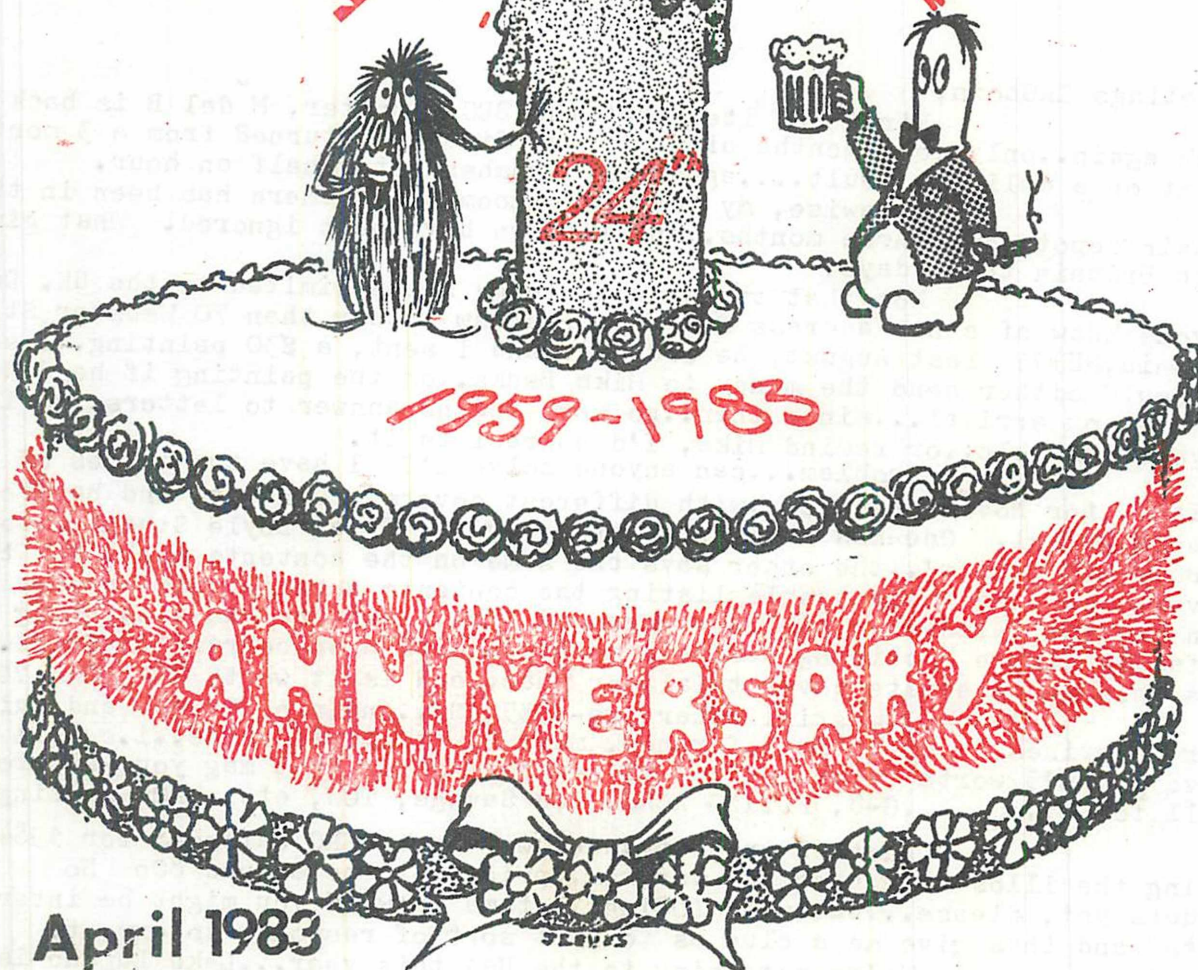


ERG

Quarterly

82



ERG

QUARTERLY

ERG is edited, published and perpetrated
by :- Terry Jeeves
230 Bannordale Rd.,
SHEFFIELD S.11 9FE
ENGLAND

You can get ERG by sending £1 or \$2.00 for
the next two issues....or send 30p in stamps
and a letter of comment on this issue. Just
send the LOC if you live overseas.

A cross in the top left corner means this is
your last issue..unless you renew or
DO SOMETHING..please

Greetings ERGbods,

First sad item that the BBC computer, M del B is back in
dock again..only four months after it was finally returned from a 3 month
stint on a delivery fault....again, it crashes after half an hour.

Likewise, my AGFA Movexzoom cine camera has been in their
repair depot some three months..and letters have been ignored. What gives
with Britain these days?

Not that the dreaded lurgy seems limited to the UK. Does
anyone know of a new address for Mike Bastraw (other than 70 Webster St.,
Laconia,NH)?? Last August, he ordered..and I sent, a \$30 painting. I said
he could either send the money to Mike Banks..or the painting if he didn't
like it on arrival...since then..no word and no answer to letters..so if
anyone can help..or remind Mike, I'd appreciate it.

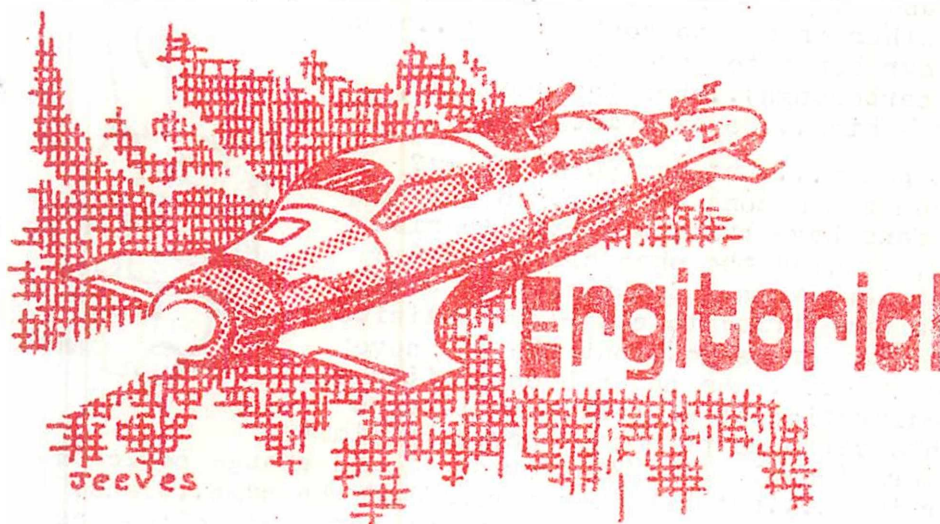
Problem...can anyone solve it? I have two issues of
Galaxy..for November 1975...with different covers. Contents and backcovers
are identical. One has a cover painting by the Brian Boyle Studio ..for
'Dream Millennium'..the other says the same on the contents page, but the
cover uses a white rectangle listing the contents superimposed on some
pen and ink illos on a yellow background (The first one has a painting of
a female figure reclining before a mountain with a spacecraft in front.
Was this an alternate cover trial..or what..and is it worth MILLIONS ???

I'm still after pre-1935 ASF..and pre 1940 SF and pulp
Air Magazines....will trade for new, mint SF at triple rates..i.e I'll
give you \$15 worth (cover price) of new titles for that mag you want to
sell for \$5.G-8, FLYING ACES, Doc Savage, TOW, etc...NOT Amazing.

Another project under way is an ERG calendar for 1984
using the illos from past ERG covers...price will be around 80p No
orders yet, please...but when LOCing, let me know if you might be inter-
ested and thus give me a clue as to what sort of response to expect.

We're not going to the USA this year...Lake Lugano is
to be graced by our presence...and maybe (if someone decides to DUFF
me up) we'll make it down under. Meanwhile..all the best,

Terry



With this 24th. Anniversary Issue of ERG, it seems a good idea to take a brief look backwards..and forwards at various points of interest.

The first one is that 24 years of a quarterly magazine should amount to 96 copies...so how come this is only ERG 82 ? Well, ERG started out as an Apa-zine in the

old Off Trail Magazine Publisher's Association..and for a while, didn't make every mailing. However, it has seen at least two issues a year..all under the same editor...all of which must make ERG the oldest regular, single-ed fanzine in the world. (Guinness are you listening?)

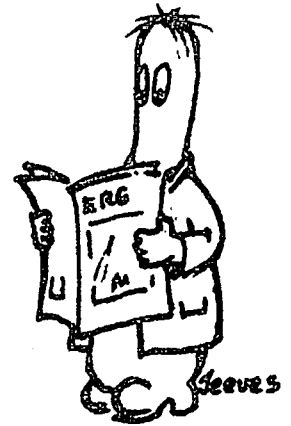
Early issues seldom exceeded 10 pages, all artwork was hand-cut onto stencil. Since then, ERG has expanded to around 26 pages... a size dictated very largely by GPO price rises. To mail out ERG.1. cost just under one (decimal) penny. The same number of pages today will cost you 12¹/₂p..or a price rise of some 13x...and for 26 pages it is now 16¹/₂p and due to rise yet again. OK, you say..but inflation... Ah, yes. Paper for ERG.1. cost 45p a ream...ink 75p a tube. Current prices are around £3.20 for paper (a rise of 7x) and £3 for ink (a rise of 4x). Surprisingly, electrostencils have remained more or less stable..I have been charged £1.50 ten years ago..and currently pay £1...In 1959 (when ERG was born) a new car cost around £500, today's similar model runs at £3,500...a factor of 7x. In view of all this and with further rises announced, it seems pretty obvious that if anything is going to kill off fanzines..it will be GPO rates.

Through the years, ERG has seen a gradually increasing proportion of electronic stencil artwork (a shift which reflected my finances). I have experimented with brush stencils (which you etch with acid), colour work via alternate stencils and also via a Banda spirit duplicator..and even lino blocks, photo-lith and screen printing. The series on duplicating finally appeared as a one-shot 'DUPLICATING NOTES'..now out of print, but with a new enlarged and updated version bouncing its way around various publishers. Several items...'Vengeance', 'Moronic Menace', and 'Upon Reflection' have all gone from ERG to sales on the professional market. Crosswords, puzzle corners, competitions, and the very popular NASA bacovers, courtesy of Harry Andr schak have all appeared here.

For one short period, whilst I was in the American FAPA and the Aussie APPLESAUCE, each issue of ERG was running to THREE editions...standard, a slimmer FAPA edition and a varied one for down under with both APA issues carrying their own mailing comments. Copies have gone to Sri Lanka, Japan, Finland, Czechoslovakia, and South Africa as well as the more usual centres of fandom....even the Sheffield Library had a regular subscription until I decided to put them on the free list.

Future plans? Well, when Memory Bank Lane finishes I shall be around 63 years old...and the decision will have to be made whether or not to continue ERG..along with the finalising of our hopes to move up to the Yorkshire coast (near Scarborough)..when that happens, the dupers will be left behind...so likewise ERG.

Which brings up the point...what is ERG's policy? Over the years, I've seen zines come and go..too numerous to mention. Similarly, fans have burst upon the fannish scene, done their thing, muddled the once clear fannish waters and sunk back into oblivion. Surprisingly, both fans..and their fanzines have tried to establish policies. Fair enough, if that is what grabs you..but ERG has never had a policy...or to be precise, has never been limited to some stupid, binding declaration of what it (and I) hope to achieve. Such statements serve no purpose, they only limit the magazine. Bill Bowers (Double Bill//Outworlds) would change policies on average, every other issue...but his 'zines remained the same..bland, generally sercon..and superlatively produced. My own personal policy has been to put into ERG whatever takes my fancy and changing interests. Thus we've had tape recording series, cine filming series, computer articles, philately, duplicating, modelling, book-binding etc. and etc. Fact, fiction, humour, puzzles, reviews, con and trip reports and Australian bush fires have all been included. The only item of policy to which I have adhered is in the use of obscenities...even there, I don't say you WON'T see any in ERG, but use of same will have to contribute something to the piece in which they appear..and NOT as so many zines do today, as crutches for feeble intellect coupled with a miniscule vocabulary. Before you scream blue murder...how many of you have curled a lip as some uneducated wight has been interviewed on TV..and repeatedly trotted out his pet catch phrase..."At this point in Time"..or "Know what I mean?"...etc. If YOU allow every other sentence of your speech to end with an obscenity, then you are just as limited.



