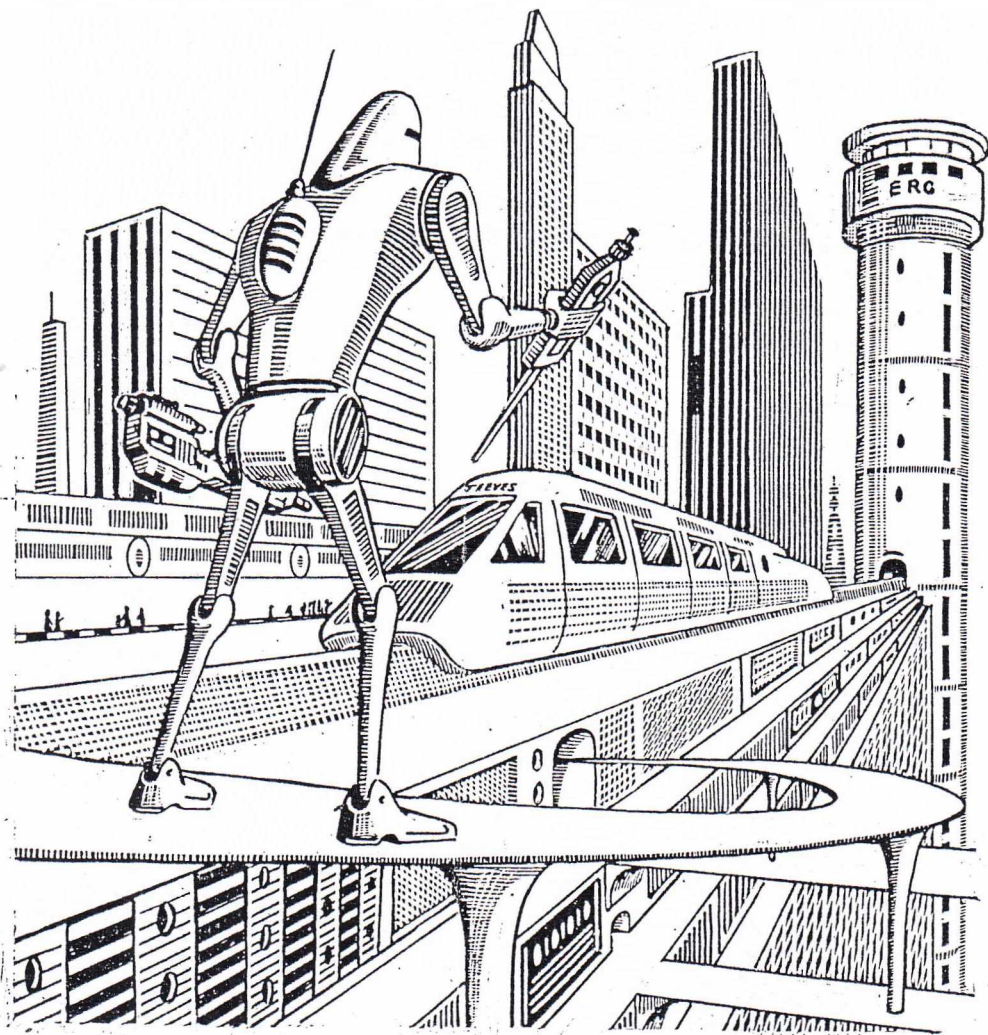


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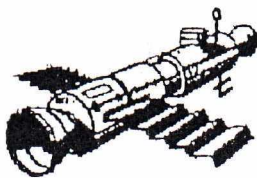
QUARTERLY

JANUARY 1999



ERG 144

JANUARY 1999



Terry Jeeves

56 Red Scar Drive

Scarborough YO12 5RQ

If you would like the next issue,
all you have to do is to respond to
this one

Greetings ERGbods,

Carrying out my regular ten-yearly sort out of the garage, I came across three battered filing boxes. Talk about a time capsule! They contained copies of much of my artwork and fannish writings over the last fifty years, including my first published fanstuff, *Insolation* and *Last Stage Reflectorsman*, from Ken Slater's *Operation Fantast*, circa 1948. Piles of other goodies from a variety of long-defunct fanzines, cover reproductions, a few actual fanzines such as *Double Bill.21*, *Quibble.2* and a diminutive *Fanscient*. Other rare items were two copies (1962 and 1966) of Ron Bennett's *Directory of SF fandom*, the first issue of *Platform the OMPA zine* put out by Eric Bentcliffe and myself and also a complete listing of the first five years of OMPA, its members and fanzines.

One find was the scraper-board original for the October 1983 ERG, so I decided to use it on this issue's cover, I hope you think it worth a second run. Most of the other articles and fiction are terribly dated, but one or two may stand reworking for use in a future ERG. I'll let you know when it happens, meanwhile, I really must check that garage more often.

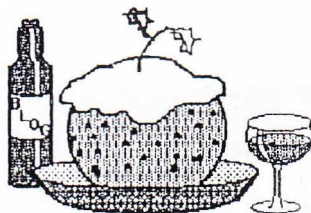
And now a thank you to Stateside readers, I appreciate all those who used Commemorative stamps on their LOCs especially Michael Waite who sent me a dollop of mint stamps as well as a LOC. If you have any unwanted American stamps kicking around, well I'd also appreciate them. No need to soak 'em off letters etc., just cut round the stamp, enclose with your LOC and I'll do the detaching.

