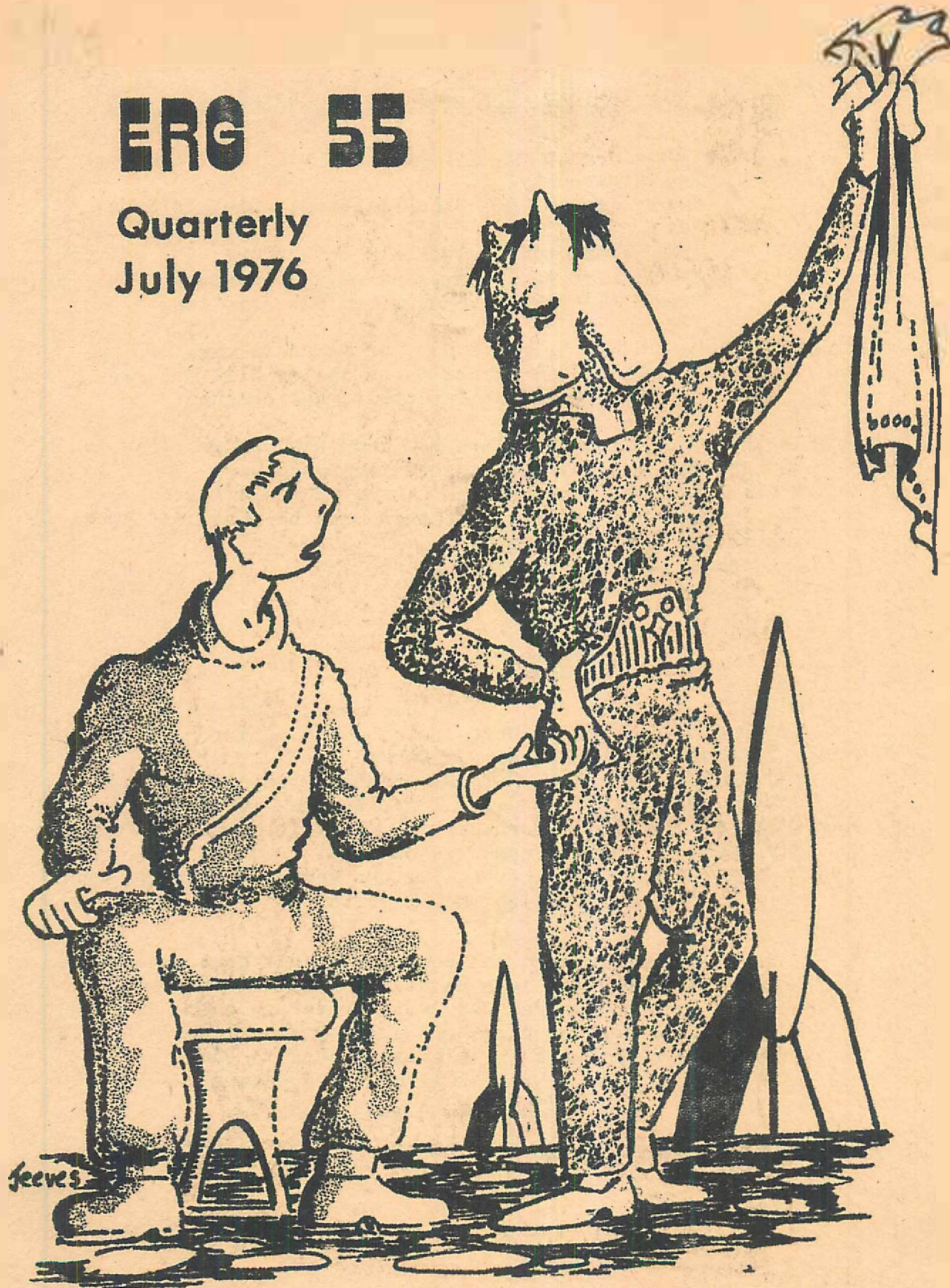


ERG 55

Quarterly
July 1976





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COMPETITION Take another look at the cover, then sit down and write one quarto page or less about it. Fact or fiction. If I get enough entries, they will appear in a future issue of ERG. Please send carbons only so that I won't have to open the piggy bank to mail items back to you.
A prize of one pb will be given to each entry used.

THIS FANZINE SUPPORTS... JEEVES FOR TAFF in '77

EDITORIAL

Writing SF is one of those things which most fan, secretly or openly, would love to do. Sadly, they don't. Instead, many load up the old .22 and start sniping gaily away at all the brave souls who have written the stuff. This may all have its place in life's rich tapestry, but doesn't get any more great novels

into the charts. Worse, such nit-picking is a sheer waste of time apart from giving the bird-brains a sense of achievement. The plain fact is that anyone can write SF. What most of us want to do, if we are honest, is to sell the stuff. With that in mind. I shall now proceed to give you the benefit of my vast experience and put your feet squarely on the rungs of that ladder to success. My qualifications ..? Well let's take 'em as we come to 'em.

