for greater flexibility of choice than today's computers -- but what about tomorrow's super device with fantastic memory banks and infinitely faster operation ... might not that have an equal flexibility of choice and action ?

For many years it was reckoned that computers could never play chess, then that even if they did, it would never be to the level of a good average player. Nowadays, computers can wipe the floor (or board) with Grand Masters! Right then, what about creativity? Surely, no computer can claim to have achieved that? Sorry, but one problem which puzzled mathematicians and topologists for years was the 'Four Colour Map Problem'...which said that NO map could be constructed requiring more than four colours to shade in its areas..so that no two adjacent regions used the same colour. No one could come up with such a map..i.e. one needing FIVE colours, but proving that four were enough had defeated the best brains around.....the mathematical proof was supplied by a computer...proof isn't number crunching, it involves creative thinking. In another case, a computer produced its own new..and radically different proofs for the congruity of triangles. That 'creativity' borderline gets blurred.

Whatever parameters you select as being unique to intelligence, it seems that some computer has demonstrated them as well. Combine all those attributes into one machine equipped with input sensors (far more acute than fallible human ones), link it to a few external waldos and who knows what may be achieved..... Artificial Intelligence ?

'Artificial' implies some sort of surrogate, not quite the 'real thing'..and in response to that, one might cite Turing's test which envisages a (human) Interrogator in a closed room and communicating via a teleprinter keyboard..which can be switched between either another human..or an 'intelligent' computer (slowed down to operate at human speed) If the Interrogator is unable to decide with which he is communicating, then for all purposes of definition, both his contacts qualify as being 'intelligent'. In practice, I suggest it might be easy to identify



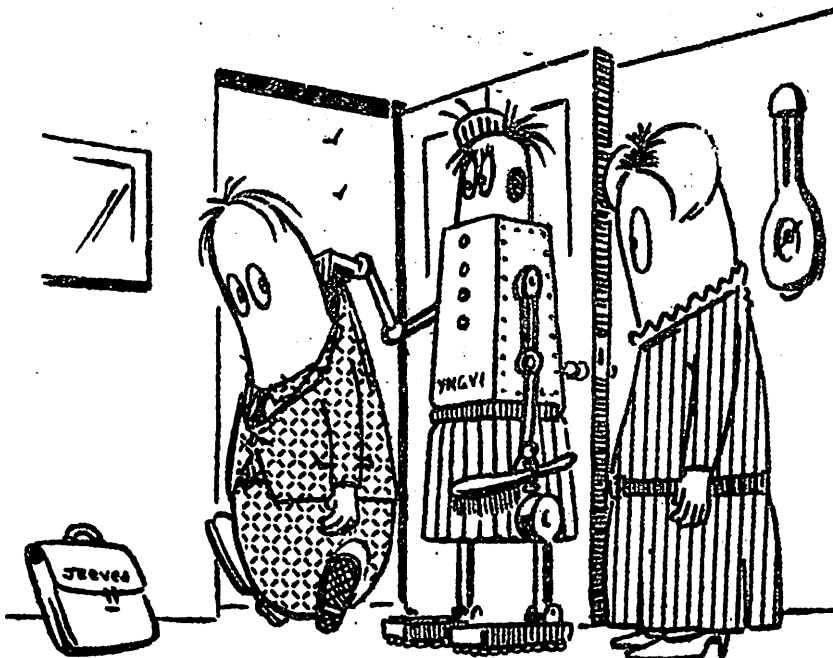
the A.I. as its answers would be more accurate, especially if involved calculations were required.

If the idea of a Turing Test sounds far fetched...such A.I. programs already exist..maybe not good enough (yet) to fool a persevering human, but certainly able to give one a good run for his money. A program called ELIZA simulates psychoanalysis by converting the patient's last statement into a question..and does it so well, some people are fooled by it. Pattern recognition, language translations and computer art are all well under way. Computer produced poetry and music are in existence. It is now possible to ..and indeed, the complexity of the task makes it almost mandatory... let a computer design a better computer. Each such generation being smaller, more powerful and faster in operation. To my mind, the question should not be 'Can Machines Think?', but more to the point...'How long before they do?' ...and I'm betting that the day is much nearer than you think?

nearer than you think!

Some Suggestions For Further Reading

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MIND G. Rattray Taylor Granada 1981
MEMORY I.M.L. Hunter Pelican 1970
EYE AND BRAIN R.L.Gregory World University Library 1966
CYBERNETICS F.H.George Teach Yoursel Books 1971
THE STORY OF CYBERNETICS Maurice Trask Studio Vista 1971
ELECTRONIC COMPUTERS F.L.Westwater Teach Yoursel Books 1977
THE MIGHTY MICRO Christopher Evans Coronet 1980
THE MICRO REVOLUTION Peter Laurie Futura 1980
ARE COMPUTERS ALIVE? Geoff Sinons Corgi 1983
ELECTRONIC COMPUTERS S.H.Hollingsdale & G.C. Tootill Pelican 1975



"...and as you can see, the Yngvi mechanical housemaid is ideal for getting rid of unwanted callers."

I'm currently attending a WEA 'Writer's Workshop' (riddled by Left Wing Militants)..and our latest assignment was to produce something inspired by the quote.."Moral Duty must be the prime concern of any writer"...so I thought you might like to read my contribution...

DUTY IS DUTY

"Democracy may be defined as what I say it is," said Arthur Gargoyle from his corner seat in the Clanger's Arms. "Or, to put it more simply, it is the right of anyone to have their own views..provided of course, that they keep them to themselves and do what I tell them." He sat back with a self-satisfied air, wiped a moustache of beer from his upper lip, and glowered at everyone unlucky enough to be in sight.

"Does that mean that anything you haven't said, is undemocratic?" asked young Timmins from behind his gin and tonic. Arthur glared at him for a moment. A fleeting thought wandered through the vast spaces within his cranium...could the lad be taking the mickey? No, the poor idiot just didn't understand the Higher Thought. Arthur deigned to elaborate...

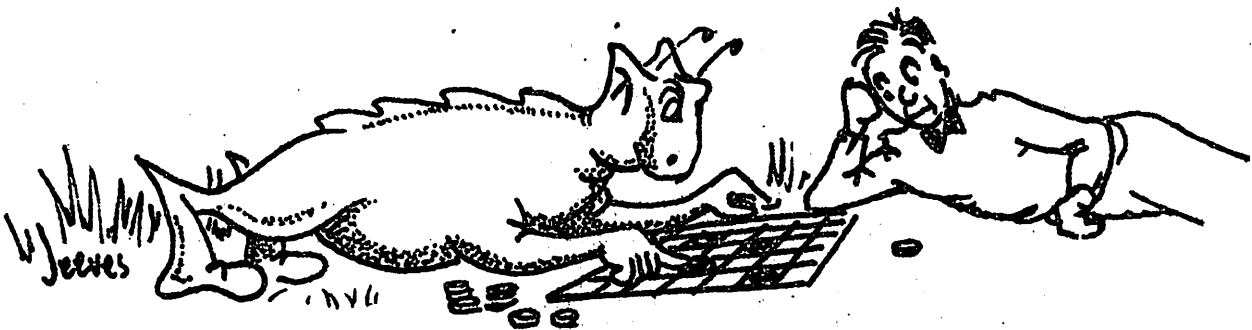
"No lad, look at it like this, most things are democratic.. like kicking policemen or nugging the wives of non-strikers - but others just aren't on. Once I'm elected Big Brother by an overwhelming majority of those I permit to vote, I'll be publishing a Little Red Book full of the things that everyone may do".

"Can you give us a few examples, Arthur?" asked a whiskery-faced oldster trapped between Arthur and the fireplace. The Great Leader pondered a moment, then his face cleared. "Easy, Bill. First, no one may earn less than the average wage...anyone bringing in less than that will have his wage made up to the National Average. Taxes will be abolished in favour of a Party Levy and everyone will have work, even if we have to sack a few people to create new jobs, and..." he paused to savour a reaw revolutionary thought, "...and all writers must submit their pieces to my Committee before sending them to any publishers. I shall issue a list of permitted topics, and it must be the prime aim of every writer to uphold MORAL DUTY."

"What's MORAL DUTY, Arthur?" asked timmins.

"MORAL DUTY may be defined as what I say it is", replied Arthur.

===== the end =====





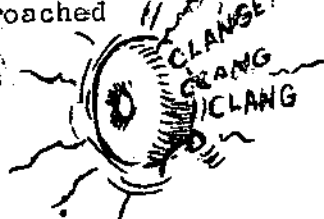
Fandom and conventions are so inextricably linked that they almost assume the status of the chicken and egg poser...which came first? For my own part, they came rather close together. Oh, I'd been a fan and collector since 1932, when at the tender age of ten, I was exposed to the assorted issues of Amazing, various isotopes of Wonder and copies of good old Astounding. Walter Gillings' SCIENTIFICTION showed me that I wasn't the only reader/collector in the UK, but it wasn't until after the war, that I actually had the chance of meeting other fans. A Convention was to be held in London!