This has been a time of everything going wrong. First the door catch on the car, jammed. Then the garden pool leaked, and so did a double liner repair job. The kitchen cooker grill packed up, the washing machine started leaking and the dish-washer stopped work. Then Val did a magic trick and turned the car into the gate-post

and to cap the lot, my innards started aching and baffled two doctors so I had a date with a specialist. He prodded me unmercifully in unmentionable places but could find nothing wrong - so now I await another appointment. Who said 'Life's rich tapestry'?

Meanwhile, Happy New Year

Terry



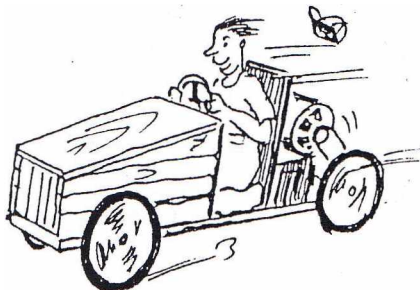
POPULAR HANDICRAFT AND MODERN EVERYDAY MECHANICAL SCIENCE MAGAZINES

To supply my demand for a regular supply of SF, I usually spent every Saturday morning doing a tour of all the local bookshops and market stalls. My favourite dealer had a pokey little shop cluttered with all sorts of worthless junk such as first editions of Dickens, Walter Scott manuscripts and Shakespearean folios.

Books were piled from floor to ceiling using up valuable space where more pulp magazines could have been stored. When the door bell rang, the old fogey who ran the place would emerge, spider-like, from a secret cavern hidden among the heaped volumes. This lurker in the bookpile had one redeeming grace, he kept all his pulp magazines in a cardboard box by the door so I didn't have to wade through all the other junk to find my favourite tipple. AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES, were stacked alongside Western, Sport and Detective magazines. I still have occasional dreams of finding such a treasure trove in some back street junk shop.



It was among these goodies that I encountered the 'Mechanics' magazines. 'EVERYDAY SCIENCE AND MECHANICS' was full of articles such as, "Look what they've invented now" or "What on Earth will they invent next?". POPULAR MECHANICS, MODERN MECHANIX and MECHANICS ILLUSTRATED also catered to the technically minded. They were crammed to the gunwales with such informative articles as 'Build an Olympic Swimming Pool in your back yard', or 'Make this dandy soap-box car powered by an old washing machine motor'. My family's washing machine had no motor, it was a pole with a handle at one end and three wooden prongs at the other. The technical name for this device was a 'posher'. With it, one first poshed the living daylights out of the week's wash in a galvanised iron tub, then wore holes in everything by rubbing the garments up and down a corrugated scrubbing board. A device which had a brief revival as a 'musical' skiffle board in the fifties. The actual washing version made a much better sound.



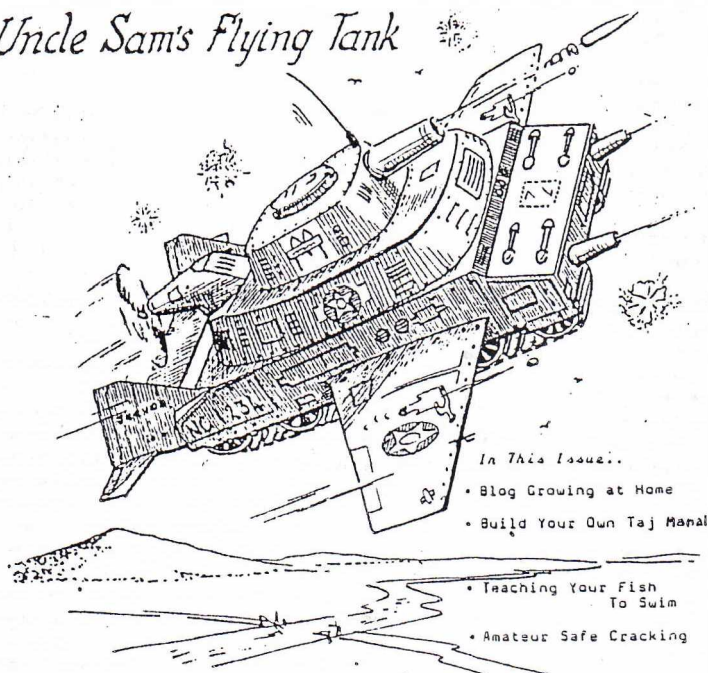
One of these magazines ran a regular monthly column giving informative details of 'How To Repair Your Refrigerator'. Our food cooling system never broke down -- it consisted of a stone slab hygienically stored down in the cellar -- where the food was

well protected from heat and germs by thick layers of coaldust and firewood splinters.

Judging by these magazines, all American homes seemed to have unlimited electricity (until 1938, our house was lit by incandescent gas-mantles). American homes also had devices called 'air-conditioners' whereas in England, we just opened the windows. Moreover they all possessed basement playrooms the size of a small tennis court. I suppose we could have played in our cellar, but it wouldn't have been much fun, playing on the coalheap by candlelight.

Despite these shortcomings, I enjoyed reading about various present, forthcoming and impossible inventions which were often illustrated on the magazine's cover where some totally incredible device would be shown as almost ready to appear on the market. Who could resist hazarding threepence to find out the wonderful details of "A mid-ocean platform for airliners" or "Uncle Sam's Flying Tank"?

