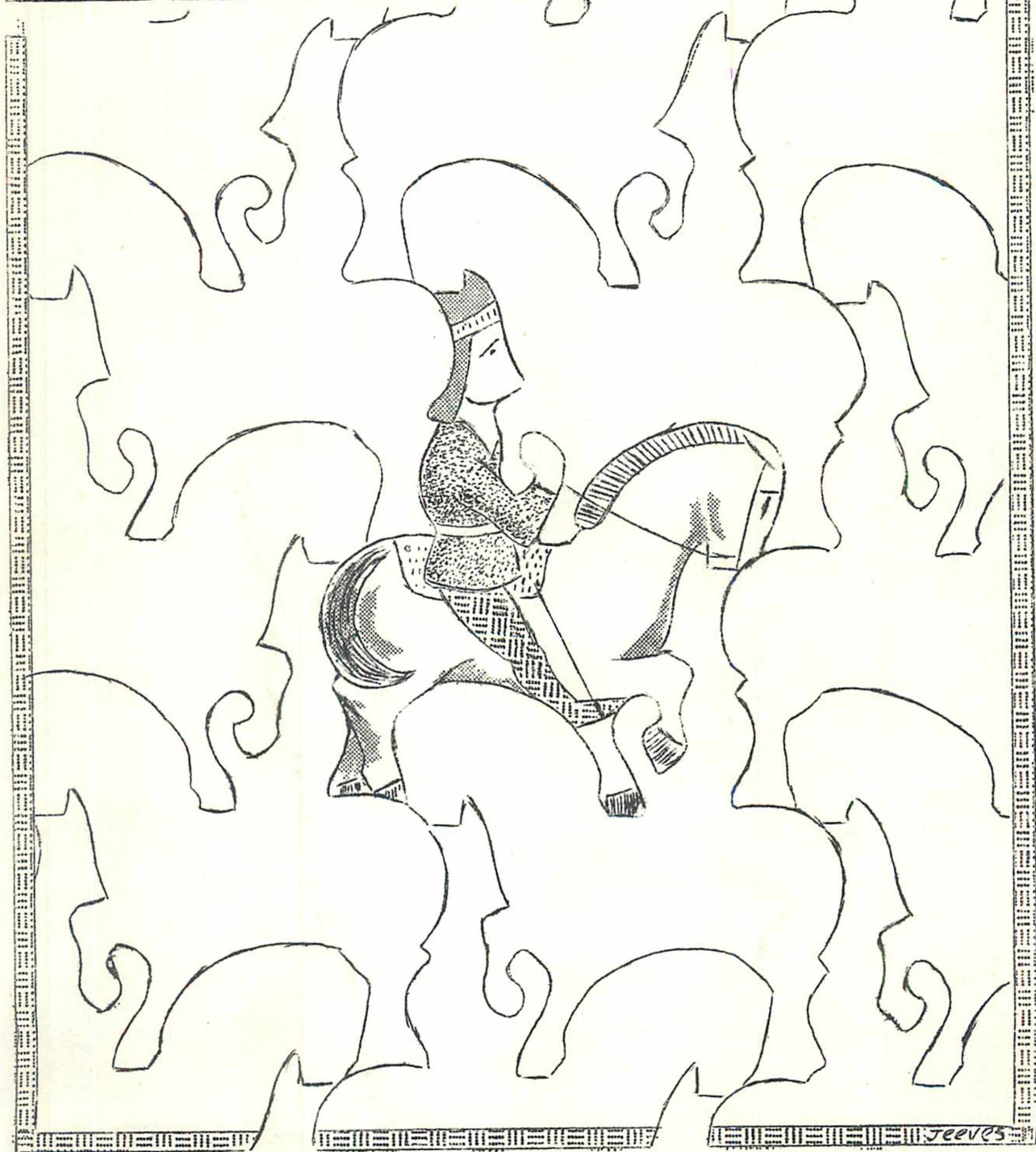
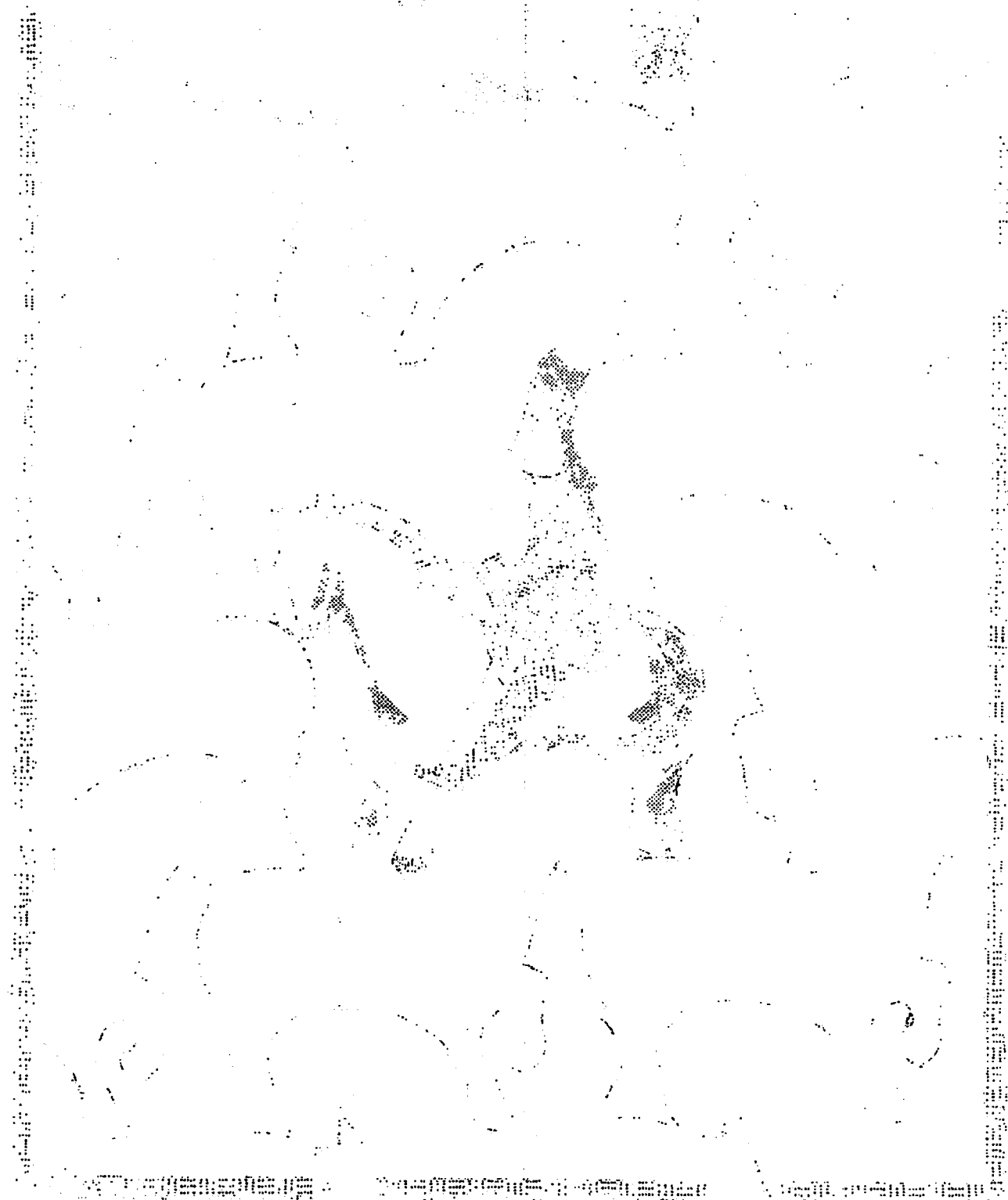