Being a penurious teacher, fresh out of post-war training college, my finances were knee-high to a rather soggy pancake. That meant a day trip to London and back to Sheffield the same day. Timetable, 7-30am train getting in St. Pancras about 11-30...spend some Con time leaving ground zero around 8pm to catch a 9 o'clock train which would get me back to civilisation (Sheffield) around 1-30am Sunday morning, leaving me faced with a two mile walk through a tough area of the city. Happily, in these days muggers were virtually unknown.

Things worked more or less to plan. Arriving at St. Pancras, I descended into the Tube 'Rotunda'...and duly began to wander slowly around the central bookstall gently waving the identification symbol of the day -- a copy of ASTOUNDING. I wonder how often fans have used that particular 'I'm a FAN' signal. It worked...before I could be arrested for pushing subversive literature, I was absorbed into a group of real, honest-to-gosh SF fans. Nearly 40 years separate me from that 1948 weekend, and the only names I can recall from that meeting are Ron Buckmaster and that of a slim young girl called Daphne...who soon became Mrs. Buckmaster.

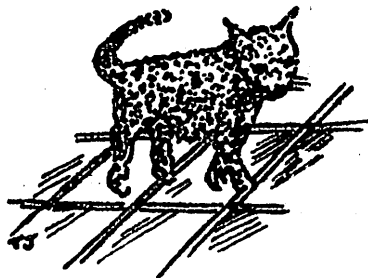


After round-robin introductions, we out-of-towners were split into small groups and taken on a flying tour of London before recombining into a fannish mass at the White Horse Tavern. As we approached the place, our ears were assailed by the nerve shattering clamour of a burglar alarm in a nearby jeweller's. It was doing its own little thing as hard as it could go, but no one was taking a blind bit of notice. It went like the clappers throughout the afternoon and gave most of the speakers, the screaming haddabs...Ted Carnell and Wally Gillings among them. The latter showed us an early cover painting for TALES OF WONDER...depicting skin-clad Burl, dweller on an Earth which had gone badly to seed, about to tangle with a giant wasp. Sitting beside me was a fan, busily scribbling away in a grubby notebook. Seeing my interest, he explained that he was Tony Thorne, and was 'Covering this for OPERATION FANTAST' Double Dutch to me at time, but one lives and learns, and it was in Ken Slater's fanzine that my first fannish writings and drawings appeared. About the only other memory of that Convention, was of everyone using a stylus to sign a duplicator stencil...does anybody out there have a run-off of that listing ???



That short exposure to real fans was addictive...I was back again the following year and apart from 1951 when offspring No.2 was one the way, I attended every Con right through until 1968 before ill health caused me to miss a few. Records of Conventoons don't list one for 1950...but I seem to have vague memories of one being held at the back of a cafe not far from St. Paul's Cathedral...can anyone help me out on that ?

Over the years, those early London Conventions tend to blur into one amorphous mass, but as finances improved (marginally), I was able to afford an overnight stay in an overspill hotel. I think it was the Avondale where I stayed when the Con was held at the Royal...and all I can remember of that is the way a large cat walked to and fro on the glass roof of the auditorium, and stole the scene from every speaker. Oh yes, and Charlie Duncombe always appeared out of the limbo of fandom to be Treasurer, played chess in the lobby throughout the whole shebang, and then vanished from sight until the following year....rather like some TAFF candidates.



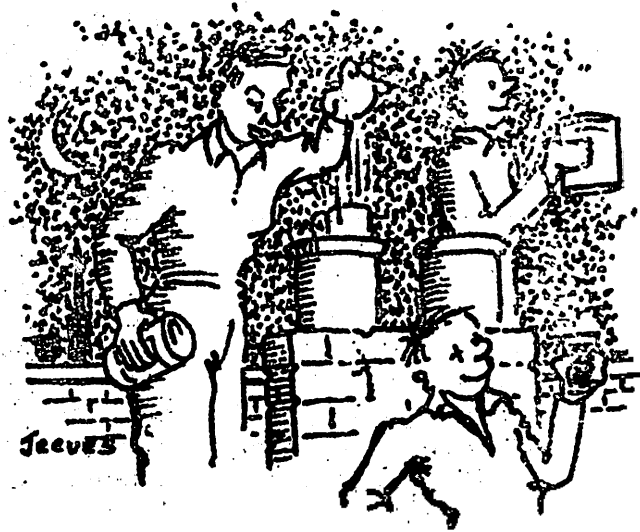
Somewhere around this era, I attended a Bradford Con and not only met Captain Ken Slater for the first time, but also met and teamed up with Eric Bentcliffe to form a friendship which has lasted ever since and survived such publications as Space Times, Con-Science, UFO Summary, Triode, Songs From Space, Waldo, and innumerable games of Scrabble.

1953 saw the Convention at the Bonnington in London and the inauguration of that august ceremony...the roofcon. This spontaneous affair came about because a peripatetic band of fen, having imbibed several gallons of booze, found their way out on to the hotel roof and thus carried fandom's banner to the rooftops of London. It wasn't long before empty bottles began to pile up, and these were then disposed of in the most logical manner.....by dropping them down the handiest chimney pot. Then a

cache of discarded paint cans was located and these too were duly sent to clear the way for the next visit of Santa Claus.

I missed this traumatic affair as Ken Slater and I were waylaid on the main staircase at 2am by a porter who was positive that as a visitor from the overspill hotel, I had no right to be in his magnificent edifice. Despite Ken's long and impassioned pleading..which lasted until 4 am, I was finally ushered out of the front door and left to wend my lonely way back to the Avondale where I was sharing a room with the late Eric Jones.. who of course hadn't been thrown out. I nipped into bed, put out the light, and settled down..for a full 15 seconds..when there came a tapping on the door, followed by a slithering-scratching sound which terminated in a soggy thump.

Bravely, I opened the door..to find the 5'4" of Eric Bentcliffe standing over a heap of old clothes..which on closer inspection turned out to be the paralytic hulk of the 6 foot, 14 stone Eric Jones. How Eric B had carried dragged and manhandled him from Bonnington to Avondale must forever remain one of those mysteries into which man should not probe...but it was obvious that the slithering-scratching gum thump had been Mr Jones collapsing down the door frame. I signed for the recumbent body, lugged it into its bed and once again settled down for what was left of the night..whereupon a slurred voice announced..."I wanna be sick"....so the rest of the night was spent in propping Mt. Jones over the wash basin.



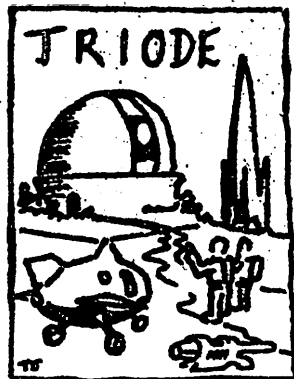
Then there was the NorthWest Science Fiction Convention which was held in Manchester. One of its highlights being an amateur SF film made by none other than 'Cover copper' John Russell Fearn. Naturally, it got a fannish reception...which annoyed JRF intensely as everyone laughed their nuts off at the sight of a model spaceship with a firework rocket stuck up its posterior wobbled its weary way up a length of black thread. Ah, the Sense Of Wonder was fading even then.



Although only a small affair, it showed that a proper Convention could be held outside London...despite the fact that London fen claimed it was much too far to travel all the way up to Manchester. A quick check with a map of England revealed the astounding fact that distance was exactly the same as that from Manchester to London...and so, we got the Supermancon of 1954..which got away from all the sercon trappings and mounted a show for fans. Dubious of the higher mathematics used in the distance calculations, most London fen didn't dare the trip..but a few did, sadly, Bert Campbell, editor of Authentic, was not among them as one of the events was his trial, for calling us 'Bloody Provincials'. I'd been co-opted to

write the script and be the prosecuting Counsel...with Ted Tubb defending. As you might expect, ten seconds into the show, and Ted scattered his copy of the script to the four winds and began to make up his own lines. In sheer defence, I did likewise, and we ad-libbed the whole glorious session.

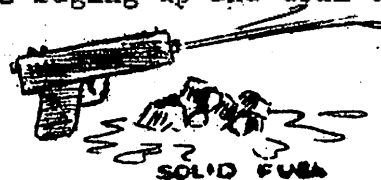
Peter Hamilton was there to natter to us about Nebula, and Alistair Paterson, editor of the Vargo Statton Mag, had mounted a talk on cover art in SF mags..VSM in particular. His plan was to ask for audience ideas as to what should be in a good SF cover...and by getting some poor fan artist to try and illustrate the resulting mishmash, establish that one could NOT get everything in and produce a picture. I was literally manhandled out of the audience and on to the stage to do the job...and up came the suggestions...an observatory...a spaceship, two spacemen...a futuristic aircraft...by some finagling, I managed to blend everything in...then, before Paterson could call for more and thus create the chaos he was after, I pointed out..."There's something else missing." Paterson bit..."What's that?" he asked. "A title," I answered, and before he had



chance to say "VSM", I had lettered in TRIODE and thus got a nice plug for our new fanzine. I still have..and treasure my photograph of Paterson and I on the platform, with me caught in the act of lettering TRIODE.