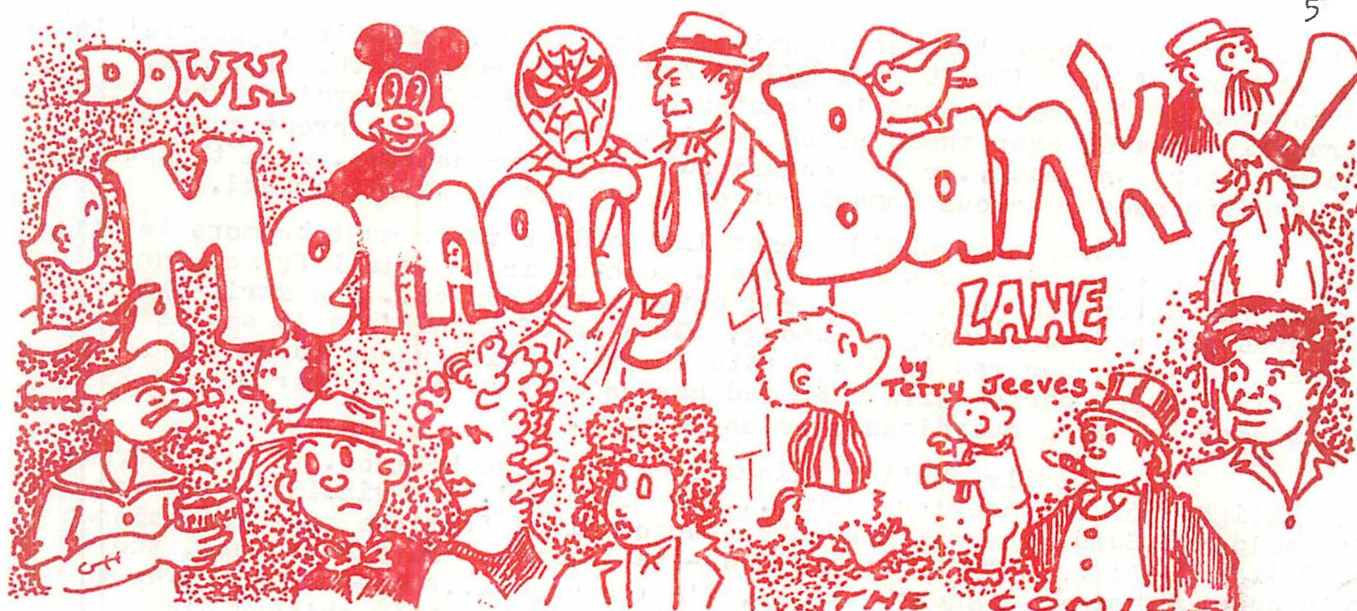
Right then, statement of near-policy coming up. ERG will continue to run items of interest to me..or which I think might interest enough of ERG's readers. Experiments will be made as and where the fancy takes me, and obscenities (etc) will not be used unless absolutely essential to the topic.

Final soapbox concerns this so-called 'spelling reform' which creeps into some (mainly Australian) fanzines...'eny' for 'any' and so on. Whilst realising that a language has to evolve..and thus introduce new words such as 'jazz', 'radar', 'nylon' etc. I can't quite see why this should lead to a demand for spelling revision except perhaps to rationalise homonyms such as to, too and two. I admit that our old friend 'ough' might be better replaced by 'off', 'uff', 'ooô', 'o' and 'ow'...but where will it end. Will ov replace 'of'. Will ecks be used instead ov 'x'. Verry kwickly orl ov ovr buks mai be unredeable bekaws ov the chanjes. Orlredi, caffis offa 'snax'. Neckst, it will be 'bacun and x'...or ecks, and as the 'h' is dropped we shall be offud 'am and x' tu folo. Drinks in public ouses and siense fickshun by ineline, erbut and ari arisun. Maybe it wân't be the GPO after all, which kills of fanzines..it mai well be the spelling reform.

And ov caws, if you want to rede maw issues ov ERG, then i ope yule respond in sum wai....as detailed inside the frunt cova. Returning to (near) normal...write a LOC, send stamps..or even money and help me keep ERG batting along to its 25th anniversary.

All the best,

Terry.



Inextricably linked with boyhood memories of pulps, model aircraft and those long, long summers, are various characters coming under the collective heading of 'The Comics'

In those days, the home-grown English comics were produced by chortling editors firmly rooted in their particular version of the past... with the result that story lines followed similar paths. No matter what Harry Langdon or Tiger Tim might get up to in the course of the strip, one could always be sure that in the final frame, hero or heroes would be about to tuck into a mammoth dish of bangers and mash...or, if it were summer, they would be on the point of wreaking mayhem on a picnic spread of cakes, buns, jellies and a huge bottle of lemonade.

Notable trenchermen in the sausage and mash stakes, were the two scruffy-looking tramps, 'Weary Willy and Tired Tim'. This couple of ne'er-do-wells graced the pages of CHIPS for many a decade...and their descendants still crop up in the SUNDAY EXPRESS...under different names of course. Willy was short, fat and his mate, tall, lanky and unshaven. The physical appearance of the pair (bar the unkempt whiskers, was an equally good description for their Roman counterparts, 'Nero and Zero'...who oddly enough also flourished on a diet of s (a rather than spaghetti. Nero and Zero were not tramps however..their mission in life involved Caesar's army in which they were foot soldiers..who never seemed to get involved in any battles..due to the 'Pax Romana' no doubt.



Jeeves
WEARY WILLIE
AND TIRED TIM

Virtually all British comics employed a similar format. This took the form of a one (or sometimes, two) page strip cartoon, with each frame being underlined by three or four sentences set in miniscule print and designed to tell you what you had just read in the 'balloons' spoken by the characters. I never read anyone who actually read these sub-titles and can only assume they were there for the deaf. Some of the comics were printed in 'colour'..or to be precise, they were enhanced by the addition of two or three primary inks slapped on key items. Coloured or not, I found British 'comics' as dull as ditch water...even when they

6
strove for a stronger 'reader identification' by employing 'real people' in the strips. Thus, FILM FUN and KINEMA KOMIC both carried the fictional adventures of 'Laurel & Hardy', 'Buster Keaton', 'Harold Lloyd' and the like. Strangely enough, even these noted American filmstars went great guns on their bangers and mash..or the occasional purloined chicken..when they were not handing some luscious damsel out of a car on a picnic spread.

Even as a child, something told me there must be more to life than endless merry japes, wheezes and a nosh-up in the final frame...and it wasn't the alternate junk interlaced between the comics...the strip which featured the poor wandering sheepdog, 'Grandpa of Lassie' as it sought its missing master. Nor was it the little lost ballerina whose parents whooped it up in foreign parts whilst she and her equally banal brother were duly maltreated by cruel guardians or step-parents.

Happily, better things loomed on the horizon. I came across the delights of the American comic...the 'funnies'. Originally appearing Stateside in Sunday newspapers, these were culled from the nest and shipped to Britain - along with the pulpzines - as ballast. Once over here, they were sold off at 1p a sheet...sorry, I'm too modern..for 1d (about 1/5p to you youngsters). The seller was usually a seedy, stubbly chinned old codger operating from a pitch beside the hot chestnut stall.

For a long time, such supplies were very hit or miss..until Messrs. Woolworths, ever alert to a market, began stapling together half a dozen such sheets inside a flimsy paper jacket and selling the resultant comic book for 2d a throw. With a regular supply of such choice entertainment now assured, I was able to begin a collection of the serial strips. Not as easy as it sounds, since 'Woollies' had the annoying habit of throwing in anything to hand..which often meant that half the comic was new material and the other half old stuff. On occasion, they would even repeat the first half in duplicate. Oh, it was a hard life.



Not only were the American comics more colourful than the home-grown mush, but they were lively, brash and full of a bewildering variety of wonderful characters. There was the wide-ranging, zany humour of Popeye along with Olive Oyle, J. Wellington Wimpy (who got an aircraft and a hamburger named after him) plus the never-grow-old Sweetpea and the nasty old Hag. When Popeye could always rely upon his trusty can of spinach to get him out of a scrape, can you imagine him using a plate of sausage and mash instead? Wimpy of course, specialised in robbing cradles or working con tricks to get himself a supply of 'burgers.

Buck Rogers, complete with his flying belt, was aided by Wilma Deering and some whacky old professor...parallels to Flash Gordon, Dale Arden and Zarkov...which came first, hen or egg? All rubbed shoulders or flying belts, with 'Terry And The Pirates', impeccably drawn by Milton Caniff. Sadly, not enough of these series came through to enable me to read a full set...but that didn't prevent me from drooling over the long, lovely legs of the Dragon Lady as she planned more devilment for Terry.

Then there was the mealy-mouthed, philosophical, 'Orphan Annie' and her 'Daddy Warbucks'. Annie was a shock-haired, circle-eyed kid who, despite kidnappings, gangster attacks and other forms of nastiness going on around her could always be relied upon to wind things up with a



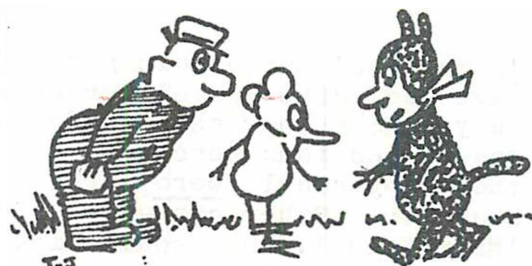
KATZENJAMMER KIDS

homespun platitudes. Naturally, she too had her imitators...such as the much more human, 'Winnie Winkle' who was far more of a tomboy and whose scrapes were more credible..and funnier. To keep the boys happy we had 'Skippy' who came the nearest thing to a cartoon version of our own 'William Brown'.

One of my particular favourites was 'The Captain and The Kids'..or as I always thought of them..'The Katzenjammer Kids'. I gather the strip began under the first title, but when its artist Dirks changed newspapers, a law suit required the creation of the newer title. Either way, the strip went from

strength to strength. Hans and Fritz were two German immigrant children who plagued the life out of their guardian, 'The Captain' and his friend, a bewhiskered old gent in a stove-pipe hat. If the Kids were creatively terrible, then my other favourites were even more so. 'Smokey Stover', fireman extraordinary got into his scrapes in a weird world where even the pictures on the wall continually made comments or participated in the action. Stover's hat would often pop its lid to emit a blast of steam and smoke, or a character's teeth would shoot out and hop around the floor hollering in surprise!

However, the most surrealistically imaginative strip was without any doubt, 'Krazy Kat'...the Kat was a rather non-descript animal whose fractured English was a sheer delight. "You never candle where it'll lend" being a sample. Kat dwelt in a constantly changing landscape, the outlines of which were dictated solely by the needs of a particular bit of action. Krazy Kat was frequently bemused by his conversations with Ignatz the Mouse. In between, his befuddlement was regularly interrupted by the arrival of a house brick slung at him by the Mouse..for no apparent reason except that it had always been so. Now and then, fate would intervene and the brick would clatter the other character in the strip...Offissa Pupp, a uniformed police dog, whose neck would often intercept the missile. Krazy Kat showed an inventiveness over and beyond the call of duty..only being equalled by the superlative Pogo and the rest of the Swamp Critters as drawn by Walt Kelly. If in your sheltered life you haven't had the sheer delight of meeting Pogo, then get a black mask and jemmy before going out and stealing some copies.



OFFISSA PUPP, IGNATZ
AND KRAZY KAT

Another strange strip was 'Toonerville Trolley'...a whacky form of public transport which meandered hither and yon in the blissful premise that it is more blessed to travel joyously, than to arrive. The only incident I can recall from this series came when the conductor was having trouble with failing eyesight which made it tricky for him to replace the narrow current-collecting wheel of his ramshackle conveyance when it jumped off the line. Another character solved the problem by replacing the tiny wheel by a metal spool a yard wide.