ERG

39

July 1972







Greetings ERGbods,

I am starting this on a bitterly cold day in March (yes Ernyntrude, I actually do work that far ahead with ERG), and have just returned from running Sandy and her multifarious friends down to their dancing class. Good kind wife Val took pity on my frozen face, and offered me a hot Bovril. When it came, I was amazed to find that it was coffee...and even more amazed to find on drinking it that it was actually Bovril which she had absent-mindedly made with milk! Ah well, fen are notoriously ready to try something new...this time I hit her with the coffee percolator instead of the kitchen table.

And now for a brief word to the slogan-lovers in our midst. I am getting a teeny weeny bit tired of being called 'reactionary Fascist' because of my views on the Belfast bastards (the ones who plant bombs wherever women and children are gathered together). If you can use any sophistry to excuse such indiscriminate bomb-planting, then go ahead, disagree with me by all means..even move to live with the ones whose actions you admire..in Belfast. Do this, but for Ghu's sake find out what a 'reactionary Fascist' is before you call me one. A reactionary, is one who is 'retrograde or conservative' in politics. I am not particularly conservative (though I prefer them to Wilson's shilly-shally..but if retrograde means going back to the pre-bomb peace, I suppose you might term me a reactionary...Fascist now, 'anti-democratic and opposing Communism'. Well, I oppose Communism, but I am very much in favour of Democracy...which means that you elect rulers and abide by their laws for the good of all....not that you heave bombs at your fellow voters. So disagree with me if you will, but on reasonable grounds, and not by sticking incorrect labels on me. And while on the topic, I'd like to hear just HOW my opponents justify the cowardly placing of bombs in public places? And please don't bring up the end justifying the means, or the chestnut about 'unfair rule in Ireland'. Things may well need rectifying, but NOT the way of the IRA. And if you support their actions, then you're not a fascist, but a fathead.

The Chestercon is over (sob), but while it lasted, it was a grand affair. Once again, on a personal note, I thought the actual programme was too s & c for me. I get bored by panel discussions and big name authors answering feeble questions..but that is just my taste. Incidentally, for next year's Con, I've proposed a full scale debate between two three-author teams; A 20 Question audience participation panel game and several more items which allow the attendee to get in on the action. Let's hope they catch on and we can get back to fun programmes for 50% of the time. On the social side, I really enjoyed meeting old friends, the friendly hotel staff, the excellent huckster and art rooms, both far better than that ghastly dungeon at Worcester,



Best Magazines

Hell 4
Viewpoint 7
Lurk.1.

Best Covers

Is 3
Gothique Era
Hell 4

And now for the rest of the mailing

OFF TRAILS 65 Well produced and a credit to your hard work. I only hope an OMPACON added to your labours will not cause you to Fafiate. Also liked the poll reminder, and enjoyed meeting up with you again at Chester.

LURK.1. A very good first ish. and one which nearly had me

putting the wrong title on this page until I spotted that tiny 'LURK'. A nice contents page, some nice little il'os, and an excellent Xword which at the moment has me stymied on four clues. Don't agree with your Con film views though...so what if Barbarella has been on general release, I missed it then, and was very glad to see it at a Con..and when I've seen private films at cons they have usually been ughish. I also enjoyed 'Jester's Tale' and the 'Avengers' episode. ERG.1. didn't have a plea for material, and I have never needed to stop and wonder what to put in it, so Pfooeey to Pete Weston's comments. I just may reprint the Who's Who, but again, with less than ten letters per issue, I very likely may not. I enjoyed your Ompa reviews (Ta muchly for the nice words) but would say anent you query to Hell.3 if anyone would be deterred by paying the full rate for not exceeding activity..course not, but it would be a nice little gesture of appreciation for those who do. Since you are now the official Fanzine Foundation custodian, I have a suggestion for you to take up with Kench (and other Ompans) Instead of leaving donations to chance, why not add the BSFA foundation to the mailing list next to the British Museum..after all, the BSFA has probably got more interest in getting copies. As for shading mats, you can try different sandpaper grades..or Gestetner direct, I wouldn't rely too much on what other dealers say about their non availability. Final guess..I bet either you or Pat are left-handed. Enjoyed meeting you both at the Con...nice people. See you next year.

RAINBOW IN CURVED AIR. I agree with your comments that people who accept Whitehall's benefits should also be more ready to accept things which they don't like so much. I like my city's libraries, parks, clean buses and streets even though I don't like paying the rates to support them...but I realise they are essential. I also agree with you against reducing activity, why make it easy for freeloaders? I'd increase the page count. As to Oz...this never worried the establishment, it is just puerile smut on a poor fanzine level.

LODBROG.4 Very neat repro from a method which I can't get to produce neat handwritten copies.

I was tickled by your promise to 'hit each mailing with Lodbrog'..cruel thing. Thanks for the open letter, but sorry Erg-mentioning seems so prone to disaster. Maybe if you tried saying "ERG is best - with salt and vinegar" it might help. By the way, what is/are/was a Lodbrog ?

HELL 4 How the heck do you manage to come up with such a good magazine so often ?

Liked the Lisa cover, and also the interiors.

Page numbers..good, but don't agree on John

Schoenherr, not being enamoured with his

Henry Moore like Bandage draped figures.

Seale's space thing..almost an impressive

list of British rockets, but only Blue

Streak was ever likely to be much deep

space use....and as for listing us as one of

the countries having a solo stake in space....How many satellites have we

put into orbit using OUR OWN rockets ??? Well ?. Let's face it, as a

space power, we're a non starter. Mike Meara has a nice piece, but I'm

tired of people quoting to me, "There are only five plots.." or jokes

etc. So let's hear WHAT the five are..with reasons.. Erg & electros..I

just never got around to using them as it is so much easier to sit and

watch telly as I cut a hand illo...and no patching in later. Confrontation

looked very much like a Don Morgan drawing..how come ? Jazz guitar's

are not my bag, so No comment. Nice thick zine, interesting material

and good letters. Keep it up chums.

FETV 6 has an interesting cover...microphotograph of a squashed earwig ?