I fancy it was to the Supermancon that Brian Burgess brought a load of offal to serve as the nasty bits scheduled to be removed from somebody's sheet-shrouded innards during a neck operation. For some reason, these were stored under Peter Hamilton's bed...and forgotten when that item was scrubbed from the programme. They were remembered several weeks later when their decaying presence made itself known to the management of the Deansgate. A fact which was duly passed along to the Con organisers...so if you ever see a reference to 'Burgess' Lights', now you know about 'em.

This was also the con where the zap gun, (known to Mundania as the water pistol) made its appearance...with battles raging up and down the intricately convoluted corridors of the Deansgate. Such a device was too good to lapse after a Con, and it was to be used in numerous hostilities at succeeding Cons...not the least of which was the legendary Kettering series.

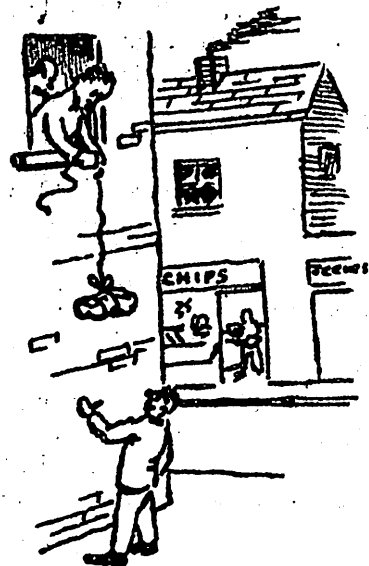


1955 saw the first

Kettering Con...and since the place was near enough to London, the more daring of the London Circle attended. That sleepy market town was never the same again. The George Hotel only boasted about 30 rooms, so the nearby Royal was also taken over. The George was ideal...multi-corridorred, two bars, a good con-hall and umpteen low priced eateries within easy walking distance. It was at Kettering that we listened entranced to some of the epic Liverpool Group tape plays...THE MARCH OF SLIME and subhlike. One of the commodities plugged in the tape was BLOG...a mythical drink...with all sorts of other properties...In no time at all, its name appeared on the bar price list...and cafes throughout the town boasted neatly lettered add-ons to the menus...'BLOG ON TOAST...2/6d' 'BLOG AND CHIPS...1/9d'...or the hybrid...'CROTTLED GREEPS IN BLOG SAUCE...3/4d' and many other delicacies.

Other delights of Kettering were the fan-huckster tables in the Con hall, the numerous prize competitions organised by dealers and by the programme planners, fan participation events in the program, panel games and a host of other varied items to plug the gaps between the sercon stuff of speech and panel. In those days, you didn't want to miss the main programme..socialising was saved for between items, mealtimes and through the night. Sadly, nowadays, we pay more for Cons..and seemingly, get less out of 'em.

Food supplies at Kettering were not limited to cafe or hotel. For the impoverished.. or gourmands among the fen, a nearby 'chippy' was available on the Friday and Saturday nights. One snag was smuggling the redolent product past the receptionist and into the hotel. A simple bit of fan ingenuity solved that problem. An accomplice in a room overlooking the chippy would lower a length of twine and the fan buying the fish and chips would tie the bundle on to its end. The parcel was then hoisted up into the hotel and enjoyed by all conspiring parties. It was a grand idea..and worked well..until someone used a weak bit of string and the parcel just disintegrated on the way up..showeking some of the local residents with fragments of a free meal.



Another Kettering legend was the late Ken McIntyre after whom the Award was nominated. Being a confirmed Guinness addict, never sober and wary of being caught without his favourite tippie, his first act after registering at the hotel was to seek out the hotel porter, cross the fellow's palm with silver and arrange for a crate of his beloved Guinness to be stashed beneath his hotel bed. Then there was the Bentcliffe Relief Run which involved carrying refreshing Liquid..in the shpe of a pint of beer..to the railway station about a mile from the hotel. Eric B had to work on Saturdays, so could not get down until around 9pm on the Saturday night. It became a ritual at Kettering Cons (we had three..plus a St Panthony reunion) to meet him at the ticket barrier, and, to the amazement of railway staff and other travellers, Eric would hand over his ticket..and keep the hand outstretched to grasp the waiting pint as he came through. Kettering had one horrible flaw however. Ideally situated though it was, the George was not only convenient to chippy, cafes and the local, SF stocking bookdealer, but some idiot had plonked a church directly opposite....great, until 8 am on Sunday morning when the clanging bells rose upon the morning air to call the faithful...and duly roused sleeping fen from their comas. Anyone remember the hilarious Atom cartoon (Hyphen??) depicting the body-strewn basket room at the George..glas es, debris and recumbent fen blearily regarding one bright and cheerful fan in the doorway...."Anyone for church?"

And there was 'Boris'...the George's night porter. I never did know his real name; but we all called him Boris..which he loved. A real fan lover (strange, but true) he was a hulking figure of a man, but with a deforming hunchback. It didn't make him bitter however, and he was always ready to bring healing potions at any hour of the night/morning.

It was at Kettering that the British Science Fiction Association was formed...rammed through largely by Ted Tubb...its aim..then..was to bring new blood into fandom...which was thought to be crumbling apart at the seams. Eric Bentcliffe and I were roped in as joint Secretaries, Archie Mercer as Treasurer and Ted Tubb was to edit Vector... a name which I proposed at a later business meeting..and which went into the hat along with several others..and came out again to give the BSFA Official Organ its name. Ted's editorship lasted long enough to send me material for the first issue..and was accompanied by his resignation from the editorial chair..which left me to get the first issue together, and edit, stencil and duplicate the next three. I still have my file copies of numbers 1 to 4 if anyone out there wants to offer me VAST SUMS for them.....??

With 1957, a Worldcon came to Britain, and made the climax to a hectic fanning week for Eric Bentcliffe and myself. The previous week-end, we had flown to Antwerp, booked in at the Cecil on the Van Arteveldestrasse and spent a week with Jan Jansen...which included all sorts of unusual events and a trip to Amsterdam to meet Dave Kyle, his new wife Ruth (they were honeymooning) and several other US fen. Naturally, chaos prevailed. Jan, Eric and I waited several hours at Schipol airport and eventually found that the Americans had landed earlier..and had boarded the KLM bus into Amsterdam and were waiting for us in the city. We found 'em at last and Jan's little Citroen led a cavalcade of taxis through the winding streets and over canals to deposit them at their hotel.

At the end of the week, we flew back to London and attended the 15th Worldcon...in a ghastly hotel. One of its delights was the longest, narrowest Con Hall I have ever known...if you were at the back, you needed a telescope to see what was going on at the other. That hall also doubled as the Breakfast room..and was the main thoroughfare between the other Con Hall, and the various rooms. The staff liked to set out breakfast during the night...and so wandering fen were asked NOT to wander through the place, as it put dust on the cornflakes!

John W. Campbell attended that affair, and was so disgusted by the 'coffee' served at the hotel, that he went out and located a laboratory glassware supplier, bought a stack of flasks, funnels and filter paper, and percolated his own coffee in a miniature laboratory right there on his breakfast table.

I actually got to meet and talk with JOHN W CAMPBELL!! We got stuck on the same Hieronymus machine together! In those days, he had just published construction diagrams for the machine..and Eric Jones had made one. It was on display in the foyer and I was in charge of it when THE GREAT MAN came along, spotted the machine and came over for a chat. ME...he was talking with me! I was combustorfoozled to have him all to myself....all I can recall now is that he was asking me about the snags in acquiring some of the components used in the device. I walked on air for the rest of that weekend.

Other Conventions followed...Kettering again, Birmingham, Gloucester (where Kingsley Amis tried to chat up my wife), Harrogate, Peterborough (where they had a car roundabout akin to a railroad turntable) for parking the cars. Yarmouth, Bristol, Worcester..and on to Coventry and Leeds. No doubt about it, fandom and Conventions are fun things..and there ought to be (lots) more of 'em.

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Yet another segment of life's rich tapestry gets embroidered....like, |
THE MENTOR 54 A/4, offset, 52pp from Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA..jammed with articles, reviews etc..but only a few so-so illos. Stocks has a nice piece on fandom and Cons, there's another on Russian SF, a rather fish short story, verse (yecck), a neat tale of a bunny a bundle of letters..and of course...two sets of reviews. Get your copy for A\$2.00, or the usual.

Of similar size, but mimeed on good quality blotting paper is OUTWORLDS 44 from Bill Bowers, 2468 Harrison Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45211, USA this has plenty of letters, personal notes by Bill, a rather waffly natter between Dave Locke and Parsley Leigh (who cares that the kiddies bedtime has been moved from 7 to 10pm??), There's also a Skelcomment/Column on ferrets!! and the whole shobang comes for \$1 or the usual.

Now for a few personal interjections..such as..the Beeb-box crashed again last week, so once more unto the repair shop (two new chips, £37) and I took the decision which I've been dithering over for a year or so, to have a new word processor fitted...WORDWISE PLUS....so now I darned well HAVE to do my pro writing on the thing. Happily, the very day I shelled out on this lot, I got a phone call from Dr. Skinner at Monsanto in Basingstoke.. 'Could I do him three cartoons as per those in 'Annals of Occupational Hygiene'?' So that's a bit of lolly towards the Datron bill. Now if anyone out there works in or around ERNIE, I'd appreciate your coaxing, it into paying out on one of my Bonds. Note to overseas readers..ERNIE is 'Electronic Random Number Inetgrating Engine'..or something like that..and is the computer which picks numbers in our Government-lottery.