My first story was INSOLATION, an epic which appeared in Ken Slater's OPERATION FANTAST sometime in the late 40s or early 50s. It did not swell my bank account..indeed, I doubt whether anyone even noticed it. However, since I felt I had a brand new idea and a logical plot development I re-wrote the thing and launched it into the wide blue yonder. It bounced like a chunk of silicone rubber. Rejection I could face, but what sent me up the wall was the comment from one editor who had clearly NOT read the story. He complained of .."the coincidence of a disintegrator being discovered at just the right time to solve the problem".

Briefly, my story hinged on a cooling sun demanding that mankind burrow beneath the ground to avoid the coming Ice Age. ALL scientific research was bent towards aiding this end....so it seemed logical that one researcher come up with a disintegrator to help chew up the rock for the cavern diggers. NOT coincidence, logical cause and effect. Where my twist came in was that the disintegrator destroyed everything in its beam..thus causing a vacuum, which in turn created a pressure on the rear which tore the thing out of the operator's hand, and it rose until the upthrust balance the weight...where it then chewed away enough atmosphere to increase surface heating and render caverns unnecessary.

It was NOT a coincidence, but the story bounced. It violated three rules which that editor had never mentioned :- 1. A story must fit current trends in style and content..mine didn't, it was dated. 2, A good (?) idea isn't enough, you need enough interest to grab the reader..mine didn't even get that editor to read it fully. 3. Don't give in, try again...with another idea...so I did.

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD hinged on the conflict between two men investigating a deserted city. One used force, the other reason. I tried to make this a mood piece, and still feel I succeeded. Anyway, it won me first prize of 10% in the newly organised NZF contest, and later appeared in a fanzine or two...and in between, was bounced by the professional market..."Wrong length", "Needs more



dialogue". One editor was on the verge of using it, but chickened out and went bankrupt instead. Rule 4, get the length right. Rule 5. Shove in plenty of dialogue (available cheaply in 5Kg packets from your local ironmonger) Rule 6, Pick a financially stable publisher.

Ah well, applying Rule 3 I waited a scant ten years before rushing to my typewriter...with the usual result. Oh, I got the length right, oodles of dialogue (some of it even making sense), story interest and I even found a financially viable publisher (i.e. one with some cash left)...and went ker-splat on my old bugaboo. My story was too dated. Oh the thing had advanced many a year and many a style, since ISOLATION but sadly, as my story moved forward, so did trends and I was still behind the tail-gate. Rule 7, start trends, don't follow 'em..and while observing rules 2 to 7, don't forget rule 1.

By this time, I had sold material...over a thousand cartoons, over 400 of 'em to Movie Maker where they have (and still do) appeared every issue since 1960. I have sold articles on film animation, one of which needed a minor revision...Rule 8 verify your facts before you submit a piece. Next came a couple of Do It-Yourself pieces, one for a timing clock (D.I.Y Mag) and another for a portable Sawbench (Practical Householder). From these I found that such pieces sell better with good clear photos (Rule 9). Delightful as it was to haunt bookstores and see my stuff on the stalls.."Little do these plebs pawing the magazines know that beside them stands a contributor" ..it still wasn't what I wanted (apart from the brunette on the sales counter). I tried making up puzzles and sold six to Puzzler and a dozen to "Quiz Digest" (a reject appears in this issue of ERG) ... again welcome, but still not a fiction sale.

Then came the breakthrough...the day when I proudly cashed my first cheque for a story sale. I had met all my own rules. Style and content were right for the market I had chosen. Length had been pruned to the editor's needs (ascertained beforehand by consulting 'THE WRITER'S AND ARTIST'S YEAR BOOK'). My yarn had dialogue..even my accompanying story illustrations were accepted and used. Those of you who have small children may have caught my first story, SAM SOGGY AND THE FLYING CARPET when it appeared in Nursery World, for June 19, 1975. This of course gives us Rule 10. If you aim to sell, no market is too humble.

There you have it. Maybe I'll never be a big-name-author, but I've had fun..and acceptances. If some of my rules help you to get started on the way to fame and fortune, so much the better...but they won't unless you brand Rule 11 on to your typewriter..."The most Imaginative Story ever conceived must be written before you can sell it.

So what are you waiting for ?

Terry Jeeves

Recent Reading



THREE EYES

by

Stuart Gordon.

Sidgwick & Jackson £3.95

With this volume, Gordon completes his superb trilogy (The others being 'One-Eye' and 'Two Eyes'). In this involved and intricately plotted final part, he brings to culmination all the varied sub-themes which have given the whole series such a rich and rewarding texture.

The Mutant sends his Mumen to take over the riches of the Pyramid...The Cyclone Brotherhood, strengthened by their mysterious song, fight against the madness threatening the land. Behind it all, the alien force lurking behind mirrors manipulates its puppets to total victory. We also flash back to the origins of Gordon's strange lands to discover the varying motives of the protagonists. The author excels in strange, outre, yet utterly credible places, societies and characters and this epic is arguably the best of the lot. It is NOT easy reading, but completely rewarding. I shall be extremely surprised if, once established, it does not sweep the board of most awards. Without doubt, this is one of, if not THE best blends of s-f and fantasy to appear in the decade.