'Uncle Sam's Flying Tank'



Among my earliest purchases were copies of EVERYDAY SCIENCE AND MECHANICS - which turned out to be edited by good old Hugo Gernsback. As well as the usual articles on the latest inventions or wondering what would come along next, there was also a speculation spot where Hugo told you just what to invent if you wanted to become a millionaire. One illustration for a money-maker showed a whole town going up in flames. In the centre of the holocaust, one house stood totally untouched. It had been coated with fireproof paint! The text pointed out, such stuff didn't exist as yet, but fortune awaited the person who could devise such a paint. Naturally, I set out to make some, but I'm afraid that my mixtures of water, dirt, old paint, salt, sugar, vinegar and anything else that was handy,

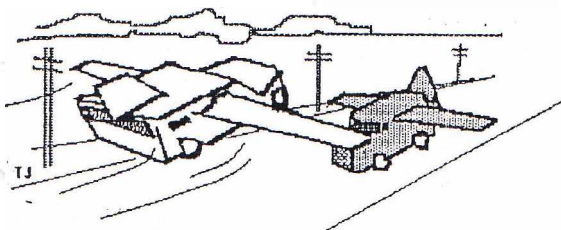
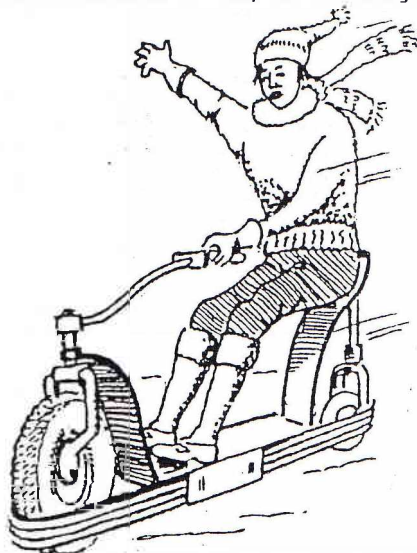
failed to protect the cardboard boxes I used for trial 'houses', so I never became a millionaire.

The January 1924 issue bore the headline, "\$12,000 IN GOLD OFFERED AS PRIZES"! On reading the small print inside, one discovered that this magnificent offer could not be won in one dollop, but was broken down over a year into twelve monthly chunks of \$1000 each. This sum was further subdivided into progressively smaller 'prizes' of \$100, £50 or less. This was payment for reader's, ideas, articles and photographs. Where the gold came in was never revealed. It was just Gernsback's way of filling his magazine by cheapskate payments.

The cover depicted a buxom female tootling merrily along on a bicycle which picked up its power from an underground cable. A form of transport which was 'soon to be tried in France'.

This was another typically Gernsbackian ploy whereby his more outrageous ideas (and non-existent inventions) were always being developed as far away from America as possible, usually in some part of darkest Europe where none of Hugo's readers was likely to be spending the weekend.

There was also a display of the winning designs in an earlier competition for budding toy-designers. Believe it or not, but the first prize of \$5.00 was awarded to a toy roundabout which was powered by cockroaches hidden inside its base! 'Latest Patents' showed us what inventors had in store. Illustrated was a winged car. The lift from the wing



One device which foreshadowed today's 'Spy in the cab', the Tachygraph, was a gadget reported to be 'of German manufacture'. Fastened to your car, it would immediately show if your chauffeur was taking illicit joy rides in your absence.

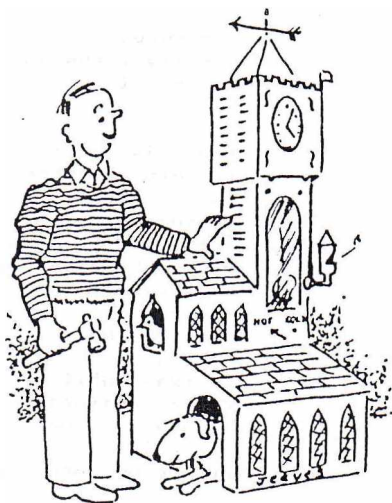
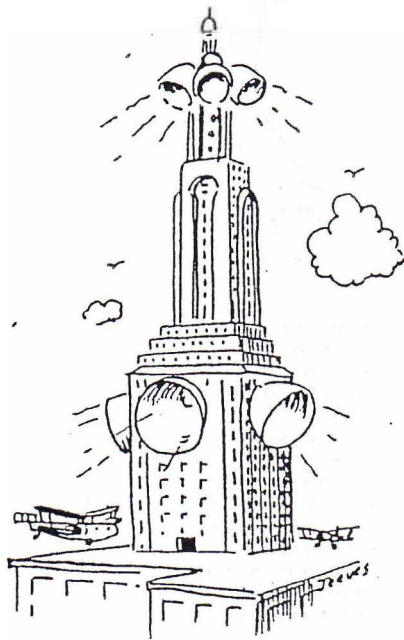
Gernsback also proposed that 'loud hailer's be mounted on the tops of city skyscrapers. Called 'The Municipal Announcer', they were meant to broadcast items of civic or national importance, along

would not only reduce tyre wear, but allow the auto to leap over an oncoming vehicle to avoid a head-on collision. No mention of what might happen if two such cars met and both made a high jump. Another bright idea was for a shoe-salesman's footstool which was to be equipped with a built-in air conditioner to waft away pongs from customer's feet.

with details of robberies, accidents, or murder. All this fascinating information would be heard 'up to five miles away'. To make matters worse, Gernsback's design also called for aircraft landing platforms on the lower decks to add to the racket. Presumably the people who were to live and work in these buildings would be recruited from the ranks of the stone deaf.

Salvaging sunken ships was not beyond Hugo's inventiveness. This was to be done by simply constructing a giant floating refrigerator, moving it into place, then sinking it down to surround the wreck. Turn on the electricity, freeze the derelict into a huge block of ice, and LO! Since ice floats on water, up would come the giant ice-cube bringing the wreck to the surface. It could then be towed home and defrosted again.

