

ERG 86

April 1984



Jeeves



EDITORIAL

Fan publishing is like a lobster-pot; easy to enter, difficult to leave... at least, that has been my personal experience over a period which began around 1938 when I sent off my first fanzine sub to Wally Gillings for his SCIENTIFICTION. Nine years (5½ of them in the RAF) and a World War were to pass before I edged deeper into the entrancing waters of fandom by attending the first post war SF con in 1947. Events snowballed, and I began writing, and then illustrating for fanzines such as Ken Slater's OPERATION FANTAST, Alan Dodd's CAMBER, and the

Cheltenham Group's SPACE TIMES. Came 1957, and I acquired a Gestetner duplicator (now used for running in the red colour in ERG) which led Eric Bentscliffe and I joining forces to publish the legendary TRIODE and at the same time, I also landed the job of duplicating the first four issues of the BSFA's VECTOR..and editing issues 2,3, and 4 when Ted Tubb's first flush of enthusiasm faded and he relinquished the editorial chair.

Then, in 1959, I joined the OFF TRAIL MAGAZINE PUBLISHER'S ASSOCIATION (OMPA) and April 1959 saw the very first issue of ERG. I chose the name for two reasons...an erg is a small amount of work, and that is all I meant to expend on the magazine (ah, the folly of youth), and also using my specially devised alphabet, I can/could easily cut or draw the name using nothing but straight lines...no awkward letters such as S, Q, R etc could bother me when using a rigid layout and a ruler. At least, I was very foresighted there..I shudder to think of having to re-draw some such title as RHODOMAGNETIC SCIENTIST'S DIGEST or suchlike.

That first issue contained fiction in the shape of KORNIN THE BOLD (which I nearly reprinted for this issue..but shelved it in favour of a new 'Sock Davidge' yarn), a listing of all space rocket launchings up to that time, scale drawings of major USA and Russian missile/boosters, some comment on the space scene..and reviews of other OMPA fanzines. It was in that first issue I first stated the ERG publishing plan..."Who knows what will happen in future issues..I'm not stating any sort of policy" That state of affairs still exists. I run items which interest ME and avoid those which don't...in my book, that is one of the cardinal virtues..and surr ways of making certain you ENJOY fan publishing...and let's face it, ENJOYMENT is the ONLY reason for the game. Nobody publishes a fanzine if they don't get a kick out of it..so why do so many fans treat the venture as the Laws of the Medes and Persians...unalterable..and there for kicking?

Anyway, right at the start, I established ERG as mainly a one-man-show...although over the years, there have been numerous guest writers, many of them illustrious names in the SF field. Over the years, I've experimented with acid on brush stencils, illos from rubber stamps, from scraper board blocks, from line outs, two colour..and even multicolour work. For many years, ERG was one of the last bastions of the hand-cut direct-on-stencil illustration..which also meant that it didn't matter a damn how good a cover or interior art might be, it was ruled (by Rog Peyton) as totally ineligible for the annual fanzine art award because there was no original drawing to submit. Since then, cheaper electronic stencils have made such strides, I use them for virtually all artwork. Cheaper?? Well,

in the early days, I was paying £2 a time..as against the current £1..and don't forget...over the same period my salary had increased about tenfold!

The 21st issue of ERG boasted a multicolour litho cover, we've had regular crosswords, a complete series on duplicating techniques and tips, my autobiography in a dozen episodes, a long run of superb NASA baccovers courtesy of HARRY ANDRUSCHAK..and to show progress over the years...when ERG first appeared, the giant computer ENIAC had only been around for a scant decade..and towered the size of a house. Starting last issue, even ERG's mailing list is now handled by my own BBC micro and Epson FX80 printer in a combination whose power isn't far from equalling that of ENIAC.

A couple of changes which have NOT been for the better, have been the prices increases in paper..and postage. Once upon a time, cheap Qto. paper was around 8 shillings (40p)..it now costs about £2.00 or an increase of 5 times. Postage has risen from the equivalent on 1p in those days..to 12¹/₂p...or a factor of 12.5. To show how iniquitous this is (ignoring the loss of deliveries and other 'services')...duplicating ink has risen by a factor of 3, stencils by about 4, and electronic stencils by ¹/₂ (since they have fallen in price).

Of course, postage isn't the only thing scooping up a fan's money. Con attendances used to cost about 50p....the 1984 Worldcon in LA is asking no less than £26 as of January 1984..and will increase each month until September....phew! Hardcover used to run around 45p from Grayson & Grayson...nowadays, the price is usually nearer £5 or more. On the other hand, transistors, computers and electronic gadgetry in general has tended to remain static..or even fall, so its the old swings/woundabouts syndrome.

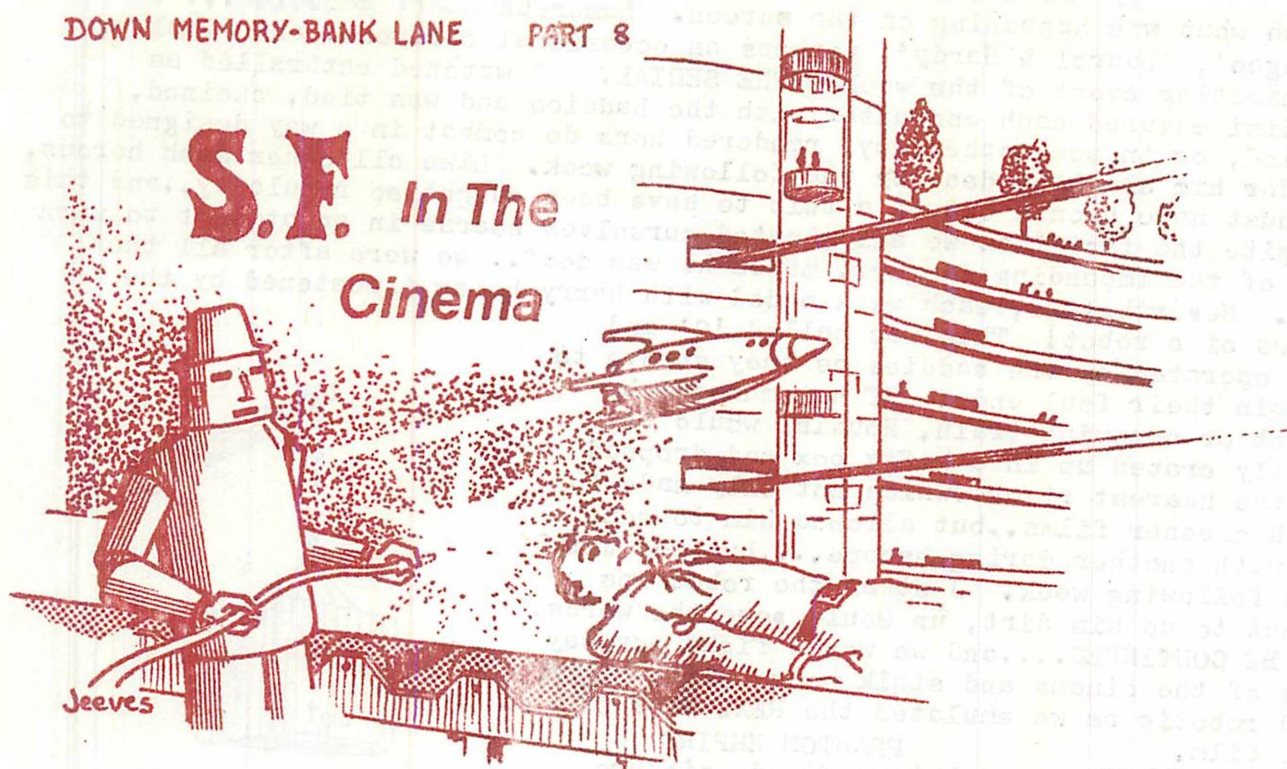
One other big change since the day ERG first appeared, has been in the contents of fanzines. Way back then, even with the aid of a 100X magnifier and every fanzine published, you would have been hard put to find any sort of unsavoury language, or semi-pornography. Fans wishing to use a 'naughty' word would refer to..'the first word on page 28 of Hyphen' when they wanted to say 'balls'. As for feuding...oh, we had it, but it didn't compose such a large percentage of a zine's contents, nor was the lettercol a happy playground for the KTF brigade. Pity..fandom should be for fun and pleasure...not many fans are in it (apart from con organisers??) for a profit..so why is there so much bickering, intolerance and general mud-slinging around?

However, all is not lost. I reckon that despite the CND campaigners, nuclear missiles, Arthur Scargill and other horrors, we are still living in the best time ever. Less real poverty, well-housed, plenty of cheap (TV) entertainment..and some of it IS good, medicare without the attendant worry of 'How can I meet the bill?', more and cheaper world travel, ...etc etc. Sure, I know large areas of the world house people on a starvation diet...but if we sent them ALL our food, starvation would still be there..caused by overpopulation/breeding..and by lack of home-grown food. They don't want our food handouts..they want the seed, tools and knowhow to produce their own.

Twenty-five years has seen many other changes...and I must admit that when that first issue of ERG rolled out of the 230-T, I never dreamed that a quarter of a century later, I'd still be publishing it. For the purists who wonder why 25 years doesn't equate to 100 issues...there were times when illness forced gaps in the schedule...now I wonder if that can be avoided for the NEXT 25 years ???

All the best, Terry

S.F. In The Cinema



Pre-war science fiction was not confined solely to the printed pages of pulp magazines. If you were lucky (and could find some unwary adult to smuggle you inside) the odd spot of SF was also available on the silver screen. Sadly, I missed out on the earlier greats such as 'The Girl In The Moon' and 'Metropolis'...although I did manage to see the latter after a rather unusual circumstance. Being on a Con Committee, I was present when film selection was on the agenda. One person suggested 'Metropolis' and immediately, another character poured cold water on the idea..."What, that oldie!" I felt obliged to point out that although I had attended the last 12 Conventions, starting with the first 1947, post-war affair, that I had yet to see 'Metropolis'....had anyone else had that pleasure? It turned out that not one of 'em had..including the bloke who had opposed it in the first place. So, 'Metropolis' got screened and I got to see it. Great fun, and some excellent effects of the Helm/to/robot conversion, and the same transition from machine to Moloch. Oh, the actors overplayed their parts like crazy and the hero looked like some Paul character in his riding jodhpurs...but everyone enjoyed it.

Probably the earliest SF film I ever saw featured Harry Houdini, the great escapologist, in the serial..'The Master Mystery' All its 2963 (or so it seemed) episodes were screened at the children's matinee at the local cinema (Do they still have such delights??). For the princely sum of 3d (old money) one could sit among the 'nice' children in the balcony...from which vantage point, you could hurl scrap paper, toffee-wrappers, apple cores and other missiles down on the common herd in the pit below. However, I usually splurged 2d of my admission money on 8 oranges (yes, 4 for a penny) and used the remaining 1d to join the riff-raff. The snag with this arrangement was that although I could now add orange peel to my offensive armoury..it had to be thrown upwards to hit those upstairs..and thus supplied them with further ammunition.

In the middle of all this innocent childish revelry, one could watch what was happening on the screen. Numerous short comedies... 'Three Stooges', 'Laurel & Hardy', perhaps an occasional cartoon... and finally, culminating event of the week... THE SERIAL. I watched enthralled as Houdini endured each encounter with the baddies and was tied, chained, buried, or in some other way, rendered hors de combat in a way designed to render him slightly dead by the following week. Like all other such heroes, he must have been a bit of a twit to have been caught so regularly.. and this despite the fact that we all shouted ourselves hoarse in an attempt to warn him of the impending danger.. maybe he was deaf.. we were after all that row. Nevertheless, each week ended with Harry being threatened by the claws of a robot! This was called 'Q' and was operated by the baddies as they strove to attain their foul ends. If not menaced by robot or oncoming train, Houdini would be neatly crated up in a hefty box and dropped in the nearest river.. which not only made for much cleaner films.. but allowed him to come up with another daring escape.... but not until the following week. Just as the robot was about to do him dirt, up would come the words, TO BE CONTINUED.... and we would fight our way out of the cinema and stalk home, stiff-legged and robotic as we emulated the REAL star of the film.

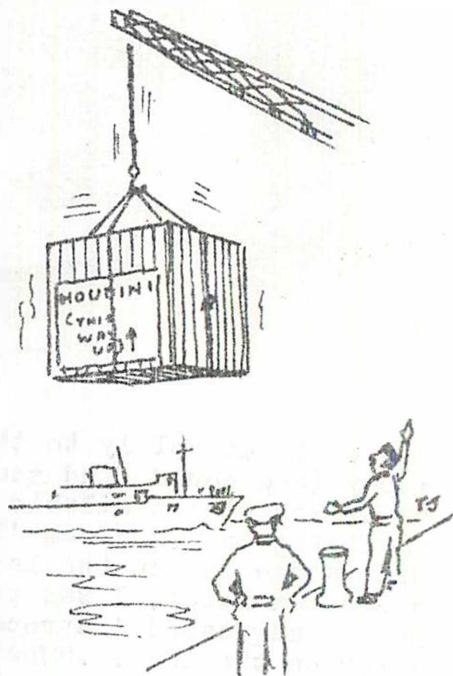
PHANTOM EMPIRE

If one robot was good, picture the effect on my tender young mind of seeing scads of the things, (obviously, I never recovered). Throw in a hidden underground city with futuristic buildings and you might think it Paradise for a SF minded youngster. It was, but there was a serpent... it took the form of that abomination, a SINGING COWBOY! Mascot Films roped in baby-face Gene Autry to grab Western fans and country music buffs.. and mystery and SF lovers were suckered in by adding the Masked Riders of the hidden

city.. as well as the robots. The plot was (fairly) simple. Autry ran a dude ranch and had a contract for a spot on local radio. This of course allowed him to sing to his guests every so often (poor sods). However, his ranch was above the hidden city.. and so the Masked Riders kept riding out to do naughty things in an effort to get it shifted. Each episode followed the formula....