Later.... WORDWISE PLUS has now been added to the Beeb, a couple of chips went up the spout, and whilst they were being replaced, I had the W+ Word Processor fitted. VERY user friendly, I'd written my first letter using it within the hour. Since then I've made up a 'KEYS' program to use on powering up, and this makes all sorts of printer goodies available...underline, Italic, Enlarged, Double-Density or Condensed can be used anywhere in the type script...and of course other facilities by entering the proper code. The rough draft of this issue's DMBL was done thuswise, and a very good investment it is. My only regret is that I can't use the set up for cutting stencils...og I know some people do, but the thought of all that gunge clogging up the Epson printer head makes me shudder. Roll on litho-offset or whatever. Then I can really go to town.

THOUGHTS 3, 22/A4/mim from Mike Lewis, 97 Fleet Rd., Farnborough, Hants GU14 9RE is crammed with LOCs airing opinions on all points East of Suez, an article on running and a slew of fmz reviews. Not protentious, but just nice friendly..and argumentative. Get it for the asking, or the usual. I suspect the cover was ripped off from Battlefield Earth with adaptations...any comment ???

SPACE FLIGHT NEWS No.1 at £1.25 may interest the space buffs among you. The Second issue should be out now...46 large pp of news, articles and lots of excellent colour photos...pity they follow this idiotic modern trend and print some parts of the text over a background illo..page 40 is almost unreadable and will certainly give you spots before the eyes. Starting with No.1 they are giving away colour reproductions of Shuttle mission badges.

FORBIDDEN WORLDS is a 20pp/Qto/offset fmz from James Mapson, Box 7087, Cloisters Sq. W.Australia 6000...and is a real mish-mash of natter, fiction, re-captioned photos, cartoons and letters. And from Roger Waddington, I'm indebted for a copy of CONTRIBUTOR'S BULLETIN..aimed at budding writers and poets, it gives news of markets, competitions and suchlike. 12 Qto pp, and costs £6.50 for 6 issues...write to Freelance Press Services, 5/9 Bexley Sq. Salford, Manchester M3 6DB if you have aspirations of becoming famous.



XYSTER 10 has 30ppA4 crammed with a strange mixture of off-trail illos saved from various eras and re-titled/captioned to change their original intent. Zany humour by Editor, Dave Wood..assisted by Vinz Clarke, Dave Langford, Irene Gore (another BAFF) and Bob Shaw..Plenty of variety, but the fantastic range of art styles make it less of a wholezine and more of a compendium. Faunch a copy from 1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7QA

They raised the Titanic, so why not CRYSTAL SHIP ? An elegant tenth issue boasting 36, offset A5 pages comes from John Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 9AZ ..some excellent

illos, a personal piece explaining the publishing hiatus and change of plan, then Skel has a long article explaining JUST WHY YOU SHOULD LOC A FANZINE, (I loved the comment on one female who uses any excuse to write her usual diatribe to any faned..guess who ?). A piece on 'Help', and a piece on Tolkien v the National Front...and a stimulating lettercol. John has no sub rates, so you'll have to weasel round him some way..it's worth it.

Those of you who read BOOK & MAGAZINE COLLECTOR may be interested to know that Mike Ashley hopes to have another piece therein (on Astounding) in the near future...and it will have (hopefully) some photos taken by me.. which involved me visiting Good Man Joe Hooton, and once again handling that Holy Grail of all magazine collector's...ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE, No.1. Picking up that issue was easy...the hard part was putting it down again at the end of the photo session. So, Joe, if you ever wake one night with a mad, fiendish urge to hurl your collection out into the night...you will remember to ring me first, so I can be waiting outside with a big net, won't you?

Speaking of collecting..anyone care to sell or trade... DOC SAVAGE pbs. 5,22,26 to 30, 34 to 53 and most after that
SPACE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE (USA) Aug.1957
WORLDS OF TOMORROW (USA) Vol.4No3 to 5/3 inclusive & 1967-1971
SF YEARBOOK (USA) Nos. 2 & 4 SF DIGEST UK May 1954
ASTOUNDING..certain pre-1935 issues. (thanks to Ray Beam for plugging one of the gaps)

900,000,000 mile SERVICE



My first car, a Ford Anglia had to be serviced every 1000 miles, my latest, a Vauxhall 'Astra' does 9,000 miles between visits to the garage... unless of course, something goes awry.

But what do you do when a fault develops with the vehicle having got around 900,000,000 miles on the clock and is that distance away from its repair base?

That's what happened to NASA when Voyager 2 did its fly past of Saturn in 1981. Something went wrong with a widget called a 'scan platform actuator', which is supposed to aim cameras and sensors wherever it is told. With a fly-past of Uranus and some 6,000 photographs planned for late 1985, early 1986..something had to be done!

Just HOW do NASA's boffins manage to 'repair' such faults whilst sitting comfortably back at base? Well, they suspected plastic shavings in the gear trains driven by two stepper motors (akin to those used in computer 'turtles' and disc drives), as this had happened to Voyager 1 in 1978. These motors have four speeds..High, Medium, Low and extra Low. Ground tests on similar motors and gear chains were set up, and it was found that a failure in lubrication caused bearing to rub on shafts at High rate..and deposit fragments which fouled the gears.

Working on the actual flight spare, engineers first caused it to seize, then began experimenting to see how it could be freed. At first, it seemed that this could be done by running the motors back and forth to chew up the offending particles..but this fix only lasted a couple of weeks and the fault returned. Experiments at varying the temperature between 10°C and -35°C seemed most effective..normal operating temperature being around -7°C. Variations could be carried out by turning on instruments, actuator heater and motor coils. This caused expansion and contraction in the gears thus crushing the jamming material.

The flight spare was also operated at various slowing speeds to see how this affected failures..and as might be expected, High and Medium rates caused the most bother..moral there was to use only the slow rates.

A third ground test involved building various sets of gears and bearings, then trying out varying mixes of lubrication, temperature and operating speeds until the optimum conditions to avoid failures had been established.

It was also discovered that actuator conditions on Voyager 2 could be monitored by shortening the control pulses to below normal duration. If an actuator was nearing breakdown by jamming, it would refuse to accept

such signals. The impending failure could be cleared by returning the pulse rate to normal and then running the temperature/forward/reverse cycle.

All these discoveries were embodied into commands sent to Voyager 2 and hopefully... 'It will all be right on the night'...or to be precise, when Voyager nears Uranus. About four days before the session begins, a test will take place...and if this indicates trouble a backup program will be sent. This, instead of moving the scan platform, will roll the whole spacecraft so that cameras and sensors point the right way. So, as you read this, one way or the other, Uranus 2 should be yielding up its secrets.

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HALLEY'S COMET is also likely to come under close scrutiny over the same period...with the best viewing time coming during December 1985 and January 1986 (Australian readers should do better in February to April 1986). Not that you can expect one of those SF magazine cover sights, as to see the little smudge that the comet will show, you'll need to get away from smog and city skyglow...and if possible use binoculars or a small telescope. Look South to South West around sunset...but let your eyes adjust to darkness for 20 minutes or so. Camera buffs, use a tripod, set shutter on Brief and try 10 seconds to ten minutes depending on your film speed.

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CRAF is NOT the Canadian Royal Air Force, but 'COMET RENDEZVOUS AND ASTEROID FLY BY'. JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) is studying a mission to send a Mariner Mark 2 spacecraft to not only rendezvous with a comet (Wild 2...pronounced 'Vilt') but fly alongside it for three years...all that after first making a close pass of asteroid 'Hedwig'.

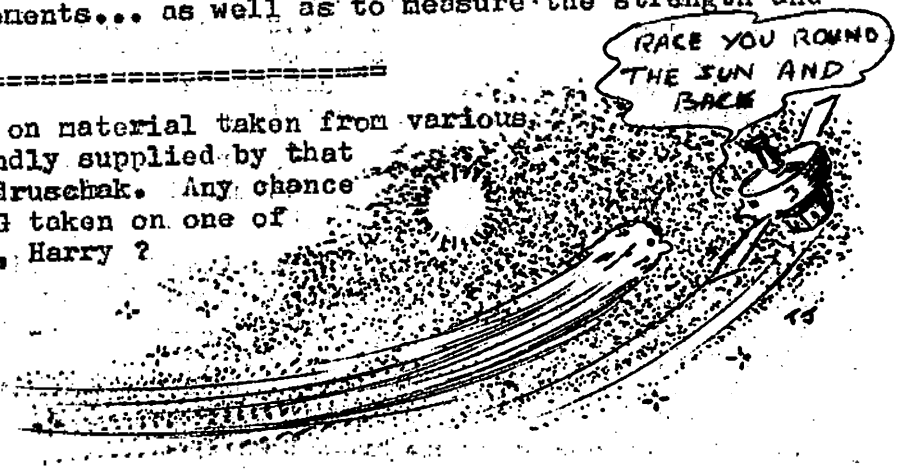
If the mission goes ahead, a space Shuttle would launch Mariner 2 on March 10 1991, and it would then pass within 3,800 miles of the asteroid...out to beyond Jupiter's orbit, then arcing back towards the Sun. A couple of mid course correction burns will bring Mariner to Rendezvous with the comet. The two will travel together for three years, only separating after perihelion.

