

# Etherline.

## Science Fiction Journal.

### FEATURING...

C. M. Kornbluth  
Dies In U.S.A.

x x x

BOOK, MAGAZINE  
FILM REVIEWS

x x x

SHORT STORY  
By NIGEL  
JACKSON

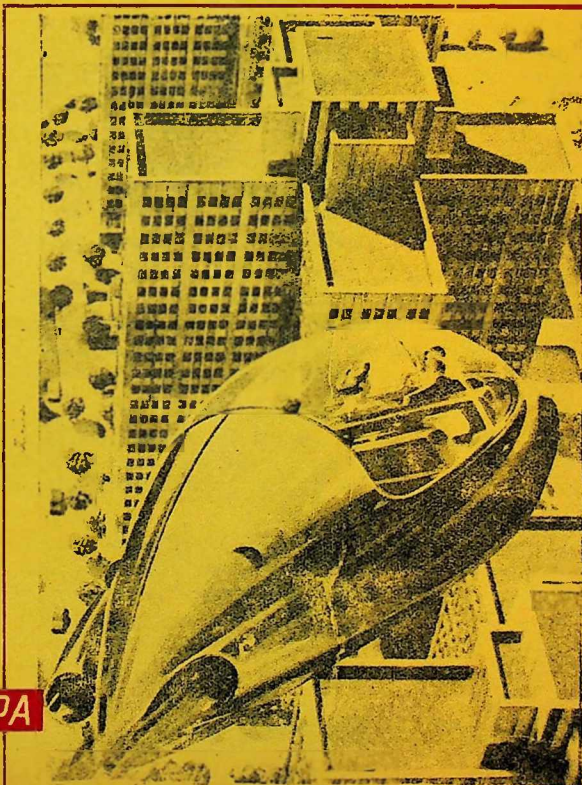
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AUTHOR STORY  
LISTING

x x x x

TRADING POST

x x x x



Published by AFPA

ISSUE No 98

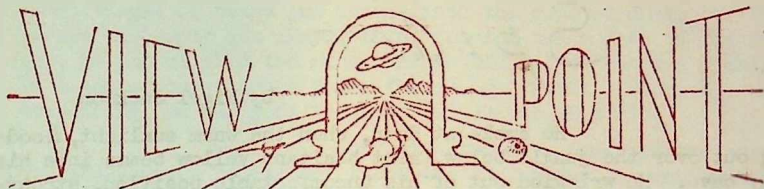
# Electrician

Science Fiction Journal



THE  
FUTURE  
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SCIENCE  
FICTION  
JOURNAL  
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NEW YORK  
1914

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Well, the tumult and the shouting has died, and we can stand back and take an objective look at the results. Personally, I think it went OK., but then, you may be of the opinion that I am biased.

There were the inevitable last minute hitches, but I think they are unavoidable where a bunch of amateurs are operating. The main thing was the fact that everyone present seemed to enjoy themselves immensely.

Not a great deal in this issue. There seems to be a bit of a lull in science fiction around here. In any case, we have another very good story by Nigel Jackson. Unless I'm badly mistaken, some prozine editor is going to wake up shortly and realise that this chap is GOOD.

Reviews are in, plus the next in the Tuck AUTHOR STORY LISTING, Stuart J. Byrne. As will be realised Don is now scraping the barrel for good authors. I don't think we've missed any of the topnotchers, but if we have, please let us know.

Finally, I wish to go into print in extending my thanks to my fellow Convention Committee members. All did a really mighty job, and I'm very happy to have been associated with them.

IJC

# Spider

by Nigel Jackson

He awoke at dawn, when the warm sunlight, flooding out over the jungle below, sent hesitant yellow beams into his tiny cave. He wriggled out of his uncomfortable position, stretched cramped joints and turned to look at the new day. And saw the spider.

It had come during the night and spun its stidy white cartwheel of a web in the entrance of the cave, effectively imprisoning him and barring him from the outside world. On Earth, months ago, he had been frightened of the smallest spiders, shrinking away when he met them by surprise, starting in terror if he felt their touch. Now, as he stared in scarce believing silence, he was almost paralyzed with fear.

For this spider was two feet long. Its fat body was rectangular, covered with thick gingery hair, ragged and fierce. The underside was sheeny, black and bulged towards him. The legs were long, horribly long, with the same crude matted hair, and splayed out in all directions as the monster clung grotesquely to its cordlike web.

It was becoming every moment silhouetted against the lightening sky, growing blacker and more indistinct; yet he fancied he could see its eyes watching him closely, in the manner of a preying leopard awaiting the time to spring.