'Gasoline Alley' involved a variety of characters..Skeezix, Walt Wallet and many others. I never did find out where the name originated, although I gather the strip evolved from an earlier one called MAIN STREET. If you were an aircraft-buff, then you were catered for by the antics of 'Smilin Jack'. Tough guys could empathise with the slow-witted 'Joe Palooka' heavyweight boxer..whose simple minded innocence usually left him the fall guy for the tricksters before he eventually came out on top. For the really macho image, there was 'Alley Oop' a Neanderthal-style caveman whose hairy face and side whiskers always reminded me of Abraham Lincoln.

'Mandrake The Magician' possessed the strange power to cloud men's minds...probably his half brother was 'The Shadow'. Immaculately garbed in evening dress, top hat and a long flowing cape, he was aided in his activities by a giant blackman called Lotharwho wandered a round clad only in a leopard skin be he in a steet brawl or at a society party.

Naturally, Mandrake only used his power for good....the foiling of gangsters or the rescue of kidnapped maidens and other normal everyday adventures which could happen to any wandering magician.



Head and shoulders above almost all the competition came Al Capp's incomparable, 'Li'l Abner'. Abner was a backwoods hayseed, giant of an amiable, very simple minded but eligible young man..if you can work all that out. His huge build and small brain saw to it that although he was always the centre of a horde of deisgning females, he always remained innocent. Chief among the women who yearned for his love, was girl friend

'Daisy Mae' whose main purpose (apart from exhibiting a bosom which would have made Jane Russell green with envy) was to chase after Li'l Abner. For many a long year she was foiled in her plans..but eventually came the day..and comics fans were astounded to find that this time, it was 'for real'..the happy couple were married and it was NOT all a dream/mistake/charade or whatever. Other characters involved in the strip included 'Marrying Sam', 'Mama Yokum'...who could lick anyone in the town of Dogpatch..and of course, the henpecked 'Pappy Yokum'.

Another of Al Capp's claims to fame was the creation in the strip, of 'Sadie Hawkins' Day..when all unwed females got to chase after the free men...and if they caught 'em..they married 'em....aided by Marryin' Sam. So popular was the idea..a real Sadie Hawkins Day was declared without the usual penalties.

For the connoisseurs of the curvaceous, there was the googoo-eyed 'Betty Boop', as dizzy a brunette as ever got into a garter. She had an hour-glass figure reminiscent of Mae West and was really a grown-up version of a doll. Betty eventually made it to the big screen, a trkumph which did not follow her rival, 'Tilly The Toiler', a pert young miss with a more realistic figure..which was exhibited to a larger drgeee in a foot-of-the-page, 'cut-out-dress-up' version of Tilly in her underclothes along with a variety of clothes to put on her figure. Sadly, since



Tellie's undies closely resembled a one-piece bathing suit...when the term meant ONE BIG piece, you couldn't get steamed up over the item.

Such cut-out items graced the bottom edge of many of the funnies. Sometimes, they were in the guise of 'dress up' figures..although I never recall one of Tarzan and his leopard skin. Other strips featured 'play money' to be cut out and used in games. Square-jawed 'Dick Tracy', crime buster supreme and owner of a personal wrist-radio often had a section of 'Crime Busters' tips for you to cut out and collect. Don't sneer at that 'wrist-radio' either..in those days, a midget portable receiver occupied a cubic foot of space and became almost red-hot in operation due to its voltage- dropping barreter, or external line cord resistance.

There were hordes of others....'Blondie' and her breakfast-on-the-run husband..who always managed to knock the postman flying as he departed to the office for further chivvyng by his boss. Young, bald-headed 'Henry', rival to Orphan Annie and Skippy, and one of the few American comic characters to make it on this side of the Atlantic..another was 'Jiggs' of 'Bringing up Father' Not so lucky, was Li'l Abner... when imported just after the war, the unsophisticated British public were too tender-hearted to laugh at his antics and the strange little Shmoo creatures which were so eager to please, they would collapse on your dinner-plate ready to be eaten. The strip had to be cancelled after only a short run.



Books could (and have been) written about the comic strips, their artists and their characters. Many analyse the motives and morals behind the drawings with a clinical detail which kills that which it would examine...in much the same way that 'doing Shakespeare' has soured-off succeeding generations. Does it really matter? IN a world emerging from a Depression, they formed an island of colour, humour and excitement. Pure escapism maybe...but they were a such of much good, harmless fun..and one in which the moral values and ethics were upheld. Crime did not pay, and the baddy always got his come-uppance. All such concepts seem sadly dated in today's hectic whirl of anti-heroes and tasteless underground 'comics'.

Oh yes, British newspapers now have comic strips..have had 'em for years in fact...but apart from their being in multicoloured black and white...90% of them are so humourless that I can't bring myself to read 'em. Likewise, the standards of draughtsmanship do not compare with the earlier material. Wyatt Earp..the James Bond strips, and the superlatively-drawn Jeff Hawke space series, spring to mind. No doubt there are still good cartoon characters around...but they are much scarcer on the ground than in those good old days. ...or is it just distance lending enchantment ?



L. Underhill

ORNITHOPTER 10 32pp/A4/Mim from Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Sq. Canberra ACT 2608, AUSTRALIA. This seems to be Aussie Take-over month. In my youth I had a model ornithopter which you wound up (elastic) and it flapped its way around the room. Here, Leigh compares the hazards of swinging a prop with flap-starting an ornithopter..he missed out the chance of getting pneumonia from the draught. The rest of the zine flaps lightheartedly over a Con Speech by Danny Lien; fanzine natter; a nice lettercol; Nicholas on flying; and several pages on Aussie fandom, now and then. Sadly, no illos. Get it for \$1 or the usual.

WAHF-FULL 10 32pp/A4/Mim from Jack Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldng. Univ of Sydney, Australia 2006. Not a lot of artwork, but what there is, is good. Contents include.. Symposium on nuclear power, another on films, a hefty lettercol and a notes on zines received. For LOC/Trade/Contrib/ etc. More real meat than Ornithopter and generally on the more serious side.

WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE Nov/82 18pp/A4/mim Jean Weber, 13 Myall St, O'Connor ACT 2601, Australia.(plus two other addresses according to what you're sending. Trade/Loc/lolly etc. Cover shows a woman polishing her husband's space truck. Jean is well into woman's lib, 1st article is a man's view of same..in a personal soul-bearing vein..'I am powerful, I am clean, I am sexy'... hoo boy. Who loves ya baby? Then a spot of fan fiction; reviews.. of one author, Jean says.." her reasons for not wanting children, though of vital importance to her, are quite irrelevant or even negative 'reasons' to another woman"..which is exactly what I think about Women's Lib ..some want it..and good luck to 'em..but let's face it, some don't..and should have their choice respected as well..by that I mean they LIKE the home and children and breadwinner Dad. Finally, a well organised lettercol..neatly presented, carefully edited and well answered..but again, largely on Lib. I am all in favour of W/L..but not in favour of the faction which sees every man as a potential rapist/sla: driver/failed sex object.

MICROWAVE 4 34/Qto/mim from Terry Hill, 41 Western Rd., Maidstone, KENT. Excellent artwork (apart from mine) a lighthearted zine which restores my faith in fan publishing. It doesn't try to rebuild the world..or fanishly frustrate it..just makes a darned good read...good editorial, Hoffman on manatees (Wonder if the Libbers will want to make them 'PERSONALiFEES ?) a fragment of Welsh history, a fiction/Peghoot yarn and a VERY GOOD lettercol which makes you holler for more. Get M-4 for trad, LOC, contrib, 30p in stamps..etc etc. Honest, this is a friendly zine which avoids the current 'we did this..we went there..I said this..' syndrome. Get and enjoy.

THE CREATURE FROM THE TYPING POOL...36 printed pages..akin in size to VECTOR but a damned sight better artwork..and far more interesting contents. Andy Neale C/O 157 Longsight, Harwood, Bolton LANCs will send you one for trade. LOC, contrib, artwork, or 25p in stamps...superlatively produced.. personal natterings..an article on books and reviewing by Gareth Gleaves which should be required reading for EVERY reviewer..some more personal fun doings on various themes and then the issue winds up with another very good lettercol.

WHICH Fanzine? Well, if Which did do consumer tests on fanzines..I reckon that well up on their list of 'Best Buys' would be MICROWAVE 4 and THE CREATURE FROM THE TYPING POOL 3. They both have the light-hearted touch, can be serious as needed..and avoid the contemporary back-stabbing which seems to have overtaken fandom...and they do it without bogging down in news and doings which are only of interest to their participants.

ERG 83..well, it ain't out yet...but if you want a copy..remember your LOC and 30p in stamps won't you...man can not live by lolly alone. See you.



((WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE...

Armed only with a cine camera and two pairs of sun glasses, our heroes, Val and Terry have flown the Atlantic, braved the labyrinth of Los Angeles, dared Disneyland and even lurked in the lair of the LASFS...now read on...))

Part 3

Terry Teeves

Peaches and orange juice may sound unusual for breakfast, but as the temperature began its daily climb towards 110° they made

a perfect start to the day before heading off along Route ('Rowt') 10 to a lunch stop in Blythe. After eating, we plucked up our courage and crossed the main road for a quick milk shake at MacDonalds..where previous experience had taught us, the best shakes are to be had.

It wasn't traffic which demanded courage..simply the heat. To walk 200 yards in the noonday sun is like walking along between two dozen hair dryers going full blast...except it's hotter.

Then it was off across the Colorado River and into Arizona. Through Quartzite and Buckeye we were borned by our trusty Greyhound, to be finally deposited at the Ramada Inn, Phoenix. As we collected our keys, the clerk informed us that we had visitors waiting in the coffee lounge. By this time our fellow travellers were beginning to wonder if we were Russian spies busy contacting agents at each stop.

A quick, stage-setting digression here. Shortly before leaving the UK, a letter of mine in Nickas had brought a response from a Mrs. Jane Raymer of Prescott, AZ, very kindly offering to host Val and I during our travels. I had written back, thanked her, enclosed our itinerary and explained that being on a tour, our movements were fixed..but if she happened to be in Flagstaff on Aug.8....

This didn't suit Jane..so, despite her very great difficulty in walking, she and her husband John (ex-B17 pilot, so he and Hal Clement should get on well together) had made the 100 mile trip from Prescott to Phoenix just on the off chance of meeting up with us. If you can think of a kinder gesture than that, I'd like to know of it. Moreover, Jane had made up a gopdy bag of local minerals and other duty-free items as a surprise present. We sat and nattered long..and loud over our coffee..no doubt to the annoyance of other residents...but since I have only one operational ear (Founder member of One-Eared Fandom) and John suffers from B-17 engine-induced deafness, it was necessary for everyone to SPEAK UP!

Our lovely gab-fest ended when it was time for our evening outing to the Western Town of Rawhide. John and Jane insisted on loading us into their air-conditioned waggon and ferrying us out there. Many thanks again, both of you. It was a lovely experience meeting two such good friends in a totally unexpected manner.and as the Raymers pulled away from the entrance to Rawhide, our Greyhound entered the parking lot...which again amazed the rest of the party..."How on Earth did you get here before us?"

In such ways are great mysteries born...the Bermuda Triangle...the strange tale of Kaspar Hauser...and now, the levitating Jeeves!

Entering Rawhide, a re-built Western movie style town, we sauntered along the dusty main street, ogled the Indian village, patted the cattle tethered by the water trough and stumped along the boardwalk fronting the various stores. A candy store offered lollipops in more varieties than a dog has fleas. The print shop offered various posters, mine deeds, cards and other souvenirs. For \$2, you could even have your named added to a 'WANTED' poster. I declined that one, as I still have the one sent to me by Betty Kujawa many moons ago... 'JEEVES ESCAPES HANGING...the rope breaks'. We moved on to the general store, pausing to sit on the cracker barrel beside the big stove..thankfully not in operation. After purchasing a few odds and ends, we moved on to inspect the Sheriff's office, peer down the entrance to the stope mine and checked out the stage coach. We did have tickets for a ride on it, but after a hectic day, we were too tired to belt around the sagebrush and through the Indian tepees.