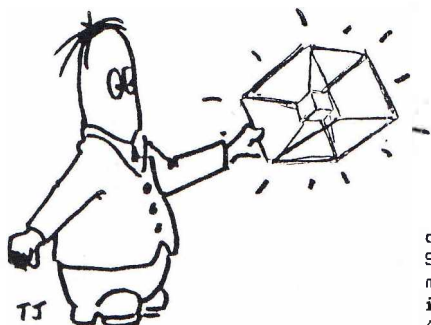
By the mid-thirties, MODERN MECHANIX, and MECHANICS ILLUSTRATED were more sophisticated versions in the science and technology field. Covers still supplied the lure to coax people into buying them. 'Uncle Sam's Flying Tank' has already been mentioned (whatever happened to it?), but we were still being told to expect such wonders as "A Mid-Ocean Aerodrome", "A Flying Car In Your Garage". and "Hydrofoil



Liners To Cross Atlantic At 100mph!" Inside the magazine, brief articles would waffle about the past history of such ideas, usually in some obscure work of fiction. The writers were very cagey as to how the wonders were actually going to materialise. The usual phrases being, "An inventor has designed..." or, "A German inventor has proposed...." I suspect whoever he proposed to must have turned him down, because I haven't seen many flying cars buzzing around.

Other articles told you how to build a hunting cabin in your back yard, turn an unused oil tank into a sunken swimming pool, make a xylophone from sticks of firewood, or build your pet poodle a doghouse in the shape of a church. Such ideas were fun to read about even though they were way outside the experience and lifestyle of a 12-year-old.

=====TJ



TIME FLIES

In those nostalgic, cliché-ridden pre-war days of the Science Fiction pulps, one of the most frequently recurring themes involved the Fourth Dimension. Authors loved using this concept since it allowed them to slip in

yards of extra wordage to pad the story to a greater length and thus up the payout. Rambling merrily along at X cents extra per noun, verb or adjective, a bearded old scientist would explain to his dim-witted, ex-college-boy assistant that if you took a point and moved it, that would generate a line. You then moved the line at right angles to the original shift and you got a plane. Move the plane and you had a cube. Having got so far, what could be simpler than to shift the cube at right angles to all previous directions so that you ended up with a hypercube or tesseract. Admittedly, the tricky bit was that last 90° shift of the cube, but if you first switched on the Professor's newly invented gizmo and held on tightly while doing so, then Presto! you found yourself in the Fourth Dimension. What you did there was up to you - and the writer's imagination.

All this upped the word count very nicely, but it assumed that any such extra dimension was one of length. Making that extra measurement one of time was a better bet and allowed even more explanation. You can locate any point on Earth or in the space above it by stating its Latitude, Longitude and Altitude, but if you want to meet somebody there, you must also specify when, and that is where your Fourth Dimension comes in.

In that case, by shifting that cube around, our 4-D travellers are actually moving in time, which of course leads us to another good old SF standby. Now of course at this point, we run slap bang into that Einstein Relativity equation

$$T^1 = T^2 \times \text{root } (1 - V^2/C^2)$$

This means that time passes more and more slowly for you as your speed increases. Oh you don't notice it, only an external observer would see you moving more and more slowly - until you reached light speed and appeared to freeze into immobility. If a hundred years later, your craft slowed down again, you would suddenly revert to a normal time-rate to find yourself a century or so in the future. Aha, time travel IS possible! .. but only one way.

Since then, writers have gaily travelled backwards, forwards and even 'Sideways In Time' (Murray Leinster, ASF 1934). They even thought up 'parallel universes', crazy idea until along came the Quantum theorists who postulate that another universe is created whenever a choice is made. Should you brush your hair or clean your teeth? Why bother with such weighty problems, a new universe where your alter egos have just done either or both, has just been created.

Despite this strange theory which is being put forward, quite seriously, by many respectable 'names' in the field of advanced physics; I find it hard to believe that when I decide to swap a comma for a semi-colon I assure the creation of a totally new cosmos interpenetrating but not affecting the 'normal' one in which I (and you) live. What sheer power at my fingertips! How daft can you get?

Let's get even dafter, fry the dilithium crystals and boost the rockets until you're belting along and exceed the speed of light. Ignore all that Pollyanna quibbling by the cleverdicks about the difficulty that to do this demands we solve an equation involving the root of a negative quantity - that's what mathematicians invented Operator j (or i) for. Electrical engineers do it three times a day before breakfast and think nothing of it.

If we accept that if we move more and more quickly, time can run slower and slower until it finally stops, then it seems perfectly logical to accept that if we keep on accelerating, time can eventually reverse direction and start flowing backwards. Bingo! we have a time travel device allowing us to visit the past. Just nip out to the backyard, knock together a spacecraft capable of exceeding c and away you boldly go where no man has gone before.

That backwards flowing time was another 1936 ASF story, 'Reverse Universe', by Nat Schachner. His space travellers were tootling happily along when 'Ka-pow', they were hit by a planet moving faster than c and hence everything on it lived backwards. For some reason, they kept living forward although I fancy they tended to grow younger. Even so, it must have been one hell of a bump when the planet hit them.

Going backwards in time is old hat, but most writers then have their characters living normally forwards from wherever and whenever they travel to in the past. Not so, the ailing ruler in 'The Emperor's Heart' by Henry J. Kostkos in a 1934 issue of Astounding. When fitted with a new ticker, (an operation impossible in the thirties), the Emperor began to live backwards and gradually regressed through adolescence, childhood and babyhood. Luckily for him, the process stopped just before he was due to re-enter the womb.