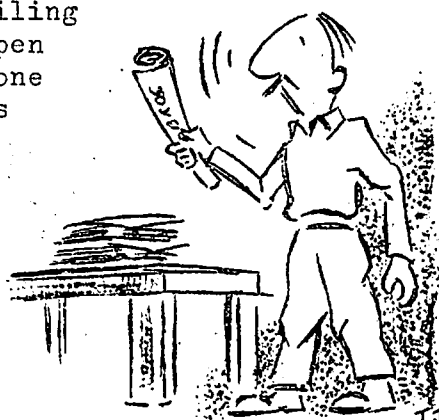
Cornish corn isn't high on my list of compulsive reading, but I like the pasties and cider. As for Artisan's pay, the only follow up must be 'What a Grecian Urns' I liked the newspaper extracts, and hope you can continue this item..but I didn't think much of my invisible illo.

MESCIFIC//VIEWPOINT 6. Well, this was very much a Chinese puzzle to read owing to the system used (i.e. shuffle,

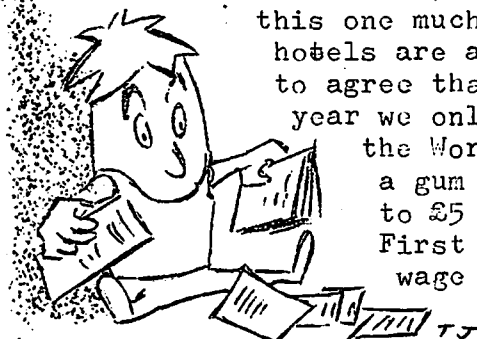
deal and staple, plus numerous blank pages. Why not decide on how many pages you want, assemble a dummy and number its pages, then dismantle it and use this as a guide to typing up half a stencil at a time. That way it all first together on collating. Liked Tony Rogers on UFO's, but you bugged me on the quiz by putting the answers in No.7 and I inadvertently read this one first. NO.7 I liked the 'Etchasketch ?' cover and found

this one much easier to read. Agree with you that overspill hotels are anathema..but what else can you do ?. I tend to agree that the BSFA should use a smaller hall, this year we only had about 60 members attending. Again, the Worcester con rep was good. Chris Priest is up a gum tree by saying that book prices will be up to £25 in less than five years, so start saving. First they are virtually there now, and second wage inflation will keep their relative cost

static with respect to salaries. But since I rarely buy hardcover s&f, I'm not worrying. Much better illos in 7. and great meeting you at the Con.



" HITTING EACH MAILING WITH LODBROG "



' TRYING TO SORT OUT MESCIFIC 6 '

18 I've already commented on this in a separate LOC, but I'd still like to offer up a prayer of thanks for the excellent artwork, particularly those excellent Pesch covers...and interiors. My LOC on the next issue should have reached you at the Arctic circle by now, so all I can say is that IS is a great magazine.

NOTH.9 A crafty bit of handworked cover which by its sheer simplicity manages to be very appealing. See you want to understand binary numbers. Simple, decimalwise, we count up to 9 and then next number makes a ten, so we put a 1 in the tens column and a zero in the units. Binary is likewise, but we count in twos. When you get a two, you put a 1 in the twos column, and a zero in the units, so that 2 is written in binary as 10, three is 11, four is 100 and so on. For a full system see relevant back issue of ERG.

RAVE REVIEW Boardman is an utter twit. He may have some valid points, but even if he does, he destroys them by his insanely hysterical outburst.

UL. Agree with you that Chandler's best were the two you mention. As for my not mentioning that Russell wrote 'Mechanical Mice' as Hugi...it wouldn't alter my point about the similarity of 'Reproductive System'

WHATSI? 23. Another crafty Kench cover...you are a hero. Yes, the muchiest part of Sheffield is called Brightside...but its neighbour slum is 'Salmon Pastures'...from the days when it was true. But nowadays, Sheffield is the cleanest and most park studded city in Britain. YES it is! This argument, "why go into space when we can use the money on Earth" is rather analagous to saying, "Why pay Income Tax or Local Rates to improve country and city, when we could spend the dough to improve our own homes and gardens." An insular outlook. In case you are still wondering about 'What a cover!' I like your covers. Like your idea of a personality quiz with an s-f slant. I've long held a theory that s-f fan give us an insight into their private worlds when they put on fancy dress at cons.. Yes no? Also agree with you that New Worlds (and editors) can only blame themselves for folding if they print the rubbish they did, so that few buy it. Also liked Jean's bit, but it needed larger paragraph spacing to break it up.

PHENOTYPE My fantastic colour method is to use Banda spirit duping plus a second Gestetner run. Fret not, Carry On Jeeves may yet be back. Can I suggest a 'squirt of Squid' as the collective noun? Nice cover, but only ONE staple...fie

GOTHIC ERA. Nice cover, but I'm not a horror/fantasy fan, so to comment might not be really fair...but I was/am a Karloff fan, and think he was a vastly under-rated actor. How about more paragraph spacing in items to break up the solid mass of print?

GENERAL NOTES I thought this a much better mailing, and personally think that a smaller active membership is better than a full 50 who fail to produce. With only fifteen mags per mailing, it makes full mailing comments more practical. COMPLAINT. with staples so cheap, why must we have so many one-staple flimsies?? And why don't more faneds take enough pride in their zines to plan them and number the pages?? Meanwhile, here's to future mailings as interesting as this has been, and regards to all those of you I was able to meet at Chester.

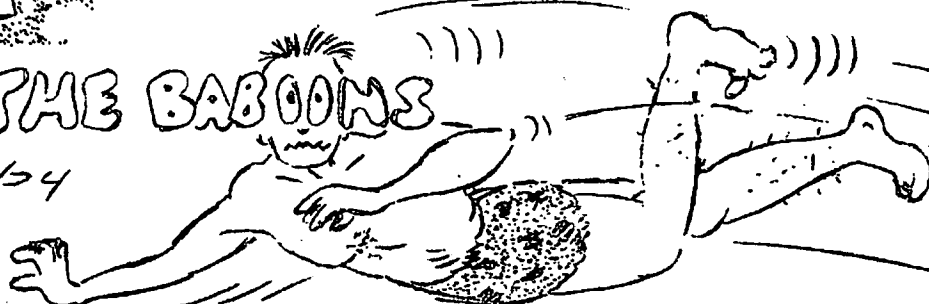
Terry.

NARTAZ

OF THE BABOONS

154

Terry Jeeves



"Hooooo.....ooo...ooey !" The spine-curdling battle call of Nartaz of the Baboons ricocheted through the jungle glades, cannoned off the breadfruit trees and finally vanished into a pocket in the rocks. N'Godli, the savage quivered in his kraal. N'Tidi, the water buffalo winced in his water hole, and even N'Fair, the cheetah quivered among the cumquats which lined the banks of P'Toocy, the river. Full well did the jungle denizens know and fear the mighty call of Nartaz, the call which presaged a combat to the death, inevitably fatal to the one luckless enough to lose his life in the forthcoming encounter.

Nartaz himself did not tremble, his eardrums had long since shattered from the strain of his war-cry. Instead, he stood rooted to the spot, paralysed with the emotion which had evoked the call. Raised from a child by a faithful wart-hog, the young Lord Branestroke faced his fearsome opponent, Kaput the man-ape. For years rivalry had existed between these two. As children they had happily battered each other with stone-axes, or playfully pushed each other into the crocodile-infested streams which fed the mighty P'Toocy. Kaput had long coveted the treasured miki stone which hung in polished sleekness from a thong encircling the neck of Nartaz. Today, the thong had parted, the stone had fallen into Kaput's ready hand, and he had taken the miki from Nartaz. The jungle Lord had invoked the ancient law...he and Kaput must fight.