1. Autry escaped from last week's peril
2. The Masked Riders charged out from a secret hillside trapdoor, wreaked their naughtiness and charged back again.
3. Quick shot of futuristic city and robots spot welding items on a moving conveyor belt.
4. Autry chases/is caught/is placed in some nasty danger.
5. End of episode. "Will our hero escape ??????"

My objections to this serial were many. I couldn't abide Autry and would love to have seen him get spot-welded by the robot.. but whenever he was knocked unconscious on to the moving belt and was just vanished into the cutting arc.... we got the 'Come back next week' message... and of course,

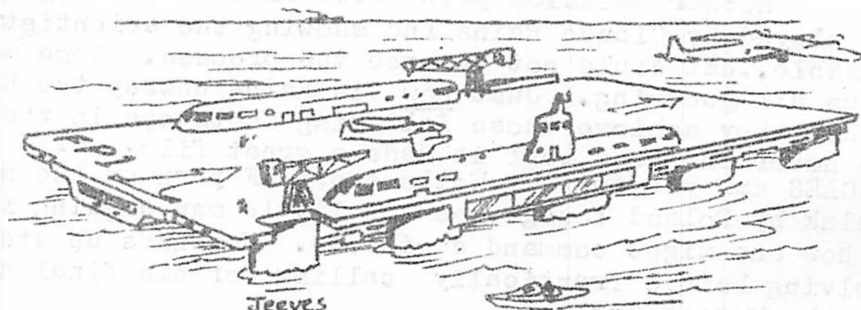


the following week always proved a disappointment...Autry had awakened during that seven days and at the start of the next episode, we always saw him rolling off the conveyor long before he even got near the robot.

Then there was FLASH GORDON..the college boy hero who zoomed off to the planet Mongo, along with Dr. Zarkov and the luscious Dale Arden in an attempt to foil the sinister plans of the saffistic Emperor Ming. Not only did we see the odd (exceedingly odd) robot, but the flying 'Wingmen', the mummy-like 'Claymen' and many other varieties..all of whome were being oppressed by Ming who lorded it over them from his gravity-repulsing Flying City. Strangely, despite the distance to Mongo, all the Mongoians had strong American accents. The acting ability of Flash Gordon in the form of Buster Crabbe, was only underceded by that of Dale Arden...although her nice legs and much more interesting shape more than made up. Every so often a rocket plane would sputter across the screen..and even then it irked me to see smoke going straight up and sparks dropping straight down..not to mention the inertialess turns and stops the thing made. The things must have had Bergenholms or the occupants would have been mashed to a pulp. Eventually, Ming got foiled..but I must admit that I felt he had one or two good ideas...such as planning a fate-worse-than-death for Dale. Oh he had the right idea. Flash on the other hand, never even as much as gave her a kiss. S-x was never allowed to rear its lovely head.

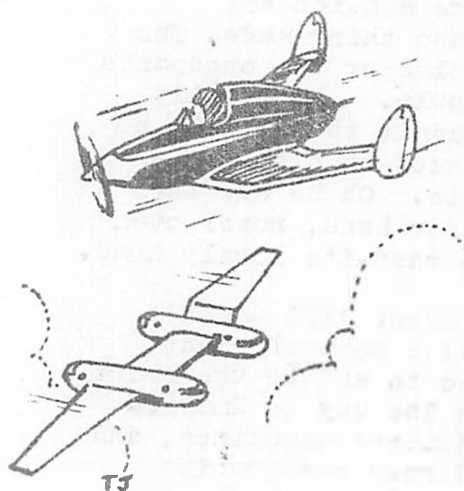


"F.P.1. Antwortet. Nicht" (which I gather meant 'FP1 doesn't answer) stood for Floating Platform 1...and postulated a sort of giant aircraft-carrier-like island stationed in Mid Atlantic to enable the short range aircraft of the era to make refuelling stops on the way to America. This was an idea often kicked around in the Popular Science magazines, and this time, a pilot (played by Conrad Veidt) talks a German combine into making one. Naturally, the nasties don't like the idea (probably they own shipping lines or something) and they open the sea-cocks, let in the water and scuttle the thing. I never could understand such bad design as to build in sea-cocks just for saboteurs. Another German film 'Der Tunnel' was re-filmed by Gaumont British as 'THE TUNNEL' and again featured a way to get to the USA..this time, under the Atlantic. Some of the location shots used the entrance to the Mersey Tunnel, and as Richard Dix pushed his work ahead, we saw the dangers of undersea volcanoes, the usual sabotage by baddies and the eventual triumph of a meeting beneath the bed of the ocean. Harry Harrison wasn't there of course.



In DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY, the old man with the scythe got brassed off with harvesting souls from day to day without time off for a pint..so he nipped off for 24 hours and left the world to get along without him. As a result, jockeys fell beath the hooves of their horses and emerged unscathed. A man who fell from the Eiffel Tower didn't even need to take an aspirin..and so on. Lightweight, but amusing.

Probably the best film of that era was the stupendous THINGS TO COME, made by Korda and reputedly based on the book of that name by H.G.Wells...it had no discernible connection. Wells did work on the script..but it had to be salvaged by a professional screen writer. The result was worth it. It started with World War 2 (Then only a shadow in the future..so they got the date wrong by about a year). Weapons of increasing violence devastated the globe over many years until the loss of technology brought things to a lull. A barbarian leader, 'The Boss' took over and was trying to resume hostilities when Raymond Massey arrived in a futuristic aircraft to represent 'Wings Over The World'.. a science based society which had somehow evaded the general destruction. From here on, a series of montage shots depicted progress culminating in the launching of a man and a woman into space.. and as usual, the malcontents want to put a stop to it. Even the 21st Century has its Luddites. Memorable shots included the futuristic aircraft, an unforgettable 'time-is-passing' shot of a soldier decaying away on barbed wire and the marvellous city and the machinery which built it. What still sticks in my mind is the final philosophy of progress or stagnation..."Which shall it be Passworthy?"



Then of course, there was the fantasy. Epitomised by KING KONG which despite the stilted acting of the period, still retains much of its original pace and impact. The excellent animation, growing tension, the scene where Kong breaks through the gigantic gate, the sad, curious way in which he flicks away at the dead creature he has just slain. Kong came alive...I pitied the poor creature in its hopeless love for Fay Wray which led to an eventual shootout on top of the Empire State building. Harryhausen's modern animation work might be technically superior..but it never grabs the heart strings as Kong did.

Another Wellsian yarn which reached the big screen was THE INVISIBLE MAN, played by Claude Rains and showing the scientist who had made himself invisible..but could not reverse the process. Some marvellous trick work had us all guessing. Just how did Rains unwrap the bandages from his head? How did they achieve those faltering footsteps in the snow? Such posers were never answered..but it made a great film. THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES saw yet another Wells short SF yarn on the screen..this time played I think by Roland Young...as the little man arguing in a pub and postulating how one might command a miracle. He winds up stopping the Earth revolving before frantically calling for his final miracle to put everything back to normal.

Messrs Karloff and Lugosi made the horror films memorable..ably aided by the ultra sharp, stark black-and-white film of the era. By comparison, modern colour rehashes with Ketchup blood, seem tame. The most memorable film of this genre was of course FRANKENSTEIN..where, stimulated by flashes of lightning and the crackling of Oudin coil sparks, the Monster comes slowly alive. Various films followed, but only BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN managed to recapture the magic. Whatever the part, Karloff not only chilled us..but aroused our sympathy through his consummate acting. THE GHOUL saw him stalking his victim. THE WALKING DEAD wherein he played a janitor wrongly accused and executed for murder had us pity



him even as the resurrected corpse sought vengeance. in THE MUMMY Karloff played an Egyptian priest, mummified alive for a crime. An archaeologist discover the mummy..and a scroll for reviving the dead. Naturally, the twit reads it aloud..and slowly behind him the mummy comes alive. In case the scene seems familiar...it has been used many times since..notably in THE THING, when the ice-bound monster thaws out.

Lugosi was more of a ham actor..depending on two false tusks and a beetling brow to add menace to his posturing in a black cape. Even so, he brought menace to successive DRACULA films and the part of Ygor in the odd Frankenstein epic. Less memorable, but equally gripping was Lionel Atwill's MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM...where everyone wondered at the accuracy and realism of the models. Not supprising, since the villain specialised in dipping his victims in a huge vat of boiling wax. Naturally, in the final scene, he gets knocked into the stuff himself. No doubt Forry Ackerman would have said that he waxed wroth. I must admit, I always had deep suspicions when visiting Madame Tussaud's.

Other memories include the memorable black and white LOST HORIZON with that wonderful torchlit funeral procession of the High Lama. Ronald Colman played the British diplomat who discovers the lost city of Shangri la, leaves it, then fights against all odds to return again. The scene where a 'young girl' loses her immortality and changes into an old crone was not unlike the final sequence in Rider Haggard's SHE, where Ayesha bathes once too often in the life-renewing flame..and crumbles with age.

Time moved along...Wells war arrived and films changed. One of the more unusual one was A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. David Niven played the part of a fighter pilot who got shot down..but missed by the angel sent to collect him, survived the experience. Eventually hauled up to Heaven, he had to argue his case for being allowed to go on living. Raymond Massey had exchanged his future garb for that of a Yankee soldier in order to prosecute the case. My chief recollection is of the seemingly endless moving staircase up which Niven was conveyed to Heaven. One of my worries was how he avoided falling off the top. I think it was Alec Guinness who gave us THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT...a garment which withstood (far better than its wearer) all the toils and tribulations which came along. However, it had its own built in obsolescence which led to an embarrassing end to the film when it disintegrated.

Another real oldie was HANDS OF ORLAC, originally a German film, it was taken up by the American studios and saw several versions. The one I remember saw ~~Colin Clive~~ as concert pianist Orlac who loses his hands in an accident...and has them replaced by those of a murderer. In between doing mayhem on the piano keys, the hands take over and lead their owner into performing sundry murders. Peter Lorre played the mad scientist.

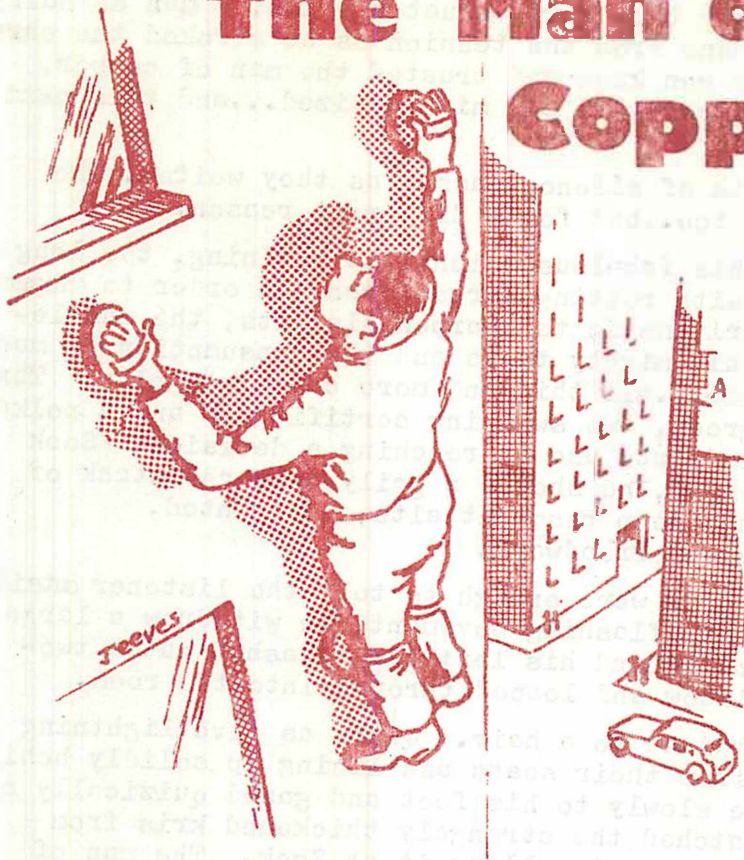
Incidentally, one interesting point about yet another (and more recent) Wells film..THE TIME MACHINE, harkens back to 1895, the year after Wells published the yarn. A cinema/engineer buff and film maker Robert Paul took out a patent for 'A Novel Form of Entertainment'.. a 'Time Machine' Paul (and according to John Baxter), Wells both proposed a mixed media display of film, sound and other effects to be presented in a theatre with a moving floor. The idea was to present a journey forward..then by stopping and reversing the projector, to give the audience the illusion of a trip backwards through time. Disneyland..are you listening? The Patent No. is 19984 for October 1985.

More recent SF films such as THE THING, DESTINATION MOON and THEM still give me fond memories, but it is to those long-gone days of the kid's matinee that I tend to turn my nostalgia lens. All those post-cinema 'gunfights' as we fired off thousands of rounds from the inexhaustible chambers of our extended forefingers. The times we would tie ropes to handy tree branches so that we could swing to and from across any narrow stream in Tarzan-like fashion..meanwhile ululating and infernal scream which would give us days of laryngitis. How I made a parachute from an old umbrella so that I could jump from a high wall. How we tied old bedsprings to our feet and attempted to leap into the air emulating 'Spring-Healed Jack..or stalked each other with rigid arms and legs as we strove to grab our foes in robotic grasp. Sometimes we were Frankenstein's Monster..on other occasions we strove to throw each other in the gutter by means of Mr. Moto's judo tricks.