The day before, his ship had lost its head and spiralled down madly into the valley some five miles away. Shaken, but alive, he had emerged into the dank heat and flowing colours of a great primaevial jungle. With a bulb of water and a small battered hand cannon, he had set off through the towering vegetation and in the evening reached the foot of a steep rocky ridge. Creatures of vile appearance and varying size had jumped at him, charged at him, stalked him, scuttled at him, slithered at him, lain in wait for him. He had shot them all. When at last he came out of the

heavy tangle of trees and bushes into the cool of dusk, he had thrown his empty gun away. Then, fearing the noises of the jungle, he had climbed the ridge before him and attained a seemingly deserted cave inches below the grassy summit. Unarmed and despairing, he had gone to sleep and dreamt of Earth.

Now, with the day, came greater strength and happier hopes; but there was the spider, astoundingly come from nowhere to poise menacingly in the cave mouth.

What could he do?

Of one thing he was certain. He could not touch it, not even go closer. The mere thought of this rendered him weak and dizzy with fear. The spider could conceivably leap from the web and bite him. He shivered. Less than twelve feet of pitted rocky floor lay between him and the spider, and every inch lent him greater feeling of security and ease.

His heart pumped fiercely as he sat, frozen against the rear wall and tried frantically to think.

Beneath the lip of the cave mouth, the cliff-face fell sheer for thirty or forty feet, then sloped another hundred to the scattered rocks lying at the edge of the jungle. If he could hit the spider and dislodge it, so that it was dashed to pieces on these rocks, he might be saved. But he trembled and shook at the idea of drawing the beast's attention to himself. Such a blow must be effected with force and telling accuracy, for there was surely no second chance. He wondered whether the beast was attached to its web with a lifeline, so that, when hit, it would fall for a time and then be checked, to scabble quickly back into its web before attacking him. He realised even more that force would be essential, force and surprise.

For throwing he might use his helmet, which was rounded and had the weight to play against the spider, provided that the web was not too strong. And here he prayed and begged that the web might not be so constructed that the spider could not fall.



Outside the dazzling sunlight and rich yellowy-green of the distant jungle foliage seemed to beckon him onward. Steadfastly he prepared for the assault.

There was one further hazard. The cave was so formed that at his end he could not stand upright, due to the formation of the roof. As it approached the entrance, the cave widened and gained height; but it was never comfortably large. He would have to move forward about four feet and then would have the room to swing his arm.

For a long time he sat still, unable to make the necessary moves; for so much depended on so little. At last, spurred on by the knowledge that every passing minute was a minute more in hell, he gathered his whole body together and edged slowly forward. The spider was still. It had not moved since he had first seen it.

Taking courage, he moved forward more abruptly and struck his head on a knobby rock protruding from the roof above; then immediately he was terrified lest the spider had noticed his instinctive reaction. The spider was still.

Aches pulsed through the crown of his head, on the spot where he bumped the bone. Imperceptibly he continued his advance, dragging the helmet with him, careful to place it quietly each time he halted and waited. After what seemed a stupendous length of time, he had traversed the necessary distance.

He now seemed to be looking directly upward at the spider, as if the black shape was balanced above him. He strained to see if its eyes were watching him; but it was now entirely silhouetted, and he could not see. It had still not made a movement. Outside the sun was glaring hugely somewhere high above, and it was becoming unbearably hot.

He seized his helmet and hurled it with all his strength at the spider. There was a sticky falling-apart sound, and, as though in an incredible nightmare, the spider was poised in the air, feet away from the cavemouth. Then its huge legs convulsed and it plummeted out of sight. He did not hear the sound of its impact on the rocks.

A wave of painful relief flooded through him like an electric shock, making him weak and giddy. There was a headache pounding in his crown and sickness in his stomach. He could not prevent himself from breaking down, and great sobs heaved themselves out of his quivering body. He thought the relief would kill him.

But what a fate he had avoided ! To be attacked and bitten apart by that spider, nothing could be worse. No nightmare had ever held so evil or malevolent a looking creature. No being of darkness had ever been so horrid. Every hair had seemed a living fibre of malignancy. Now he could walk the face of this planet fearlessly, knowing that whatever happened to him, it could not be as bad as this.

The yellow sun was bathing the green trees below in brilliant sunshine. Let him find some water and he would be king of all this world. Joyfully, he began to crawl towards the shattered web, to venture out into the open air of that beautiful morning.

And immediately recoiled, screaming and screaming uncontrollably. Hopelessly he scuttled to the farthest end of the cave and crouched in utter fear. Scream after scream fell from his lips as, huddled in the recess of the rock, he gazed with shocked mind and quaking body.