THE WROND END OF TIME

John Brunner

Methuen 55p

A paranoid America hides behind a fantastic nuclear defence barrier. When the Russians contact C-T life and decode a threat to trigger the U.S. holocaust, they infiltrate an agent into the USA to try to avert the disaster (Yes, good Russians) Sheklove, the agent enters with the aid of a Stateside clairvoyant, but the security web tightens. One of Brunner's best, with only the too-obvious ending (and shelving of the alien problem) letting the pace down a trifle. Readable and hard to put down.

EXTRO

Alfred Bester

Methuen 60p

Originally Analog's 'Indian Giver', this scintillating slice of s-f concerns a small group of immortals each of whom got that way by virtue of having undergone an excruciatingly painful near-death. Guid (G and Guignol), the narrator, plans to recruit big-name scientist Sequoya by exposing him to a ghastly accident, but is forestalled by a real calamity and the involvement of Extro, the super computer. Suddenly, the Immortals are fighting for their lives. Bester gives us a superbly constructed yarn with a delicious set of characters and neat handling of future slang and idiom. Good in Analog, here in one piece, it is even better...and this edition has a much more enticing cover than the hardback.

A WREATH OF STARS

Bob Shaw

Gollancz £3.50

A neutron planet, visible only through

special glasses, wanders into the Solar System. Much to the astonishment of scientists, it is brought into a cometary orbit by the Sun. Shortly afterwards, diamond miners in an African working begin to see 'ghosts' in their pit. Investigations follow with highly unusual results. With many authors, this one might have followed a slow, tedious course. Not so with Bob Shaw. His secondary sub-plot, the background of an 'emerging' state with an ambitious President and a ruthless henchman, is enriched with cross-tension and personal conflict so that it almost overshadows the main theme... But not quite, Shaw is too good a craftsman for that, and here he is at his highly readable best. Gripping and well-paced throughout so that interest is never allowed to flag. T.J.

ASIMOV ON ASTRONOMY

Isaac Asimov

Coronet 80p

For Asimov lovers, this is a grab-bag of some 17 astronomical essays culled from the pages of the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. Starting close at home with the causes of tides, the author widens his scope - the chance of a major meteorite strike, Kepler's laws, planetary orbits, Lagrangian points, and on to satellites, Bode's law, comets and then to the stars. Fascinating, thought-provoking stuff and equally useful as reference material. Asimov's lucid, down-to-Earth style is sustained throughout (and you also get a dozen pages of photos). T.J.

THE GRAY PRINCE

Jack Vance

Coronet 60p

Schained Madduc (who has virtually no part in the story) returns to her ancestral home on Koryphon to find her father murdered. The air car carrying her and her companions is shot down and a search mounted to find out the reason. Various enigmatic aliens and their cultures add colour to an otherwise drab landscape in which the Redemptionists (led by Schaine's childhood friend - now the Gray Prince) strive to 'free' the 'alien slaves'. All rather confusing, but Vance gets inside the skin of his world and though the story is slow-paced, interest is sustained throughout. T.J.

THE BROMIUS PHENOMENON

John Rankine

Dennis Dobson £2.95

When spacecraft Interstellar Two-Nine vanishes near Bromius, Controller Dag Fletcher starts an investigation punctuated by regular attacks on his life. The Bromusians are known as a cheerful, gentle race sporting vestigial telepathy... plus a hitherto undiscovered taste for a barbaric mass-catharsis. Throw in the secret which sparked off the trouble and the loose ends get rather tangled. Nevertheless, the whole is a smooth, high-speed space-opera as Fletcher (a sort of super Bond-cum-Kinnison) unravels the mess. Ignore the 'but-what-abouts' and enjoy this high-grade romp and galactic intrigue. T.J.



THE SHOCKWAVE RIDER

by John Brunner

Dent, £3.95

The latest in Brunner's 'Future Extrapolation'

series and a worthy follow-up to 'Zanzibar' and 'Sheep Look Up'. The world has become increasingly computerised and society in general is suffering from a large overdose of 'Future Shock'. All, that is, except who can outfoot the computers, the man who can follow the cultural moves without being swallowed, 'The Shockwave Rider'. Halflinger is the 'Brunner hero' - beating the system, denouncing the government follies, and so on - and this time he carries all before him, the reader included. When you stop and think about the book, holes appear (some of the ever-recurrent puns are terrible) but it makes a hell of a good read while you're at it. ..and don't miss the superb cover Mike Little's done for Dent. (A. S-P)

THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER

by John Brunner

DAW \$1.25

DAW's "Book of..." series has been rapidly changing through the months. From the original collection of S-F by..." theory, the series has been growing more and more 'personal'. The selections have become more representative, and have included S-F and non-SF, fiction and non-fiction. A very good trend, but perhaps here they've gone too far. The book contains four SF shorts, one mainstream excerpt (unpublished novel), five articles, five ballads, five limericks, four poems, four pieces translated by Brunner, and a crossword! After that, all I can really say is that the SF stories are good, as are the articles - but the rest? (A. S-P)

A SONG FOR LYA

BY George R. Martin

Avon \$1.25

At last a collection of stories by George Martin. Anyone who has been reading Analog over the past couple of years, or even any of the other magazines, will be familiar with his work. Others may only have come across the title story when it won a Hugo last year. Either way, you cannot fail to be impressed by his craftsmanship. Also in the book are, 'With Morning Comes Mistfall', 'The second Kind of Loneliness' and seven others. All I can say is, "Roll on the second collection." (A. S-P)