We assimilated other things as well...heroes always wore white and were clean-shaven. Villains dressed in black and often had thin pencil moustaches. Bearded men were either wise old codgers, or dirty old so-and-sos...although scientists had to wear beards as a sort of trade mark. Our prejudices were also manipulated. Germans were always wicked, sadistic enemies. Lascar seamen untrustworthy and Chinese master criminals to a man. Important people wore top hats and spoke with a 'posh' accent...common plebs had cloth caps and dropped all their aitches. On the other hand, we also acquired the now ridiculed attitudes that 'Crime Does Not Pay,' that 'Honesty Is The Best Policy', that good always triumphed over evil and that one's country was worth defending. A real man never hit a woman, a smaller person or a weaker one. Fights were wrestling matches or with fists...no kicks, head butting, karate chops or knee-in-the-groin affairs.

Despite all this, people still tell me that the media do not have any influence on attitudes or behaviour of youngsters. I wonder just who is living in cloud cuckoo land?

The Man of Copper



A 'SOCK' DAVIDGE NOVEL

by

Terry Jeeves

Death lurked in the city's gloom, it slithered along dark alleys, sped across ill-lit intersections and always drew ever nearer to its goal. The sinister shadow crept across Twentytooth Street and approached the foot of the mighty Ompa State Building. It paused there

for a brief moment to strap large, rubber-suction pads to knees and elbows before commencing to scale the sheer surface of the giant edifice. A sinister Malayan kris with a strangely thickened blade might have been seen to glint menacingly before the shadow of death mounted above the feeble glow from the street lamps.

A scant 97 floors up, the black figure paused by a lighted window. A strange, red-tipped hand reached out and attached a sensitive microphone to the tough, bullet-proof glass... the shadow waited.....

Within the brilliantly lit apartment, six men hunched beneath a single lamp poised above a baize-covered table. 'Sock' Davidge (so-called because of the power of his knock-out punch) gazed in deep concentration. His burnished copper skin, caused by a lifelong diet of various copper compounds, shone until his hulking 5' 2½" frame looked like a polished statue. From between tightly clenched teeth came a strange, eerie, trilling whistle...slightly off key, as Sock had not yet used his strange powers to re-grow a molar lost in a recent battle against the dastardly forces of evil. His henchmen waited in silence, their poker-faces immobile as frozen putty whilst they hazed at the symbolic plan of the city stretched before them. Sock, was their revered boss, whatever he decided was OK by them.

Engineer 'Longjohn' (named after his underwear) scratched a sunburned, yet aristocratic nose. The dapper 'Hum' stroked his fully loaded, lace-trimmed sword stick; and, as was his wont, hummed one of his favourite airs much to the annoyance of 'Burp' Rennire seated on one side of him, and

'Digger' Snooks on the other. Only the short, squat chemist, a man so hairy he was known as 'Mink' seemed immune from the tension as he stroked the ears of his pet skunk, 'Pongo'. These men knew and trusted the man of copper, together they had been through thick, thin and middle sized...and this next decision was the big one.

Long, agonising moments of silence passed as they waited. The sinister listener outside waited too..but for a different reason.....

Sock called upon all his fabulous scientific training, the long hours spent each day exercising with rotting garbage cans in order to enhance his sense of smell, the mental arithmetic to sharpen his wits, the muscle-cracking tensions to strengthen his mighty throws and the consumption of many calories to increase his waistline...all this and more came into play. Three PhD's, a fistful of assorted degrees, two swimming certificates and a polka-dot belt in karate were all called into use in reaching a decision. Sock straightened. With a lithe movement, he shoved a gaily coloured stack of paper towards banker Snooks. In a deep resonant alto, he grunted,

"Right then, I'll have a hotel on Broadway".

Those few trenchant words were enough to tell the listener outside that his quarry was within. In one flashing movement, he withdrew a large diamond from a secret compartment behind his left ear, slashed out a two-foot circle of glass from the window and leaped through into the room.

Davidge's men were trained to a hair. Quick as five lightning flashed they reacted..shooting from their seats and lining up solidly behind their leader. Sock Davidge rose slowly to his feet and gazed quizically at the intruder who by now, had snatched the strangely thickened kris from between his yellowed teeth and was now levelling it at Sock. The man of copper gave a fearless, verdisgrisian laugh. He had faced far worse terrors than a man armed merely with a naked blade. Any one of a dozen skilful and cunning movements would enable him to foil the thrust of of that puny weapon when it came... the Singapore Counter perhaps? maybe the Bombay duck or even the Hong Kong Shuffle...?? A winsome smile played across his handsome features...until the haft of the knife belched fire from its curiously rhickened base. The single-stage, rocket-propelled kris shot straight towards his heart.

Only the copper man's superlative reflexes honed by hours of shove halfpenny, saved him then. Mighty throws twanged and creaked, cable-like sinews snapped taut and Sock gave ONE MIGHTY BOUND! It carried him safely clear of the ravaging blade as it tore through the vacuum left by his departure...and on through each of his aides in tuen, killing each one instantly if not sooner.

But what of Sock Davidge you ask? ..and you may well do so..for that mighty leap had been taken before Sock could use his lightning powers of calculation to evaluate the trajectory, apogee and final point of impact. It was the Copper man's first error..and a fatal one. The leap carried him in a graceful parabola (of the formula, $y^2=4ax$) over the head of the villain, through the two-foot hole in the bullet proof glass, and straight down for 97 floorsworth of empty space.

Naturally, that explains why there are no more Sock Davidge stories available in this series. It was..

THE END

We kick off this issue with an all too brief extract from a long and very interesting LOC from..

Ted Hughes
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"ERGmail: a gripe. Why do so many of your correspondents get steamed up about femLib? Femlib is for cranks. Why can't letter-writers find something more interesting to gripe about? Like - WHETHER SF? Are the SF mags going to disappear? None of importance in the UK since New Worlds went down the drain. Fewer and fewer retailers stocking the USA products. Where have all the readers gone? Are the paperbacks and sword and sorcery taking over? Why don't SF mags flourish in the UK? Yankee mags get by on a circulation of around 100,000 a month..that's not a big figure for a country with a population like the States. Surely, out of a UK population of around 55 million, there are enough to support a mag? ((As I said in a longer personal reply to TED, 100,000 represents only .04% of the US population. that percentage of the UK works out at 220 readers. If only half the USA issues sell, that's (at over £1 a time) more than £50,000..which ain't chicken feed..whereas if the UK publishers sells ALL his product..he grabs £220. Another sad fact is that as far as I can ascertain from the Writer's & Artist's Year Book, we don't have ANY magazines devoted to 'ordinary' fiction..let alone SF..about the only UK outlet for fiction (other than full length books) is in the women's magazines..so what chance does SF stand...especially the trash currently published under that heading...especially in Extro/Interzone fmz)))

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"First of all let's agree (((by NO means))) that a study of pornographic films proved that such films had no adverse effect on the viewer; they were in many cases, beneficial. (((Naturally, all those 'look-alike' crimes were purely coincidental ???))) All those madmen who see a violent act and were turned on by it (((I thought you just said there were none?))) would probably have been turned on by anything. I fail to follow your argument that those who consciously imitate TV programs because it appeals to their sense of fantasy/fun are being 'influenced in their behaviour! (((Are you trying to tell me that people would send gifts to soap-opera 'weddingsI...would have sent them if they hadn't seen the program? Seeing such a program HAS influenced their behaviour...as has the Trekkie who wears Star Trek gear..or the kiddy who emulates 'Kung Fu'..or the viewer who apes the outrageous hair style of his pop-idol?))) SOME people are influenced by media? Hence all media should be censored? Do you think that's a reasonable attitude? (((All people defecate..that doesn't mean I want to watch 'em do it on stage...))) Aren't you in fact saying that everyone should be protected from everything until we can establish that nothing will harm them. (((OK, then give your kid a loaded pistol to play with...teach him all the obscenities you can think of...that indiscriminate sex (and disease) are the norm...that violence is pleasing and good behaviour and consideration for others aren't worth bothering about. Why do extremists always demand ALL or nothing by way of censorship ???)))



ETHEL LINDSAY

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Carnoustie

Angus DD7 7QQ

"Was interested in how much TV influences people. It must do, just as we were influenced in our behaviour by the cinema. ((Dead right Ethel..see my MBL ending))). Just think how many people were taught + hold a cigarette by watching the screen, to say nothing of other social actions. What bores me now on TV is usually gratuitous to the plot...all those cars chasing madly..with the b' 're always failing the hero on a winding road. ((What puzzles me is why they never switch off the ignition and slow on the engine...or can't you do that on automatics? Also, when the baddy tries to drive the hero/ine off the road..both cars batter to an fro for mile after mile instead of the attacked car simply STOPPING.))) I had word that Eric Needham died Dec.1st. He had written me over a year ago saying he'd retired on health grounds. I sent him an Xmas card, and had back a letter from his widow Kathleen to say he had died suddenly. She asked me to pass on the word. ((Older readers will remember Eric's inimitable brand of humour in fanzines of the fifties..as well as his more recent item on strange crustacean aliens, here in ERG..plus those lovely WIDOWER WONDERFUL WOTNOT rhymes. He'll be sadly missed by all of us.))

PHIL HARBOTTLE

32 Tynedale Ave.

Wallsend

Tyne & Wear

I was very pleased to see the CRUMBLING ENGLAND reprint as I appreciate this kind of humour, which you do very well. This is the sort of thing I had in mind when I urged you a couple of years ago to go back and dust off some of your old SPACE TIMES material. Let's have more of the same if there are any. ((Ta muchly Phil..and yes, I have ALL the material I ever wrote for fmz..going right back to my very first pieces on OPERATION FANTAST..c1950. However, this time you get a brand new 'Sock' Davidge yarn..hope you like it))) DMBL was possibly better than ever this time, as you obviously wrote with great knowledge and feeling for the subject ((Believe it or not..I'm still toying with the idea of taking flying lessons...if only I can justify the expense))) Because I'm not a flying buff, and hadn't seen the pulps, I didn't appreciate it. Then, in the next day's post, I received from Mike Hill, a reprint copy of G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES. After reading it, I was able to go back and read your article again...with much greater appreciation this time. ((Mike Hill's address is 10 Silk Close, Lee Green, LONDON SE12 8DL and his excellent reprint cost 90p + 10p postage... a bargain if you want to wallow in a spot of pulp nostalgia...send him SAE for details.)))

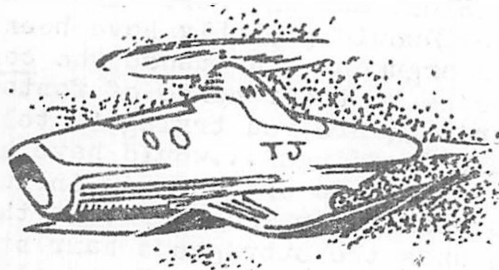
HARRY J.N.ANDRUSCHAK

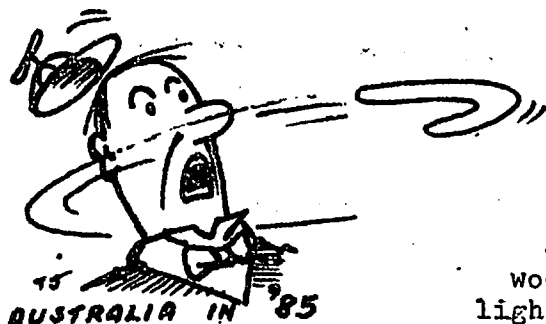
PO Box 606

La Canada-Flintridge

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I started reading SF around 1955 and I was educated by Willy Ley, Isaac Asimov and others of that category. The late 1950s may well be the golden age of science fact writing in the SF magazines..and once Sputnik 1 went up (on my 13th birthday, WOW) just about every magazine scrambled to get in a science column. The Dean machine..was Campbell joking or going senile..or just engaged in a cynical act of deception? ((Nope, the thing got a write-up in the prestigious MISSILES AND ROCKETS, as well as in other magazines...mark you, M&R even ran several reports on an anti-gravity investigation..and NOT in April))





PAM BOAL

4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights,
Wantage, Oxon, OX12 7EW

Thank you for

ERG 85, love the cover, it's certainly time people realised the problems that modern architecture and heating systems are causing in Santaland. (((Yes, and the wooden sleighs don't activate magnetic traffic light sensors either))) DMBL evoked memories of my own. My aircraft were obviously cruder constructions than yours (one thing about living in London during the war, there was no shortage of scrap wood)

being generally no more than 3 bits of wood nailed together, the lengths & positions being guided by imagination rather than magazines. (((We used to add cigarette-card propellers on pins..they spun when you ran)))

MATT MACKULIN

350 Bury Rd
Rawtenstall
Rossendale
LANCS

"The Ergitorial was extremely funny, but not as humorous as the ad for the Wammenbonker (((now sold out))). I was saddened to hear that you may close down shop on ERG when you move (((Depends on cost of going photolith))) I notice that you get a lot of mail, but all the articles in ERG are done by you. Is this a new policy or are you not getting submissions of work? (((Not a new policy, for 25 years I've written almost all the issue myself..but now and then I ask for ..or get, outside material. The policy?..'Whatever takes my fancy'..but there are one or two guests in this issue...you may have heard of them ???)))