Down from the invisible grassy bank a few feet above was reaching a long scrawny yellow arm, wrinkled like parchment, holding another of the bestial spiders which it carefully placed in the vacated web.

Nigel Jackson.

.....





New items out or due from British publishers include the following: **THE MOONRAIDERS** by S. J. Bounds from Digit , at 2/- stg. in Mar; **A VISIT FROM VENUS** by R. Fraser from Cape at 15/- stg., on March 31st.; **FUTURISTIC** from Badger Books at 2/- s. in March; **OBJECTIVE VENUS** by James Williams from Badger at 2/- s. in Mar.; **PETURBED SPIRITS** , a collection edited by R. C. Bull, at 2/6 stg. from Barker in March; **SPLIT IMAGE** by Reed de Rouen from Panther at 2/- stg., in March.

In their **FITZROY** editions, Arco Publishers intend to issue three of Jules Verne's classics - **THE FLOATING CITY**, **THE BEGUM'S FORTUNES** and **FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON**. Prices and dates to follow.

Independent produces Elmer Rhoden Jnr. has announced (amongst others) the early production of **THE RED SATELLITE** and **HORROR FROM SPACE**.

A new factual book will be issued by Harrap in due course, titled **MAN AMONG THE STARS** by Wolfgang Muller at 18/-s.

It is with extreme regret that we announce the death of C. M. KORNBLUTH of a heart attack, at his home in America in March 21st. Recently, **NOT THIS AUGUST** and **TAKEOFF** were both bought for filming. He was aged 35.

Books out in America recently include **A CASE OF CONSCIENCE** by James Blish, from the IF novelette, published by Ballentine at 35c in April; **MAN OF EARTH** by Algis Budrys, from Ball-

To page 18.....



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Nigel Jackson, 7 Hunter Rd., Camberwell. E.6. Melbourne, Victoria

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# AUTHOR STORY LISTING



Number Fifty Four.....

STUART J. BYRNE

Compiled by DONALD H. TUCK

A US science fiction author who has travelled through most of South America and also lived in Guam. He first appeared in the field with a story published in 1935 , but was not sighted again until 1948. Palmer has often featured him in his own magazines and recently this editor unsuccessfully plugged a Tarzan by Byrne. This may still appear, however with the characters changed.

## STORIES

<sup>1</sup> as John Bloodstone (though this pseud. may not necessarily be entirely Byrne's)

- |    |                              |                        |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Beware the Star God.s        | I Jun'54               |
| 2. | Beyond the Darkness.n        | OW Jun/Jul'51          |
| 3. | Bridge, The.nv               | Science Stories Dec'53 |
| 4. | Children of the Chronotron.n | I Dec'52               |
| 5. | Colossus.n                   | OW May'50              |
| 6. | Colossus II. nv              | OW Jul'50              |
| 7. | Colossus III .n              | OW Sep'50              |
| 8. | Golden Gods, The.n           | AS Apr'52 <sup>1</sup> |
| 9. | Golden Guardsmen.n           | sr3OW Apr'52           |
|    | Lady of the Flame            | see The Naked Goddess. |

- |     |                                    |  |
|-----|------------------------------------|--|
| 10. | Land Beyond the Lens, The.n        | AS Mar'52 <sup>1</sup>                       |
| 11. | Last Days of Thronas.n             | Science Stories Feb'54 <sup>1</sup>          |
| 12. | Matter of Perspective, A.nv        | OW Dec'51                                    |
| 13. | Metamorphs, The.n                  | OW Jan'57                                    |
| 14. | Music of the spheres, The.s        | AS Aug'35                                    |
| 15. | Naked Goddess, The.n               | OW Oct'52, 'Lady of the<br>Flame' ACF Feb'53 |
| 16. | Potential Zero.n                   | Science Stories Dec'53 <sup>1</sup>          |
| 17. | Power Metal.n                      | sr501 May'53                                 |
| 18. | Prometheus II. n                   | AF Feb'48                                    |
| 19. | Qsrthnxrpppf. nv                   | OW Mar'52                                    |
| 20. | Return of Michael Flannigan, The.n | AS Aug'52 <sup>1</sup>                       |

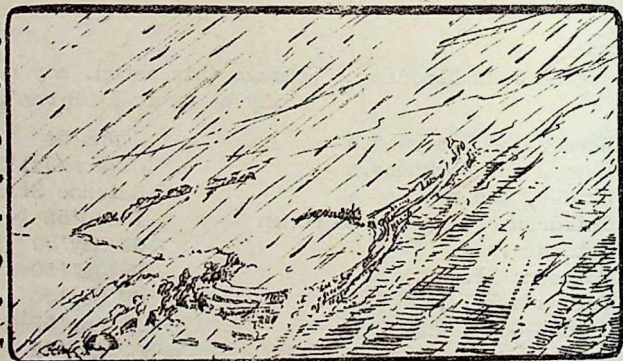
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### Connected Stories

- |                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 'Michael Flannigan' series | 10, 8, 20       |
| 'Colossus' series          | 18, 5, 6, 7, 9. |

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Window, on a World...