At this point, the life support machine was switched off and the infant resumed normal forward growth. The catch was the Emperor had changed sex and had now become a baby girl! To get around this without upsetting the populace, it was announced that the Empress had just given birth to a baby daughter. The yarn didn't explain how the new female infant was also her husband. Well, you can't expect authors to explain everything can you? Modern writers are always telling us that something must be left to the reader's imagination. Maybe those old pulpsters had something after all.

Funny to start by moving a point around and then end up with a sex-change, isn't it? Truly, there are more things in this universe that Horatio ever dreamed of.

THE OLD MILL STREAM A Column of City Life

by Penelope Fandergaste

I'm completely out of breath. I do hope it doesn't show. I'd hate you to find you're increasing your breathing rate either from subconscious imitation or out of misplaced but appreciated sympathy.

That's what comes from deciding I simply must get this written before I... Rather like those letter writers who sign off with what is imagined to be a highly inventive and original excuse for brevity, that they're in a rush to catch the post, as though that mailbox emptying was the final collection before Doomsday. And what excuse do they use with e-mail pray? But in my case it is getting this written before I collapse from sheer exhaustion. It's what comes of sitting down at the typewriter immediately after coming in from my early morning jog..

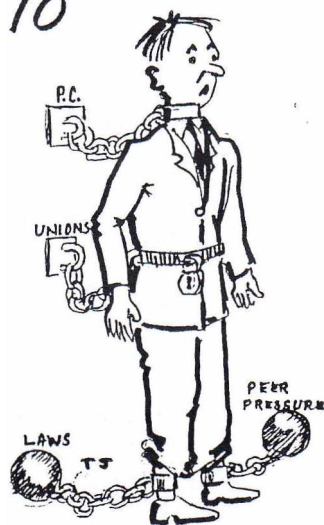
Yes, six ayem and irrespective of the weather, come rain, fog, hail or snow (or, where I live, any combination of all four), I'm out there joyously putting one foot in front of the other and running, actually running. Just like Bill Clinton when a camera's spotted by one of his security men, through the local park and back again. Puff puff and why on Earth do I put myself through this sheer torture@ It's hell out there I tell you.

The trouble of course is that I love my food. I'm one of those rare people who over-indulge. I was saying as much to Vince Clarke at the Glasgow World Convention when we were talking about food, but before we could develop the theme fully Vince was hauled away by some label-toting official in order to take part in a programme item or meet the press or buy her a drink, or towards whatever label-toting officials were directing people that day. Half the Convention attendees seemed to be bearing labels, all colours of the spectrum (the labels, not the attendees), and very nice labels they were too, ribbons like those awarded to the winning nags at show jumping events.

But, back to Vince. I vaguely remember that the conversation had started with an observation that there seemed to be an extraordinary number of obese people at the Convention. Some of them made Bill Donaho look like an anorexic Anthony Perkins. Of course, I fully realise that there might have only been one or two of these worthies at the Con and that their sheer space-filling presence made them conspicuous, particularly during the evening parties if one happened to stand on your foot

What hit me more than anything wasn't their size or their obesity, but the fact that they all seemed to have been Trekkies. Has anyone done a survey on the incidence of obese Trekkies at a Worldcon? Are there books of Venn diagrams available anywhere? Of course, it's all too easy to follow a tenuous link of pseudo-logic and attribute this obesity to these poor devils being couch potatoes who spend their entire lives munching hamburgers while wallowing in a constant 24 hours a day viewing of Star Tek videos.

But all the same I like my food and as I'm only about 40 pounds overweight... Yes, *only*... and as I have visions of my ballooning to perhaps 45 pounds overweight (by the end of the week that is), well I thought I'd do something about it. Which explains why, since that Convention, here I've been happily jogging away. Well, jogging away anyway. And don't be a smart ass and tell me I could eat less. Whenever was being told the truth any help at all?



Freedom

A few years back, in ERG 108, I nattered about sundry rights of the individual. Just for the hell of it, I feel like reworking the theme a bit in the light of more recent events.

Whenever the word 'freedom' is bandied about, much hot air gets expelled, chests get beaten and vocal chords are threatened by chronic laryngitis. This all seems rather puzzling since we all know what the words means - don't we?

Well, to avoid any misunderstanding I consulted a dictionary. I found that, among other things, freedom means the 'state of being free'. Very helpful indeed. The dictionary added that freedom also means 'non-slavery' and 'civil liberty'. Nice sounding phrases, the latter one in particular might stir some people to tell us that for many a long year, Communist citizens had little or no civil liberties and therefore could not be free. The Militant Left might counter that by saying that in such countries there are no profit-mongering capitalists or bureaucrats and that each citizen works for the good of the whole, with the 'State' freely telling everyone what to do. As for the Senator McCarthy era, what price American 'freedom' then?

Anarchists see things in a much simpler manner. 'Freedom is the ability to do whatever you want without anyone trying to stop you'. Anyone believing that is only likely to find his Nirvana on some desert island where he (or she) is the sole inhabitant. There, totally free of restraint, he can drive on either side of the road, spit on the sidewalk, smoke when, where (and what) he pleases or blast his eardrums with 500 watts of the bang-bang-thump which some call 'music'.

However, such 'freedom' is anti-social in any group larger than one. Some civil liberties must be proscribed for the general benefit of all. We drive on one side of the road for safety and to expedite travel. We avoid spitting on the sidewalk for health reasons, there are even laws (are they ever applied?) to stop people dropping litter in the streets or playing their ghetto blasters in public.