Then excitement stirred on main street. Two bad guys had just ridden into town and were loudly plotting a bank robbery. Not unlike Laurel and Hardy in build, it was hilarious to watch them...and the drunken sheriff. The bank was eventually robbed and a final shoot-out ensued before Good triumphed over Evil.

Dusk was falling by now, so we wandered into the saloon to watch the gambling (with fake money) on roulette, faro, blackjack etc. We passed up the chance to hook our feet over the long bar, and instead, slid into one of the comfortable booths ranged around the walls. In no time at all, a curvaceous bar girl dressed in 'typical Western movie gear' of a red, plunge-neckline, zero-skirted 'dress' and with long, mesh-netted legs, had brought our drinks..and I sat back to enjoy the view. It was interesting to watch the goings-on in the saloon as well.

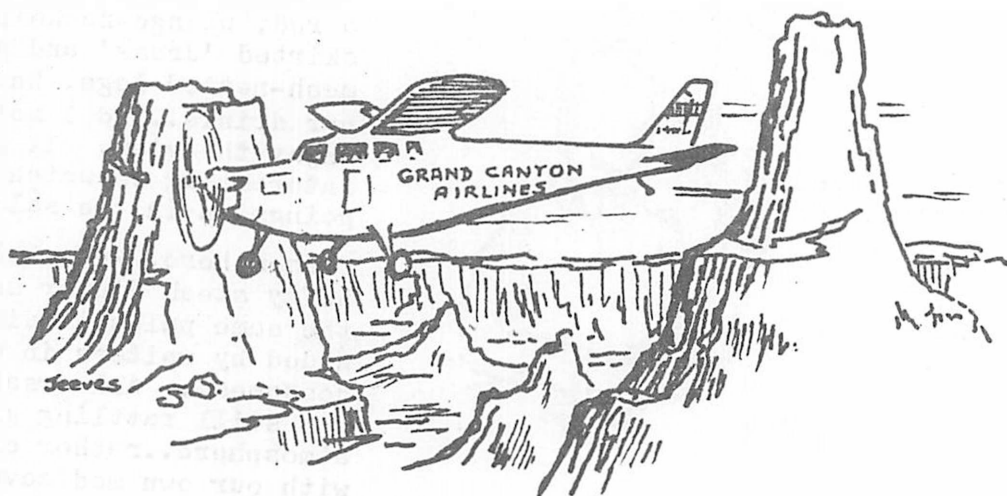


From here, we moved on to a hefty steak dinner served by the same pulchritudinous gals aided by waiters in cowboy costumes.. All ersatz as hell, but still rattling good atmosphere..rather on a par with our own mediaeval banquets.

The meal, the hectic day and the final run back to Phoenix, took their toll. We slept like logs until the crack of 6.45 am. Then it was down to a breakfast of buttermilk pancakes, jelly, scrambled eggs and three sausages all served on one plate..followed by bread, jam and endless cups of coffee. Val limited herself to fruit juice, a pastry and more tankfuls of coffee. Total cost, \$6.98, or about £4. Incidentally, for coffee, in the States, you pay a basic 40c or so..then your cup is kept refilled at no further cost. We've only met this in one place in England...a cafe in Holmfirth, setting for 'Last Of The Summer Wine' TV series...and it makes a nice idea.

Off up Route 17 for lunch in Sedona. Surrounded by superlative scenery, including the kind of rocks seen in the movies..and much of it was a lovely pink and red. Sedona, like so many other towns along the route, consisted of a single, shop-studded main street set in a wilderness..plenty of eating houses, a multitude of Realtors (well, they do have a lot of land) and an equal number of banks. Indeed, I am convinced that the main industries in the USA are banking, eating, and the selling of real estate. It was here that we asked directions to the nearest Post Office (the last had been in Farmer's Market in L.A.). On discovering we had no car, the response was, "Oh well, I'm afraid it's too far..about a mile down the road"...which with the mercury simmering over 110° would have required an effort akin to mounting a moon mission. Why, oh why, put the Post Office so far from the community centre anyway?

From Sedona, a short run took us to a leg-stretch in Flagstaff before moving to the next attraction....Flight Base of GRAND CANYON AIRLINES. After a brief wait, during which we bought a couple of sets of slides, we were ushered out to a single-engined Piper..where, because of my height and weight, the pilot allocated me to the co-pilot's seat...from which I was able to get superlative film on both still and cine. A quick engine run-up, a few words with ground control, then brakes off and in a surprisingly short time, the ground fell away and we found ourselves cruising low over a flat plateau. Ahead, a single bright streak gleamed across the horizon...it grew to a yellow and red slash, widened out...and then, with a marvellous sense of soaring like a bird, the ground dropped away in a rush and we were way out over the GRAND CANYON!..over a mile deep, and some five miles across.



IT WAS STUPENDOUS...words can never describe that view. Not only does it have to be seen..it has to be experienced! I could go on about its ever-changing colours, its immensity, the total stillness and timelessness of the place and never get near putting the feeling across. Awe-inspiring, magnificent, incredible..no use wasting words, the only thing to do is to go and see it...even photographs and movies fail to do it justice. That flight alone, made the whole trip worthwhile. Way down below, some tiny 'water rats' were swimming in the thread-like Colorado River...then the pilot explained that they were actually ten-foot long inflatable rafts carrying intrepid tourists over the rapids.

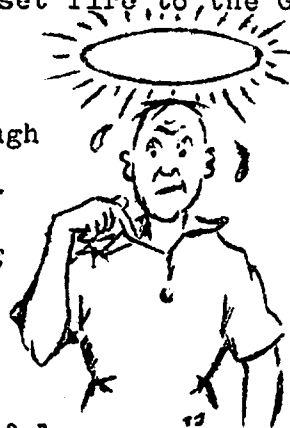
In and around the multi-hued peaks and ravines flew our tiny Piper as our cameras whirred and clicked fit to bust...mine did, but by shifting to 'Manual' I was still able to capture a fraction of that scene..with the high spot which came when the pilot sighted twin peaks ahead, and some 100 feet apart..so he flew us between them! Then it was back to the strip, a quick approach brought us in a couple of feet above the runway..and then the pilot flew its whole length at that altitude before touching down by the tower. \$40 for twenty minutes..and worth every penny of it.

From here, we nipped along to our cabin...half a mile from the canyon's edge, dumped our bags and grabbed a quick snack at the cafeteria. ((Where in England would they accept a \$50 traveller's cheque (or its sterling equivalent) for five bucks worth of food?)) Hunger satisfied, we strolled along to watch sunset over the canyon...which proved just as emotive from ground level. One or two venturesome souls began to clamber down one of the narrow pack-mule trails...but on the principal that what goes down..has got to come back up...at much greater expenditure of effort, we stayed at the rim.

Back in our cabin, a misguided attempt to switch on the air-conditioning caused a chaos which we learned later was shared by fellow travellers. Not the usual 747 dashboard array of knobs, dials, switches and levers..just an unmarked knob and switch...neither of which seemed to do anything...until I noticed that my hair was catching fire. Looking up revealed the awful truth. Set in the ceiling was a radiant heater..which refused to go off despite much clicking and twiddling (Why don't Americans include INSTRUCTIONS!). Then I noticed that the knob had moved a fraction on its own..the truth dawned..it was a time switch and we would have to wait for it to run down. We waited..and waited..and waited..the knob reached zero..and stopped short of it..leaving the heater going full blast. Mustering all my technological skill, I belted it with a hair brush..success! Things began to cool down and my visions of going down in history as the man who set fire to the Grand Canyon, vanished. We settled down to sleep.

...and the 'phone rang!

Mike Banks had called up from Ohio to welcome us to the USA..and had got through to our cabin..one of hundreds. This speaks well for the Harvey organisation, camp operators..as IN L.A. a caller ringing the 'Rainbow' had been told we weren't registered. Mike, Rosa, Val and I had a cosy, hour-long natter..which included the good news that Mike had sold another bucketful of stories (including one to Analog) as well as a book or two. It was great to hear Mike again..and very thoughtful of him to ring up all that way to welcome us back to the States. But then, we've found Americans all seem to be like that...kind, thoughtful, and generous..which is why we hope to make another trip over there in a year or so. Meanwhile.....on to the Hoover Dam.....



Small



A couple of years ago, when I bought a ZX81 and 16K RAM pack, that was just about the only low price home computer under £500. Things were not much better in November 1981 when I ordered my BBC 'B'...finally getting it in June '82..and up and running with delivery fault removed in Sept. It is a superb job, but in those two years, others have appeared to make the market much more competitive. There are about 20 micros below the £500 mark nowadays..so herewith a list to give

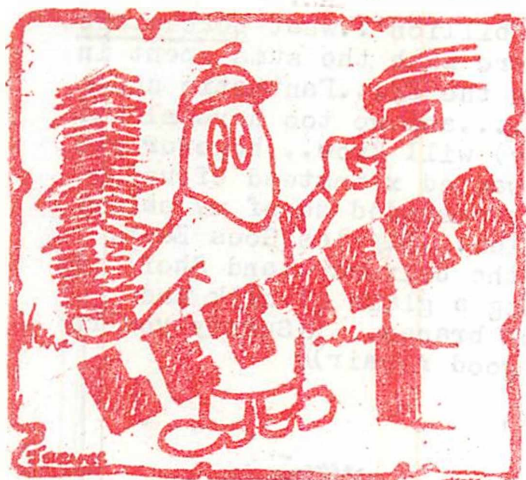
some help to those of you who contemplate a purchase. This is meant ONLY to give you an idea of what's on offer...I don't claim it to be exhaustive, prices are approximate, and some details are missing...but it should give you a starting point. (All have typewriter keyboards unless indicated)

COLUMN HEADING... P=Price RAM=Random Access Memory C=Colour (or B/W if not)
L=Language S=Sound S/R= Screen resolution (No of colours indicated if known)

MODEL	P	RAM	C	L	S	S/R	
SINCLAIR ZX81	£50	1K	B/W	Basic	0	43x63	Expandable to 100K by add-ons Printer & disc drive available
SINCLAIR SPECTRUM	£125	16K	8c	Basic	Yes	256	
	£175	48K	8c	Basic	Yes	182	
(All Sinclairs use a 'pressure sensitive keyboard')							
DRAGON 32	£200	32K	9c	Basic	Yes	?	
ATARI 400	£200	16K	?c	Basic	Yes	?	(Pressure sensitive keys) Type keyboard
400	£250	32K	?c	Basic	Yes	?	
800	£450	16K	?c	Basic	Yes	?	
JUPITER ACE	£90	3K	B/W	Forth	0	64x46	16K packs available
ORIC 1	£100	16K	16c	Basic	Yes	?	
	£170	48K	16c	Basic	Yes	?	
TEXAS TI 99/4A	£200	16K	16c	Basic	Yes	192x256	(other lang. available)
VIDEO GENIE 1 **	£250	16K	B/W	Basic	0	?	(No details of Genie 2)
COLOUR GENIE	£200	16K	8c	Basic	Yes	?	
MULTITECH MPF II	£270	64K	16c	Basic	Yes	280x192	(Similar to Apple)
COMMODORE VIC 20	£160	5K	16c	Basic	Yes	320x200	
VIC 20	£200	21K	16c	Basic	Yes	320x200	
VIC 64	£350	64K	16c	Basic	Yes	320x200	
LYNX	£225	48K (few details..has own language..but Basic and Forth to be available later)					
SORD M5 (Japan)	£100	4K	32c	Basic	?	256x196	Pressure keys
BBC 'A'	£300	16K	16c	Basic	Yes	1280x1024	(7 operating modes)
'B'	£400	32K	16c	Basic	Yes	1280x1024	

((And although I haven't the data on these..you might remember..APPLE, PET, ACORN, TANDY, NASCOM, TANGERING etc. Hordes of games, add-ons and peripherals are available)))

Has built-in cassette recorder



(((Editorial comments lurk between these triple parentheses...and in response to all the people who plead for a longer lettercol, ..I'd like to run one..but as J.W.Campbell so often said..."print isn't elastic". Were I to include a really long LOCcol, then I'm afraid that either the price for ERG would increase with the increased weight..or else something would have to be missed out. It's the regular problem every issue, so bear with me will you folks...)))