THE DARK IS RISING

by Susan Cooper

Puffin 60p

Second, and so far best, in a fantasy series that recently won the Newberry Award for Volume 4. Bor Will Stanton, it was an ordinary Christmas - until he met the old man who warned him, 'The Walker is abroad' and rapidly the Christmas takes on more of an importance as Will gets involved in the continuing war between Light and Dark. The book has to be read to be believed - any synopsis seems trite and cannot convey the sheer 'power' of the writing (evident to a lesser degree in her SF novel 'Mandrake') Her writing ranks with Alan Garner at his best. By the way, do not be sidetracked into trying to read the volume first (Over Sea, Under Stone) cover blurb to the contrary it is not available in Puffins (Out of print, and no reprint in sight) and its story line is not really relevant before the third in the series. (A. S-P)

THE CRYSTAL GRYPHON by Andre Norton Peacock 75p
Another novel set in the 'Witch World' series, but not really related. Kerovan, heir to the keep of Ulm, is betrothed to Joisan of Ithkrypt, although they have never met and seem fated never to be. For as the time for their joining approaches, so do the fearsome invaders from across the sea sweeping all before them with their dreaded machines. Joisan and Kerovan both get swept up in the conflict and their paths slowly converge as they become involved with the darker and deeper goings-on centred on 'The Crystal Gryphon'. The plot-line is familiar Norton-fodder, but the story is really rather good. Kerovan is one of her better heroes. An added plus in this edition is the superb cover by David Smea. (A.S-P)

TRITON by Samuel R. Delaney Bantam \$1.95
After Dhalgren what? The answer is an immensely skilful intensely enjoyable book. Earth is at war with the Outer Satellites, but so far, Triton has remained neutral and, as far as the protagonist Bron Hellstrom is concerned there are far more important things to think about - such as him. The whole book is about Bron and his view of things, which become so horribly, cynically identifiable-with. The book is peopled with superb characters like 'The Spike' - and her pyrotechnic micro-theatre -, the aging 'queer', Lawrence, and Sam - who must surely be Delaney himself, but above it all swaggers Bron. Triton is a book about identity, sexuality, life - and a damn good story too. It might not raise the storm that Dhalgren did, but I bet more people will finish and enjoy it. (A. S-P)

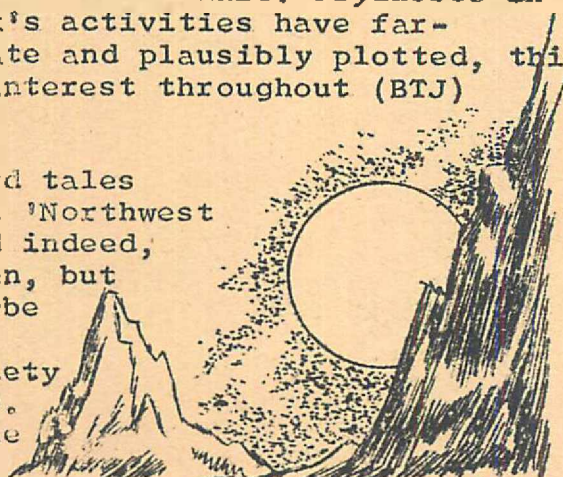
THE FOREVER WAR by Joe Haldeman Orbit 60p
The adventures of Mandella and the war that spanned several centuries, this is a novelisation of the Analog stories from the last few years. To my mind, it is the best of the 'SF War' books to have appeared, and handles superbly the problems of a war spanning light-centuries, and hence actual centuries. This is my bet for the Hugo this year - if it doesn't win it'll be a shame. (A. S-P)

TO LIVE FOREVER by Jack Vance Sphere 60p
Society is five-tiered, with each level granting extra years of life, and at the top - immortality. Assassins enforce the age-limits, but Grayven Warlock, escaped killer and an immortal, registers again at the bottom, and re-starts his climb. Tension runs high, with everyone chasing 'slope' and extended life. Psychoses and instability are rampant so that Warlock's activities have far-reaching results. Fast moving, intricate and plausibly plotted, this is a good no-nonsense tale sustaining interest throughout (BTJ)

SHAMBLEAU by C.L. Moore Sphere 60p

A collection of vintage weird tales involving 'Jirel of Joiry' and spaceman 'Northwest Smith'. Copyright is given as '53, and indeed, my own copy (Galaxy Novel) appeared then, but memory says 'Weird Tales pre-war'...maybe someone can confirm?? The two chief characters (cardboard) meet with a variety of unmentionable (Lovecraftian) horrors. Title story, Shambleau sees Smith tangle with a Medusa-like creature, with the other tales seeing similar confrontations.

Despite these backgrounds, Jirel is never in a battle - or West in space. Poetic, evocative, but only to be read in small doses (BTJ)



THE CANDLE IN THE SUN

Robert Wells

Sidgwick & Jackson £3.