PHIL WILTSHIRE

2 Chiltern View Rd
Uxbridge,
Middx.

"Yes, I remember making models out of Balsa wood and glue, then there were the kits where one made a frame up and put tissue round the frame. Then a big elastic band with the propeller attached to it. After all the hard work, out I would go with my mates to the fields..when it usually busted after a few flights, so I always used to carry the glue around as well. (((Me too, my best flier was a 2½ foot span 'Competitor', Val and I and the dog went flying on the moors. The model went one way, crossed a main road, narrowly missing a car, and hared off down a deep valley. The dog spotted a sheep, so scooted off the other way with Val in pursuit. Took us half an hour to get back together again.))) I also remember the Farnborough Air Show and climbing about the planes. As you say, it's a great pity the BBC don't have it on for 2½ hours now. (((Too much football, horses, boats, cars and other rubbish...mustn't upset the great God 'watch sport')))

JUDITH BUFFERY

10 Southam Rd
Hall Green
Birmingham

I enjoyed DMBL about flying, it brought back childhood memories of reading BIGGLES (I always preferred boys' books) Letter col was good and I was particularly interested in the controversy over triremes. I remember reading a poem at school which referred to 'Quinqueremes of Nineveh' and being told these were galleys with five banks of oars (((The poem was 'Cargoes'..yes, Masfield. I gather he invented 'quinqueremes'...for the poem, but no such vessel existed))) I have received notification from the PLR that I shall be receiving a small sum for payment on borrowed books... so may I use the pages of ERG to express my thanks to all those who borrowed my books in 1983. Keep up the good work lads and lasses... and remember. Keep up the good work in 1984. You don't have to read 'em...just borrow 'em from your local library. (((This is the admirable scheme whereby authors get paid for the number of times a library book is borrowed.)))

BERNARD M EARP
21 Moorfield Grove
Tonge Moor
Bolton

Your reply to Alan Covell.. 'When we fought it was either wrestling or fists, nowadays it's either Kung Fu kicks or a rabbit chop to the neck'. I'd be

delighted if anyone tried either of those on me. You can't just go out and maim someone who has taken the time and patience to learn (I have) Someone who thinks he has learned all about Kung Foo from watching TV is far less to be feared than someone who's been street fighting for years. ((You miss my point..I'm talking about inexperienced kids...we did NOT fight viciously..and we were inexperienced. Imagine the damage to a modern kid who knows no Kung Foo when given a nice hefty kick in the slats from a big bowyer boot...or given a spine jarring chop to his neck. THAT's what I was deploring...the action without the responsibility)))

FanaLog, Oh boy have you put your foot in it, Terry. Joy Hibbert is married. Being a liberated woman, she hasn't changed her name. ((Clang once again..but by YOU Bernard. Re-read my comment, I never said anything about Joy's married status. In response to her LOC comment of "If I had decided to start a family", I said that to me, that means first get married..but to Joy it is equivalent to getting pregnant. Have to read more carefully old chap))) Let's ban a book that has led to more bloodshed and violence than any other. A book that's started wars even, a book that's started more bigotry and hatred than any other. Come on now, Terry, you're ahead of me aren't you? The book is the Christian Bible. ((Try reading it, Bernard..the book doesn't advocate or detail these things...it's the interpretation people put upon it and the meanings they read into it that have caused all the trouble. When you come down to it...most of its readers (not all by a long chalk) have been people who professed a religious belief in all its precepts)))

ERIC MAYER

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Enjoyed the airplane story very much. Excellent illos. Maybe you're more familiar with planes and find drawing them easy, but having drawn one airplane for GROGGY a while back, I can really appreciate how well executed your

drawings are. I'd love to hear about your airplane adventures during the war by the way. ((I have covered most of these in my other series 'CARRY ON JEEVES..but will be starting in to re-run it once MBL is finished))) It's a funny thing, the old vets rambling on about their war-time experiences is a cliché by now. But fans who might be able to inject something unique into their accounts, never write them.

JOHN D OWEN

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Bucks MK16 9AZ

I must say that the sight of No.85's cover with its Christmas images and the logo proclaiming January 1984 did rather make me groan...I mean, a Christmas cover on the January issue. It's almost as bad as those January editions of magazines (especially American ones) that appear on the stalls in the first weeks of December. ((Well it would have looked daft on the October issue...and ALL the January issues were mailed out in time to reach readers by December 25th))) I can remember going through an aircraft craze as a kid in the mid fifties, when British aviation was still capable of turning out exciting aircraft. I didn't buy magazines to any great extent, but I had models all over the place and used to get very upset when one of them got knocked down. I never got on too well with flying models, not being able to afford 'proper engines'. Mine were mere gliders or rubber-powered thingies that tended to crash and disintegrate on their maiden flights. ((Mine too...flying gear always included spare tissue and a tube of balsa cement, a razor blade and strands of elastic)))

This touching missive brought tears to my eyes...and please don't think he is being funny at my expense..I didn't pay him a cent. Just call it....

A CHIP OFF THE (Robert) BLOCH

"Write me something for the 25th Anniversary Issue of ERG" says Terry Jeeves, in a letter I was too dumb to throw away without reading. A natural mistake, really; the return address label read 'B.T.Jeeves' and I opened the envelope with elation (((I use a knife..TJ))) thinking that at last I might be getting a fan letter from England. Imagine my surprise, not to say disgust, when I realised it was just another dodge on the part of a fanzine publisher seeking to fill up empty space in case a freebie from G.M.Carr doesn't arrive in time.

I am not unduly impressed by the fact that ERG has survived for a quarter of a century. After all, I've survived that long myself -- in spite of reading British fanzines -- and all the experience has taught me is that longevity is no substitute for quality.

"Preferably humorous", Jeeves requests, referring to the piece he expects me to write, just as though I was some sort of natural comedian like J.G.Ballard or Christopher Priest. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint, but I see no humor in a fanzine that lasted for twenty-five years; not in a world where even the Third Reich lasted for only twelve.

But on due reflection, there is something impressive (is that the word I'm looking for, or is it 'nauseating'?) about a publication that has survived the slings and arrows of outrageous fandom for 25 years. So much has happened in the interim, to say nothing of the outerim; so much has changed.

Consider, if you will, the state of science fiction fandom in the days when young B. (for 'Borstal', I suspect) ((No, 'Barmy'..TJ)) Terry Jeeves first ~~perpetrated~~ published ERG.

How well I remember that glorious year! It was then, at the Worldcon in Detroit, that a limping Harlan Ellison showed me the scar he bore from mad dogs kneeling him in the groin. ((('groin' pains?? TJ))) It was the year that Bob Silverberg first quit science fiction forever, the year Bob Tucker had the sex-change operation and returned from Sweden as Ursula K Le Guin. Those were the days, my friends -- the days when STAR TREK didn't exist, nobody played video-games, the term 'Dungeons & Dragons' hadn't been invented, and the only SF film at a Worldcon was 'New Worlds Meets Its Creditors From Outer Space'. In those quaint oldfashioned faraway times, SF fanzines often dealt with SF, and some of the people who attended conventions actually came to see the events on the program. Incredible as it may seem, the New Wave wasn't yet so much as a trickle, almost nobody was doing drugs under the age of ten, and the only feminist movement we recognised in fandom was the strip-tease.

Since then, of course, much progress has been made. The New Wave crested and subsided, then dried up completely; not only are little kiddies doing drugs, but some of them are reading LOCUS as well; feminist SF is flourishing now that Bob Tucker is writing under the pseudonyms of Vonda McIntyre, Janna Russ and J. Ramsey Campbell. Harlan Ellison is still showing off his scar -- but only to girls under the age of 18. Last but by no means least, ERG is publishing this 25th Annish. Terry can publish for another 25 years as far as I care...as Chuck Harris once said to a budgie, "If rape is inevitable, lean back and enjoy it"

Robert Bloch/California



Science Fiction has often explored the concept of man's initial encounter with some alien life form. Probably the best known yarn being Leinster's excellent *FIRST CONTACT*, wherein two exploration vessels meet in deep space and so pose a 'what to do?' situation as beloved in the good old 'Astounding' tradition. How can alien and Earthman shake hands, promise to meet again and each head off home without leading the other to their star system?

Leinster's characters solved that one by destroying all their star charts and weapons..then exchanging spaceships. Only in that way, could each be sure that the other hadn't been left with weaponry or tracing devices. It made for a nice compact yarn, but as a model of what one might expect from such a meeting, it left much unsaid. Leinster's aliens were pretty much mirror images of their human counterparts. Their sense of humour approximated to ours and in short, the tale might just as well have concerned two prairie schooners meeting along the Santa Fe trail..and neither wanting to let the other know where their gold mine was.

Anthropomorphism is the problem. We think in terms of what we know, remember, or understand. Our aliens are simply jig-saws or extrapolations of earthly creatures. Even our concept of alien intelligence is based firmly on a human prototype....we know how we think, therefore aliens must operate in much the same way. To step outside our normal frame of reference and conceive something utterly new such as a different life form or style of thinking is so extremely difficult, I'd be inclined to think it downright impossible...and most SF stories seem to bear me out.

Raymond Z Gallun wrote old faithful (and a sequel) and had a Martian hitching a ride on a comet to bring him to Earth to visit the equivalent of his pen-pal. The story rated highly, was a tear-jerker, but when you get right down to it, the alien was just a kind-hearted old soul just like your Uncle Bill.

Both John W Campbell and 'Doc' Smith scattered weird-looking aliens through their space operas, but on closer inspection, most of them are just the space-age versions of the Lascars, Dagoes, Germans and Russkis who used to fill the villains slot in the good old pulps...albeit dressed up in strange costumes. Campbell's Nigrans in *THE BLACK STAR PASSES* were so human..they (sensibly) disliked the thought of invading Earth. In *ISLANDS OF SPACE*, he gave his humanoid Nalsals and Satorians, bones of Iron (an idea swiped by Doc Smith in his later *MASTERS OF SPACE*)..but all had very human thought processes and reactions. Smith did make efforts to come up with something different...the Wheelmen of Galactic Patrol, the rolling Zabriskian Fontema, and of course Lensmen such as the dragonlike Worsel and the frigid-blooded Nadreck of Palain IV who could boast an extension into the fourth dimension! Despite this, he was a quite humanlike coward..and had other similar attributes as well.

In *GOLDFISH BOWL*, Ribert Heinlein had the most inexplicable aliens of the lot... we never see them! Two mysterious waterspouts appear in the Pacific, one sucking up water, the other returning it. Our hero goes up to find out what gives...and returns dead, but with a self-inflicted message scratched on his body..'Creatian Took Eight Days' which tells us that whatever made the waterspouts has been around since then. Since we never to get to see them, they can't really be allowed to qualify as utterly different beings.

In *TECHNICAL ERROR*, Hal Clement also kept his aliens off stage. Shipwrecked spacemen find an alien ship..which they eventually destroy through ineptitude. They do however, encounter a vastly different technology...but a door is a door whether it fastens by magnetostriction, a Yale lock or a simple loop and peg.



Pournelle and Niven gave us *MOTE IN GOD'S EYE* with alien Moties which operate on completely human-type motives..they want breeding space. The creatures come in a variety of types engineered for specific jobs, even having a built in hang-up which brings quick death in case of sexual abstinence. That is a different idea and not what we would normally think of as a survival trait, but on the other hand, I wasn't so happy about a race which needed 'Communicators' to speak for 'Masters' to such an extent that without such Communicators, their Masters would be condemned to a life of isolation. What really disqualifies the Moties in my estimation is their completely human mental processes and humour.

So it goes...scratch an alien and beneath the paint you'll find our old familiar goodies and baddies with all the usual motives and feelings. Let's face it, if we judge by SF stories, aliens are just cuddly old humans ...or perhaps nasty back-stabbing old humans in some cases.

If future spacemen eventually do meet up with other life forms, what might we expect..in shape and in intelligence? Question one ought to be..."How do we recognise it as life?"..after that we can move on to, "Is it intelligent?" If the encounter is with something totally unimaginable, then we might as well give up right now. On the other hand, part of the fun in life is speculation..so let's just speckle a bit. Herewith a few guide lines for identifying that queer thing in your back garden..and whether or not it might be on a take-over mission. Of course, if the neighbour's legs are sticking out of one end...I'd suggest you put a tick in the latter box.

A LIFE FORM must... 1. Be capable of reproduction...mammalian, oviparous, bud, seed or even extending crystal wise.

2. Be capable of consuming 'food'...solid, liquid or radiation conversion.

In addition to these, I'd suggest that an INTELLIGENT Life Form would also..

3. Be capable of movement at its own volition (to raise it above the level of a plant. Admittedly, life doesn't have to wander around...but so doing must enhance mental horizons.

4. Be able to collect and organise facts and use them to both pose and solve problems.

5. Be able to communicate..otherwise the intelligence is unlikely to arise..and if it did, it would be wasted.

6. Be able to act against what instinct or self survival might indicate. An animal might not venture into a fire to save its young, but an intelligent personality would be capable of it.

Of course, unless our being uses 100% conversion efficiency, we must also include the ability to excrete.

Well, what can we dream up for our alien (let's call him Grok) within those limits? He can be any shape, so let's settle for a sphere (you can make him a cube if you have a thing about balls) His surface area would be ideal for taking in solar energy and give a maximum strength to weight ratio. However, to move, he would either have to squash and ooze like a snail..or maybe shifty his internal centre of gravity. Grok could use tummy muscles for that. So he lives off 100% solar energy conversion..it has to be 100% or else he'll need an anus somewhere. To see, he'll need to differentiate some solar receptors into 'eyes' and others into 'ears'.. at which point, we are rapidly getting anthropomorphic. Ok, we'll let him use telepathy and/or esp for communication with the outside world...still on the anthropomorphic side, but a lot more alien than drawing solar systems in the dust using a stick held in his non-existent arms.