JUDITH BUFFERY "You mention you're a film buff. How about something in Memory Bank Lane with reference to films? ((Don't worry, it's on the list..along with 'the ads' 'Learning from SF', 'Airways', 'American mags'

and many other topics))) You may tell Ethel Lindsay I'm a middle-aged 39. Sinatra is old by anybody's standards ((Not mine..I'm 60 years young))) and my musical youth was formed by people like the Moody Blues, the Beatles and Fleetwood Mac ((What about Woody Herman, the Inkspots and Kay Kayser..who Val and I had the pleasure of hosting last summer))) You could certainly hear the words they sang. I have to say that from your description of Disneyland, it sounds awful ((That's just it, it ISN'T..when I said it outdid Blackpool..I meant not only by the quality of what was on offer, but by its cleanliness, the friendliness of the staff, and the total lack of the sleazy, sweat-shirted brigade breathing total disinterest everywhere)))

VINCE CLARKE

16 Wendover Way
Welling

KENT

"ERG 81 (Ghod!) Nice cover marred by the extremely serious blunder...the line in the medallion on the helmet of the leading figure should be horizontal, not vertical..and why did you miss out the 1/- in the top right hand corner? ((That line is a giro compass indicator..she was just going a different way..as for the missing price..well, I didn't want people thinking ERG was a cheap rag)))

I like Judith Buffery's calm writing and she's sold me on Blade Runner. Terry Hill liked it too. I find it hard to forsake the fire for the cinema these days ((So do I, and I HATE the compulsory 20 minutes of sitting looking at the curtains at half time..then being subjected to ten minutes of ad rubbish followed by an hour of a 'J Arthur Rank looks at Something Totally Boring' before getting to the thing I've come to see. Before I got married, I used to note the time of the main film, get in for that..and out again immediately after it))) Memory Bank Lane..the 'Modern Wonder' Space Traveller articles were done by John Russell Fearn, not Eric Frank..((Well I got the sound right))) You might also have mentioned Burrough's 'PIRATES OF VENUS' and sequels which were also in Passing Show' ((I might have, but I never saw 'em))) John Wyndham's real name was John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris ((Poor sod))).

IAN GOFFIN

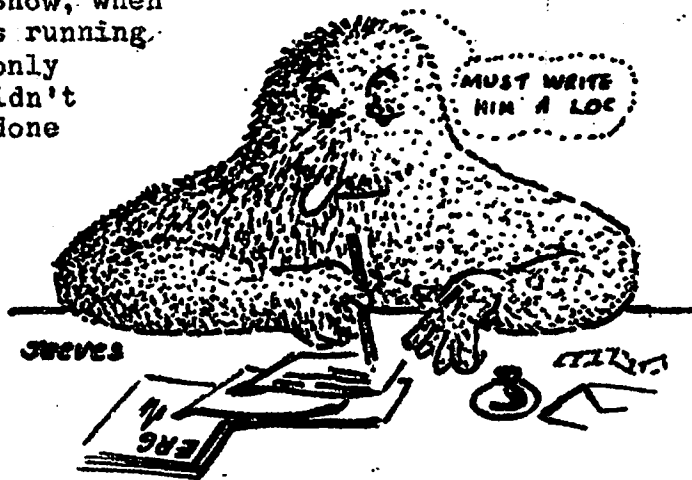
19 Edgehill Cresc.
Foxhill

SHEFFIELD S6 1FG

Cover of ERG 79..I don't suppose you might have a giant bell-jar hanging around, that I could borrow? I've got a couple of friends who would look quite nice in one filled with potassium cyanide. It always impresses me how by the use of shading and the angle of light an artist can create real, three-dimensional images from an otherwise lifeless drawing. Considering the 64 billion dollars spent on developing the Shuttle, it would seem amazing that the same country has some of the worst slums of any 'civilised' nation. ((False logic....'the poor we will

always have with us'...don't be frightened by '64 billion'..what percentage is that of the expenditure...and how does it compare with the sums spent in the USA on Welfare and on Medicine? Similarly in the UK...Fantastic sums are spent (wasted) on 'Sport', drink and tobacco....and we too have slums. As anyone balancing a budget (household or country) will know...however you share out the lolly, someone else will think you wasted x instead of using it on y))) Thoroughly enjoyed Memory Bank Lane..it reminded me of my early days with old adventure books which included Biggles...Biggles Goes East, West, South and To The Toilet. Biggles conquers the Universe..and Sheffield with both hands tied behind his back while drinking a glass of milk and playing Holst's 'Planet Suite' on a pair of broken braces. (((Surely you're exaggerating a bit? I'm sure the braces were in good repair)))

E.P.HUGHES "DMBL Like looking in a mirror,
10 Kenmore Rd., for me. My Passing Show, when
Whitefield, I came across it, was running.
Manchester a Barsoom serial; but I only
saw a few copies. TOW didn't
thrill me as much as it seems to have done
you. But the Yankee Mags! I remember
the first Astounding I bought with 3
hot little coppers. I cut my teeth
on bedsheet Wonders and Amazing
Quarterlies...now alas, nearly all
gone for pre-war firelighters...
but March 1936, 'Redemption Cairn',
hit me like a bomb. Don't care
what some crazy convention voted;
the best SF story ever written was,
..and still is.."Valley Of Dreams",
closely followed by "A Martian Odyssey".
Third, if you want my opinion..'Surface
Tension' (((Personally, I fancy "Under Pressure", "Microcosmic God" and the
good old "Grey Lensman"



SIMON GOSDEN
2 Ayndale Rd I enjoyed the story "Upon Reflection", Donby Grork was a bit
Rayleigh of a mouthful though (had to think how to pronounce it every
ESSEX time I came across it. (((How about 'Dran pe Niblo and some
of those 'Dune' and other recent ASF yarns, then?))) I agree with your
comments on SF in the modern day trying to be something it isn't. I also
collect and read SF purely for entertainment. Too many new books are dire
and certainly not entertaining. (((Tickled me..a an article in the BSFA's
'Matrix' slamming (in careless English) the literature and literary standards
in ASF...and implying that the abysmal 'Interzone' was far better. Heck, I
can't read the damn thing.. boring, pretentious and the usual get-nowhere..
rubbish)))...(((Oh yes..Simon also sells SF..so if you care to send him an
S.A.E. for the latest lists....)))

MIKE ASHLEY
4 Thistlebank Many thanks for the latest ERG, as enjoyable as ever. I had
Walderslade a good opportunity to read it through because I've been
Chathan ordered by the doctor to stay flat on my back because I've
KENT somehow got a slipped disc. Thanks also for the smashing
individual Xmas card..I'll certainly treasure that one. At present
I'm working on an INDEX TO WEIRD FANTASY MAGAZINES to be followed by INDEX
TO WEIRD FANTASY ANTHOLOGIES/COLLECTIONS, so if you want to help out on a
further index, bear that in mind. (((Sure will, and thanks again for the
enclosure, Mike)))



PHIL HARBOTTLE
32 Tynedale Ave
Wallsend
Tyne & Wear

I was interested in
Memory Lane..your
memory for generalities
is pretty damn good over

40 years. However, whilst it makes for
a good fanzine article, why not write
it as a memory piece, then have the
facts checked and corrected in the
form of footnotes? I'd be pleased to
act as consultant. MODERN WONDER..the
first issue did NOT have the first of a
series on the Solar System..that must
have been 'Chronicles of a Space Voyager'
by John Russell Fearn which began in No.19

((Oh well, I did say at the start my memory
wouldn't be all that accurate))) PASSING SHOW is famous for a great number
of SF serials..two by Beynon, several by Burroughs. The artist was the
great Fortunino Matania. There was no novel sequel to PLANET PLANE except
for the short in TALES OF WONDER ((STOWAWAY TO MATS..T.J.))) But how did you
miss the fact that PLANET PLANE was reprinted as a serial in MODERN WONDER
itself...as THE SPACE MACHINE ((Sorry, but I'd stopped reading MW
by then)))...((Phil, as agent for and holder of the copyrights on J.R.Fearn's
tales is self-publishing some of the material...WORLDS WITHIN with a cover
by Roland Turner and the original Dold illos from ASF inside makes up a very
neat bit of nostalgia packaging...as does 'FROM AFAR'...and soon to be
published is SURVIVOR OF MARS aka 'The Avenging Martian'...these three little
press items are excellent ways of getting hold of some long out of print
yarns, and can be obtained from Phil for £1 a copy...personally, I got a
kick out of seeing those old illustrations once again.)))

BRUCE GILLESPIE
GPO Box 5195AA
Melbourne
Victoria 3004
AUSTRALIA

writes to say that he has just published S F COMMENTARY
REPRINT EDITION for 1969 which comprises all the first
8 issues of Bruce's excellent fanzine SF Commentary..200
numbered copies, 200,000 words..photos of notables and
material by Bangsund, Foyster, Aldiss, Dick, Brunner,
Silverberg etc. £25 a copy...English cheques acceptable,

so if you want a copy..make your cheque payable to 'Bruce Gillsepie'

KEVIN RATTAN
23 Waingate Close
Rawtenstall
Rossendale
LANCS

Co West Old Fan was told with a splendid eye for
humour and ability to relate delight of what you
enjoyed. Just one thing struck me as strange, the
suggestion that the dollar controls the pound. Isn't it
the other way round? ((Well, every time the US raises its

interest rate, the pound slips against the dollar..and the Bank Of England
steps in to bolster it up...the £ was worth \$2.40 during our 1980 trip..and
only £1.70 on this one))) Memory Bank Lane..as ever I find myself in the
position of finding an incidental detail my favourite piece in ERG,, In this
case, it was the 'Bluebird' illo with 'front', 'back' details labelled.
'Home Cooking' interested me. For the first time in my life I have been
forced to feed myself, now that I'm away from home! ((That's how I began.
In the RAF, we used to draw our own rations for night duty at the main
transmitting station in Bombay..one night, feeling a bit groggy..I did
myself THREE suppers between midnight and 9am..each of bacon, duck eggs and
fried bread. Next morning, I was whisked into Colaba Hospital with yellow
jaundice. Got out a month later..'light duties for two weeks'..so I was
sent on an assault course. ..even a humble boiled egg can have a history)))

Joy Hibbert

11 Rutland St.,
Stoke On Trent

"Yes, we and the Japanese manage to converse, but you alien might be from a planet with less diverse people. ((You miss the point..I said if we have trouble conversing with Japanese..picture the difficulty we'd have with a real alien))) "You're not struggling 'personfully'..you're struggling hard Try not to use person for man where there's a better synonym. Your review of Jean Weber's fmz shows the common male fault of jumping on what he sees as sexism (i.e. women not being worshipful to men) ((Rubbish! I said quite clearly what I meant..that I hate women..AND MEN who harp on about how wonderful THEY are and how clever))) Jean probably clobbers all men as rapists because all men are subject to the brainwashing which enables them to see women's bodies as commodities. I know you don't know any better, but try to think before you get defensive. All men are potential rapists - if any choose not to take advantage of the situation it is either luck or a realisation of his brainwashing, I should remember that your wife, like all others, has no right to refuse you. ((More rubbish..in fact there is so much bias here I felt I had to run this letter..."All men potential rapists indeed"...I am most certainly NOT one, real or potential..and as for this out-dated concept of 'marital rights'..words fail me. My wife is a person in her own right, we work and live as a team...and neither would dream of trying to force themselves on the other. It is precisely this sort of rabid howling which gets 'libbers' their bad reputation in the first place. Some men are lousy blighters, agreed...but so are some women..neither sex has a monopoly on brains or stupidity.))) "Going by the last ish, you want to eat unwrapped food since you can't unwrap wrapped food" ((That was a funny..you know, 'ha Ha...sorry you didn't get it..perhaps you take things too seriously ??))