Nowadays the big time media grabber is usually 'the demo'. Wherever a tree is to be felled, a statue erected or a by-pass built, you can usually count on a bunch of opposers climbing the tree, impeding the bulldozers or just standing there with mis-spelt placards determined to put an end to whatever they hate. Ok, there are arguments on both sides, but the bottom line is that one or the other has their freedom eroded - either the developer gets his way or the protester.

11

So just what freedoms do we have? The rights to thinking and breathing are pretty certain. I'm not so sure about talking or writing in these days of witch-hunts of those who fail to toe some politically correct line - the 'fatwa' against Salman Rushdie is one case. Another outstanding item which receives much publicity is a 'worker's right to strike'. This seems an untouchable right, but it has a few strings attached which many people conveniently overlook. Any worker should be allowed to withhold his own labour - unless he has previously signed a contract to the contrary. I'm all in favour of that, BUT, that worker is then in breach of contract and must be prepared to face the consequences of his act - such as a shortage of money and food (why should others pay his Social Security handout?). Then there's the suffering of his family which he, not some mythical employer or State brought about. These conditions are caused by the worker, nobody else.

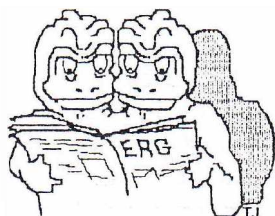
Much was said of the hardship to miners' families during their strike. Little was said of the plight of those whose livelihood depended on the miners working. Many small shopkeepers in mining areas went bankrupt. They extended credit to the strikers, but with no money coming to them as Strike Pay or Social Security handout. They were worse off than the strikers. Even after the strike, many were saddled by the burden of unpaid 'credit'.

A corollary of 'right to strike' should surely be 'right to work'. If you don't want to strike, then why should pickets, secondary picketing and intimidation prevent you from ignoring the strike call. This is where that freedom gets eroded. Trade Unions and 'closed shop' tactics soon dump on the would-be worker. Trade Unions can be good and protective affairs working for the general good of the worker, but when they extend their power to encourage 'secondary picketing' to close down other industries they go too far. Why should the Nit-Pickers Union be able to put member if the 'Cheese-Benders Amalgamated' out of work?

Then again what 'freedom of choice' does a 'closed shop' allow of whether or not to join? Definitely not, so more freedom erosion. For many years I was a member of the National Association of Schoolmasters, then they called a strike over an issue with which I didn't agree. I duly came out on strike, but when the strike was over, I wrote deploring the action, resigned from the NAS and joined a different Union. That was freedom. But had I stayed out of all Unions I suspect that my Education Authority would have uncovered some sort of 'closed shop' to ensure that I did join a Union.

I recall two classic examples of Union thinking. The first came just after the war when I had a waiting-for-college job in a shop. The employers of the city shops proposed a reversion to pre-war closing times of 6pm weekdays and 8pm on Saturdays. A Union meeting was called where it was proposed that we accept this imposition because it "...would strengthen our bargaining position in any future deals." If you think that's daft, I met a similar nitwitty when I was a teacher. The Education Authority wanted to make compulsory, the hitherto 'voluntary' dinner duty imposed during wartime. Our Union suggested we all kept on doing it, but that it be termed a voluntary duty with nobody refusing the chore.

Freedom means different things to different people. It's all around us, but it isn't easy to define, and even harder to grab.



FABLES OF IRISH FANDOM.1

Ken cheslin, 29 Kestrel Rd., Halesowen, W.Midlands. B63 2PH. A massive, 70pp collection of the time-binding John Berry yarns of days gone by in Irish Fandom. Lovey stuff and if that isn't enough you get all the original and wonderful Atomillos beautifully reproduced. Get it while copies last, for £2.00 a throw.

THE 1999 CALENDAR is also available from Ken. Each A4 page has a Kench cartoon and a date panel. If

you want to remain fannish through 199, write for a copy now -- no price given.

OUTWORLDS.70 Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503 USA

Striking cover followed by 140 beautifully produced pages crammed with articles, artwork and photos. There's a comprehensive (but tricky) Index, Bill declares "I don't do policy anymore", but I don't believe that. Dig into a real feast of goodies, 'names' and excellent artwork with Alan Hunter's superb work topping the lot. Get it for editorial whim, \$7.50 or £4.60 Read and enjoy.

VANAMONDE 273.274.275,276 & 277 Comes from John Hertz, 236 S.Coronado St., No.409, Los Angeles, CA 90057 USA Each issue is a single sheet (2 sided) holding a news item followed by comments on John's apa (Apa-L ??) Not being a member I'm afraid the comments are over my head. If you're into apas, you might faunch copies from John.

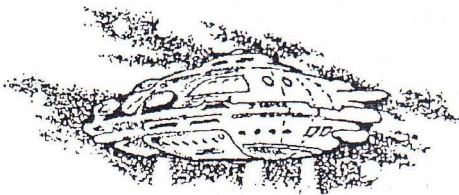
FOSFAX.192 72 pages of very small print from FOSFA, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281 USA. The Official Organ of Falls of Ohio Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, it contains sundry articles, Con and trip reports, news, reviews and oodles of LOCs. \$3.00 a throw but a crawling letter may get you a copy.

LETTERSUB.19 from Terry Hornsby, 66 Johns Ave., Lofthouse, Wakefield WF3 3LU has 16 pages of personal natter, fascinating news snippets, locs and 'Small Talk! on interviews etc., Nice, lighthearted and friendly. Get it for the usual.