"Aa...u...gah", Kaput's cry shook the whispering grasses as the man-ape charged. His mighty arms opened to crush the young Lord Branestroke. His yellow fangs gaped ready to rend and tear. His long claws unsheathed to tear and rip. All in all, he made a most unpleasant picture, but even as his arms closed, his fangs snapped and his claws raked out, Nartaz acted. Mighty thews creaked and twanged as he leaped upwards in an arc that would have taken him clear of the attacking Kaput, had it not instead taken him slam bang into the branch of a hefty tree. 'Thunk', Tarzan's mighty skull shattered the mighty branch and with a half-dazed jungle cunning, the brainstruck Bran estroke yet found the ability to perform a quick entrechat followed by an Immelmann turn before landing squarely across the broad shoulders

of his enemy. His powerful, jungle trained fingers sought for and found holds in the shaggy hair covering Kaput's body. His flashing teeth sought for, and found dozens of little, many legged wriggling things as they squirmed for safety beneath the man-ape's pelt. Refreshed by his snack, Nartaz transferred his teeth to Kaput's throat, but the hairy one was wily. Stocky legs galvanised into action. Backwards into a nearby wonkli tree ran Kaput. There was a sickening crunch, wonkli berries flew in all directions, and the man-ape felt Nartaz's grip relax. Quick as a flash, or perhaps even faster, Kaput turned, seized the halfstunned jungle Lord by the ankles, and flailed him round and round against the hollow trunks of the wonkli trees. Something about the 'Tink, tonk tunk' made by Nartaz's skull against the wonkli trees appealed to a primitive sense of rhythm in his mind....he did it again. To the 'Tink, tonk, tunk' of Branestroke's skull against the trees was added the 'Tinkle, Tonkle, tunkle' of Branestroke's teeth as they scattered to the jungle floor. Fascinated, the man-ape began to extemporise variations on his simple primitive melody, he had never been able to carry a tune before.

Many a lesser opponent would have succumbed to this treatment, weaklings would have felt really ill, but not Nartaz, no, not he, not at all. From some inner well of strength which is known only to the simple minded children of Nature, and which sets them apart from mere animals, Nartaz rallied. Once again, the jungle echoed to the cry of, "Yeeee...ooo...ow!", a slightly modified version of his battle cry, caused by the agonising pain to which the jungle Lord was being subjected. Nevertheless, it still throbbed with the mighty power which drove N'Gainly the giraffe to flight, and which made N'Funi the hyena cry in his sleep. Then Nartaz acted. Though bruised and battered, the young Lord Branestroke yet found the strength of will to force his agonised muscles to one final effort. From the porcupine-hide pouch at his waist, Nartaz withdrew his .75 Mauser automatic, flipped the action to full automatic, and with the last of his failing strength, placed the muzzle to Kaput's hairy chest and pulled the trigger.

Ninety-seven steel-jacketed messengers of hell thundered through the man-ape's body. It was enough. The vice like grip on Nartaz's ankles relaxed. The centrifugal force from Kaput's spinning took over and carried the jungle Lord high into the air like N'Sanitary the vulture. Through the leafy tree tops soared the jungle lord, past the nest of N'Ezi the water fowl, through the web of N'asti the spider, and splat into the muddy waters of P'Tooley the river. N'Kindli the alligator slid smoothly forward and gave thanks to N'Holi the Provider for this unexpected breakfast. There was a quick gobbling sound and a couple of burps, then all was quiet once more on P'Tooley the river.

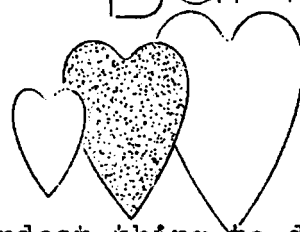
The precious miki stone, cause of all the trouble, together with its broken cord, was lost forever....which only goes to show that some things aren't worth making a theng about.

Phinnish



THREE FOR ME

Alan
Burns



It's the hardest thing to do, to select three really memorable SF stories, because what seemed one for eternity when it was first read, on re-reading seems utter crud. For instance as a child I was set on Neil Jones Morome stories, but, buying the entire series recently I felt that they were suitable only for classing with Flash Gordon and other kids stuff. But three stories will stick with me forever I think.

The first one is by Eric Frank Russell, my favourite writer. The story is "...and then there were none." The second story is "The Equaliser" by Jack Williamson. The last story is "Telek" by Jack Vance. . They all appeared in AMLOG, and though I can practically recall every word, bar the names of the characters, I never tire of reading them when I come across them.

"...and then there were none" is a story with possibly the tritest of plots. A battleship lands on this planet, some of the crew like it and stay, the battleship leaves. What is haunting about the story is the completely convincing anarchist society that exists among the settlers on the planet. I dislike anarchists, in fact if by pressing a button every anarchist in the world was killed I would press it without a moment's hesitation. But Russell's anarchy is one founded not on long-haired howlers but ordinary decent folk. It is the same anarchy that exists in any neighbourhood. Mrs Smith is good at icing and does special cakes, Mrs. Jones is fine at nursing and sees to the sick, and Mrs. Brown is the keenest supermarket expert and knows where everything can be bought cheap. On Russell's planet everyman does what he likes to do best, for himself and for his neighbours. If a man wants to brew beer or make brandy he does so. The invisible medium of exchange is the ob, short for an undocumented obligation. You eat at a "Gulper, but in return you either wash dishes or do something for someone the owner of the gulper owes something to, and if you have spare time enough to sit down and work it out then you'll find it to be theoretically sound. It is division of labour made sensible, reasonable and most enticingly practical.

suffers from a fundamental weakness of concept, but this doesn't stop its being memorable for me. Briefly the world is gripped by a merciless dictatorship, based on the fact that the production of power and goods involves so many men and such complex technology that only by this dictatorship can the world survive. An expedition returns from going to this star to look for further uranium supplies on a planet orbiting it, and when the expedition returns to Earth the dictatorship has collapsed, destroyed because a scientist has discovered a special coil, called "The Equaliser" where just by winding it any man can have his private source of power, or, a highly potent bomb. This equaliser civilisation is rather like Russells, but the basis of it is a little shaky. Told that by winding a coil thus and thus, a man isn't going to give up his job and run away to generate unlimited power. The most powerful source of electricity in the world isn't a particle of use without motors and machinery to be driven by it, and to make these there has to be a factory with men and machines. However it is a fascinating story and the subtle renaming of the secret police "The Square Dealers" and the Young supporters the Tyler Scouts, is quite clever, and the fact that a city is labelled "Metropolitan Area - Danger" is all too true now as it is in the story.