Naturally, his brain will be tucked away inside..although it may get a bit confused by High-G or Coriolis forces when he runs around quickly. To reproduce, Grok might bud a few little Grokkles on the outside..or split in fission mode. Budding might be a little hard on the offspring if Grok has to roll somewhere fast, but he can do so if he wishes..remember, he can act against his instincts (to preserve his young)..cos I made him that way. He also has a positronic (or dozitronic) type brain, is continually renewing his body cells and is thus immortal, and never goes to a football match. In short, he is perfect. There's only one snag... he is still a human type operating on anthropomorphi. lines. It seems that try as we may, we still can't come up with a truly different alien.

Funnily enough, we're probably not so hot on making contact with them either. Oh we all know the number game..teach 'em 1,2,3,4, then 1,4,9, 16, move on to the Solar System diagram and in a week or two, we can be exchanging views on Heinlein's latest novel...or can we? After all, they tell us dogs, apes and dolphins are all intelligent...but even so, we're still a long way from having a nice cosy chat with any of them aren't we?

Maybe if we taught 'em to play Scrabble.....?

L. Sprague de Camp

has very kindly
given me permission

to print this extract from a forthcoming Krishna novel by he and his wife Catherine Crook De Camp. At the time of writing, THE KINGHTS OF ZINJABAN is currently with the de Camp's literary agent...so this is a rare foretaste to whet the appetite of all you Krishna-lovers. The scene is set in a Krishnan bath house as Alicia, Cyril Ordway and Jacob White join Krishnans in a communal bath house...

.....Keith and Alicia, clad from neck to foot in a thick layer of suds, led the way into the next room. This contained a large pool of water, whence plumes of vapor slowly rose. The pool was full of Krishnans, some standing, some floating, some leaning back against the walls of the tank, with eyes closed in ecstasy.

"Ouch!" said Ordway. "Any hotter and you could jolly well serve me for dinner." He inched his way down the steps. White followed, his sheet spreading out around him. Next to Ordway, a Krishnan said:

"You Earsman is?"

"Yes, old boy; I an."

The Krishnan puzzled over this. "I sa-tudy ze English. I sink 'boy' mean young he-Earsman. How can boy 'old' be?"

"Just a manner of speaking," grunted Ordway.

"'Manners' mean 'polite', yes?"

"I suppose so," said Ordway, looking around for Reith. But Reith and Alicia were standing in a corner of the tank, talking in low tones and now and then uttering a quiet laugh. The Krishnan persisted:

"Zen you say: 'old boy' to polite be, yes?"

"Look here, my friend --"

"Look where? At you? And is you friend?"

"I'm trying to tell you, I'm not the ruddy expert. I don't speak your bloody language."

After a few seconds of silence, the Krishnan said: "'Bloody' mean has blood on, yes? How can word --"

"Oh, God!" breathed Ordway. "Just another manner of speaking. Let me relax and enjoy the bath, will you like a good chap?"

"Chap. 'Chap' mean part of face, no? Zen how --"

"I don't know, God damn it! Will you please for sweet Jesus' sake shut your face and leave me alone?"

"Jesus not my god is, and cannot alone in crowded pool be."

After a few seconds of silence, the Krishnan pointed to White. "Ozzer Earsman zere, in shit. Why him 'ull shit?"

"Now see here, I don't let no bloody greenie insult an associate of mine! You natives are getting too much cheek --"

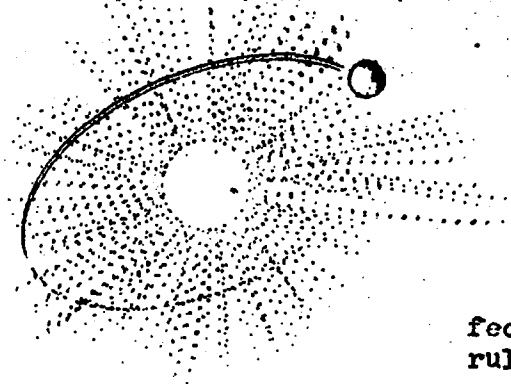
"'Cheek' mean same as 'chap', yes?"

"Shut up!" screamed Ordway. He put pudgy hands against the Krishnan's bony chest and pushed. The Krishnan fell backwards; his face disappeared, all but the ends of his olfactory antennae. He reappeared, sputtering:

"Hishkako baghan!"

My most sincere thanks to Mr. De Camp for allowing me to publish this extract. Let's hope we don't have to wait too long before buying a copy of the whole novel.....B.T.J

It's a Small World



In SF's early days, writers had no difficulty in setting their stories in the 'World Of The Atom'. Every SF fan knew that atoms were only minute copies of our own Solar System with a glowing proton replacing the central Sun and orbiting electrons acting as planets.

These little worlds allowed writers to set yet another adventure yarn for Bat Durston to come down, jets blasting from his dimension-reducing machine to land just in time to save the totally feckless heroine from the ~~fangs/boos/~~ cruel ruler.

Nowadays, that has all changed. Inside the atom, life is more hectic than the registration desk at a Convention. Protons and electrons have a hard time of it dodging such newcomers as quarks, neutrinos, neutrons, bosons, tachyons...and of course, the newly discovered dungeons and dragons. Never heard of them? Not surprising really, as they were only discovered in the CERN reactor after a series of underground-behind-locked-door tests..hence the term 'dungeon'.

In a recent experiment to capture the trace of the elusive W particle with which they hope to tie down the Unified Field Theory, two opposing particle beams were first accelerated to high speed..thus increasing their effective mass in accordance with the equation..

$$... M = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

The beams were then slammed head-on into each other. The resulting crash not only recorded the elusive W, but woke hundreds of revolting French farmers from their dreams of ruling France, Britain and the EEC. The next step was to arrange six particle beams into three pairs, opposing and at right angles. An extra one million francs was put in the electricity meter and all the beams slapped together at the focus in one colossal pile-up. It worked! Barely had the dust settled, when, glowing in the debris could be seen the new particle tentatively labelled the 'dungeon'. It sat there like a tiny sun, its warm rays bringing a healthy glow to the pallor of the joyful scientist's cheeks. A closer inspection (wearing sunglasses and gum-boots) revealed the ASTOUNDING (copyright) fact that another miniscule particle was in orbit around the dungeon. A game-playing scientist was quick to notice the parallel and the new discovery was named a 'dragon'.

In next to no time, if not even sooner than that, everyone got down to investigating the properties of these two strange new creations. A quick-witted operator soon found that one could light a cigarette from 'dungeon'. The next step was to fry an egg on it, and pretty soon, a character called Don Channing had wired it up to run the central heating system. Not that the 'dragon' had been neglected during this time..but the tiny particle seemed totally inert as it whizzed round and round its primary. It was at this time that the head of the laboratory, Bron Dabury had the bright idea of examining the thing through a microscope he happened to have in his pocket. To his astonished gaze was revealed a small, blue world with oceans, continents and fleecy white clouds. By hooking two microscopes in

series/parallel. a really close-up view was obtained. There was life on the surface..not necessarily intelligent life, but life nevertheless. It seemed to be divided into two factions busily fighting like mad. Closer inspection (using three linked microscopes and a Boy Scout magnifying glass) revealed that one band wore dark boue uniforms and were apparently trying to barehandedly defend their concrete-silo headquarters against a motley, unwashed crew of attackers. The latter, screaming abuse and chanting weird slogans were well armed with large boards mounted on the ends of long poles with which they belaboured the heads and bodies of the defenders.

As the battle raged, a CERN scientist finally managed to link his Instamatic camera to the microscope lens. He obtained a photograph of one of the flat boards. On closer inspection, it was seen to bear the battle cry of the attackers. It was duly enlarged, and a copy now hangs above the particle generator where it proudly displays the message...

PEACE NOT WAR !

=====Here endeth the lesson...

WANTED by the editor. SPACE THEME STAMPS..any country, any issue. If you have any to throw away or trade, drop me a line. Likewise if you have any surplus pulp magazines..SF/Air War etc.,

If you'd like a full list of what I have to offer, either send SAE, or indicate your interest when sending in a LOC. Hardcover, paperback, ex-collection, fanstuff...all on offer. I must create space





TRIP '78

===== From Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge. NSW2776, Australia, is a mammoth 154 page account of Eric's wanderings hither and yon (mainly in the USA). Fascinating reading..but slightly marred by a preponderance of food cost estimates and how they relate/damage his budget. Another niggle is the so-called 'reformed spelling' used..'eny' for 'any', 'rivise' for 'revise' etc. I winced at 'San Diago' for 'San Diego' and one or two grammatical errors..but ignore these, and you have one of the best trip reports since the Moffat's superb effort. Price not given..so write and ask.

STICKY QUARTERS 7 from Brian Earl Brown hits the other end of the size scale with 20 pages, 7"x4"..but crams in letters, illos, personal notes and some fmz

comment. 25c a copy from 20101 W.Chicago No.201, Detroit, Michigan, USA 48228

SONGS QUARTERLY from Pete Presford, Ty Gwyn, Maxwell Close, Buckley, Clwyd, N.Wales boasts 18, A4 pages, a cover illo and one interior..then lots of nicely mixed ramblings and LOCquotes along with comments on same. Friendly and entertaining personalzine..get it for a LOC/stamp/show of interest/trade.

THE MENTOR 46 50, Qto.pp/Mimeo from Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Neat duping, plenty of good illos, a Bertram Chandler item, some so-so fiction, verse, crossword, Alderson on woman-dominated societies, a very good book review section and an even better LOC section. Definitely one of the livelier Aussie zines..\$2 an issue or the usual.

RATAPLAN 24 from Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Sq., ACT 2608, AUSTRALIA has 38, A4, mimeo pages, and no artwork. Con comment, Fantasy v SF, a book review cum hatchet job on 'Songs From The Stars', fanzine musings, Locs and a spot of humour round out the issue. Sadly, the lack of proper item headings and illustrations make this a rather heavy package..unless of course you want plenty of reading matter and to hell with trimmings..\$2.00 for 3 issues or the usual..trade, lolly, contribution or sheer soft soap flattery.

WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE..Jean Weber, PO Box 42, Lynham, ACT2602, Australia has 18 A4 pages CRAMMED (Jean used a miniscule typeface) with personal natter, and assorted comment (Personal Power..sexism..sexual mutilation..etc) and other items dear to Jean's heart. There's a nice cover illo (and the usual obligatory doe-eyed illo inside). Jean (and her correspondents) have plenty of interesting viewpoints and things to say..but I would like to see 'em get away from the too-frequent sexism angles. Meanwhile..Vote WEBER for TAFF, DUFF, GUFF or whatever, and get a real fanzine fan.

MAINSTREAM 9 ..Suzanne Tompkins, 4326 Winslow Place N, Seattle, WA 98103 has a hefty 44 pages jammed with Suzie's natterings, a lengthy Langford Trip report, semi-fiction by S.B.Bieler, random thoughts by R.A.MacAvoy and a long lettercol. Plenty of good interior illos (including some by Atom) All in all, a nice friendly, unpretentious zine. Get it for a buck a copy or grade, LOC, contribution..or any of the usual..(threats, bribery and/or mint sheets of US postage stamps)

SOUTH ON PEACH TREE 2..being a bid raiser for Worldcon in Atlanta/86..so if you want to join 'em, the address is Worldcon Atlanta Inc. PO Box 10094, Atlanta, GA 30319 USA..this issue costs \$2.50, has 32 good quality pages and introduces committee, advertisers, some LOCs and many excellent illos.

GROGGY TALES 21 comes from Eric & Kathy Mayer, 1771 Ridge Rd East, Rochester, NY 14622, USA..and is the last bastion of ditto fandom. 10 Qto pages, jammed with artwork, personal natter, reminiscences by Don Brazier anent 'Title', a John Berry item on boomerang throwing and a 'Letter From Argentina' by Mae Strelkow. Get it for the usual, and enjoy. One of the nice friendly zines.

STICKY QUARTER 8 Brian Earl Brown 20101 W Chicago No.20, Detroit, MI 48228. is a slim (half Qto appx) 34pp perzine..using extra colour work and items by John Berry, fmz natter, cats, LOCs and oodles of artwork. Get it for 'usual' OUTWORLDS36 Bill B.wers, 2468 Harrison Ave, Cincinatti, OH 45211..12 Qto pp photolith/offset..mainly a letterzine plus a dialogue between Dave Locke and Steve Leigh...next issue, 14th Annish (ah, these young zines(for \$2.00.

XYSTER 3, 24 A5, offset pages crammed with...LOCs, clerihews, Con comment, personal (and highly amusing) memories, John Brunner's Cymrucon speech (Why the heck does he bring his political views into an audience which does not necessarily hold the same ideas---stick to SF which we all are supposed to love. Pity, 'cos the rest of the speech is terrific. There's a new little 'book game' for you to play. Definitely worth getting as it is varied, up-beat, friendly and one of the better zines around. No price, but 17p in stamps might get you a copy...you'll not be sorry.

HOLIER THAN THOU..Mary Cantor, 5263 Riverton Ave, "1 Nth.Hollywood, CA 91601. No less than 92 QTo pages of mimeo. No wonder it's \$1.50 an issue (or the usual). Too much stuff here to list in full..but oodles of LOCs, excellent artwork, a too brief fmz review col, a rather pointless and over long item 'Jews In Space', personal notes, a new look at the 12 Days Of Xmas by Boyd Raeburn..and Jean Weber describes a totally un fascinating operation. Very much like the curate's egg, this zine...but on a quantity/price basis alone, how can you go wrong? Controversy here too, if that's what you crave.. humour, feud, riposte..etc etc.