# MELBOURNE S.F. CLUB REPORT

Mr. and Mrs. Les Ward have just had a sister for their two boys. Mother and babe are well. Our felicitations ! Someone broke into the Museum and stole some rare fire arms. McLelland has a cast iron alibi !

Special thanks for Mrs McCubbin for the cup of tea she put on during the afternoon at the Convention.

Things went remarkably well, after the last three members of the Committee - one hour late ! The police safety drive held up Tony and Merv, Jack had a domestic delay. Pending their arrival, the other committeemen were 'doubling in brass', to coin a phrase !

Graham Lyell's mother had to have an operation on her arm - it is not yet known if it was successful. On top of that, Graham's firm transferred him to Sale ! Our sympathy and best wishes to both of them.

Tony and his car tried conclusions with a tree the other morning. The tree inflicted considerable damage, losing only a little bark in the process ! Bad luck, Tony !

Mr. E. Popple, of 1 Thomas St., North Williamstown, is interested in hard cover books by H. P. Lovecraft. He particularly wants BEYOND THE WALLS OF SLEEP and THE OUTSIDER and other Tales. Anyone who can help, please get in touch direct.

Norma Hemming, who wrote BALANCE OF POWER, the play presented at the 5th Australian S F Convention, is seriously ill in Sydney. We send our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Mike McHugh and family were enplaned for Hong Kong,

typical Air Force manuvering ! We hope they had a good trip.

Melbournian

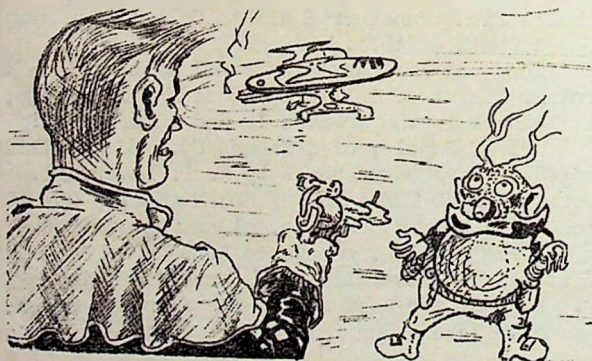
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from page 8.....

antine at 35c in March; THE NAKED SUN by Isaac Asimov from Bantam at 35c in March; SATELLITE E ONE by Jeffery Lloyd Castle from Bantam at 35c in February; OUT OF THIS WORLD by Murray Leinster from Avalon at \$ 2.75 in February; SPACE POWER by Don Cox & Michael Stoika, from Winston at \$ 4.50 in April; A STIR OF ECHOES by Richard Matheson from Lippincott at \$ 3.00 in March; WORLD WITHOUT MEN by Charles Eric Maine from Ace at 35c in February; THE WORLD IN SPACE by Alex Marshack from Dell at 35c in April; THE OLD MAN AND THE SKY by Robert Portune from Putnam at \$ 3.95 in February; THE HIND CAGE by A.E. Van Vogt from Avon at 35c; CITY ON THE MOON by Leinster and MEN ON THE MOON edited by Wollheim, an Ace Double at 35c in February; THE 27th DAY by John Mantley from Crest at 35c in March; THE TIME MACHINE by H. G. Wells from Dell.

The Leigh Brackett item, THE TIGER AMONGST US , announced for filming, is now announced as a mystery.

IJC

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MAGAZINE

## Reviews

## NEBULA

No. 27

Front cover by D. McKeown, back cover by A. Thompson, with black and white illos by Turner and Quinn.

THE GREAT GAME, a novel by Ken Bulmer leads off the issue with an intricate story of a cosmic game of chess. Good reading.