The opening of this one had me wondering if I had missed an earlier episode as Gascon, last man alive has already escaped from capture by dolphins and is alone in a drowned world from which all humans have fled. Unbelievably, though totally submerged, all power sources still function. Gascon receives a Telex message which leads him to an encounter with a band of mutant survivors and then to a strange, dream-state, rather pointless existence with a strange robot. An encounter which strains his intellect near to breaking point. What caused the 'Disaster' why a flooded railway should have been originally built with an airlock, and many other loose ends escaped me. Nevertheless, the story is different, imaginative - and in many ways, a welcome change from space-opera, and superheroes. (TJ)

THE LION GAME

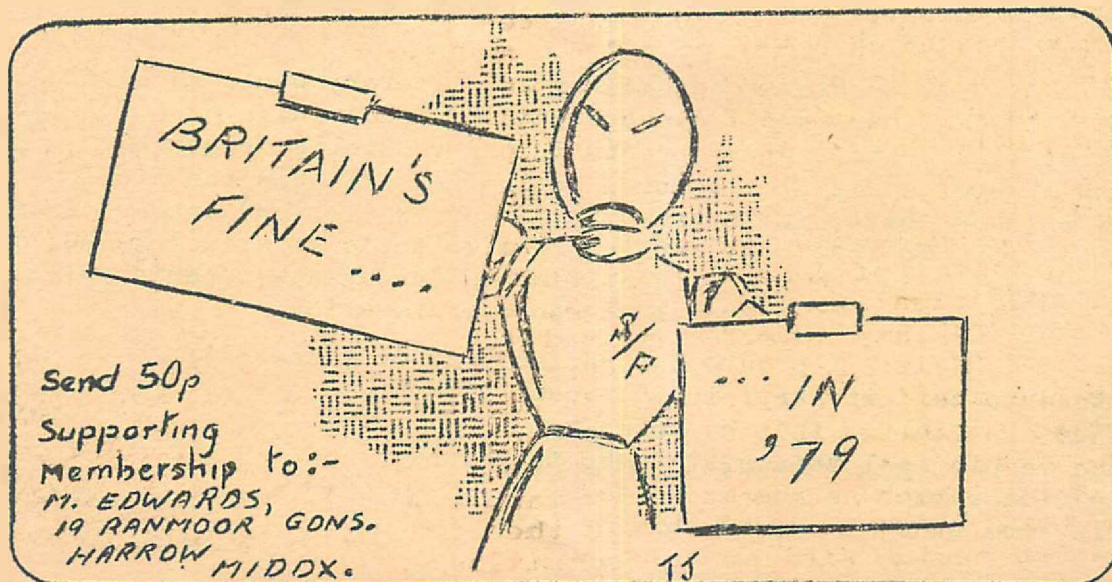
JAMES H. Schmitz

Sidgwick & Jackson £3.95

Why James Schmitz chose to make his central figure a teenage girl is something only he could explain - possibly because having a nubile female helpless before a nasty old villain adds a certain sexual piquancy to the situation. In 'The Lion Game' (which appeared in Analog in 1971) telepathic heroine Telzey Amberson encounters a variety of menaces - opening with her tangle with the mad, half-man Robane and his hunting monster. The action proceeds via her pursuit by a psi-gifted predator and on to a full-scale involvement with a species of giants infiltrating the Terran Foundation...this last section dragging somewhat almost as if it had been originally added to bring the novel up to length. Being a gifted telepath, Telzey is no slouch at the intricate cat-and-mouse game played through the intricate mazes of the matter-transmitting portals -- but fighting a telepathic warrior giant doesn't come easy. It does however make for a rattling good story. (TJ)

APOLOGIES.

On the Contents page, some reviews were credited to Graham Poole. A glance at the reviewer's initials will show that there is an error somewhere. In actual fact, the review notes are the work of Terry Jeeves, and Andrew Stephensen-Payne.



RAY BRADBURY

by
MICHAEL A. BANKS

He is often labeled "the world's greatest living science fiction writer", usually by nonfan types. Though that title may be a bit ostentatious, there is no denying that Ray Bradbury is, "one of the world's greatest science fiction writers" - right up there in that time-worn lineup of 'Heinlein, Clarke, Asimov, and Bradbury'.

Why is Bradbury so often included in that listing of writers who have become almost legendary to fan and non-fan alike? Surely there are others - Anderson, Simak and van Vogt for instance - who have made just as big an impact on the science fiction field as Bradbury.

The answer to that lies in what Bradbury has in common with Heinlein, Clarke and Asimov; each of the four has made himself known outside of science fiction. With the exception of Heinlein, to a certain extent, they have proven their abilities to the world at large, and brought a measure of 'respect' to science fiction. Heinlein did it by dealing with themes sympathetic to the philosophies of the younger generation; Clarke, by his scientific background and activities, and being involved with '2001'; Asimov did it by being Asimov.

Bradbury took a slightly different approach. The pure 'literary' merit of his stories forced mainstream critics to accept him, and, in doing so, take a closer look at science fiction. And, as usually happens, they found that there was a little more to SF than BEMs and planet-hopping heroes.