Finally "Telek" by Jack Vance. Vance is dear to my heart with his Dying Earth Series, but this little cameo is very interesting. On one side of the story are the Teleks, with mental powers so great that they can move a planet in its orbit. On the other side are the normal humans, who don't hate the Teleks but think that their powers should be given to everyone, this of course can be done. The hero does a service for a Telek and in exchange gets the power. The story then becomes a tense battle between the hero and the top Telek, to get these powers given to a group of normals. There is a simply marvellous description at the end of a Telek's sports day. If anyone had powers of teleporting, telekinesis and the like what amusements would they have? Well there is the game of bump-ball, where opposing teams have aerial floats and they have to knock a ball into each other's goal. Then there is water sculpture, a fascinating medium this, and finally there is the whole stadium's occupants moving a ball into various patterns. The struggle in the box between the hero and the top Telek is great. The killing knife is hovering in the air between them, each trying to drive it into the other's heart, but the hero relies on good old human powers, snatches the knife and kills the top telek, a better vignette of a world with mental powers commonplace was never drawn.

So those are my three favourite stories, but quite possibly you disagree, but then that's the main charm of SF, it's very seldom you get agreement over a story, indeed some of the Hugo winners I wouldn't give houseroom to.



DOWN MEMORY-BANK LANE

Part 10

Leafing through the earlier gripping instalments of this fine column, I was surprised to find that although I had reminisced about films, comics, adverts, British s-f, and Uncle Tom Cobley and all, I just hadn't got around to the real McCoy - the honest-to-goodness American pulp magazines. I had better remedy that omission right now, and the high-pitched whirring noise you can hear is just my mental time-machine grinding furiously backwards for close on 40 years.

I must admit right away that I'm completely unsure as to just when I first encountered s-f, although the short stories of H.G. Wells are the most likely culprits. What I am sure of, is that my first bought magazine (for 3d, or 3c) was a copy of Wonder dated around 1930 to 1932. The cover still sticks in my ~~day~~ memory, and was probably the only pulp cover which your doddering old maiden aunt Emmelina could have carried in public without blushing like the friendly neighbourhood fire engine. (OK, so your local fire engine doesn't blush.. ours did) Inspired by the interior Gernsback editorial, 'Wonders of Color', it featured red, blue and yellow dots of about 4mm. diameter. These were scattered all over the front like a king-sized dose of measles. On second thoughts, Aunt Emmelina probably wouldn't have carried it.. unless she wanted to be regarded as Typhoid Mary. On reading Gernsback's exposition, all was made clear. It seems that printers..crafty blighters they are, managed to produce their multi-coloured covers by printing bushels of tiny single-coloured dots all over the place. Combinations of the three basic colours produced all the shades under the sun. The Wonder cover used 4mm dots to illustrate an enlargement of such a multi-coloured picture. I can remember how I dug out a magnifying glass and scrutinised these blobs of colour to see if they were composed of much tinier dots. I finally decided that such primary colours wouldn't need breaking down, so old Uncle Hugo must have taught me something, even if only to mistrust printers. The only other thing which I remember about that cover was the fact that it was a single-piece fold around issue, rather than the normal half-inch thick spine.

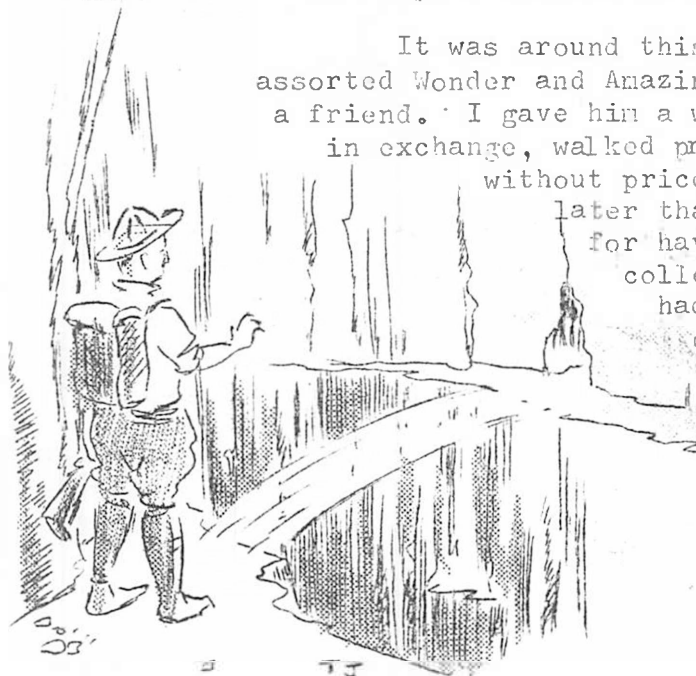
Of the stories in that issue, like pickled onions, only one comes back. 'Pool of Life' by Arthur G Stangland related how some explorers were trapped in a cavern formed by an underground river. Some aliens plonked them on plinths, and proceeded to pour plastic over them, rather like our modern trick of encapsulating moths and butterflies in Perspex. Ghu knows why the intrepid explorers stood still for it, but no doubt it was because they were under the baleful influence of a sinister Oriental poison. The accompanying illo depicted an array of these artistic stalagmites, with earlier victims ranged in the background. In the finale, two of the men escaped becoming overgrown paper-weights, but the third, a black man (faithful retainer he) got the full treatment.



At the rear was a 'Science Discussion' or 'Forum'. Some twit had written in to ask, "What is the fourth dimension?" Apparently he kept meeting it in stories, but was unable to find it on his footrule. Faced with such a demand, lesser persons might have qualified (or chickened, if you prefer the expression) (Or would you rather I said 'turkeyed'?), but not Uncle Hugo. With the aid of a cruddy diagram he set out to unscrew the inscrutable via the old familiar route...a point of zero dimensions when moved, produces a single dimension line, etc. etc. However, owing to that cruddy drawing, his zero dimension point was a worm's head about 6mm across, and the same applied to all the other stages. To make amends, his tesseract didn't extend into the 4th dimension, but closely resembled a cat's (a demented cat) cradio. Even so, I lapped it up and came back for more...including that oldie, "What does a rocket push against in a vacuum?" and similar pot-boilers.

It was around this period that I acquired a stack of assorted Wonder and Amazings by virtue of a trading deal with a friend. I gave him a wad of battered old 2d 'bloods' and in exchange, walked proudly home with a load of jewels without price....s-f magazines. I also found out later that he got a thick ear into the bargain, for having traded away his brother's s-f collection. Apparently this older brother had an inferiority complex a yard wide, or else he was courting Aunt Emmelina. All the covers had been surgically removed from each copy in order to render it fit to be read (or carried) in public.