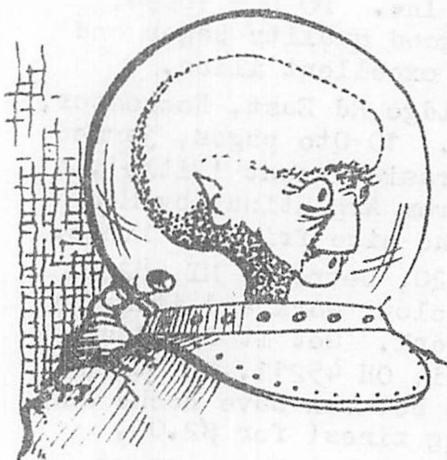
...and this one is virtually a prozine...

TO THE STARS, 40 page, slick, Qto size @ \$1.50. First issue of what is basically an L. Ron Hubbard cultzine...CRAMMED with good artwork, oodles of ads..and.. a Sturgeon interview, an Elron reprint on writing, Interview with artist Alicia Austin, competitions, news, An Ackerman news article, reviews, a piece on the Solar System, loads of letters (and a cartoon by me), a club

for Hubbard fans ..and then mpre news. Edited by John & Bjo Trimble of Star Trek fame, this one deserves to make progress. Send your orders to the Trimbles at 3963 Wilshire Blvd., No142, Los Angeles, CA 90010...Make checks payable to Methuselah Press and send to the address above (sorry about that 'checks'...I automatically carried it over when copying from the logo page. Get in early, I suspect this one will become a collector's item very soon.

DON'T GET CAUGHT.4..16, A4 pp from Kevin Rattan, 21, The Square, Scorton, Nr. Preston. Comparison of Destination Moon/Forbidden Planet/DR Who..plus LOCs, natter and opinion. Nice little perzine for the usual..or a stamp. Supports the 'Do or Don't Step On A Spider Fund' for distressed femlibbers.





IDOMO...c44 A4pp from Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Rd., Wissett, Nr Halesworth, Surrey. Good fanzine reviews and plenty of 'em. LOCs, 'verse'(or worse). Natter on pirate/free radio stations, mosquito slapping and other odds and ends. A nice, chatty mix with something for everybody...get it for Trade/Locs, tapes, records..etc. Well worth a try.

TYPED AT THE GATES OF DAWN..44. A5 offset pages..excellent artwork (lovely centrespread), LOWs, numerous articles...on a pop group 'do', book/film natter, school doings and a week in the life of a bookseller. This is an excellent debunker of the theory that a perzine can't be interesting. Recommended...if you're not too serious about life and things. Trade or LOC

or the usual grovelling will get you a copy. A beautifully produced little zine which also shows you that Vector-sized zines don't have to be boring and dusty dull.

DELIGHTED to be able to say that MIKE BASTRAW has just contacted me and not only included the thirty bucks for the paintings I sent..but threw in a further ten buck interest..PLUS two superb sets of laser photos of the Shuttle/Orbiter complex...(I first saw these in San Francisco..and was struck by their clarity) and to round off the package, Mike also included a nifty NIEKAS iron-on jacket patch. Many thanks Mike...really appreciated.

CRYSTAL SHIP 8. from John D Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks is another zine which puts Vector to shame. 56, A5 photo lith pages with oodles of excellent illos. Those for the article (by Ian Covell) on Beam Piper are a dream. There's also a batch of articles, some fiction and a whacking great LOCCOL...Get it for a letter and stamp while stocks last..and you'll kick yourself if you don't. I'd rate this as a perfect example of what a good fanzine should be..if only it were a bit less s&c.

Those art-buffs amongst you may have noticed a new artist in this issue of **ERG** Eddy Dean lives in Niagara Falls..well on the banks of the river if you want to be precise...and all being well, will have the cover spot on the next issue. Needing art? Contact him at..5793 Morrison St., Niagara Falls, CANADA Ontario L2 E2 E8. I'm sure he'd love to oblige.

WANT TO PLAY HOB?

...PLAY HAVOC?

....PLAY ON WORDS?

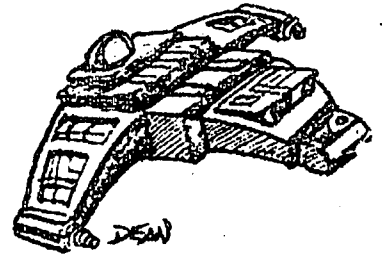
Don't just sit and wish..send £5 to the ERGitorial address and in return I will rush you a brand new comb and a piece of tissue paper. Amaze your friends when you sit down to buzz. Be the first on your block to own a genuine ERGazoo!

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Teacher**
LEARN AT HOME



FOLIO.2 26pp, A5, photo-offset, from Tom Bingham,
82 Dresden Close, Corby. Northants...is
jammed with poetry and some good artwork. Seems a
nice friendly zine for those who love what now
under the name of 'poetry' these days...i.e. non-
rhyming prose..much of it obscure. However, as I
am a well-known Philistine in the field...I leave
it to you..mention ERG..\$2.50 gets you three
issues..but no doubt 21p in stamps would get you a
sample copy. It IS a nice little (poetry only)zine.



SMALL FRIENDLY DOG. 52, 1/44pp from Paul & Cas Skelton, 25 Bowland Close,
Offerton, Stockport SK2 5NW...a friendly, anything-goes
perzine wherein LOCs and personal comment/response tend to get rather mixed.
Main highlight of this issue (apart from the luvverly ATOMillos) is the
account of Paul & Cas on their marvellous pedal-powered velocipedes as they
tour the hills and dales of Yorkshire striking terror into every fan they
visit. Great stuff...for LOC, the usual or whatever takes the fancy.

THE OUTER LIMITS...Radio program..copies available from Antony Tomkins,
14 Great Clowes St., Salford M7 9ET. Tony is not so interested in
selling copies as in trading. He wants to acquire other tapes, pulp mags,
paperbacks, artwork, posters, radio items etc etc. I've already got 4
of his cassettes (including 'WITH FOLDED HANDS') and can vouch for their
quality. Now is there anyone else out there wants to get publicity in
Fanalog? This could become a worthwhile service...first pulp mag copies,
now tapes..what next???

NIEKAS 31 76Qtopp From Ed Meskys, RFD1 Box 63 Center Harbor NH 03226 USA
This issue is devoted to heroic fantasy..articles on Conan/Howard/
heroes etc etc by such names as Sprague De Camp, Catherine Crook de Camp,
Don D'Amassa and items by Harry Andruschak on JPL, plus reviews, art, LOCs
a reprint of my own Kornan story and much, much more. I'd recommend this
as being one of the 'must' zines for anyone wanting to keep au fait with
American fandom/fanzines of the top level. \$2.50 a copy or 4 issues for
9 bucks...remember, it's 76 closely printed..but extremely well illoed
pages, and a card wraparound cover.

DEFENESTRATION 5 18 Qtopp from David Singer, 3271 NW 28th Terrace, Boca
Raton, FL 33434, USA. Labelled 10th Annish, this one is
a perzine on Conventions, personal musings, filk singing. Get it for \$1.00
trade, LOC or the usual.

COINCIDENCE DEPARTMENT.. Saturday morning, the postman mis-delivered here a
letter addressed to 223 Bannardale Rd..half a mile away because of our
erratic numbering). Coincidence? It was Progress Report 1 for Novacon14.
Turns out the chap there (Dave Dunn) is a regular Novacon-goer..but fancy
me getting his Report. But there were only a few hundred mailed out.

our postman must be conditioned by
fanzines arriving here.

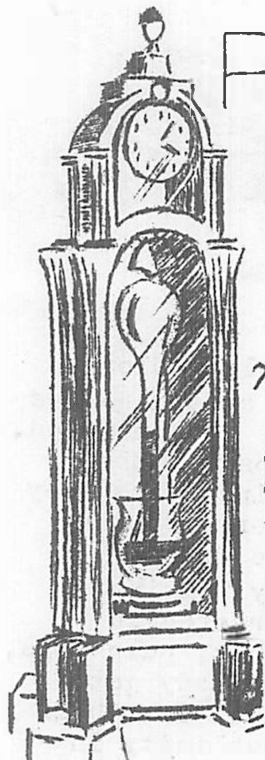
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Variable book, "The Truth About the East,"
Write National Registry Co., 66 W. 34th St.,
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Great stuff if you have JAPANESE
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postage and law-suit costs.



Perpetual Motion

164
Terry Tavees

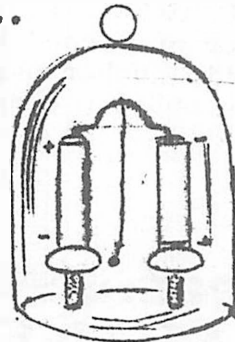
Many SF yarns have been written about perpetual motion machines... but just what IS perpetual motion?

One of those things (like SF) which we all know about, but that nobody can define? If I present you with a device that will still be functioning a year or two from now, does that qualify. If so, then battery powered clocks, watches and suchlike self-powered widgets qualify. Well then, how about something capable of running for 50 or even 100 years? At least two such devices exist or have been constructed.

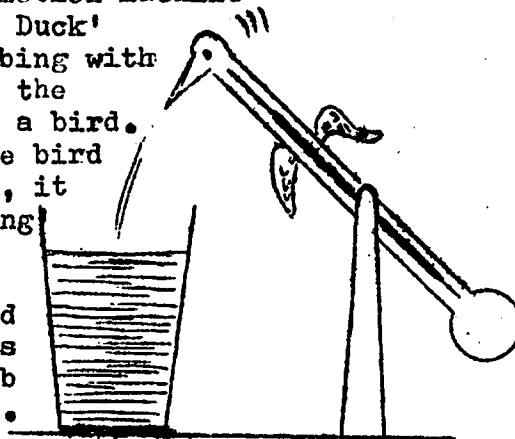
The first was an atmospheric-pressure-driven clock made around 1774 by James Cox. A tall handsome device which used 150 lbs of Mercury to produce a Torricellian vacuum. Fluctuations in air pressure wound a clock spring through a cunning series of levers and gears. The Clock was set up in Weeks' Museum where it ran for some 70 years before being stopped when the museum closed. According to A.W.J.G. Ord-Hume (see Book Reference) it can still be seen, stopped, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The second long-running gadget, devised by G.J. Singer, consists of two voltaic piles, a pair of bells, and a pith ball suspended by a silk thread. The piles alternately charge and discharge the ball as it bounces to and fro between the bells. A sample of this longevity-winner is still operating in the Clarendon Laboratory..after being started in 1840. If you want to read the full (and fairly simple) instructions for making one for yourself, Ord-Hume's excellent book supplies them in detail.

Such inventions are of course not what a science fiction fan would really call 'perpetual motion' as both rely on a power source.. long-lived in both cases, but finite nevertheless. Mention p.m. to a fan and he immediately thinks of a closed cycle device in which part of the power output goes to drive the input...a common suggestion being an electric motor which drives a generator. The generator supplies the energy to run the motor. Even if all frictional and other losses are ignored..the power created would only just be sufficient to drive the motor. This system has cropped up throughout history..in essence, if not in fact.. even before electricity was discovered. Numerous 'inventors' have postulated..and drawn carefully detailed plans of large water reservoirs from which powerful streams cascade. These falling streams not only power water mills, but also drive an Archimedean screw which raises the water back up again. A variation was offered in a drawing depicting a giant, scaled-up set of air bellows (the kind you used to see by firesides), these puffed out air to turn a windmill..and in turn..you've guessed it, by a series of cranks, the windmill powered the bellows.



What seemed to be a real perpetual motion machine appeared in 1948, as a toy. The 'Drinking Duck' consisted of a thin length of capillary tubing with a volatile liquid in the bore. Pivoted at the centre, the tube was decked up to resemble a bird. Once the beak had been dipped in water, the bird would wing upright..after a series of bobs, it would stop for a while..then start 'drinking' again. It operated on vapour pressure. Dipping the beak, cooled the tube, the gas in the bulb shrank in volume and the liquid came part way back down the body tube..thus swinging the bird vertical. Once the bulb warmed up the gas, the cycle started again. Not true p.m. though as it operated by taking warmth from the surrounding air.



Radium decay 'clocks' of varying types have been designed..and even constructed..but even radium decays away with time to inactivity. One of the most common p.m. machines involves a series of weights on hinged arms around the rim of a pivoted wheel. Rising weights can hang straight down, whereas once past the top, they fall outwards until their arms reach stops on the perimeter. In theory, this overbalances the wheel to one side and it will start..then continue, to spin. In practice, it will swing back into equilibrium with moments taken around the pivot balancing each other out to a total of zero motion.



Other designers suggested two flat discs which overlapped by almost half their circumferences and were placed so close together that water could be drawn into the shared space by capillary attraction. The weight of water would then cause the unbalanced wheels to revolve in opposite directions. Sadly, the turning moment would be neatly balanced by capillary adhesion, and again, no motion would result.

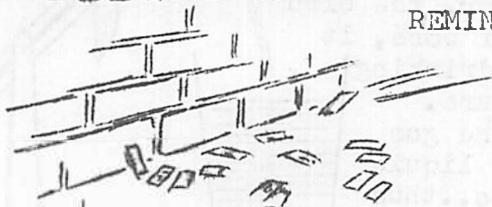
Oh, there have been machines made that actually worked..until investigators discovered the hidden gearing in the wall and secret second floor and ceiling of the house. Another innocent looking perpetual mover turned out to have a powerful spring motor hidden in its base..with a drive shaft inside a supporting column. My favourite however was a gadget that stood boldly on four solid glass rods as it churned away..thus showing that it had no such hidden machinery. That one turned out to be driven by compressed air going up what were NOT solid rods..but hollow glass tubes.