His acceptance by the literary world is interesting. About twelve years ago I discovered his work in high school literature texts; today, his poetry appears in the venerable, reactionary SATURDAY EVENING POST. His stories crop up in PLAYBOY. His non-fiction (done, for the most part, in the same style as his fiction) appears in a variety of publications, ranging from writer's magazines to men's magazines, from the now defunct LIFE to Sunday newspaper supplements. The topics range from travel to space exploration.

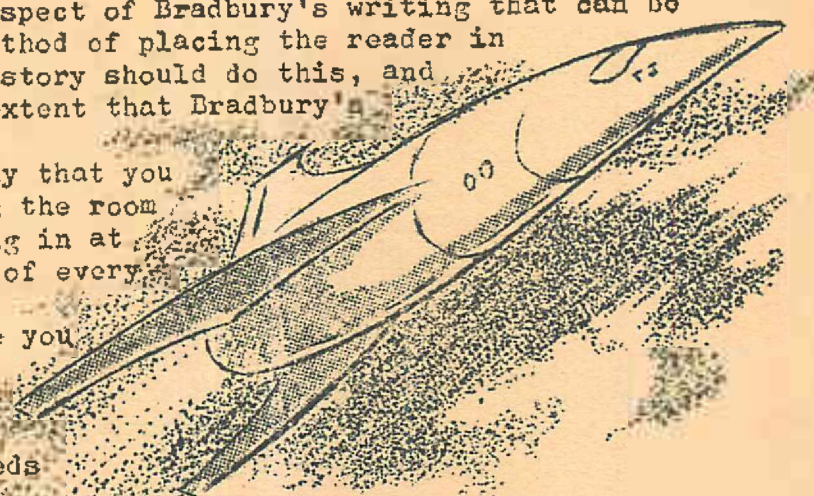
I'm sure though, that Bradbury doesn't intend to be 'literary' in the accepted sense; I get the feeling that he works to make people feel things, to make them know the discoveries he has made, to help them understand why this or that

must be done, why this or that is the way it is.

And this he accomplishes with brilliant imagery, subtle, yet strong emotions, and an almost 'magical' feel for the English language. A poor analysis of his style, perhaps, but I don't think that a complete analysis is possible, as evidenced by the many poor imitations of Bradbury - wrought by amateurs and professionals - that have been popping up over the past 25 years. (Of course, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.)

There is one aspect of Bradbury's writing that can be delineated however; his method of placing the reader in the story. Certainly any story should do this, and most do - but not to the extent that Bradbury's stories do.

In the same way that you are aware of every item in the room you are most likely sitting in at the moment, you are aware of every detail of the settings of Bradbury's stories. (While you are not consciously aware of a lamp in the room, you would notice its absence.) Bradbury succeeds in placing the reader in the story by giving many of the details by inference; or letting the reader supply his own details,



based on the concrete description he does supply. Unfortunately, this effect is lost when Bradbury's work is transferred to film, especially in the case of THE ILLUSTRATED MAN. The problem may not be in the stories themselves, however, but in the way they were handled. Not being an expert filmmaker, I can't really offer criticism or suggestions on films made of Bradbury's work, other than to say that perhaps Bradbury himself should have been given a free hand in their production. There is far more quality apparent in the film MOBY DICK, for which Bradbury did the screenplay, than in films based on Bradbury's works.

Now to the burning question. "Does Bradbury write real science fiction?" No, I don't think it's debatable; go back and read 'The Lost City Of Mars', 'Kaleidoscope', 'The Other Foot', 'There Will Come Soft Rains', and 'The Long Rain' - I don't think you'll argue the point. You might notice too, that each of those stories (yea and verily, all of Bradbury's work) deals with people - something that SF didn't deal with until recently, according to Unities

I believe what misleads many people into feeling that Bradbury doesn't really write SF is the fantasy quality in his work. Admittedly Bradbury does do fantasy (perhaps horror/fantasy, as in the case of 'Skeleton'), and science fantasy ('Boys ! Rise Giant

Mushrooms in Your Cellar !), but SF comprises a larger part of his work than either of those categories.

There is another category Bradbury works in - one I call 'mainstream'. Here again, the fantasy quality misleads some into labelling these stories fantasy. Stories like 'The Big Black And White Game', 'The Anthem Sprinters', and 'The Terrible Conflagration Up At The Place' are slices of life, and far from fantasy, despite their unreal mood.

The stories contained in DANDELION WINE are also of this category (most of them) And, while the characters in the stories may lead one to assume they were written for a juvenile audience, the reverse is true. Hell, Bradbury has a good 25 years on me and I still remember the things he writes about in those stories -even though I n ever stepped foot in Summer 1928. There is one work of Bradbury's that I would consider juvenile, though. THE HALLOWEEN TREE, published in 1972, is obviously and delightfully meant for the younger set, though this doesn't prevent anyone's enjoying it.

There has been a dearth of new material from Bradbury lately - hopefully there will be an end to this scarcity soon. It may seem impossible to ask more of a writer who has created so much already, but the wellspring of creativity displayed in Bradbury's works is not the type to run dry.