However, the stories were intact, and in those pages I encountered a phenomenal character

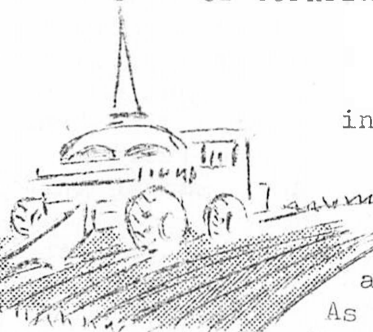
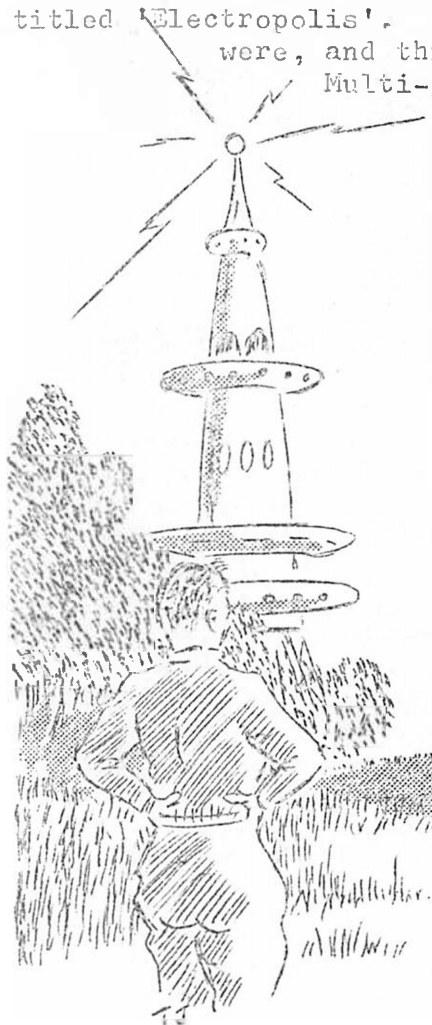


in the shape of a bulky spaceman who had been born and reared on Jupiter, (No, it wasn't Aarn Munro) and who could therefore hurl a screwdriver with the speed and force of a rifle bullet (make unspecified). It just so happened that he had a screwdriver in his hand when his ship was boarded by pirates, hence the reason for slinging it around with high velocity and damagine effect.

Then there was Hyatt Verrill's 'Bridge of Light'. This had been inspired (I imagine) by some abstruse scientific treatise which said that light had substance. Anyway, once every full moon, a bridge would form across a canyon buried deep in the Amazonian jungle. I recall that all Verrill's tales were set here. Whether this was because Verrill had been reared there by an anaconda, or because editorial policy demanded this setting to allow Paul to illustrate explorers in riding breeches, I never knew. Nevertheless, I grew up firmly convinced that the Amazon teemed with anacondas, blow-pipe carrying Indians, hidden civilisations, and jewels the size of ostrich eggs...plus beautiful white maidens who got there as babies, the sole survivors of air crashes.

Wonder, in those days also featured reprints or translations of foreign authors, (probably because they would accept even lower payment than the home-grown variety) One of these offerings was by a character called either Otfiid, or Gottfried, von Hanstein, and was titled 'Electropolis'. In those days, the real action was where the volts were, and this tale had them. Paul went to town with the illos.

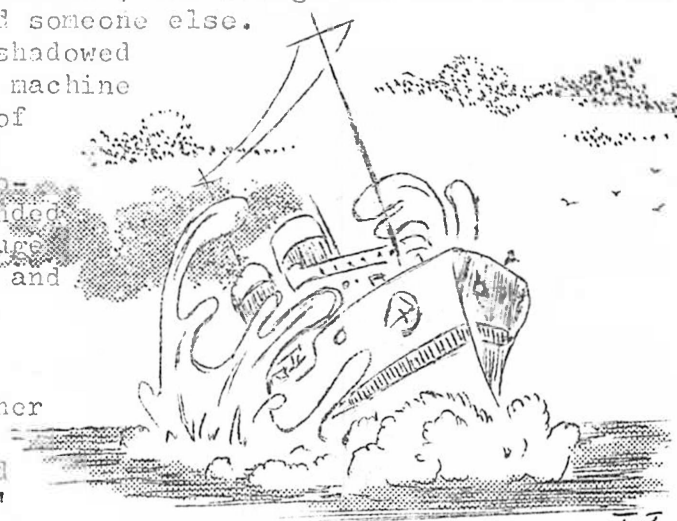
Multi-gearred, rivet-studded radio-controlled combine harvesters romped gaily around beneath insulated towers which radiated electricity in all directions. The usual jodhpur-clad hero stood in the foreground, while somewhere near at hand lurked a Junoesque maiden in a Grecian robe, just waiting to be rescued. Memory informs me that 'Electropolis' (A title no doubt inspired by the film, 'Metropolis') was a secret African colony, conducted along scientific lines, and using robot farming and radiant power. No doubt in the final episode, the hero narrowly escaped ending up in a packet of cornflakes.



My favourite yarn from this era concerned the inevitable inept scientist who mixed up a slew of something-or-other .. (would you believe fish-paste ?) and so created a protoplasmic life-form. As with all such twits, he allowed it to grow from microscopic size until it filled a test tube. At this stage, unwary flies began to land on it, and the growth scoffed them. The elated scientist heaved the

lot into an empty fish tank and allowed it to keep on growing until the day he absentmindedly leaned on it...whereupon it tried to scoff him. Too much was more than enough, and he began to feed it a diet of nitric sulphuric, and any other handy acid, plus high voltage electricity. Like all good monsters, the growth lapped up this treatment and in desperation the scientist fed a tiny portion to his pet goldfish. Hoo-blooming-ray! The fish ate it. However, a quick calculation showed the growth grew faster than the goldfish could eat. The solution was obvious; heave it into the sea, and let the fish there have a beano. All went well for a year or so, then ships began to vanish. Instead of the fish eating up the protoplasm, the reverse had taken place and it now threatened to engulf the earth. It was finally written off, when the heroic inventor injected himself with a particularly virulent form of cancer and jumped into the heaving mass.

Also in Wonder, was van Manderpootz, a whacky scientist who tried out his inventions on a Wooster-like character straight out of Wodehouse. In 'Pygmalion's Spectacles', the stooge saw and fell in love with his Galatea..but she married someone else. In 'The Ideal', Manderpoots foreshadowed the anti-car lobby by devising a machine which could recognise a picture of a car, and would leap forward in a mock attack. This, via a jumbo-sized artistic licence, was expanded on the cover into a machine of huge proportions roaning city streets and chewing up autos...a come-on not fulfilled in the story.

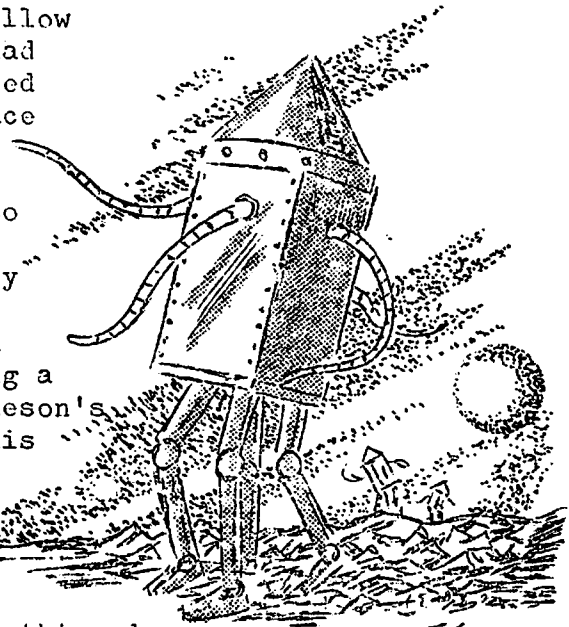


There was another story from this era which was even more prophetic. It appeared I believe in 'Air Wonder Stories' and had something to do with an air race.