The lust of such inventions..real and imaginary, is long. If you'd like to read about these..and many, many more, then try to beg, borrow or steal a copy of Arthur W.G.Ord-Hume's book..PERPETUAL MOTION. Allen & Unwin 1977. It cost £5.50 then..probably a bit more now if you can get it...but it's well worth hunting down if you like to read about such flights of fancy. The ISBN Number is...0 04 621024 5 If you're handy with tools, maybe you'd like to try your hand at making one of the machines described therein... who knows, yours might actually work!

FLICKING FAG-CARDS .. A THIRTIES REMINISCENCE

by

Ken Lake



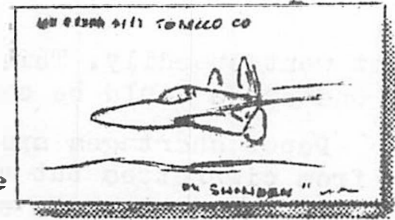
In 1936, I was five years old, starting school, and beginning to take in the world around me. By 1939 the War was upon us, and by the following year the full rigours of evacuation, the disappearance of ice-cream and cigarette cards, for that matter, the disappearance of a great many of the fit men-folk into the Forces, the rationing of chocolate and sweets, the introduction of the blackout and a host of other changes brought my real childhood to an end, (it's hard to be a child when every night you lie in your bed - or the Anderson shelter - hearing the bombs dropping all around and wondering, "Will Eric or Malcolm be at school tomorrow..or did they get caught by the last lot?")

But during that short four-year period, I enjoyed a lower-middle-class childhood of a type that has never returned. Walking to school, playing in the woods and fields or on the pavement in your own street.."Don't you go round to that council-house area, they aren't very nice children there".. with nobody to suggest that you should not talk to anyone you wished so long as they looked respectable; playing marbles along the gutters with little fear of cars (though I was once run into by a bicycle. I suffered minor bruises, he broke his leg as it went through the spokes of his wheel, and nobody had much sympathy for either of us); playing five-stones on the pavement (passers-by happily walked around you - they knew just how important it was not to disturb you in such a game); or for that matter, playing 'curb and wall' which necessitated rushing back and forth across the street and the pavement with nobody implying that this might be foolish or dangerous.

And flicking fag-cards. First you had to get them, and that meant one of three things: either your father gave you his and those he cadged from colleagues at work, or you searched every empty packet you saw on the street (nobody worried about litter in those days - when I first decided to collect bus tickets, my problem was not getting them, but sifting anything worthwhile from the thousands scattered over a small triangle of grass near the bus stop) or you simply stopped any man you saw coming from a tobaccorist - or anywhere else for that matter - and asked, "Got any fag-cards, mister?"

The words had become traditional. Nobody dreamed of altering the equation in any way; it worked. It produced a slow but constant flow of cards from total strangers, so long as you didn't attempt to touch them, you spoke politely, looked presentable and were prepared to accept any feeble excuse as a reasonable explanation, passing on to the next unsuspecting victim with the same bright, disingenuous smile and the same formul request.

Having gotten your cards, you had to decide what to do with them. There were so many brands of cigarettes, from so many manufacturers, all with their own, ever-changing series, some as common as dirt and others eagerly sought after. Almost anything from Abdulla was scarce in my milieu, while Wills and Players were most common. Subject mattered too - plenty of boys wanted Cricketers or Footballers, but few were keen on Film Stars and even fewer on Theatre Actors, so you automatically evaluated the make, the subject, the size (oversize cards were scarcer but few people wanted them) and even the number (number one, or for the standard series number fifty - the last one of the set - still demand double the price of any other card from cigarette card dealers today, as there are many collectors who want only these cards).



Building up sets was quite a task, for they were available for no more than six weeks in many cases (smaller firms kept them running longer, thus helping to equalise quantities around). I can recall driving my father to distraction by meeting him daily from work. "Have you got number 27 yet Dad? You know it's the only one I need for the set and nobody else has it to swap"

Rumour had it that the companies would deliberately make one card scarcer than the rest, to stimulate interest. It might have happened a few times, but more likely was 'zoning' whereby a load of stock might end up in one town, starving the rest of the country of the cards it contained. I think the manufacturers would soon have come to realise that jiggery-pokery, if carried out on a large scale, would have deterred collectors and brought the hobby into disrepute.

For a hobby it certainly was: how better to persuade sensible people to rot their lungs and fill their homes and offices with smoke, than by 'giving away' some small colourful item which was demanded by every child in the country and which was a medium of exchange and a source of kudos. "My Dad always gets the sets first - he knows a man who gets them from the tobacconists" True? Who can tell now? All this and a game too!

Yes, we've gotten to it at last. The cards not in demand, those sissy subjects, unwanted duplicates, damaged cards or those from cigarettes that nobody, but nobody smoked - these all ended up defaced, mangled, dirty and downright ger,-ridden after a few dozen sessions of 'flicking fag-cards'

So what did you do? Simple: you stuck any two cards back to back - they had to be the same size. You were not allowed to use oversize cards at all, as they ruined the odds. Then you stood, side by side or taking turns at a chalk line or crack in the pavement, and you each flicked a card. It had to bounce off the wall, rather as a cricket ball must bounce on the pitch before reaching the batsman. It would then fall untidily to the pavement - and one hoped, it would precisely cover a card thrown by your opponent. If it did, you retrieved both your card and his; if not, both lay as more and more piled up around and across them.

The game was never properly finished. After your mother called for the fifth time, or the bell went for the end of break, or the pang of hunger finally banished the thrill of the game, you picked up all that were left and divided them equally among the players.

So if you come across wedges of corner-bent, scratched, dirty cards stuck together in pairs, now you'll know what they were for. But what happened when the war came? Well, the packaging that enclosed the basic

packet went speedily. This meant that packets were not open for inspection, and cards could be extracted without leaving a sign of any disturbance.

Paper shortages speedily led to the disappearance of the card, not only from cigarettes but also the 'trade' cards from chocolate, biscuits and tea for example. In postwar years, few companies returned to cigarette cards, though infamous among those which did was 'Turf'..they tasted no better than their name, and the impression was a monocolour one printed on the slide of the packet. Needless to say, children scoured the neighbourhood daily taking apart every 'Turf' packet they could find.

However, we did have one shortlived replacement to help us break the habit. Early in the war, Canadian troops came over in great numbers and brought with them 'Sweet Caporal' cigarettes which had, clearly printed on the back of the packet for all to see, a series of aircraft silhouettes. By this time, we were all into 'aero recco' (aircraft recognition of course) ..you had to be, when the difference between 'ours' and 'theirs' could lead to your death from one of a stick of bombs or a machine gun bullet as you strolled to school ignoring the wardens cycling past with signs around their necks reading 'AIR RAID WARNING', shouting, "You lads get to shelter at once, don't you know there's a raid on?"

So we took our courage in our hands and started to accost these strangely speaking, oddly uniformed men, using the time-honoured phrase modified for the period, "Got any aero recco cards, mister?" Give them their due, the Canadians caught on fast and many a free-smoking squaddie found himself introduced to a smashing mother.. "Mum, mum, this man's give me eight aero recco cards, and I only got three of 'em". One wonders how many of these encounters led to a more lasting relationship.

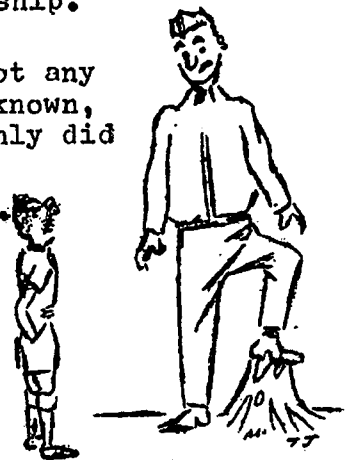
Of course, as the war proceeded, fag-cards were forgotten and we all became corrupted by the Yanks. "Got any gum, chum?" was the cry, though few of us, if truth be known, actually liked the chewy, tasteless stuff at all, and only did it to keep in with our peer group.

But to get back to cards: I'm no longer a collector, but I have kept in touch with the hobby. Most of a time I'm asked for valuations..usually by people who believe it's a law of economics that anything you've kept a long time must be worth a lot of cash. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you - or pleased to encourage you - but here, very much in brief, are the facts.

Any card which is badly damaged is worthless. Any card stuck into an album with gum (even its own) is virtually worthless - collectors just don't like those lovely little albums the companies used to sell or give away I'm afraid. I wonder why? Space, I suppose.

Cards with small damage have a value; any in pristine condition are worth at least twice as much. The value can vary from 50p for a whole set of 50 common cards, to £100 for a single rare card.

The earliest cards appeared in the 1890s, so cards of the twenties and thirties are 'modern' to most serious collectors. It's the 19th Century



ones that mostly command high prices, though there are again popular subjects and scarce sets from all periods which have a price commensurate with the basic laws of supply and demand. For example, John Player cards sell today between £600 and £2.25 for a complete set in fair condition; Wills are about the same.

If you'd like to pursue this in more detail, or you have cards you want valuing, I recommend without any reservation at all, a paperback £3.75 book called:-

CIGARETTE CARD VALUES Murray's 1984 Guide To
Cigarette & Other Trade Cards



Martin Murray was a boy collector who has kept it up and now runs a successful business, Murray Cards (International) Ltd., from 51 Watford Way, Hendon Central, LONDON NW4 3JH. I recently visited him and spent hours browsing - and despite not being a collector, I bought some too! He tells me that 90% of his business is by mail..based of course, on his catalogue prices - and that he also runs regular auctions and attends numerous cigarette card fairs (There's one held ten times a year at the Eccleston Hotel at Victoria).

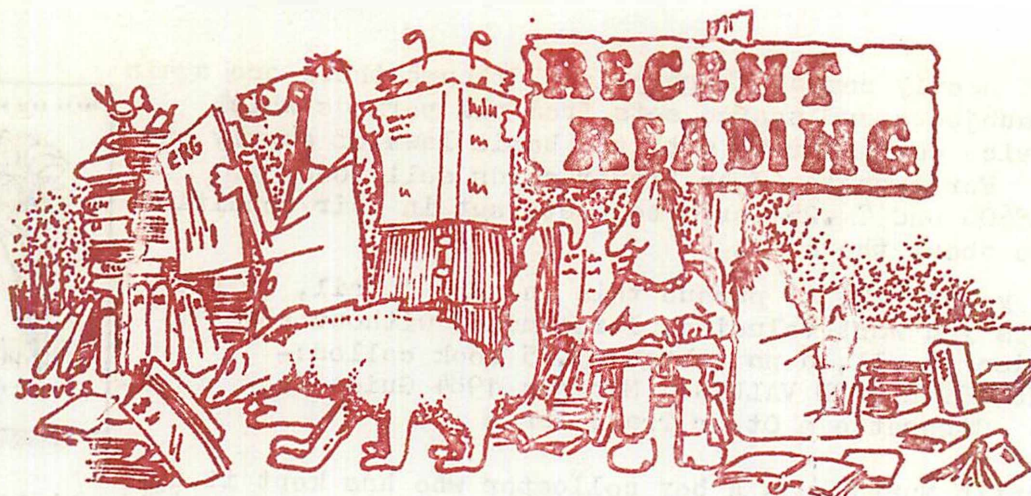
After visiting Martin, I wrote four articles about certain aspects of cigarette and trade cards, thereby recouping more than the cost of my purchase and the trip to see him. This DMBL piece is a free 'thank You' to him for all the pleasure the hobby gave me!

Ken Lake 1984

Editor's Addendum. The game we played was not quite the same..we used single cards and if any part of the thrown card covered part of another, then the thrower picked up ALL the cards on the floor. The game then started again. Another variation was for a lad to set up (say) half a dozen cards leaning against a wall. We each took turns flicking our cards at them and anyone successful in knocking one of the standing cards down, collected all the cards thrown to date. Playing this way, one got through large numbers of cards in a short session of play. At times, we would indulge in 'Who can throw a card the farthest?' contests, but these were purely for fun..no card winning or losing being involved.

The more commercially (crooked) minded would set up stall with a thick exercise book into which cigarette cards had been placed at random. This book was then closed and thrust edge first at any sucker daft enough to play. The idea was that you took one of your own cards and stuck it between a couple of pages. The book was then opened and if your card had landed in a page containing any of the bookie's cards..then you pocketed the lot. Obviously a game for the unscrupulous organiser..he need only put in a smidgin of cards..and regularly 'milk' his book to be sure of a fat haul.

Then of course, there were the 'silks' pictures printed on silk. You couldn't throw these flowers, flags etc (usually from Kensitas) but parents on the distaff side seemed to love sewing them onto cushion covers. I still have a load of these..including some very early ones, in my collection. Reckon I'd better order me a copy of Murray's book in case I'm sitting on a fortune...after all.. I have saved 'em a long time...that makes 'em worth a lot doesn't it? T.J.



NEW READERS START HERE.... Every so often, someone asks, "Why do you never pan a book?", or "Why do you say nice things about, 'Star Dream Mist Riders of Dragon Fire Haven' ?... It was rubbish". As I keep trying to point out, opinions differ. MY opinion doesn't matter a hoot! Recent Reading is meant first and foremost to tell readers that a book exists. A second reason is to give you some idea of what a book is about.... a late third aspect is my opinion for the few (many) who find their tastes are similar to mine. Once you know the first two points, then it's up to you to decide whether or not to go out and BUY...which you can't do until you know the book is on sale. I am NOT in the business of dissective literary criticism...or slamming a book simply because it didn't appeal to me...So please, use these pages as a guide, and not as immutable statement of what is right. Now Read On....