MEMORY HOLE, Greg Pickersgill, 3 Bethany Row, Narberth Rd., Haverford West, Pembrokeshire SA61 2XG Not a fanzine but a repository for them from which you can faunch literally thousands of fanzines to boost your collection, or get rarer items on loan.

They also have over a hundred back issues of ERG if you're missing a copy. No fee, you just pay postage. Drop Greg a line, he also is glad to accept your old fazines. An inventory of the Permacollection is available on disc at WWW.GOSTAK.DEMON.CO.UK

SKUG.14 from Gary Mattingley, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin, CA 94658 USA. 60pages, full-colour card covers with natter on work, music, PCs, movies, TV and so on. There are pieces on teenage sex, architecture, Con coverage, Mac Strelkov discusses Chinese (I think), also blank verse and oodles of LOCs. Nicely varied and friendly, try 'the usual.



LETTERS



Alan Sullivan, 30 Ash Rd., Stratford, LONDON E15 1HL 'The Ads': Advertising seems to be aimed at much the same sort of people regardless of the era. The dissatisfied, the unfulfilled, the stupid, the greedy. Likewise the techniques.

Wish-fulfillment, promises of something for nothing and the good old triple S factor (Sex Sells Stuff). These ads are still alive and well - or at least their modern counterparts - in a variety of magazines like Fortean Times and SFX. Wealth, power, Enlightenment, Forbidden Knowledge, sex, memory improvements, drugs and fake IDs. Air Cars: Now we're getting into the *really* weird-and-wonderful. I remember the heli-car from 'Things To Come' - the dead-spit of an autogyro (except they can't do VTOL). Some interesting designs but most of them seem to involve marrying the conventional car to the existing aeroplane. *[Sorry to limit the BEST LOC I've ever had, but space always calls the tune.]*

Vince Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, KENT DA16 2BN

Aircars, surprising and interesting. Can't see how you could regulate traffic if they became popular - unless some sort of radar was used to fend off other stuff. Be like a fairground bumper track otherwise. Hunting, marvellous article - not what I expected at all from you. It occurred to me that the hunting lobby reject the idea of shooting foxes because of the possibility of merely wounding one *[Can't see that bothering 'em]* and leaving it to die in pain.. If there was a real plague I would have thought it useful to put the Army on the job with automatic guns. A fox isn't going to get up with half-a-dozen rounds inside it *[I suspect the same would apply to a few unlucky soldiers.]*

Alan Burns, 19 The Crescent, Wallsend-on-Tyne, NE28 7RE

Aircars, reminded me of a tale in Analog of a Russian inventing a personal flying unit. The Red Army got it and were invading, but the West carefully sent great droning bombers as the story said, scattered the Army and again everyone might as well go home and cook dinner. Fox Hunting, as Oscar Wilde put it, "the unspeakable after the uneatable", but as for damages to fences etc. the hunt usually pays in collusion with the farmers who probably ride themselves. *[Now That would be a gymnastic trick]*

John Rupik, 59 Beech Rd., Armthorpe, Doncaster DN3 2DZ

I liked the latest issue, particularly the article on adverts in old pulp magazines. It was pure nostalgia. That, combined with comments made about slipsticks started me thinking about some of the old SF stories set in the future. In particular, post 2000AD stories in which sliderules were still a major calculating tool. Perhaps you could draw on your knowledge of early pulp stories to do an article about similar anachronisms caused by technological changes since the pulps were written. *[That's a tempting idea, maybe I'll work on it.]*

Ken Lake, 36 Barrington Rd., Loughton, Essex IG10 2AY

Interested to see three aircars called "roadables" - I thought the word was a Heinlein invention, but obviously he stole it. You've missed out the only aircar I recall seeing photographed and described pre-war: The Flying Flea (Possibly French, La Petit Pouce?) Do you know of this? [*The Flying Flea {Pou de Ciel} made by Mons Mignet was an ugly biplane without folding wings and not a road vehicle*] and if you're going to include the Pitcairn Autogyro you should include the original Spanish one - which I saw take off from Chobham aerodrome c1937 flown by its inventor Cuerva. [*The Pitcairn had no sticking out wings, but folding rotors for in traffic. The Cierva had sticking out stub wings and no folding rotors, it was NOT a roadable vehicle.*]

William Danner, R.D.1, Kennerdell, PA16374, USA

I almost passed up 'Hunting' I enjoyed it greatly for your opinion is about the same as mine. Living in an area visited by many from the cities to indulge in a bit of killing, I've never even had a gun in my hands.. Your article made me think of an old definition: "A horse show is a bunch of horses showing their asses to a bunch of horses' asses showing their horses" Long ago I was acquainted with a guy who had one of those 22-tube Midwest radios, he said it worked very well. One of the clerks in a big radio supply place once showed me in a repair manual the circuit of a Philco 7-tube receiver. Two of the tubes had their heaters connected so they would light and the grid of each was connected to the plate of the other with no other connections to them. [*Well at least it had two spare valves handy.*]

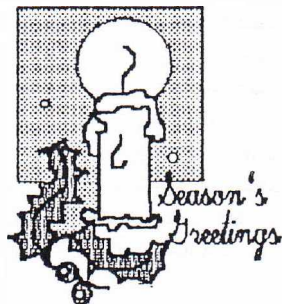
John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St., #409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, USA

No doubt you realise Hugo Gernsback's imagining radar couldn't invalidate later patents because a patent doesn't protect an idea, but a workable application. [*Well I recall reading an article yonks ago which stated just that. Anybody know for sure?*]

Arthur C. Clarke dreamt up geosynchronous communication satellites before there was a way to get them. No patent. You could hardly expect me to applaud your savaging of tea-parties - so I do. Just think what women could write of various pseudo-social affairs men drag them to - say, office parties, ending "I told you men were different"

Geoff Barker, 19 Oldfield Grove, Stannington, Sheffield S6 5DR., S. Yorkshire.