The story itself would never have won the author a 'Hugo' even had Gernsback himself been up for grabs. However, it did have several aircraft approaching 700 mph (using airscrews I'm sorry to say) and then mysteriously breaking into pieces. Even a schoolboy today, could mutter wisely into the where his beard would soon be, and mutter, "Sonic barrier, compressibility effect", but in those days, the absolute record was less than 400mph, and was only raised during the 30's to a mere 440 my the Macchi-Castoldi. For an author to have come up with the Mach 1.00 sound barrier in those days, denoted either a phenomenal intellect, or else a close understanding of what was at that time, highly advanced aerodynamics.

Much more boring was O'Connor Sloane's 'Amazing' during the late thirties. Under his inept leadership, it sank lower and lower with such idiocies as 'Greta, Queen of Queens', by W.K. Sonneman, 'Adrift in the Stratosphere, and two time travel shockers by John Russell Fearn, 'Liners of Time'. and 'Zagribud'. Some good tales appeared, such as Hasses 'He Who Shrank' which detailed a descent into the microcosm, and of course, Doc Smith's 'Triplanetary', but on the whole, the magazine was as mediocre as its slumping sales figures said.

Another regular pot-boiler in Amazing, was Professor Jameson and his fellow Zoromes. Originally, the dying Jameson had made arrangements for his body to be placed in earth orbit, so that the vacuum of space would prevent his body decaying. Many millenia passed and along came the Zoromes, bunged the Professor's brain into a spare tin can, and off they all went to seek adventure. With each new story, they managed by sheer simple-mindedness to get into one tight corner after another which even a half-witted reader could see coming a mile off. Escape often got help from Jameson's built in heat-ray tentacle. Useful as this tool was, I was constantly amazed that no other Zoromes adopted the idea...for that matter, it was the only purpose-built tentacle of the lot of them.



The literary giants of those days were people like Stanton A. Coblentz, Loyd Arthur Esbach, Miles J. Breur, Arthur Leo Zagat, Eric Temple Bell in the guise of John Taine (remember 'Telegraph Hill'?) and many others. Of those once famous names, only one or two remain in the field today. For most, the story revolution which Campbell originated in the thirties, proved an insurmountable barrier. Gone are the mad scientists and the college boy heroes. No more does Hawk Carse hunt down the dreaded Ku-Sui, or spacemen wade through the steaming swamps of Venus to fight the dreaded space pirates who lurk in a hidden city. It is easy to look back and judge (and sneer over) these tales by modern knowledge and standards, but such a treatment is too facile. In their day, and in their period, these hack yarns became the foundations for what we now know as a 'Sense of Wonder'. Really, for all of us, this is the time when we first met with ideas and concepts woven into story form, and inextricably entwined with that most memorable part of our lives, adolescence. My generation got it from the pulps, the current generation got it (I hope) with the coming of the Space Age, and Neil Armstrong. Each generation will find its own Sense of Wonder, but this will never make any of them measurable by absolute standards. The old s-f is inferior in virtually every way to the modern crop...but that doesn't mean that modern yarns cannot learn a few tricks from the old masters. An old man is not necessarily a useless idiot, even if much of his knowledge is dated. So even though reading the old s-f is no longer such fun, it is still an interesting exercise if only to see how it all began...and believe me, in those days, it WAS fun! If it hadn't been, then it would have died right there, and there would have been no science-fiction around at all these days.

.....Terry Jeeves.

Down Memory Bank-Lane, is a re-written and extended version of a series which originally appeared in Lynn Hickman's magazine, 'The Pulp Era'. Regretfully, no back issues are available with earlier instalments...either of ERG, or of 'The Pulp Era'. So if you don't want to miss any further gripping instalments.....SUBSCRIBE NOW.



THE TAU EFFECT

Poul Anderson Gollancz

A colonising spaceship sets off for the stars scooping up fuel hydrogen on the way. An accident

makes it impossible to turn off the drive until they can find an 'empty' region in space. To reach one before they die of old age, they accelerate nearer and nearer to light speed. More and more snags crop up, which require them to accelerate even more. Eventually, they witness the death and rebirth of the universe. Apart from the concept involved, I found the book rather tedious and rather 'pulp era style' in its theme. Nothing much happens in the ship beyond numerous threatened action which fails to get off the ground, a lot of conversation, and considerable sleeping around. Credibility was lacking, as apart from numerous lectures on the tau effect, a bit more interaction on human terms was needed with that gosh wow universe outside.

RELATIVITY FOR THE MILLION Martin Gardner, Macmillan. Inspired by the Tau effect, I sailed into this highly popularised account of relativity and its fringe results. Many interesting points are raised, and I wound up with a sheaf of notes by the end of the first two chapters. One of them is the still unexplained query I raised in ERG some years ago. If the speed of light can drop below normal when the light goes through a denser medium such as glass, and thus lose some of its kinetic energy, WHERE does the light obtain the new energy to speed it back to vacuo speed when it LEAVES that block. I'm still curious if anyone can tell me. This also brings up the point that since c can be varied by the medium through which it passes, does it not at least give a plausible story line to say... 'might there not be a medium other than vacuo, where its speed may exceed c...and a spaceship might also traverse that medium'. But I digress...a highly enjoyable and readable book, with numerous light-hearted illustrations and highly thought provoking. Buy or borrow if you are at all interested.

GOLD, THE MAN Joseph Green, Gollancz £1.80. 'Gold' is a genius created by gene manipulation, and as such is the only person capable of carrying out a plan designed to stop the alien invaders who zip through our system and drop bacteriological bombs on Earth. A 300 foot humanoid giant is captured, but with a damaged brain. Scientists scoop out the duff bits and install a control cabin wherein Gold and a female assistant operate the giant back to its (tediously detailed) home planet. All finally ends well after Gold rapes his assistant and other aliens help him to deliver her child. Basically preposterous, but in general flows smoothly enough to carry you along. Borrow, don't buy.

This is similar in concept to the S-F Through The Ages series by I.O.Evans from Panther. Each volume contains ten tales culled from various stages of s-f. This sounds like a good idea, but in practice seems more like a cheap way of filling up the pages and still having 'name' authors. Much material is tediously 'dated', examples being Kipling's 'Night Mail' and Rosny Aine's, 'The Shapes', the former being padded out with a stack of pseudo adverts all boringly similar, where one would have done. Of the more recent material, nearly all of it is good, but has been heavily anthologised before; perhaps the best-known being Clarke's little gem, 'The Nine Billion Names of God'. The long term, or voracious reader will find little new here, but to the newcomer or collection builder, or even as a gift to someone you want to hook, both volumes are well worth the money.