Michael A. Banks
P.O. Box 312
Milford
Ohio 45150

[illegible]

PUZZLE CORNER

ON THE PLANET TRENCO

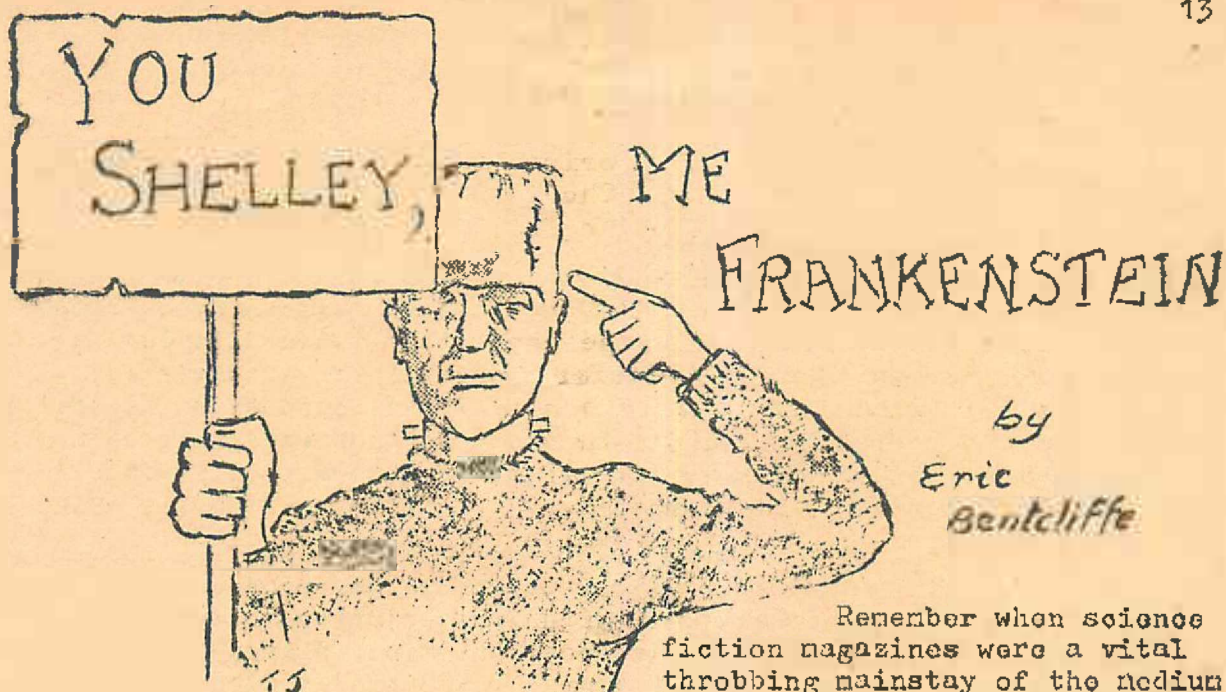
The planet Trencu is the same size as Earth, give or take a few thousand flurps. It is a perfect sphere unmarked by mountains, valleys, rivers or seas. To get around faster, the Emperor Podrang II ordered the building of a monorail around its equator.

The designers had planned to mount the rail one flurp (roughly a meter) above the ground, but Podrang commanded that this be increased to two flurps so that his subjects could walk beneath the rail.

How much extra rail must be inserted into the original planned length so that the whole equatorial run will be at the specified height of two flurps ?

Give your answer correct to the nearest whole flurp.

Solution will be found at the end of Eric Bentcliffe's article..and
don't peck. Terry Jeeves



Remember when science fiction magazines were a vital throbbing mainstay of the medium? (Those were the good years, but I'm an old fan and tired...) The years when the SF mags catered accurately for their readers, for the science-fiction reader. Note that word reader, please, I'm not debating how the fan should be catered for...even though the fact that he is catered for is one of the reasons why the science-fiction magazine is in decline as a major part of the SF scene. And that's only one of several sweeping generalisations which I shall indulge in, on this topic of marginal fannish interest.

I think I'll be a little more specific about it though, for I consider it important to the theme I'm hoping to develop in this article. The Science Fiction Magazine brought about the birth of SF fandom and, unwittingly, SF fandom is bringing about the death of the SF magazine. Well, almost unwittingly. A typical SF plot is to sow the seeds of one's own destruction, so this is not completely ironic.

It all started back before I was even a young fan, in an area which I'll date vaguely as the late-thirties. SF magazines needed to find and encourage a readership with the object of self-perpetuation, and the aim of making money. They did this by encouraging the belief amongst their readers that if they weren't all star-begotten they were, at the very least something 'different' and, perhaps, a little superior to readers of other kinds of fiction. That It Was A Proud And Lonely Thing To Be A Fan, if you like. There were various approaches used to achieve this, from the (relatively) intellectual one adopted by Astounding Stories, to the out and out emotional cultism employed by Planet Stories, Startling and TWS. That these latter (Better) publications were also to generate the first seeds of fannishness, is not relevant to this particular discussion. Other magazine-media also tried to do this; Detective Fiction for example,

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but their readers were not as easily coerced, after all they didn't have to read the magazines to find their favourite type of story, it was freely available in the local libraries and was 'accepted' already as a genre of literature.