Mariner will move in to within six miles of the nucleus, then back to several hundred miles to avoid damage from the developing tail as the pair near the Sun. Cameras will record changes in the nucleus and tail and a Surface Penetrator is to be fired into the nucleus to measure the presence of up to 20 elements... as well as to measure the strength and resistance of the core.

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This article was based on material taken from various NASA/JPL fact sheets kindly supplied by that Very Good Fan, Harry Andruschak. Any chance of getting a copy of ERG taken on one of these deep space probes, Harry?

RACE YOU ROUND
THE SUN AND
BACK





((My own sweet ERGitorial words of wisdom are enshrined within these triple parentheses))

ALAN BURNS 19 The Crescent, Kings Rd. South, Wallsend NE28 7RE

"Your cover stamps you as the Roland Emmett of fandom. I open up, and what do I see, Jeeves lamenting the demise of quarto, and what may I ask is wrong with A4? ((Nothing, if you cut it down to 8"x10" on the other hand, ERG has been Qto for 26 years and I don't want to muck up my filing system with that overlong, floppy format))) Robots, that word should be done away with as out of date. How about ARM (Advanced Response Machines)...((Like my Epson printer ?? I used robot specifically and said...that I was referring only to 'humanoid robots'...now a humanoid robot may be an ARM..but the reverse

doesn't necessarily apply))) Next article on Destructive Machines like the Whirling Crusher and the Black Sapper's Earth borer for example. ((Not sure what you mean there Alan...I dealt with both of those in earlier instalments of DMBL))) 25" telly working on paraffin..not so mad, didn't you remember that in the early thirties, the GLC (Gas Light and Coke Co., not Livingston's gay rabble) had a radio powered by a bank of gas-heated thermocouples and there are teles working happily off 12v batteries. ((True, but I still think it made a funny cartoon..and you forgot that Elizabethan-ruff-like bank of thermocouples used in Russia to power farm radios..it just sat on the neck of the oil lamp. But if you want to be technical..I fancy you would need a MONSTROUS bank of such low temperature couples to run a 25" colour telly)))

KEN LAKE

115 Markhouse Ave
LONDON E7 6AY

I ought to mention that the Post Office is actually REDUCING a rate. From

November, second class: Inland Rate will go down from 13p to 12p. Now get this..in recent years, the P.O. have issued 'discount' stamps..which had a 'D' or a star printed over the gum on the back so they could easily be identified. Now although the 12p stamps are to be sold at 'face value', they constitute in the eyes of someone at the GPO, a 'discount' and so the FIRST batches of the 12p definitive will be on discount-marked paper. But, when all this is used up, the definitives will appear on normal paper..and the discount-marked varieties will turn up relatively scarce over the years. So, a sheer (price £12) put aside now, would probably net you a reasonable profit in a decade or so. I should explain that market movements in philately are one of my professional fields of expertise and I am offering this little tip in the spirit of Christmas Fandom for all who feel inclined to take it up. ((There you are, ERG's Financial advice column. However,,just in case you fancy making a million....I just had my UK stamps valued by a peripatetic Stanley Gibbons agent...starting in 1858, they catalogue at just over £600....Mr. SG rep told me they were only worth 'face value'...he didn't say what that meant for the used items ..but it's a good job I didn't put em aside as an 'investment.')) Comment on ERG92.. Good heavens, I almost forgot..No comment, keep up the good work...Ken.



Mike Scott
70 Hough Green
Chester CH4 8JG

It is interesting that you say that humanoid robots were thought much more likely than space travel fifty years ago. Everyone talks about the amazing speed of computers. I suppose people never really thought about the problems of creating even a limited sort of artificial intelligence because research wasn't far enough advanced for the problems to be apparent, whereas the problems with space flight were fairly obvious. After all, identifying the problem is the first step in solving it. Talking about 'artistic clangers', your impression of Gaea (I assume that is what it's meant to be) is dreadful. Gaea does not look like the Ringworld. (((Wasn't meant to be Gaea, just a general sort of ringworld)))



ROGER WADDINGTON
4 Commercial St.,
Norton, Malton
Nth Yorks

With your suppliers willing to cut A4 down to quarto, ERG100 in that format should be easily achieved, for us lesser mortals who have to buy a box at a time, there's little hope. Actually, I always was a devotee of quarto, with A4 the bottom of the page is much farther away and you have to work harder to reach it. (((Perhaps if you typed faster???))) Chuck Connor used to read LION and Captain Condor doesn't get a mention? Though it does bring to mind the thought that there are other heroes for other ages, other generations; and that such as Doc Savage and Dan Dare will eventually fade into darkness along with their celebrators. (((Sad, but true...Kinnison is going, Gerry Carlyle, Van Manderpootz and the Skylark gang are fading...and I wonder about tales such as 'Black Beauty' and Gulliver's Travels not to mention Struwwelpeter...without Disney's cartoons and the Beeb's drawa I fancy they would be gone already))). I think the great appeal of the Daleks is precisely that they couldn't be taken too seriously. With logical thought and action they could be overcome. They surely gave that frisson of fear without anything more harmful...Now if you mention the Cybermen, well there's the stuff of nightmare. (((I fancy you're right...as a kid I always preferred the slightly inept nasties...you didn't have to take 'em seriously)))

ALAN SULLIVAN
3 Eccleston Sq.,
Westminster,
LONDON SW1V 1PG

The Robots was good stuff...while on Dr. Who, what about those sluggish silver cyborgs...The Cybermen (((I didn't count 'em as humanoid/robots))) If it wasn't for their resistance to gunfire they'd never get anywhere. ERG has a certain appeal - a feeling of nostalgia - no offence (((none taken))) of balmy halcyon days when SF was young and the imagination ran wild and free. I may not remember most of the stuff, having only heard of it second hand, but it lacks the cynicism so common today. (((Dead right, cobber...modern SF is so jammed with message, feminism and/or social relevance that the plotlines are non-existent or bland to the point of boredom.)))

ETHEL LINDSAY
69 Barry Rd.,
Carnoustie
Angus DD7 7QQ

The Daleks on TV have men inside moving them about, who could at a pinch get up a step. Have you seen the 'Tripods' moving? (((Yecch! I watched two episodes of this before I realised the Beeb had made it into a typical Sunday afternoon costume drama...even if it does get broadcast at other times.))) I think I've gone back to mystery yarns because what I enjoyed was SF, and a lot of what is published now is fantasy...sword and sorcery...and when a blurb tells me that this is another world with wizards and princesses or Witch Queens, I go blech! (((I agree with you ENTIRELY...my word is Yecch)))

ROB GREGG
103 Highfield Rd.,
Rimford,
Essex RM5 3AE

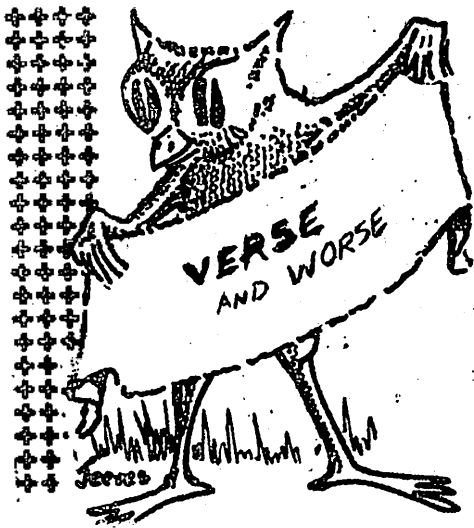
Your 'Operation Fantast' was great stuff and had me laughing all the way through. Highly appropriate too, as I had only just left hospital. Your remark on why we are called 'patients' is accurate..it seems that all 'in-patients' are ignored until 'out-patients' have been dealt with. (((Well, the in-patients are more likely to snuff it and so save 'em work..and free another bed.))) Largely agree with your comments on the heavy sercon zines like Foundation and, I suspect, van Ikin's 'Science Fiction'. Mose of these highbrow, in depth theses go right over my head. I'm the kind of reader who likes a strong plot and clear storyline. I don't read a lot of deep meaning into the stories I like. (((Me too, when I want a message or a fact, I read non-fiction...the 'message type yarn' seems akin to trying to dose one's ice-cream or cherry cake with healing nostrums in the style of 'sugaring the pill'))) Another good bunch of fanzine reviews.. most of which I haven't had the pleasure of seeing (sob!) Groggy, Country Road, N BNF Zine and Mad Scientist's Digest all sound especially interesting (grovel-grovel..Eric, Joni, Eckhard and Brian). Can't you persuade Ethel to revive Scottishe? (((There you are faneds..someone crying for a copy of your wares..how about it? Ethel I fancy finds retirement, bawbees and a fanzine mutually incompatible)))