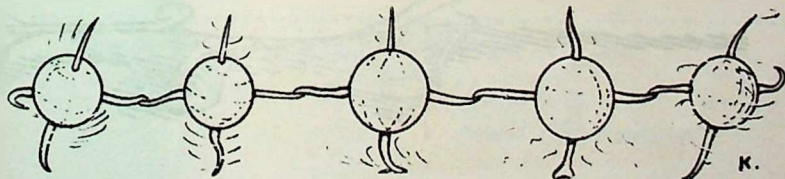
Novellette THE HIRED HELP by John Brunner gives us a story of a strange factory rising from the ruins of war-torn Britain. But for what purpose? Good.

The issue ends with 3 short stories.... RISK ECONOMY by Philip E. High, COLOUR BAR by Jonathan Burke and ESCAPE FROM PLENTY by W. T. Webb, all of which are good.

Quite a good issue.

Val Morton.

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## REVIEW

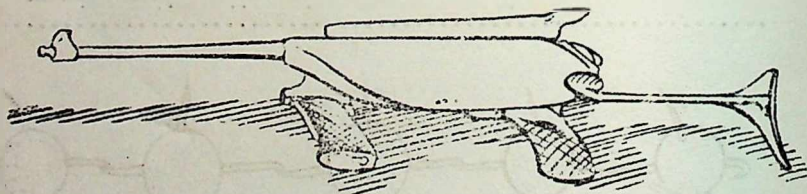
K R O N O S .....in Regascope, released through 20th Century Fox, starring Jeff Morrow, Barbara Lawrence and George O'Hanlon. Production by H. Mendelson, photography by W. Struss, special effects by Jack Roban, screenplay by L. Goldman and Irving Block, with a music score by Paul Sawtell and Bert Shipton.

This film, although receiving good reports from overseas critics, unfortunately only rated as a support to a western for 1 week at the Lyceum. It deserved better.

The story condensed concerns an alien scout seeking replenishment of supplies to aid a dying planet regardless of the cost to Earth. The story of its eventual downfall is interesting and some very good photographic effects are seen. Jeff (This Island Earth) Morrow as the scientist and George (Joe McDoakes) O'Hanlon as the semi-comic assistant act their parts well.

Seems like SF films are on the up-grade - about time, too !

Val Morton.



# SCI FI FLASHES

from ... Forrest J. Ackerman ...

To keep you up on title changes, here are the latest brain children of Hollywood publicity men:

'The Revenge of the Colossal Man (formerly The Return of the...)' becomes THE COLOSSAL BEAST.....

'Keepers of the Earth' is now known as ATTACK OF THE BLOOD LEE - CHES....

'Teenage Witch' becomes DEBBIE AND THE DEMON.....without Debbie Reynolds !

'The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T' will be re-released as CRAZY MUSIC..

'Stranglehold' with Boris Karloff is now HAUNTED STRANGLEHOLD...

'Toward the Unknown' will be re-released as ROCKET PILOT (Editorial Note: This has just appeared in Australia as BRINK OF HELL)

'The Astounding Giant Woman' will become THE ATTACK OF THE 50--- FOOT WOMAN.....

Let's hope the stories are better than the titles !

Rumor has it that Art Clarke's CHILDHOODS END will be seen on TV screens before long !

Forrest J. Ackerman

.....  
MONTAGE COVER BY MERVYN BINNS.

INTERIORS BY McLELLAND

AND METZGER



- AM8 Mammoth Book of Thrillers, Ghosts and Mysteries  
Parrish, J.M. Brit. '38 51s  
Spectorsky, A. US '47 10s
- x - Man into Beast  
Wells. C. US '19 ?  
Man Who Fell Through The Earth, The.  
Scott, J. Br. '46 28s, US  
'46 28 s, Can.  
'46 28s.
- AM12 Mandrake Root  
Anon US '29 17s
- AM17 Master Sea Stories  
x -- Masterpieces of Mystery  
Vol. 2 Ghost Stories French, J.L. US '37 ?  
Vol. 3 Mystic-Humorous French, J.L. US '37 ?  
x -- Masterpieces of Thrills Gawsworth, J. Brit '36 ?  
AM2 Men Against The Stars Greenberg, M. US '50 12s;  
Br. '51 8s  
US PB 9s
- Men of Space and Time see Imagination Unlimited
- x -- Mercury Story Book, The Priestly, J.B. Br. '29 ?  
NB. In one publishing data list this was given as 'London  
Mercury' publishing body and Priestley the Introduction.
- AM4 Midnight Reader, The Stern, P. Van D. US '42 15s  
Br. '48; '51 15s  
Can '42, '48 15s  
US PB '47 13s
- (The Pocket Book of Ghost Stories)
- Modern Tales of Horror see Creeps by Night
- Moment Without Time see Best From Startling Stories; The
- AM6 Monsters Anon Br '34, '37 12s

To be continued





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