THE ARTIFICIAL MAN. L.P. Davies. Gollancz, £1.60

Author-hero lives in an isolated village housing about a dozen people while he writes books and recovers from his 'black outs'. Gradually he discovers something is wrong, and the whole set up a fake just for his benefit, and designed to lead him in a certain direction. Action is fast and furious after a slow build up, and our hero develops psi powers to pull him out of the frying pan at the last moment...and the enemy into it.. ..plus a kick in the teeth for the reader. Well written, but despite the twist in the tail, the ending was rather weak.



The One and Only GREAT ERG LOGIC PUZZLE. For the first correct solution submitted there is a prize of the next two issues of ERG Free !

There are four s-f fans, Fred, Tom, Sam and Bill. Between them, they sub to Erg, Locus, Outworlds and Moth. Their homes are in Leeds, Paris, York and Oslo. Favourite promags are, Analog, Galaxy, If, and Amazing, and their favourite characters are Conan, Tarzan, Fahfrd and Kinnison. Find who lives where, favourite character, promag and fanzine to which each gives allegiance, if :-

- 1 Fred likes Tarzan, but has never read ERG
- 2 Tom and Sam meet each day at work.
- 3 Bill hates space opera and has a sub to Outworlds
- 4 The Galaxy reader lives in Oslo and exchanges his old copies of Locus for the Leed's fan's copies of Moth
- 5 The Kinnison lover lives in York and borrow's Sam's Analog
- 6 The Amazing reader likes Conan.

Enough information is given to solve the puzzle, the prize is two free issues of ERG, and if you would like more puzzles of this and other types...For GHU's sake, write a LOC and say so. T.J.and if any faned would like a similar puzzle compiling for his fanzine, write and ask, but a SAE would be apprediated.



Eric Bentcliffe,
17 Riverside Cresc,
Holmes Chapel
Ches. CW4 7NR

"Thanks for the copy of
ERG, interesting to note
that you are still exper-

imenting with Brush Stencils, and I think this
one has come off quite well (((Which is more
than the stencil did))). A convention in the
Fantipodics (pat. pending) or rather a Worldcon
there does sound a bit impractical to me. I
doubt that if enough pommies and yanks would

attend to give this legitimate title.....air fares across the Atlantic have
reduced in cost to where most dedicated single fen (at least) can afford
then if they really want to make the trip; but fares to Australia are going
to be highly prohibitive for some time to come. And it can't be a Worldcon
these days without an international attendance, even if, for many years, the
Stateside ones were...(((Why ever not ? Australia has to start somewhere,
just like Britain..when we first went for a Worldcon in 57, it was unheard
of for just the same price reasons))) Your symposium on Space Warfare is
an interesting idea, but I think both articles (((of three ?))) should have
stated (roughly) the period of likely space war they were intended to cover.
(((They did. The period when ships have enough fuel to lark about)))
Obviously any space war taking place within the next two or three decades
would be at a similar level to 1914 R.F.C. fighting methods - except that
the participants will probably be throwing used meal-packs at one another
(((A highly lethal arrangement, if they come from British Rail))) I don't
think it at all likely that any space-war would take place until after
considerable colonisation has taken place, by which time spaceships are
going to be much more sophisticated than perhaps even we can conceive of.
If colonisation of the planets does take place, a force-field (Meteo-
deflector) will be invented because it will have to be invented. And I
think that old Doc' Smith's concept of Blaster (Laser) Beams against Force
Screens will not be far from the truth by this time. (((Quite probably,
which is why I specifically linted my piece to likely developments in the
immediate future. Thanks a lot for the comment, and look forward to seeing
the first issue of Blazon, your new mag of St. Fanthony))).

James Goddard
Widdlands Lodge
Widdlands
Southampton
Hants

"I notice with approval that Alan Burns is a lot more
moderate in the things he says this time, and the only
thing I can really take issue with is his opening para-
graph. He seems to be proud of the fact that he had to
smuggle his BF into the house in an effort to prevent other
people seeing the terrible stuff he was

reading. (or if this paragraph doesn't apply to Alan,
then he feels to seem pride in the actions of others)
It seems a strange thing to feel pride in activities
carried on in a sly manner. (((You miss the point, he
was showing how fen triumphed over persecution by
adults))) A vast majority of people to-day are honest
and open, whether this is a good thing or a bad thing
I can't say (((Why cite it then ?))) but it surely shows
a healthier state of mind. (((But kids still sneak
in forbidden reading matter))). Having said that, I



found the rest of what he had to say was of interest, and quite sensible to. Your paragraph in EDITORIAL about Ireland was obviously well-intentioned, very few people really like violence of any sort; but, dare I say it, you judge the issue too emotionally (((No doubt the relatives and survivors of cafe blow-ups do too))). If the army commanders had judged the issue in the same way as you do, there would have been a full scale war in Ireland by now, and not just two-sided war, but three-sided war, with Lynch's government compelled to join in. (((A real war might be preferable..at least the soldiers would have a proper enemy instead of the current cowardly backshooters...as for Lynch, the sooner he does start fighting..the IRA..the better))) Nobody should try to blame the children (((bless their little stone-throwing hearts))), who seem to feature so prominently in most of the riots. Punish the parents who fail to control them! If necessary, take all the children in the most troubled areas into state care (((Shades of internment !))), make sure they are split up into small manageable groups and if necessary, farm them out to foster parents in the British Isles. The army would then be sure that any hostile crowd would be composed of thinking, reasoning adults (((and that's a laugh. no such adult would go within a mile of an Irish crowd))) and could take much more severe action if the occasion demanded. (((Personally, rather than wish such children on people in Britain, I'd round 'em up and fine the parents heavily))).



ALAN BURNS
6 Goldspink Lane
Newcastle On Tyne
NE2 1NQ

Many thanks for ERG. As ever, I express dislike of the mixture of Banda and Gestetner. One or the other please, but not both, natty drawing though.

I note and agree with your editorial, and go straight on to your article on space warfare. In general, I agree with your assumptions, although I felt you dismiss rays too lightly (((They were light rays !))) Admittedly, we haven't anything except lasers to play with as yet, but it is not inconceivable that we could project a magnetic field to be a tractor beam (((I doubt it when you remember that inverse square law of attraction))) but what most people cheerfully overlook is that a tractor beam is only feasible for two purposes, either anchoring yourself to a bigger ship, or if you are bigger, for anchoring the smaller to you. (((I pointed out such a beam was only to bring the enemy within range of normal weapons, not a weapon in itself))). I feel that tractor beams of small size might be fitted to torpedoes to make a spatial 'sticky bomb' (((Good idea..if they can invent one))) I sadly fear that Lewis Vickers' article was but a pale reflection of yours and scarcely worth commenting on (((O.K., we'ol fire Vickers.))) If you do another symposium on space warfare, why not get him to deal with the vacuum packing of bits and pieces in a ship instead of dealing with stuff that a rather limited knowledge of engineering on his part, makes him unable to explore fully. (((Isn't vacuum packing a contradiction in terms ? Once you pack it, you haven't got a vacuum))) Now I must close, I am rushing off to make my reservation on the chartered Concorde for the Austracon in '75. (((You are a ghod man !)))