PAMELA BOAL

4 Westfield Way
Charlton Heights
Wantage
Oxon OX12 7EW

As always, I find your various reviews entertaining as well as most useful. One thing though, while 8 to 10 year old boys would be unlikely to identify with a girl hero, girls of that age have no difficulty identifying with boy heroes..probably because be it comics or computer games, the few girl or female heroines around aren't worth identifying with. Even with Enid Blyton (who is still popular despite the 'expert' condemnation) a girl with any spirit identified with the boys..and her girls were a little real than most. I never regarded you as an MCP, but ever since some feminists annoyed you, you have developed a habit of throwing in such remarks as 'ladies, read Tomasina,' etc. which are frankly beginning to irritate the hell out of me. (((I sympathise Pam, but what can one do? If I júst say, 'Tom, Dick & Harry' those harpies howl...likewise if one says. 'he' somewhere to avoid repetitious 'he or she' at every verse end..they howl (chiefly you know who)..and now I get shot at for trying to cover both ends...ah woe is me))). Enjoyed DMBL (may your banks never run dry) (((This may be the final part, as I'm toying with the idea of running my auto-biog xaphy..CARRY ON JEEVES..Comments anyone ?))) Your comments on Daleks are in fact those put to good use by wheel chair users. Quite a few cartoons pertaining to disability have carried the cartoon of Daleks nassed at the foot of stairs,saying, "That puts paid to our plans of conquering Earth". Odd though, that while people can appreciate that a 1" step can be a barrier to Daleks..it can also be a barrier to a great range of wheelchairs. (((True Pam, and so can swing and rotating doors...designers please note.)))





Many moons ago, Ken Potter and Dave Wood published 'one-shot' fanzines...i.e., each issue only boasted one copy which was then handed on to another fan. The zines were STELLAR and CENTAURUS...much beauty blushed relatively unseen in those rare publications...and since GOOD poetry is rare among the much published drek verse of today, I herewith reprint one of the gems wot as how I wrote for one of those long defunct affairs. Read and weep!

HYA KINNISON

See now Kinnison whom foes dread,
Hair all ruffled, LENS bright red,
Coming from some mighty battle?
No, he just got out of bed.
With his lens (he sleeps with this on)
Comes the mighty Kiball Kinnison.

Landing free, he has no ticket,
(Worsel told him where to stick it)
On 'the Plate' he spills the gen,
cleans it up and starts again.

Kimball tells how battle rages,
Rages cause Doc Smith has pages,
Pages where he tells the saga,
In between his swigs of lager.
Lager still and lager, shall the battle be,
All the way from Trencu to

Lundmark's Nebulae.

Skip the details, do not bore us,
Don't forget to read Centaurus.

Next the Master Pilot Campbell,
tries a Dianetic gamble,
Maulers form a huge umbrella.
Drive by Dean and bomb by Teller
Boskone's Navy's full of pride
But George O Smith is on our side.
Flanked by Kinnison and Worsel
(Trumpet Voluntary by Purcell)
They will forge a weapon for us
'Neath the cauldron, burn Centaurus.



SCIENCE FICTION THE 100 BEST NOVELS

David Pringle
Xanadu £3.95

REVIEWS

Here, the editor of Interzone gives us his choice of the 100 'best' and as you might expect, leans to the 'Speculative Fiction' breed...though not entirely so..Heinlein has 'Puppet Masters', 'Door Into Summer' and surprisingly, 'Have Spacesuit - Will Travel' included. Predictably, Clarke's 'Childhood's End' and 'City and the Stars' are here, but Asimov only has one yarn against Ballard's three and Dick's five. Sadly, this isn't

an anthology containing all the yarns - instead, you get brief essays giving biographical details together with capsule reviews plus publishing dates.

No matter who selects '100 Best', results are bound to be controversial and in this case, the 'literary/Spec.F/New Wave' bias makes the result more so...nevertheless, this is an excellent source book for guidance in further reading, particularly for the newcomer. Its Moorcock introduction does it a disservice as it raises the pointless.. 'Why not more women/

black/left-handed-vegetarian-lesbian writers?' red herring. Pringle chose from what has been written not from what might have been..or to balance some esoteric ratio, and in so doing has produced an entertaining.. and controversial volume. Read, enjoy...and argue.

FIRE AND HEMLOCK

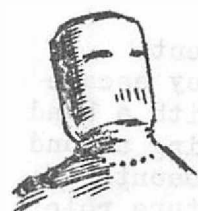
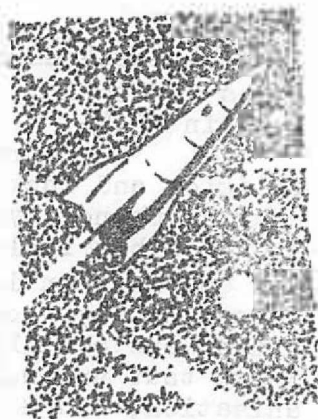
Diana Wynne Jones
Methuen £8.95

We first meet Polly Whittacker at age 19, but quickly flash back to her 10th year (though she still converses like a 19 year-old). An improbable meeting with Tom Lynn (probably the most illiterate cello player in the British Philharmonic) gives her a strange picture which leads to her being followed by the mysterious Mr. Leroy. Despite the age disparity, Tom and Polly meet occasionally, and devise a fantasy world of their own..which seems to be coming to reality as they meet people and places as they had imagined them. We follow events up to the present, with Leroy growing ever more menacing and Polly's memories..and those around her..being subtly altered to exclude Tom Lynn....then a final confrontation...which was a bit above my head, even though this is a book for young girls. Oh well, maybe I can't empathise with their psychology..but with Christmas and New Year present-giving time around, this may help you fix up some young daughter or niece

THE COSMIC CODE
Heinz R. Pagels
Pelican £4.95

Issued in 1984, but I just managed to buy a copy. The first part covers Einstein's life and work which formed a bridge between classical physics and quantum theory. Then on to quantum theory, Heisenberg's Uncertainty, the cat of Schrodinger and modern developments..including one instantaneous action-at-a-distance experiment, but omitting the epochal one in Paris in 1982. Part 2 deals with particles..down through hadrons, baryons etc to the basic quarks, leptons and gluons. Finally, a summary of the logic and invariance of natural laws. Virtually non-mathematical, not easy going, but highly rewarding if you like to know what makes the universe tick.

EINSTEIN'S UNIVERSE Published in 1979 to accompany a Nigel Calder TV program, I managed to acquire this B.B.C £6.25 copy via a Book Finding Service. It is crammed to the gills with stories of Einstein's life, his papers and ideas..all deftly explained in everyday language...with details of the various experiments confirming the theories...and that includes aircraft-borne clocks which run faster than those deep in Earth's gravity field. It also covers black holes, FTL travel and all the other linked items of modern cosmology. A very readable popularisation if you can manage to find a copy



THE ROD OF LIGHT

Barrington J Bailey
Methuen £2.50

More or less a sequel to 'Soul Of A Robot' in which robot Jasperodus sought a soul. Now,

knowing he has one, he escapes an attack by the robot-hating Borgors and goes to meet super-intelligent Gargan (who acts as thick as two short planks) who is heading a band of other constructs in trying to equip robots with souls. Set in a sort of post-holocaust Europe (?) seemingly without nuclear power..they mine coal, yet have spaceflight and intelligent robots..this is one of those lightweight yarns which seem to have been written at one sitting..plenty of action, but precious little plot line..just on-going events. Suitable for passing a train journey, but not classic SF. It isn't labelled juvenile..but it is! Moorcock says Barrington is 'The most original SF writer of this generation' but since I gather Moorcock is half of Bayley..that isn't surprising.

NICK HAZARD Interstellar Agent No.1

P. Harbottle & J. Lawrence 95p
39 Carterways,
Dunstable, BEDS

Fifties fans will remember J.R. Fearn's, 'Vargo Statton' & 'Volstead Gridban' yarns published under the Scion imprint. Now Messrs. Harbottle and Lawrence have taken 'MISSION TO VORGA', scripted it, coaxed the original cover artist Ron Turner to work on it, and the result is (part 1 of) a 3 part black and white strip..in a 32pp/A5 format. An additional bonus is Turner's 1958 strip..SPACE AGE AND THE WRECKERS. Story lines are a bit naive (teenage market ?) but the artwork is excellent, so if you want to get in on a collector's item (No.2 should be out when you read this) send off your order whilst stocks last. (Also available from P.Harbottle, 32 Tynedale Ave, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear are republished Fearn stories... WORLD'S WITHIN, FROM AFAR, SURVIVORS OF MARS, and TALES OF WONDER at £1.00 each..and NO GRAVE NEED I at £1.25..& THE SLITHERERS at £2.00)

THE LEAKY ESTABLISHMENT

As the result of a drunken bet, Roy Tappen smuggles Dave Langford, an old filing cabinet out of Robinson Heath Nuclear Sphere £2.25 Centre...and then finds someone has carelessly left a nuclear warhead in the bottom drawer. A newly installed detector system prevents him smuggling the thing back in. Each 'foolproof' scheme to replace the thing only worsens the situation. Those of you who had the pleasure of hearing Dave read an extract from this book at 1984 Novacon will need no further details..but it's a hilarious, over-the-top sned-up of the nuclear establishment. No sacred cows are left unstoned and you had better tape up your sides before reading if you don't want 'em to split.