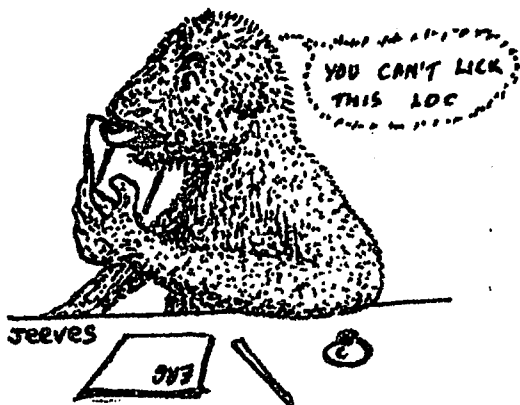
((To redress the balance a bit, here's a brief note from a femfan who we all know, love and respect..for herself and what she is...NOT just because she isn't a nasty old man...))

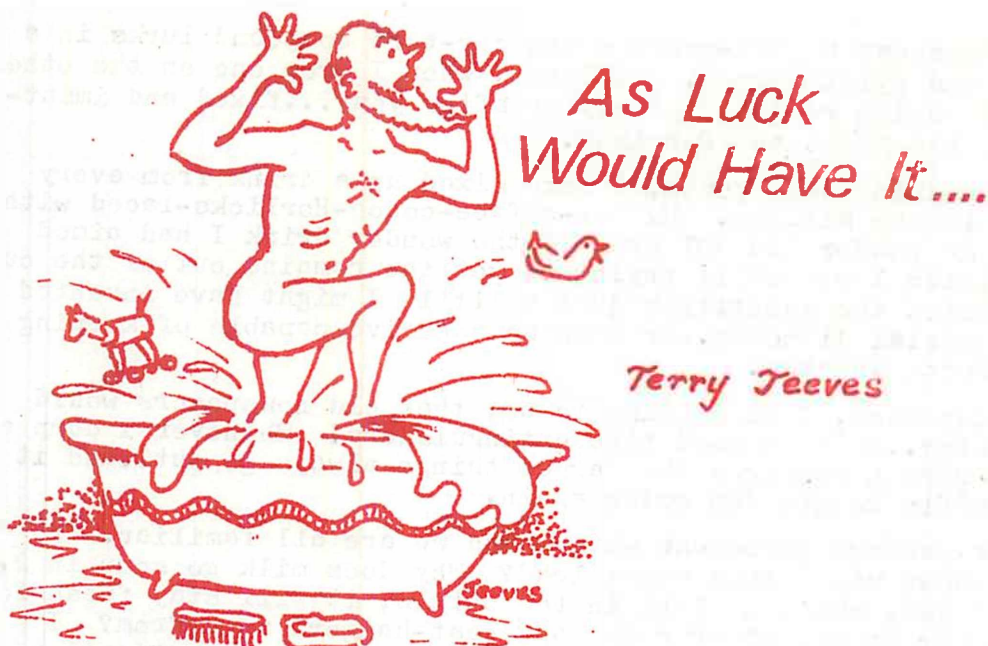
Ethel Lindsay
69 Barry Rd.,
Carnoustie
Angus:

Many thanks for the latest ERG and congratulations on reaching the end of 24 years publication! That really must be some kind of record. Congratulations on putting ANGELS at the tope of your dislike list..it must be the pit. I think I must take exception to Judith Buffery again. Whilst not disagreeing with her assessment of Blade Runner, I cannot agree that this is 'serious' SF as opposed to Star Wars. This is part of the thinking that if the future is seen in a pessimistic light, it must be serious..and anything that assumes light-heartedly that technology will be of benefit to us, is fantasy. It is a form of thinking which runs through a lot of today's criticism. How rarely one reads a book which assumes something good might happen in the future, or some good come of the burgeoning technology of today.

((Very true, Ethel...yet people seem to wear blinkers when looking around at all the benefits we have gained..they

only seem capable of seeing the nasty parts. I grew up in a house with one cold tap (and a tin bath), loo across the yard and the only 'entertainment' a wind-up gramophone...and a medical bill was a frightener))





Accidents seem to have sprked off many an invention.. I remember reading that when a careless workman \$ropped a hunk of his lunch time cheese into a nearby bucket of shellac, the resulting gunge proved to be the base material on which the brittle olf 78rpm disc industry was built.

Archimedes played with a rubber duck (or was it a wooden Trojan Horse?) in his bath tub and discovered his famous principle...although history never records who lost it in the first place. Alexander Fleming probably hired the same workman from the record-pressing form as it appears that Pennicillin originated in a mouldering sandwich left on a bench. Careless storage of a chunk of pitchblende on top of a photographic plate gave us X-ray photography. Phoenicians had a barbecue on the beach, their fire fused the sand to give us glass. Even the killing of slaves to dedicate swords (by having the red-hot blade thrust into them) is reputed to have led to the tempering of steel by quenching.

Every schoolboy is firmly convinced that James Watt invented the steam engine when the lid blew off his kettle during the making of a mid-day cuppa. Dunlop is rumoured to have stepped on a water hose in the garden; seen it swell up, and immediately invented his pneumatic tyre..and even Mills made a bomb in the munitions field.

All of which would seem to indicate that instead of spening huge sums of money building and equipping gigantic research laboratories, the same result could be achieved in a much simplor way. Get a few ham-fisted, accident-prone workers, then turn 'em loose in a big shed stocked with odds and ends from all the local junk shops. Alternatively I suppose, if you happen to be manager of a zoo, the same ends could be reached by using 50 million monkeys.

Picture the Earth-shaking discoveries waiting to be found by tossing stale hot-dogs into old crankcase oil! The millions inherent in the spinoff from mouldering fragments of Col. Sanders Deep Fried Southern Chicken if marinated in the dregs of a Big Mac milk shake mixer....or even from floating a raft of college professors in a giant swimming pool until they discovered some other lost principle.

Nearer home, I suspect a hard-wearing new car-tyre compound lurks in a mixture of custard and nylon carpet. At least, when I drop one on the other, the result is a mess which remains there year after year...fixed and immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

In my callow, experimental, youth, I once mixed up a drink from every available beverage in the kitchen. My tea-coffee-cocoa-Horlicks-laced with Bovril and milk shake powder did NOT produce the wonder drink I had aimed for...but a month later I was still trying to get the remains out of the cup. Perhaps if I had varied the quantities just a little I might have invented a substitute for industrial diamonds..or even an adhesive capable of keeping heat tiles on the Space Shuttle.

Strange as it may seem, I am willing to bet that old newspapers would make good fireproofing..or even good fire extinguishers! Whenever I dump a heap of them on my garden bonfires the darned things always go out..and it takes a can of paraffin to get 'em going again.

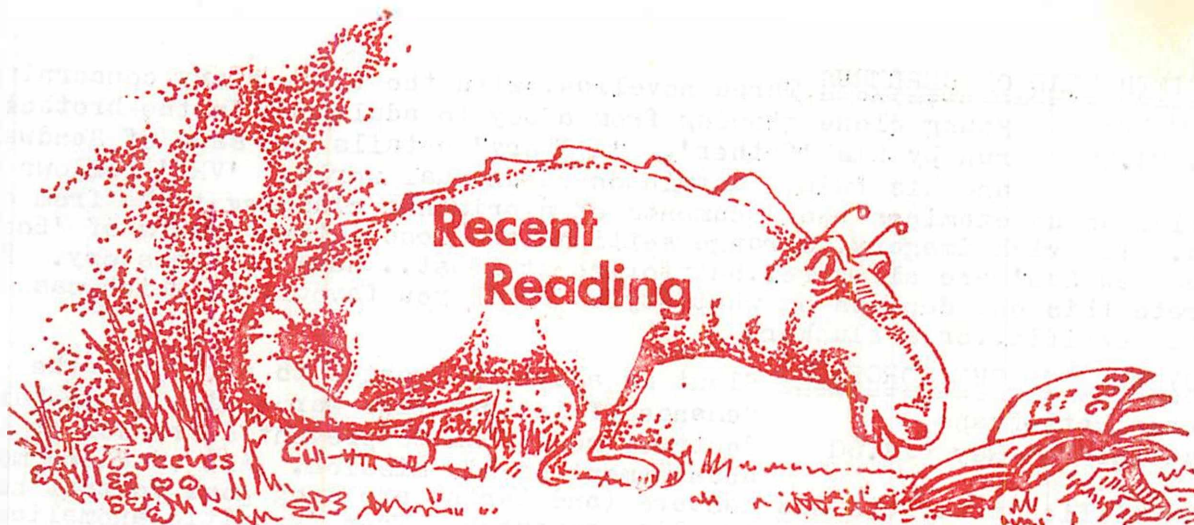
There are other strange phenomena with which we are all familiar. If investigated, who knows where they might lead? Why does milk go sour in 2.7 seconds if put in a jug, when, if left in the bottle, it will stay fresh for days? Where do rubber bands, paper clips and coat-hangers come from? I never buy the things, but my stock seems inexhaustible. An investigation into this occurrence may well lead to a new scientific principle akin to Fred Hoyle's theory of 'Continuous Creation'.

Take the case of my trouser pockets..when empty, they never give trouble, yet no sooner do I fill 'em with loose change, keys, penknife, bottle opener and other essential items than they go and develop holes. Obviously the effect at work here is that matter creates holes...as when a Black Hole is formed. Don't know why it took an astronomer to figure that one out.

Closely akin to mass-created holes are breaking shoelaces. It is a firmly established fact that shoes in wardrobes keep their laces intact..yet don the shoes, pull the laces and the damn' things break like wet string. Mathematical theory has it that a tossed penny will give an equal number of Heads and Tails. Try tossing buttered toast over a new carpet and it will invariably land gooey side down. Someday, when the wife is out, I aim to try tossing buttered pennies to see which rules they follow. Closely allied to this is the fact that although a photograph can be ~~either~~ in or out of focus, mine scoff at chance and always appear fuzzy. Some strange force is at work.

Which is where my laboratory for accident-prone workers comes in. With hordes of such people dropping strange objects into weird mixtures..who knows what may be discovered? Right now I'm trying match-heads in petrol as a new rocket fuel. See you on Mars! Terry.





THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER Cromwell, sadistic king of Aragan, ressurects the Norman Winski evil sorcerer, Xusia to aid him defeat Richard of Eh Dan. Hale £7.95 Richard's armies are massacred in three, off-scene battles;

whereupon Cromwell slays Xusia and Richard's family..with only the son, Talon, escaping to foster revenger..which he does in a three-cornered denouement wherein Xusia returns to intrigue against Cromwell..and to violate the woman Talon loves. I suspect this may be a translation (it does say..'based on the screenplay') from some clumsy writing 'her best feature were her dark eyes', 'tongs for pulling out tongues'. Typographical errors such as 'fish' for 'fist' and 'thrown' for 'throne' also hinder the reading pleasure..and despite such flaws, pleasure it is! The tale is full of life, action (much of it gory), sex and moves at such a cracking pace, one is never bored. If you enjoy unadorned sword and sorcery (with no cerebral frills or pretences), then this is as near unputdownable as you can get...and there's a hint of a sequel in the last sentence.

THE CRYSTAL SINGER Originally a 4 part series in Elwood's 'Continuum' and Anne McCaffrey here expanded into a novel..with to my mind, a vast improvement over the individual parts. Ballybran crystals form a vital part of the Galaxy's technology, their mining is a hazardous, penalty-demanding task and requires singers with perfect pitch. Killashandra Ree sets out to become one of the legendary 'singers' along with the risks of death by mutilation or mutation by a symbiote. Killashandra is rather lucky, and seems sexually neuter rather than female..but the build-up and background are impeccable with scope and detail far exceeding the pot-boiling 'Dragon' series. I was drawn into this against my normal dislike of Ms McCaffrey's yrsns..and found it one of the most enthralling tales I've read in a long, long time. Don't miss it, it's a real story.