I enclose an article about the iceberg airfield you mentioned. It comes from a gaming magazine called Wargaming Illustrated. See what you reckon. [*Fascinating, I was sure I'd read of one somewhere, obviously, not the one you sent, but seems my memory was OK*] Have you seen Mile Don's 'Dreamberry Wine' catalogue shown in the EMU adverts on TV?. The lead character throws an envelope on a pile in a tray and the top one was, you guessed it, 'Dreamberry Wine'. [*haven't seen it, but I'll watch out now - even if it means watching adverts.*]



Gene Stewart, Old 815, 1710 Dianne Avenue, Bellevue, NE 68005, USA Too many writers who would not bother with genre writing are forced to try it these days in order to break into published status. Readers who remember when SF was different, recall when SF was more than just a cynical market spin put on whatever book they've got on hand to fill the category slots are fewer every month. *[Too true = and panic, I just mailed you a load of books and omitted the street and house number from the address. Hope you can intercept 'em at the Post Awful]*

Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, N.Yorkshire YO17 9ES A fascinating look at aircars. As you say, more suited to America than Britain; but back in the days when politicians were promising a chicken in every pot and futurologists a car on every lawn, why did they never take off? (To coin a pun). You still occasionally see new variants on TV news bulletins; but do they ever go into production, or do they remain one-offs? Be interesting to read from your American readers maybe, as to whether there are any in daily use. *[I suspect the snags and poor performance make them little more than gimmicks unsuited to everyday]*

C.W.Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA30047-4720

I remember the ads for muscles, batteries and razors, but never felt moved to try any of those things. Battery technology was always pretty stable and one brand much like another, and I only tried a razor a few times. I have used an electric razor since college. The whisky and 22 tube radio ads must have been before my time. Couldn't you use more tubes in a radio by running them at a lower gain and chaining several in series? *[Theoretically yes, but you'd introduce more distortion and background noise.]* Just as well the aircar never became a consumer item, the way most people here drive on the ground I would hate to think of them being able to get overhead.

[I fully agree]

Ron Bennett, 36 Harlow Park Cresc. Harrogate, N.Yorks HG2 0AW The Ads, a very nice extensive survey. But don't mention Charles Atlas to me. I really did have sand kicked in my face when I was a spotty youth and actually paid for the Charles Atlas course. After a couple of months I went back... hey, just realised... It was on Scarborough's South Bay near the waffle stall. I went back really confident of sorting out the bully in question. Got rocks kicked in my face. How was I to know that he'd taken the course too? *[Life is tough!]*

Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Rd., Halesowen, West Midlands B63 2PH If the real object of fox hunting was to 'control' the fox population - I reckon that the cost of the hounds, hesses and fancy dress would be enough to hire some marksmen to shoot foxes and still have money left over. Hunting for food I think is OK, but to kill animals for 'fun' or 'sport' can't be justified. I have no objection to the huntspeople drawing lots and hunting each other. *[Great idea.]*

Ted Hughes, 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield, Manchester
M45 8ER

Your piece on 'Ads' in the old pulps revived memories. I hadn't realised how familiar I was with many of them.. Those old mags wouldn't be the same without Charles Atlas' muscles, the radio repairman's self-taught ability and the detective telling the copper who to arrest. I suppose we should be grateful to them, because they made Astounding and the rest financially viable. 'Bright Spark' also revived memories. I can remember the first 'spark' transmitter I encountered. It was in the wireless cabin of the S.S.Peterton, and was big enough to stand up in. When I pressed the key to talk to a Canadian lakeboat that had come down the St.Lawrence with us, you could have heard (and smelled) it for miles.



Greg Pickersgill, 3 Bethany Row, Narberth Rd., Haverford West, Pembs. SA61 2XG

The 'Ads' article interested and amused me. I'm a keen magazine collector, but more for ancillary material (editorials, reviews, letters and ads) than the fiction itself, even though I believe there's a strong vein of never-reprinted but excellent material still in the magazines for some anthology editor to find. What's so fascinating about those ads is that they're so much more literal than most advertising today, which adopts a much more oblique tone and in doing so, credits the viewer/reader with a lot more word and visual sophistication. Ads today are much more stylish, inventive and genuinely artistic than they used to be. *[And often more incomprehensible.]* OK, I have to say that a lot of advertising from the Twenties and Thirties was VERY strong graphically.

EDITORIAL NOTE. After the recent mention of slide-rules in the LOCcol, I decided to dig mine out along with my old four-figure log tables and see how they (and pure noggin powe) compared with three modern calculators - a cheapo, a medium price and a more expensive one. Just to keep life easy, I did a simple calculation using each method, 12 divided into 3456. Here are the results.

Pencil and paper 2.88, Slide-rule 2.89, Logarithms 2.88 and all three calculators 2.88. On another run, 123 into 456, the slipstick came up with 3.76, all the other ways produced 3.7073. Bearing in mind that I only used to use the slipstick as a quick check on longer log calculations, it seems clear it comes close enough for most uses -- and I bet a skilled operator could beat a button-pusher for speed. T.J.

And remember, next issue is ERG's 40th. Annish, a LOC on this issue will make sure you get it.