CODE OF THE LIFE MAKER

Radiation corrupted the data banks of an alien self-replicating factory and over the ages endless settlements of flawed robots have spread through the galaxy..one group on Saturn's moon Titan, has established its own sex, religion and backward society. Then a 'colony' ship is sent to Mars by GSEC, bearing phoney mystic Zambendorf supposedly for him to carry out psi tests..and NASO has included debunker Massey ostensibly to expose him. However, its destination is really Titan..and both Zambendorf and Massey have other roles to play when GSEC seeks to exploit the robots. A neat balance between humans and equally 'human' robots seeking to understand their world, makes for a taut and well written yarn. (Oh yes, NASO is North Atlantic Space Organisation, and GSEC..General Space Enterprises Corporation)

MOLLY ZERO

Molly Zero is raised in the regimental..yet benevolent environment of 'The Blocks', then, meeting Paul, they escape to find jobs in a nearby village before moving on with a band of gypsies...and various dangerous adventures including a band of terrorists's activities with bombs. I found the 'continuous present' in which this was written, very wearing..almost like one of the adventure role games..."You do this...", "You do that...". I suspect this started life as an up-market juvenile, but I may be wrong.

THE TOWER AND THE EMERALD

Princess Viviane is lured into releasing the evil priest-magician Idoc from age-long bondage. He then takes possession of her lover Caradawc causing him to slay his own father (who was trying to rape Viviane). Idoc then seeks his revenge against the reincarnations of the five who first enslaved him...Caradawc, Gerin, Rheged, Cai and Viviane. The latter flees to the forest where she meets the Green Lady, is given a crystal ball and is hunted by Idoc in his persona as The Black Knight. Much riding hither and yon, powerful enchantments and near disaster before final (?) triumph. Sex, sword, sorcery and mysticism in the usual romantic-heroic mix which seems to be so popular these days.

CROSS THE STARS

Mercenary soldier, ex-Hammer's Slammer, Don Slade plans to retire to his home world of Tethys, but the route is fraught with perils. Flashbacks cover incidents of piracy, plant symbiosis, a battle with a re-synthesising centre, a planet of programmed 'slaves' and another of parthogentic females. Eventually, Slade reaches Tethys and a final confrontation with a usurper. Fast-paced and exciting action-adventure (No.9 in the Venture series) and a rattling good blend of Dorsai, Starship Troopers..and, dare I say it? Kimball Kinnison.



SCIENCE FICTION FILM SOURCE BOOK

Ed. David Wingrove £10.95, Hardback £7.95, Paper

An Aldiss foreword points up the difference between the visual film and the more cerebral (?) book. This is followed by a list of contributors and a brief introduction and you're into a 'Brief History'...which puts the arguable point that cinematic SF came of age in 1968...so the 'History' is mainly post-1968. A list of 'Important Films' (? no 'King Kong'?) and you're into the real meat of 250 pages jammed with capsule reviews of 'more than 1350 SF movies'... complete with brief credits and star ratings for

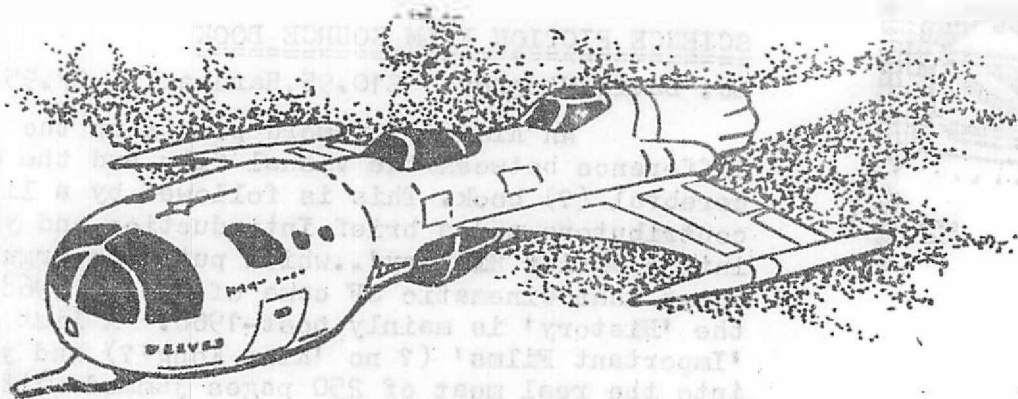
Plot, Technical Skill, Entertainment and Artistic Merit...all of which are of course highly subjective, so you can enjoy yourself looking up favourites then disagreeing (or agreeing) with their assessments. 'Icing on the cake' includes a listing of early serials, 20 pages detailing people who have put SF on the screen, a list of authors/books which have been made into film, and finally a short Bibliography. Numerous, but small, 'stills' stud the text and the resulting volume is a 'must' for any SF film buff. I'd recommend the hardcover for durability and appearance as the price rise is minimal.

THE GERNSBACK AWARDS

Triton Books \$14.95 A 'Retroactive Hugos' forward by 4SJ Ackerman explains how he pushed the idea of digging back into pre-Hugo days to publish yarns which may have qualified. Members of First Fandom, (myself included) voted on sundry stories and came up with the ten you get here...complete with Gernsback 'puffs' and original (mainly Paul) illos. I can do no better than list the titles...The Coming Of The Ice, The Empire Of The Ants, The Crystal Egg, 'The Eggs From Lake Tanganyika, The Metal Giants, The Diamond Lens, The Thing From Outside, The Mad Planet, The Moon Metal, and Beyond The Pole. In the U.K., Ken Slater may be able to get you a copy, but if writing direct (see address in Fanorama) you might add a couple of dollars for post and packing. Happy nostalgia.

HAWKMISTRESS

Marion Zimmer Bradley Arrow £2.25 'Iaran' psi-power is awakening in 15-year old Romilly and she uses its animal-empathy to tame and train the hawk Preciosa. This arouses the anger of her strict father...who begins to enforce domesticity on his tomboy daughter. The final straw is her betrothal to the Lord of Scathfell, a typically stereotype and slimy character. Romilly flees from home into a land seething with discontent over a usurper to the throne...whilst the true King hides. Romilly soon becomes enmeshed, against her will, in the plot and intrigue before all is resolved. This is another of the Darkover novels which Ms. Bradley does so well...and so often, and I suspect it is aimed at teenage girls and women's libbers. In essence, it is the SF equivalent of a Mills & Boon romance...with touches of Bonnie Prince Charlie and a few others included. However, if you're into hero(ine)s, causes and battles, this is far netter written than most, so read according to your tastes.



BATTLE FOR SPACE

Curtis Peebles
Blandford £10.95

194 slick, appx. 400 pages with numerous illustrations, many in colour, plus silhouettes and details of many US and Soviet spacecraft. An Introduction by Kenneth Gatland sets the political background of defence, treaties

and a brief survey of current programs. The main body of the work covers Russian and American (+ some Chinese) work on surveillance and Navsats, Salyut missions, nuclear missiles, anti-satellite devices and space law. Lasers and particle beam weapons get exhaustive coverage before the final summing up, forecast, glossary and index. Excellent explanatory diagrams, layman's language and a good layout cleave through media gobbledygook to give you a clear idea of the possibilities..and conduct of a war in space plus the real information on the 'Star Wars' program. Ideal for space buffs and indeed anyone wanting to know what is going on 'up there'.

THE FUTURA ILLUSTRATED FILM GUIDE

for Cinema. Video. Television
Futura £6.95

One of the first things one does on picking up a book such as this (if you are strong enough), is to look up one's favourites - no easy task with over 2,800

films ranging from the early days, right to the present..even so, 'Things To Come', 'E.T.' and 'Destination Moon' have escaped the net. Each title has a capsule review, release date, star list, running time, whether it is colour or b/w, and where relevant, its availability on video. Ratings from 1 to 4 are given as a guide to entertainment value and production standards. Stills abound! Every page has at least one, often two, and sometimes three. In addition, there are photos and profiles of 39 stars and a brief Introduction explains the symbols used, as well as MPAA guidance ratings which accompany each film. (for some obscure reason, this Introduction refers to the work as 'Rating The Movies') Without doubt, this is a superlative MUST for any movie buff..and is about exactly TWICE the size of the Halliwell guide, for only £1 more....no less than 448 pages, 8" by 11" in size. Now where else can you find a bargain like that?

+++++

DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE...Parts 1 to 12 in one, 80+ page volume...the pulps, the 'blooms', air mags, SF films, Education via the pulps, the 'Ads' and much more..including original ERG covers, and 'G-8 and His Bottle Aces' fiction. £2.50 or \$3.00 inclusive of post & packing. Only 50 copies run off, a few still left...buy now before it becomes a collector's item.

ELEPHANT SONG

Barry B Longyear
Futura £2.50

Fitting snugly between 'City Of Baraboo' and 'Circus World', this yarn completes the trilogy of O'Haras space-going circus. Starting with the crash of the Baraboo on Momus, we see the circus hands fighting to establish a colony. Aided only by their dwindling herd of bull elephants, work begins. Central character is Little Will, one of the few telepaths among a motley crew. Lurking in the wilds, a clutch of unborn, but telepathic and amoral snakes seek to dominate someone to guard their eggs. Disease and natural disaster also threaten in what starts out rather fragmentary at first, but then settles down into an excellent and moving yarn.