PREFERRED RISK Wars are virtually ended thanks to the 'Company' which insures vortually every aspect of life..a prospect which does not suit all. Tom Wills, a naive Claims Adjuster is sent to Naples to help out a flush of claims following a nuclear skirmish. He meets the enigmatic Rena and a bunch of conspirators plotting to overthrow the Company..plus the incredible, totipotent Zorchi who specialises in losing limbs to claim insurance, then growing them again! A fast moving, near 1984-ish yarn. The premise is a bit thin, but interest is never allowed to flag. Originally a 4pt Galaxy serial (Jun-Sep 1955), it was a good yarn then and still reads as well as ever..plus the bonus of 2 short articles on how it came to be written.

THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS

Three novellas, with the title story concerning a young clone growing from a boy to adulthood in the brotherhood run by his 'father'. 'A Story' details the saga of Sandwalker and his twin, Eastwin on an unusual world. 'VRT' follows an official as he examines the documents of a prisoner claiming to be from old Earth. The rich imagery, strange settings and descriptive powers of 'Book Of The New Sun' are all here..but for me at least.. none of the story. How you rate this one depends on what styles of SF you favour..in which case it can be terrific..or a clunker.

THE CYBORG AND THE SORCERERS

Slant is a cyborg created to carry out the demands of interstellar war - with an in-built destruct mechanism to prevent surrender or the abandonment of his mission. All of which makes things difficult as both his masters (and Earth) are long gone so that no-one can deprogram him..or his controlling computer. Then 'gravitic anomalies' are detected and the computer forces Slant to investigate..and this embroils him with telekinetic 'wizards'. Not a cerebral yarn, but just highly entertaining straight SF..which makes for a refreshing and enjoyable read.

LIFE ITSELF

A straightforward coverage of size and the 'Big Bang' leads to a discussion on the requirements and origins of life. Then a look at DNA/RNA chains and on to the chances of life arising in the Universe and its particular needs as to where..and how it might have appeared. The author's final premise is an extension of the Arrhenius' spore theory..except that he postulates a long-gone super race which sent out spores to seed the Galaxy. Entertaining, thought-provoking and imaginative. If you want an insight into the mysteries of life and its development then don't miss this lucid exposition...the speculation is NOT allowed to get in the way of the facts..so don't class it with Bermuda Triangles, pyramids and the like.

RUN TO THE STARS

Mankind has a stardrive, one colony ship on a new world and a second ready to follow. Then Earth's bureaucrats (A breed not too clearly defined) change and seek, not only to abort the new mission, but to take even more drastic measures. Security Chief Bellamy enters the action when he sets out to investigate the killing of a rocket pilot. From such a simple start, the plot expands on a grand scale to include espionage, treachery, alien contact and a battle in deep space. Every so often, along comes a story which takes all the old elements and re-works them into a thing of delight. Mr. Rohan does that here with a gripping yarn worthy to rank alongside the best of Heinlein, Asimov or Smith..and it isn't like any work of theirs either...just read and enjoy!

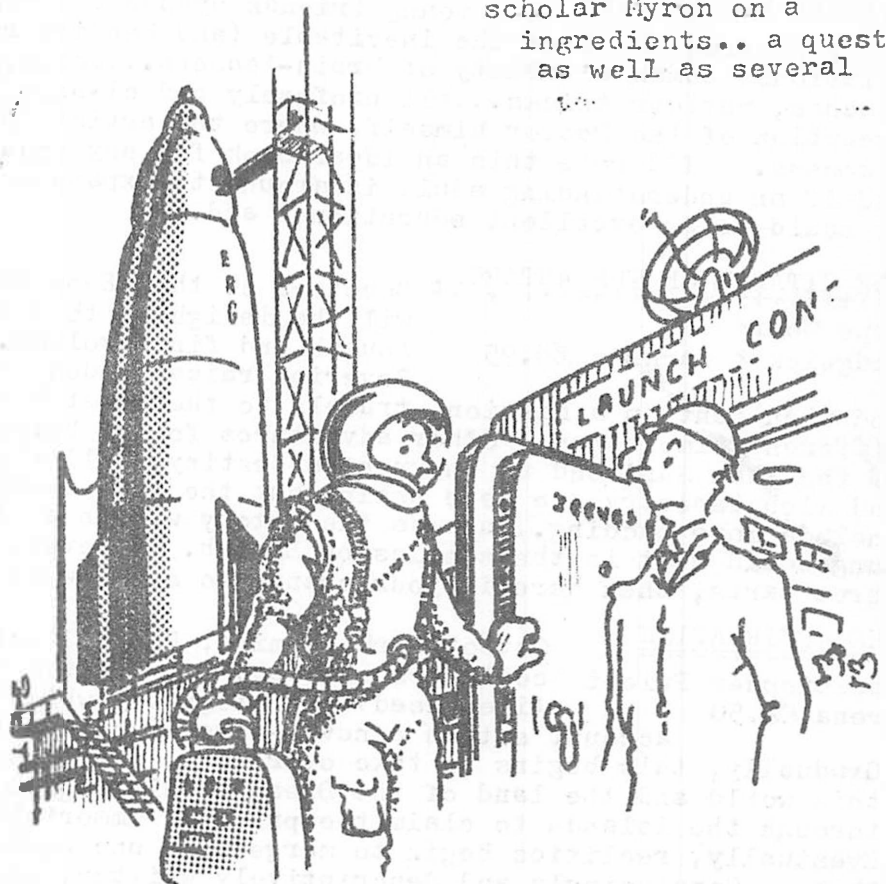
GALACTIC EFFECTUATOR

Miro Hetzel (an interstellar 'Private Eye') is first commissioned to investigate the Istagam Company which is driving his client out of business. The trail takes him to the planet Maz where the warlike Gomaz are under a tripartite rule by their would-be victims. His second case has him trace a paranoid doctor who performed a cruel operation on a man about to wed his girl friend. As always, Vance's worlds, races and characters display a delightful (and unpredictable variety). He is never afraid to develop a character or situation even if either is irrelevant to the plot; a trait which adds both richness and colour to his writings. This tale is no exception, maybe not a pretentious Award winner...but certainly a highly entertaining read. If you like Vance, you'll go for this.

Three new illustrated STARBLAZE titles, each half as large again as the average paperback from Donning (Fantast (Medway) can get 'em for you). First, AURELIA by R.A.Lafferty (182pp/\$5.95) concerns Aurelia of the 'Shining People' whose class assignment is to govern a minor planet. Since she skipped her Navigation classes and barely passed 'Spaceship Design', chance brings her to Earth closely followed by a 'Dark Antagonist'. Her reception proves most unusual. Mounted on this base, Lafferty writes off in all directions in a near-humour/anything-goes style which you love or hate. Personally, I hate it..but now I've told you the book exists, the rest is up to you. Also in a (more) humorous vein is MYTH DIRECTIONS by Robert Asprin (170pp/\$5.95). Third in the series of adventures befalling apprentice magician Skeeve and fallen demon Aahz (following 'ANOTHER FINE MYTH' and 'MYTH CONCEPTIONS'). This time, Skeeve and the luscious Tananda go dimension-hopping to get a birthday present for Aahz. They elect to steal the Trophy for the annual Veygus/TaHoe clash (pun-names for Vegas and Lake Tahoe). Tananda is caught so Skeeve and Aahz mount a rescue mission involving them in building a team of demons to beat the other sides. A lively romp laced with slapstick fun but more logically self-consistent than the lafferty. Indeed, it is well up to the level of the 'Harold Shea stories by Pratt and De Camp. Speaking of the latter, he gives us the third title.. THE DRAGON OF THE ISHTAR GATE. (342pp/\$5.95) in which the ageing Xerxes, King of the Medes and Persians seeks rejuvenation by a spell requiring dragon's blood, a king's ear and a hero's heart. Condemned warrior Bessas is teamed with the scholar Myron on a mission to seek out these ingredients.. a quest beset by many normal perils bands seeking to wipe out the pair. This is the first in a new series and for my money, THE BEST BUY. Not so much fantasy (which it beats four ways from centre) as a historical romance wherein De Camp uses his considerable scholarship to create a richly convincing tapestry. Joy of joys, it's illustrated by Steve Fabian.

Normally, I'm a hater of barbarian heroes, but this one had me hooked from the very start.

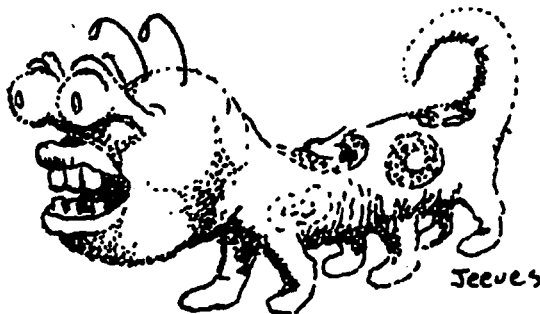
*(Fantast (Medway) Ltd. 39 West St. Wisbech, CAMBS PE 13 2LX)



"Do you have another match ? The fuse went out ."

ALIEN CONTACT

The first half of the book details the experiences of the Jenny Randles & 'Sunderland' family. 9-year-old Gaynor encounters aliens Paul Whetnall and a grounded UFO, then Coronet £1.75 later recalls how, at 3½ months old, she played with 'fireballs' which came through her bedroom walls. Brother and mother also have encounters (then mother remembers aliens prowling around the house), there is a trip taken to an alien planet and neighbours also meet the aliens (Arno and Parz). Read as fiction; it is trite and lacking in style. As fact, it offers little by way of corroborative evidence other than a blotched photo and some indifferent drawings. The second half of the book offers 'explanations'/justifications coupled with the usual mishmash of half truth and allusion. Highly recommended to saucer freaks and cultists of the UFO band...I can't see anyone else swallowing the stuff.

DOCTOR WHO: Quiz Book Of Magic

Michael Holt A similar format to the earlier 'Book Of
Methuen Magnet 95p ~~Dinosaurs~~, with Dr. Who setting problems to his two young friends Nyassa and Tegan (or puzzling over their posers). After the inevitable (and happily restricted) optical illusions, comes a variety of brain-teasers...coins, cards, numbers, string, matches, parlour tricks...all profusely and clearly illustrated..with the exception of the Doctor himself, where the artist fails to capture a likeness. I'd rate this an ideal book for any enquiring-minded youngster and if an understanding adult is around to expand and explain the material it could be an excellent educational aid.

THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH

Gene Wolfe Devotees of the 'Book Of The New Sun' series
Sidgwick & Jackson £8.95 will be delighted to get their hands on this fourth and final volume. Former Torturer, Severian raises a dead soldier, enters a hospital and when sent on a mission, travels to the 'Last House' which has storeys in different time zones. Other adventures follow before he finds the meaning of the 'New Sun' and an unexpected destiny. All the colourful characters and rich tapestry are here again, but the tale seems to wander more..and include more padding..such as the 'story within a story' of the kind Kai Lung would meet in the stories by Bramah. However, if you enjoyed the first three parts, then here is your chance to see how it all comes out.

THE AFFIRMATION

Christopher Priest Out-of-work chemist, Peter Sinclair, is loaned a country
Arena £2.50 cottage so he sets out to pass his time by writing his (idealised) autobiography which becomes a fictionalised account set in a never-never land of his own imagination.