MORETA: DRAGON LADY OF PERN

Anne McCaffrey Corgi £3.95

After a scene-setting prologue for newcomers to the Dragon pot (which still does not tell me why Threads failed to over-run Pern before the Dragons arrived), we meet Weyrwoman and Healer, Moreta. She attends a shindig at Ruatha Hold and meets the new Lord Alessa. Romance is in the air, but a new disease begins to ravage Pern, quarantine is declared at all Holds and Ports, and on top of all this comes Threadfall. Moreta has to fight both enemies and we see her performing various healing operations on Dragons. There's the usual (brief) Hatching Impression...plus romance and tragedy. To round out the book, you get a glossary of terms. Normally, Pern's Dragon riding affairs bore me, but this one proved above average and a good read. I'll bet you numerous 'Moretas' appear in future Convention Fancy Dress parades.

THE BUCCANEERS OF LAN-KERN

Peter Trenayne Methuen £1.95

Conclusion of the Celtic-based mythology-trilogy in which Frank Dryden is on a nuclear submarine transported to the far future and a land of devastated ruins, mutants and witches. Now, Dryden, chief's son Pryderi and his sister Kigva are striving to regain the sacred drowyth relic 'An Kevryn' which was stolen by the buccaner Conla. Joining forces with the tribe of Mons, they sail on to confront Conla in his lair. A profusion of strange names, honourable warriors and black-hearted villains mixes with plenty of sword, less sorcery and all the standard ingredients of the 'we win one, they win one' school. Characters are rather slim, black or white figures, but if heroic fantasy appeals to you, then this may ring your bell. Other titles:- THE FIRES OF LAN-KERN and THE DESTROYERS OF LAN-KERN.

BALANCE OF POWER

Brian M Stableford
Hamlyn £1.75

Coming in on this part (5) of a series left me a bit unsure of 'what has gone before'..but I gather the star ship Daedalus is re-visiting various colonies..this time the one on Attica seems a failure...as we open with Alex, (a biologist) is aboard a sailing ship on an improbable trip to Attica's other island..mutiny, marooning, meeting with natives and our heroes are into an alien/colonists power struggle..further complicated by a strange plague. If any of you are old enough to recall the Galaxy ads..."Bat Durston...", then you may fancy this one uses the same treatment to update a visiting British ship calling on African colonies

A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON

and

THE SOURCE OF MAGIC

Piers Anthony
Orbit £2.50 each

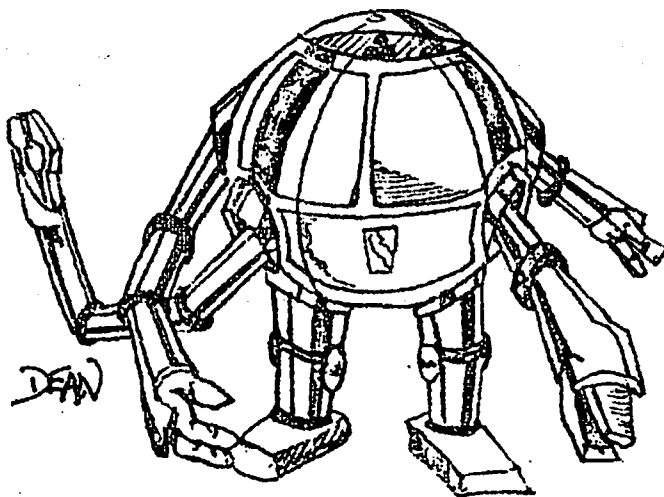
A pair of 'trek/quest' yarns set in the land of Xanth (which bears a close resemblance to Florida, complete with an 'Ogre-Fen-Ogre Swamp'), where magic works..for everyone and everything.... except, as in 'SPELL' where we follow Bink's adventures as the only Xanthian without a magic talent. His search for one leads to various encounters..withthes, dragons, deadly monsters and planets as well as more real perils. In THE SOURCE, Bink heads off on another hunt, this time the Magician King sets him the task of finding the origins of the land's magic. As with most such yarns, these two use their basic 'grail' as a peg on which to hang an on-going series of adventures along the way. The eventual success of the mission is less important. On that basis, these read well and without that tedious 'hero repeatedly frees villian to come back abd be even nastier'. Not great SF, but highly entertaining. If you go for them, there are several other titles in the series.

EMPIRE OF THE EAST

Fred Saberhagen
Futura £2.95

A massive (3-part, 558pp) novel set in a future world of wizards and magic, with technology almost forgotten. The cruel Satrap Ekuman tortures wizard Ardneh to death so the wizard vows vengeance and appears to re-incarnate in the body of young Rolf (whose parents were slain by the Satrap's men) so, joining with guerillas and mastering a long defunct nuclear powered tank, an assault is mounted on the Satrap's fortress. Part.2. continues the theme, but with emphasis on Satrap Chup, crippled in the opening battles. Then finally, the magician Ardneh achieves his destiny. There's no mention of where the magic came from..or where the technology went..but otherwise a hefty chunk of heroism of the oppressed as they triumph over evil.

R4 D4 (Denoting number of arms) on the right is another illo from the Eddy Dean pen.



THE RETURN OF NATHAN BRAZIL

For those of you who thought the Well World Saga Jack L. Chalker at an end, here's Vol.4, with at least one more to come. Penguin £1.95 The microscopic Dreel parasites are invading the Com worlds and only the Old Weapons can stop them..but in doing so they open a rift in Space-Time. Mavra Chang and Obie the computer join with the Olympian Cultists to search out Nathan Brazil, as only he can put things right. I enjoyed this the most of the Well Worlds' yarns to date but felt the Dreel menace was dropped too easily..and too early. If you enjoyed the earlier parts..you MUST read this one.

TERRAHAWKS

Aliens from the Centaurian planet Guk, destroy NASA's Martian Jack Curtis base and dig in. Clone (one of nine) 'Tiger' Ninestein is Sparrow £1.25 appointed head of Earth's forces. Helping him is the little Japanese Hiro and his mechanical zeroid..as well as Kate Kestrel and a fleet of marvellous spacecraft. The Earth assault is launched and overcomes various attacks upon it. Ninestein is taken prisoner aboard a microscopic ship which has expanded to giant proportions, but after a series of adventures, good triumphs over evil. A (very) juvenile novel..-isation of the Andersons' new TV series, plenty of action and highly visual word pictures which will make it an ideal gift for most youngsters and to any fan of the Anderson puppet sagas.

THE ROBERT SHECKLEY OMNIBUS

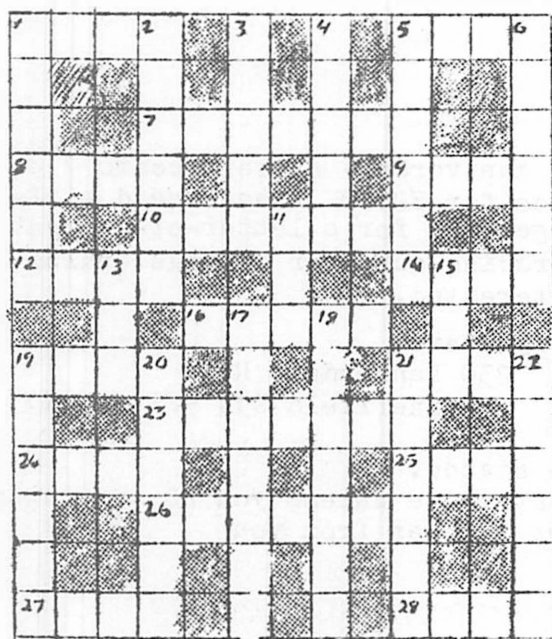
First, an excellent Introduction by Robert Conquest..not the usual puff, but one which makes some telling points..such that most modern stories are not stories at all, but simply mood setters. Following this comes the novel 'IMMORTALITY INC' which links time-travel, reincarnation, body-transference and an after life into a fascinating whole. Then no less than 12 short stories..topics include:- An alien space crew in need of a new engine. A man who is sold a Martian therapeutic machine in error. Love for sale. The dilemma of an 'answer anything' device. Wives in stasis. Armageddon. Fabulous TV games and much, much more. Sheckley not only casually throws away plot ideas which other writers would turn into novels, he writes in a distinctive, 'no-nonsense style which lets you know exactly what is going on..and won't let you go. Just when you think the ending will be predictable, he puts in the tail sting...and twists it. He's a long term favourite of mine...read this collection and I reckon he'll become one of yours.

INVASION EARTH

Opening with a (sub)nic bang as an alien spacecraft streaks Harry Harrison across the USA and slams down in Central Park. Col. Hayward Sphere £1.50 investigates and finds an alien prisoner who says his race (the Bettr) will aid Earth against the Oinn who plan to attack. Russia and America unite to build an Antarctic base..but still suspicious, Hayward checks out the Oinn fortress and finds the Bettr 'prisoner' was not what he claimed..and it seems that the Oinn are little better. Events escalate to a final show down near the South Pole in a fast-moving adventure type SF yarn with more than a touch of James Bond/movie possibilities. A refreshing change from much of the modern moribund, introspective stuff or the sword & sorcery vogue. Lightweight, but highly enjoyable. Quibble: Harry..you ought to know better than to put a 'geostationary' satellite above the Black Sea..which is at least 40°N of the Equator...above which ALL such orbiters must travel.

PRIZE CROSSWORD

It has been quite a while since the last Crossword in ERG (it scored low in the ERGpoll), but being an addict, I just had to include one in the annish. Solutions on this sheet or reasonable facsimile. Prize is a copy of the 600pp paperback GENESIS by W.A.Harbinson ..and goes to the first correct solution out of the hat after May.20th..which gives overseas readers an equal chance. Go to it...



CLUE ACROSS

1. Pb 5. Average, but not quite normal 7. Na abbreviates this 8. Ruler of Mongo 9. Bits of diamond 10. Expand from near leg 12. A natural nuclear reactor? 14. Back 16. Two-legged 19 Shellfish in the stars 21. Old 23. White metallic element 24. Nee 25. Charged particles 26. Change reverse of French: Changed 27. Boy in jug? 28. Palindromic sound.

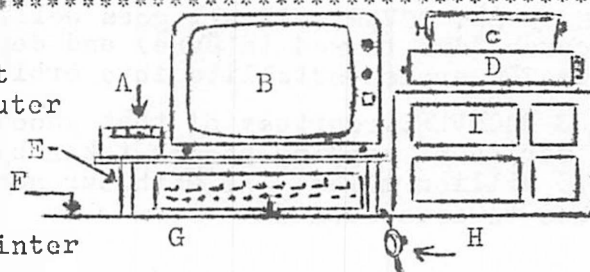
CLUES DOWN

1. A blue dye 2. Peril from a mucked up garden 3. Sum 4. Before 5. Soporific digit 6. Bates wrote his Farewell 11. A little current 13 A Turkish officer 15. Little effort to read it in here 17. Copy 18 Thrown out 19. A mine-demon or metal 20. Two based 21. In the middle of 22. Romberg made quite a song about it

COMPUTER CORNER

The sketch on the right shows the current computer set-up here in the Stately Crumbling Jeeves' Mansion. Legend is:-

- A..Cassette Recorder B...TV monitor
C..Roll of paper D...Epson FX 80 printer
E..Stand to hold TV F...Top of my desk
G..BBC Micro. 'B' H... Mains switch I is a D.I.Y cabinet I made with



four drawers. Two drawers holding 34 cassettes each, and two holding 17 ea. The mains switch (taken from an old electric blanket) controls recorder, micro, TV, and printer so all go 'on line' in one go. A shelf to the right holds handbooks. I looked at it this way...if I had to unpack, connect up everything each time I wanted to use the gear...it would seldom..if ever get used...so this way, I can walk in and be operating inside 10 seconds.. the warm up time for the TV. Next purchase will probably be a colour monitor...then the portable can go back in the bedroom. The paper roll rack is another DIY item and houses a two-ply (self carboning) roll of paper. With true Jeevesian economy..I added a take up roller to divert and collect the (unused) carbon sheet...once the front paper is used, I can then use the roll of self carboning paper. Of course, with the Epson, I can also insert single sheets if required..as when using the word processor to write a letter. And just think...when ERG1 appeared, transistors had only been around ten years !



ERG 86

April 1984

Anniversary Issue

This issue of ERG Quarterly, a special, 25th Anniversary number, costs 75p. Normal rates are two issues for £1 or 3 issues for \$2.00. Please send bills not dollar cheques. Alternatively, you can get ERG for a letter-of-comment and 30p in stamps. I'm also interested in trading subs for SF mags, pulps or whatever...so drop me a line if you're interested.

Sole Editor, printer & perpetrator:- Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd.,
Sheffield S11 9FE. U.K.

All material by the editor unless otherwise stated.

(...~~.....~~) Status Box. a x indicates your last issue unless you DO something
a ? indicates I'd love to hear from you

THE FRONT COVER...if all goes well, this will have been lithoed by Keith Jeeves (due to wed in June) and depicts one of the Space Shuttles putting the ERG annish-satellite into orbit.

THE BACOVER...courtesy of that ghod man, Harry Andruswhak, is the first of a series of mapping photos taken by Voyager 1. It depicts Callisto from 9.3 million miles. As with our satellite, Callisto always keeps the same face towards Jupiter

This issue is unique and will become a collector's item..so place it in a helium-filled vault and water regularly. Do not feed.