THE RIVER OF DANCING GODS

Jack L. Chalker
Orbit £2.50

Truck driver Joe, and hitcher, Marge find themselves diverted to an alternate world formed by the backlash of creation..and where magic works and trolls, elves, fairies and dragons exist. They were lured by Magician Ruddygore to aid him in the battle against the evil forces of the Dark Baron. Transformed into barbaric hero, and heroine, their task is to acquire the legendary magic lamp. Their journey traverses rivers by such means as 'trollbridges' or 'fairyboats' before the final confrontation. Entertaining throughout, in a Simakian manner, but without his twee folksiness. I enjoyed the yarn..and the last line indicates it will be a trilogy.

MICROWORLDS

Ed. T.F.Monteleone
Hamlyn £2.50

Want a bargain? No less than 17 stories and a poem by Ray Bradbury are crammed into this large-size paperback. Each involves a computer.. Gordy Dickson's 'Computers Don't Argue' deals with the perils of a computer-run Book Club (I've had a similar hassle with Reader's Digest). Benford's 'The Touch' is about a suicide/murder game, Bischoff's on outlandish software protection and Bova's 'Love Calls' has an emotional computer. Naturally, Clarke's 'Nine Billion Names' is here..along with Asimov's 'Last Question', Ellison's, 'I Have No Mouth..' and yarns by Pohl, Malzberg, Sladek and enough variety to please every taste whilst upsetting none. Read, enjoy, trouble next time you power up your home micro. Remember, these yarns may be today's fiction.... but what of tomorrow?

NECTAR OF HEAVEN

E.C.Tubb
Arrow £1.75

24th in the Dumarest saga, as that indestructable hero, still hunted by Cyclans, continues his endless search for long-lost Earth. Opening with Dumarest and Vardoon in an accident which strands them in Arctic-like waste, they move on to Sacawenna to seek the rare drug 'Nectar Of Heaven'...and become involved in the plots and counterplots of a society which is based on ruthless power struggles. Its current ruler, aided by a Cyclan, seeks to entrap Dumarest... Once again, (as if we didn't know), Earl fails to find his goal, but in the meantime, his search allow you to relax and enjoy another action-packed adventure. One niggle though..why does he travel under his real name? Surely a few active computers would reveal him to the Cylans the very first time he bought a ticket somewhere? Any solution to that problem, Ted?

===== ADDENDA/ERRATA or what have you....

THE SCIENCE FICTION FILM SOURCE BOOK by David Wingrove...see page 25, is published by Messrs. Longman...which I neglected to mention...sorry, T.J.

SOME SUMMER LANDS

Set in 'Atlan' during Earth's distant past, this is the story of Seka, mute daughter of Ciza who, though married to Jane Gaskell Orbit, £2.50 General Zerd, carries the child of the man-ape Ung-g.

Zerd also has a consort Sedili who seeks vengeance on Ciza when the women accompany Zerd into battle against the Northern King. During skirmishes, Seka's mental powers develop until after escalating adventures, Atlan falls. The story is episodic, earthy..even sleazy but the characters (warts and all) develop in fascinating detail without the usual heroic stereotypes. Despite being the fifth in the 'Atlan Saga', the tale is complete in itself and a refreshing change from the more hackneyed S&S plots.

ICEHEDGE

In 2248, life expectancy is around 600 years when 80 year old Emma Weil, life support expert finds herself aboard a spacecraft taken over by mutineers. After aiding them to service and escape in a starship, she returns to Mars to oppose the ruling Committee in a last-ditch battle. 2547 sees Hjalmar Nederland, archaeologist, hunting for evidence of what really happened and proof of the Committee's guile. 2610 has Edmund Doya seeking proof of his theory about mysterious ice sculptures on Pluto..discovered in Nederland's time, and said by him to be left by the mutineers. Doya believes otherwise.

Those three separate yarns (originally from the magazines) link to form an intriguing, well-plotted whole...and cry out for a fourth part to resolve it all.... and NO it is NOT a 2001/'Sentinel' spin-off.

NORBY'S OTHER SECRET

14-year old Jefferson Wells Janet & Isaac Asimov (whose brother is called 'Fargo') has a robot named Magnet £1.50

Norby..telepathic, intelligent and possessor of a built-in anti-gravity system which is coveted by the Inventor's Union. Admiral Yobo warns Jefferson of this, and the frightened Norby hides briefly in hyperspace (another of his tricks), only to return pursued by a lion from the Roman Coliseum. Hardly has that been disposed of, than the IU men come after Norby, so Jefferson, Yobo and Norby retreat into hyperspace where they encounter.. but I'd better not say more and give things away. This is a fun juvenile with plenty of side sniggers, dragons, Mentors, pirates and the like. It follows the earlier, NORBY, THE MIXED UP ROBOT, and should make an ideal Christmas gift for any SF inclined youngster.

ALL THIS FLESH IS GRASS

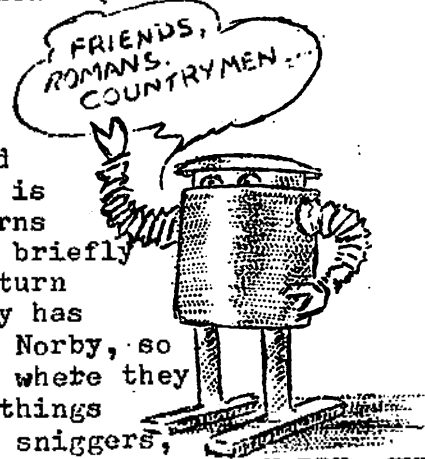
A force field englobes Millville and Brad Carter is pitchforked into acting as an ambassador for a flower intelligence seeking territory..which involves him in an interdimensional trip..and the enmity of the townspeople (who are beautifully portrayed) Tension mounts, but I was a bit disappointed with the denouement.

TIME AND AGAIN

After 20 years in space, Asher Sutton (complete with mind-partner) returns to a hostile reception, as a time-traveller has warned that he will write a book which causes an android revolt. Sutton is hunted by those wanting the book written, by those who don't, and by a man scared of the mindpartner. Both yarns are by Clifford D Simak in his inimitable

'folksy' style. Excellent reading and highly un-put-downable. A reminder though...both are re-issues, so check your memory banks before buying. If you haven't read 'em before, treat yourself for the Festive Season.

Published by Methuen at £2.50 each.



A QUIZ FOR OLD FOGEYS

How many of the blanks can you fill in ?

(And anyone else who
wants to have a go)

Arcot, Morey and appeared in a series by
 Professor wandered around with the machine men known as
 Kleon, Ward and appeared in the Past, Present & Future series
 written by
 Posi and were two atomic particles in a series by
 Ole Doc Methuselah had a tormal called in the yarns by
 wrote yarns about 'Life Bailey and partner
 The partner of R2D2 was another robot known as
 Colby was always hunting the criminal in a series by
 Kimball Kinnison was married to
 Gilbert had two brains in the Null A series by
 Passworthy and were the two main characters in the film
 Seaton and were two Skylarking heroes in a series by
 The Gray Mouser's partner was called
 Jay was a robot in Men, Martians and Machines by
 Adam was a robot created by the writer
 'Waldos' were invented by and Comsats were first written about
 by whilst first wrote about the oil-carrying 'Dracones'
 in the story which had three titles/...../.....
 The Vitons appeared in the lead story in the magazine
 The 1936, up-dated TWS ran a strip cartoon about a man called it
 was drawn by
 The word 'Scientifiction' was coined by Gernsback, but used it
 for the title of his early fanzine.
 The first issue of ERG appeared in the month of in the year
 Campbell introduced the following into Astounding, the machine for
 testing psi power, 'The Modern Science of Mental Health' and
 the Drive to power spaceships.
 A ride in an atomic-powered submarine was offered as a prize by.....

((The number of dots has no relation to the length of the missing word))

RATINGS

35 or over....You are a Secret Master of Fandom
 30-34 excellent, keep taking the tablets
 20-29 You show promise, even if you don't keep it.
 10-19 Trying...very trying
 Under 10 Why don't you read more science fiction?
 Over 44 You cheated, there are only 43.

ANSWERS
 Wade, J.W. Campbell, Jameson, Zoromes, Boltan, Nat. Schachner, Negro,
 Joseph H. Skidmore, Murgatroyd, Rene Lafayette (Hubbard), Isaac Asimov,
 R. Daniel Olafson, CPO, Deverel, Ross Rocklynne, Charles McDougall, Gosselin,
 A.E. Van Vogt, Cabal, Things To Come, Crane, E.E. Smith, Fohrd, Score,
 E.F. Russell, Link, Rando Binder, R.A. Heinlein, A.C. Clarke, F. Herbert,
 Under Pressure/Dragon In The Sea/21st Century Sub, Sinister Barrier,
 Unknown, Zarnak, Max Platsted, Gillings, April, 1959, Hieronymous, Dianetics,
 Dean, Galaxy.

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ERG 2
AWARD WINNER
Jeeves