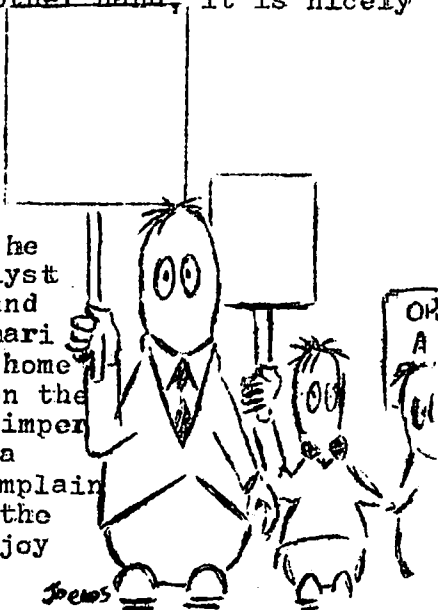
Gradually, this begins to take over as he shuttles back and forth between this world and the land of the Dream Archipelago where he is journeying through the islands to claim the prize of immortality, won in a lottery. Eventually, realities begin to merge with one world taking over from the other. Convincingly and descriptively written, scenes and to a lesser degree, characters, come alive. I class this as a 'Very interesting, so-what yarn; less a 'story', than a slice of 'life'. Plenty of ups and downs, but at the end you are left little further than at the beginning. Sinclair never really gains one's empathy as a person to be pitied, censured or worried about.

THE STALKING **THE TALISMAN** The pseudonym hides Robert Holdstock, who both by 'Robert Faulcon' opens a new series following the adventures of Arrow £1.50 each. Daniel Brady has he seeks out a Satanic/demonic cult in order to find his lost family and wreak vengeance. In **THE STALKING**, all is peaceful in the Brady household, when in bursts a group of demonic figures. Brady's wife is raped and she and the children stolen away with Brady left for dead. Months later, further horror strikes at the hospital where he is recovering. Nurses die, a private detective is slain and Brady aided by Ellen Bancroft (whose family has also been taken) sets out on the trail. **THE TALISMAN** sees the hunt continued as a motley group of people collect in East Anglia drawn by a strange compulsion. Brady follows under guidance by a medium and much horror and mayhem ensues before another of the villains meets a terrible doom. When the ghost of a Viking warrior is set loose. Plenty of sex, gore and violence but the supernatural menace doesn't come across as strongly as one would like. Instead of a continual lurking threat, it only seems to emerge on cue. However, you pay your money and you take your choice.

ON THE GOOD SHIP ENTERPRISE Subtitled, 'My 15 Years With Star Trek', this Bjo Trimble entirely delightful volume also takes in fandom as we Starblaze \$5.95 follow Bjo into SF, first contact with Star Trek, it writers, actors and producers. We agonise with her at the setbacks and the 'Save ST campaign'. There are plenty of lighthearted (and excellent) illos as well as an 11 page photo section. Cheerfully and entertainingly written, 'warts and all'..once started, you'll not put it down. If you have any sort of feeling for ST, rush off and get your copy..don't walk, it may be sold out. Physical details.. near 300, large sized pages...UK fans, try Ken Slater.

THE SHATTERED GODDESS Another writer from the ranks of fandom. A second child Darrell Schweitzer appears in the crib beside the Guardian's son. Named Starblaze \$5.96 Ginna, it is left unwanted, whilst the royal Kaemen is possessed by the evil powers of a dead witch. Ginna studies magic and the paranoid, evil Kaemen succeeds to rule and begins a reign of terror. Ginna flees the city, increases his magic powers and we have the eventual confrontation. The story follows the standard good-v-evil route, but finds no new territory along the way. On the other hand, it is nicely illustrated by Steve Fabian.

THE COLORS OF SPACE The near-human Lhari have a Marion Zimmer Bradley monopoly on star travel, Starblaze but it doesn't prevent Bart Steele from travelling five light years to attend and graduate from Earth's Space Academy. Immediately, he is plunged into a plot to discover the secret catalyst which powers the warpdrive. Two weeks of surgery and sleep-learning change him into a fully competent Lhari star navigator and of course, he eventually brings home the bacon. It's another old plot, and bordering on the juvenile/adult zone...but...it IS a story, not a whimper out ended affair, it has cracks, but moves at such a rattling good pace you never get bored enough to complain about them. If you like action-sf with a touch of the aliens-are-people-too, understanding, then you'll enjoy this one.



LAST-MINUTE ODDS

AND ENDS

Since starting work in this issue, I have managed to get my camera (cine) back from Agfa..it was located lurking in the Post sorting office..."Oh didn't you get a note through the door? It's been here a fortnight" Sounds of head battering wall. Computer came back.."Yes, it came in last Friday..so much for promises to (a) phone me..and (b) to bring it round to the house. I also got my cartoons out of Woman's World..who had alternately 'not received them'/'passed them to the art editor//Not received them. All these items date back to September 1982..so is there any wonder we're having a slump... nobly aided by Foot, Benn, Scargill and others of their ilk.

ERGTAPE. ERGtape 3 is now available. It contains 'The Orson Cart Theatre of The Air' presenting NARTAZ OF THE BABOONS; a 'SHINE' commercial, 'Reviews' a Peghoot, RETURN OF NARTAZ...ALBERT AND THE MONSTER..SWORDS ACROSS THE PECOS and many other strange items.

ERGTAPE 1 and 2 are still available too. ERGtape 1 has the history of the Crumbling Jeeves Mansion, 'Notud' commercial, NARTAZ RIDES AGAIN, SON OF NARTAZ, WACKERJOBby, verse, WORTHY OF NOTE, RED PLANET INTERLUDE, STREAK MORON's FLIGHT TO MARS, BATULA and other oddities.

ERGtape 2 contains a trip on the ERGbod home tour route...LAST STAGE REFLECT-ORSMAN, JEEVES COMES HOME, HOROSCOPES, KORNAN THE BOLD, DEATH IN THE OPHAND MANOR, JOURNEY OF THE VACUUM BEETLE, Mrs Fullalove's column etc etc.

ERGTAPEs come on C60 cassette and cost £2.00 each. or \$4.00 postage included.

DISASTER...I'm typing this whilst waiting for the repair man. I went to run off some ERGstencils on the RONEO..and the handle just went round and round (Now I know what that little screw was that I Hoovered up in my den a fortnight ago)..I COULD NOT find a screw to fit...tried a self-tapper..which effectively ruined the thread, but wouldn't fix the handle..so I've had to call in the expert to fit a new handle. Oh my aching bank account.

DEMOCRACY may be alive and well...but not in Sheffield. Our (brainless) Labour council have emulated the candidate at a recent by-election (who said that if Labour were to be elected, they would not give the people a referendum on leaving the common market..as people couldn't be relied upon to vote the right way). Our council, not content with milking off £60,000,000 a year to give us 'free' buses...thus keeping the rates astronomical...also use some £20,000 a year out of ratepayer's money to publish an anti-Government newssheet. They have donated a hefty sum (£70,000 was one quote I saw) to support CND and have now offered a salary of £10,000 a year for a Peace Officer to plug Sheffield as a nuclear free zone. Quite apart from the fact that ratepayers include one heck of a lot of people who DO NOT support CND, I wonder what the legal position of using our money in this way might be. Anyway, Val and I are so fed up with this state of affairs that in a year or two, we hope to move out of a city in which I have lived for 60 years apart from 5 1/2 in the R.A.F. Destination?? Scarborough if we can find a suitable place there.

DEPARTMENT OF JEEVESORIAL CLANGERS...Man just came to fix the duper..turns out it had simply slipped from manual to electric..one press of a button and it was working again..now I never thought of trying that. Second clangor is the cartoon on the rear of this sheet..sans captions on the signboards. Big board should read..."ASK AN AFGHAN ABOUT SOVIET PEACE' and the next to it..'Or A FINN' Naturally, if you wish to add..Abyssinian/Czech/Polc/Saar etc..geel free. If you support CND, put in your own quote...and peace be with you when we reap the results of being unprepared..which has never saved a country yet. Egad, ERG is developing a soapbox. Best, Terry.



AMES RESEARCH CENTER

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH

JUPITER'S CLOUDS

This view of Jupiter's North Temperate Region shows never-before-seen aspects of the planet's cloud top. Taken by the Pioneer 10 spacecraft as it flew past the giant planet on December 3, 1973, details of the picture have been improved by computer processing at the Optical Sciences Center, University of Arizona.

This view is from 992,000 km (616,000 miles) away. Planetary rotation (at 22,000 mph at the equator) is from left to right. The picture is among the best closeups made by Pioneer 10, and shows far more detail than can be seen from Earth. Among the most interesting features is the whirl of cloud motion seen on the right. Its edges and boundaries are extremely sharp. Apparently, there is on Jupiter an appreciable amount of latitudinal (north-south) motion in addition to the predominant longitudinal (east-west) light and dark bands. These swirling cloud features are thousands of miles across, many the size of continents on Earth. Jupiter's planet-circling bands now are believed similar to "highs and lows" found in Earth weather, but are stretched completely around the planet.

Jupiter's atmosphere is largely hydrogen. The planet is believed to have a small, rocky core which has a temperature of 54,000°F (six times the temperature on the surface of the Sun)—and going from the center outward to the surface, temperatures are believed to decrease steadily to something like 10°F above zero, at a point somewhat below the cloud tops where pressure is one Earth atmosphere.

Jupiter radiates 2.3 times as much heat as it receives from the Sun. The best explanation for Jupiter's tremendous internal temperature is that it is left over from heat of formation of the solar system.

The Pioneer Project is managed by NASA's Ames Research Center, Mountain View, Calif. The Pioneer spacecraft was built by TRW Systems, Redondo Beach, Calif.

PIONEER-JUPITER MISSIONS—Man's first reconnaissance of Jupiter began with the launch of two spacecraft, Pioneers 10 and 11, in March 1972 and April 1973.

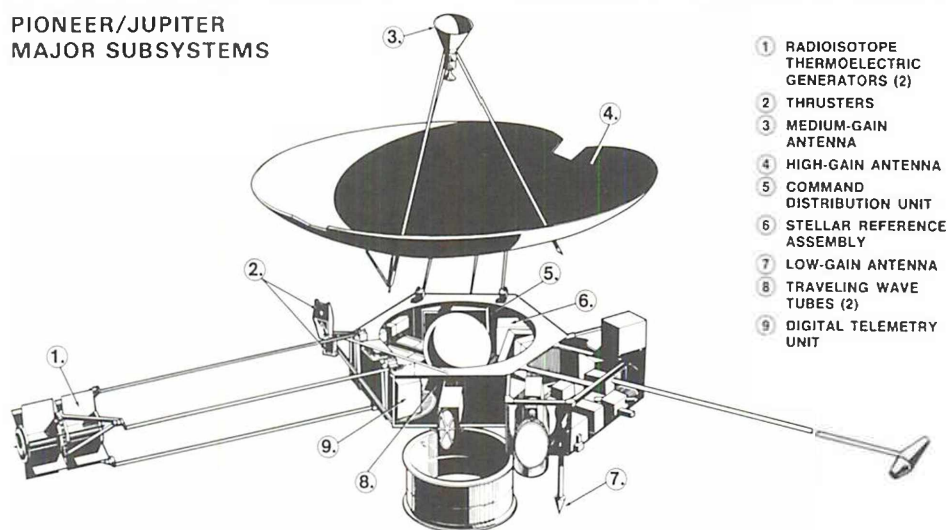
These two Pioneers are the first to go beyond the orbit of Mars, to pass through the Asteroid Belt, to reach Jupiter, and to use Jupiter's gravity to escape the solar system or to go to Saturn. The trip covered more than a half-billion miles.

Pioneer 10 came within 81,000 miles of Jupiter's banded cloud tops. Pioneer 11 comes to within 26,000 miles of the cloud tops in December 1974.

Pioneer 10 will cross the orbit of Saturn in 1976, of Uranus in 1979, and will leave the solar system headed for the red star Aldabaran in 1987. Pioneer 11 is targeted to reach Saturn in 1979 after passing around Jupiter.

SPACECRAFT—Pioneers 10 and 11 are identical spacecraft, weighing about 570 pounds apiece, including 65 pounds of scientific instruments. Each can perform at least 13 scientific experiments, and make hundreds of measurements. The Pioneers can communicate to Earth from as far as two billion miles.

**PIONEER/JUPITER
MAJOR SUBSYSTEMS**



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CLOSE-UP VIEW OF JUPITER'S CLOUDS BY PIONEER 10 (NORTHERN HEMISPHERE)