I don't know whether the SF magazine was the first product to be sold by stressing the difference of its user/reader - certainly this method of selling has been used in advertising a great deal since, but rarely with as good effect....and, I doubt that this early usage of a now-established technique was intentional. Even the late John W. Campbell who, later, tried to sell such diverse things as Dianetics, the Dean Drive, and Sticky Metal Plates didn't, I believe, realise quite what he was doing back in those early days. It was the enthusiasm that he, San Mines, 'Doc' Lowndes and other editors of the period had for the medium that inspired their belief that it was worth evangelising about, rather than any deliberate attempt to encourage the burgeoning SF reader to help form a cult.

Intentional or not, effective it was, and the result was the gradual formation of SF fandom...which then proceeded to 'organise' itself into a pressure-group representing the readers of science-fiction. That it is nothing of the kind is irrelevant - that this is what it appears to be to anyone unacquainted with it, is. SF Fandom is thought to be a body the readers of SF by editors, publishers and by many of the writers in the genre. It wasn't always so, of course, but it is now...SF fandom has become an establishment. This has resulted in the SF magazine in particular, no longer catering for the casual reader (and attracting their continued purchase of the magazine) but instead, aiming their publication at the considerably more sophisticated (as regards SF) aficionado.



The popularity of such pocket-book series as STAR TREK and PERRY RHODAN points up this argument. That is the type of fare the reader wants; simple exciting escapist fiction which does not unduly tax the mind or the imagination. But then (the readers) can't find it in the magazines, or from the longer-established publishing houses - they are too much influenced by SF fandom.

Postulate a new SF mag arising..featuring unsophisticated SF slanted towards the mass market ... what happens ? It gets immediately blasted from left, right and centre by the SF fans who, because it does not cater for their tastes, write to the editor/publisher and tell them they are doing it all wrong. They should get established writers such as Heinlein, Ellison, Silverberg,

Tiptree, Zelazny, and Anderson who know what SF is all about. They need Kelly Freas for the covers or, perhaps Jack Gaughan. They could do with a good column on fandom. But, above all, they must stop printing this crap, these adventurous stories disguised as SF and publish the real thing !

Naturally, the pressure doesn't stop there. The magazine gets slated in all the fanzines, and their editors (courteously) send copies along, 'just to help show the newborn editor where he is going wrong'. It gets a further jolt because none of the stories featured in the magazine even get nominated for a HUGO. And, if this isn't enough...eventually, his readership gets labelled as a Special Interest Group, and it is suggested that they hold their own conventions because we, sure as hell, ain't programming for them !

I'm not sure what the solution to this dilemma is, or even, if there is one.... It's possible of course, that in some emergent state beyond the reach of fandom, it may be possible to bring out a new magazine which will cater for the reader....printed in Urdu or Swahili, but I'm quite firmly convinced that no new magazine is going to appear and Go Its Own Way..in the English-speaking world, for long. Which, perhaps, is a pity.

The only remedy I've been able to think up is that the Industry as a whole subsidises us to GO AWAY... That they bribe us with new typers, duplicators, litho presses, et al. Which, I suppose is why I've written this article, my first about science-fiction for years - I mean, I know all about it, and what should appear in the magazines, and I'm pleased to advise editors and writers at any convention on how they can improve SF; but I do need a new typewriter.

...eric bentcliffe.

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SOLUTION TO 'ON THE PLANET TRENCO'

Original length of line (circumference of Trenco) is given by the equation,

$$c = \pi \cdot d \quad (c \text{ \& } d \text{ being measured in flurps, and for convenience we take Trenco's radius to be the radius of the circle of rail originally planned})$$

Now to raise the line to two flurps..that is, one flurp more than was originally planned, the radius must increase by one flurp..and the diameter by two flurps.

$$\text{So the new circumference is, } c = \pi \cdot (d+2)$$

$$= \pi \cdot d + 2 \cdot \pi$$

Since $\pi \cdot d$ was the original circumference, the increase is 2π , or approximately 6.28 flurps. Answer to nearest flurp, is therefore two. And this applies whether Trenco is the size of Jupiter..or the size of a golf ball. Fancy that !

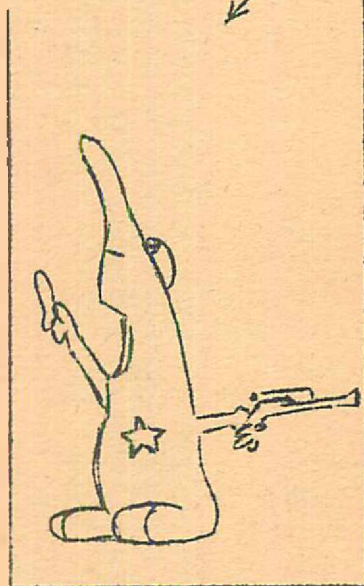
LETTERS

((T.J. in the brackets))

with most of the remarks in Ergitorial and add the observation that the Yanks are motivated by unadulterated sour grapes because their own SST did not get off the ground. You bet if we said no more US aircraft land here till the issue is settled what a squawk would be heard from the co-called Anti-Concorde lobby. ((I fancy this would make things worse. Our best bet is to stick it out..don't chicken, SHOW we have a winner, and once the rush starts everyone will have to have a Concorde..QUICK))

The Clifford D Simak thingy was enjoyable & informative, I have only 3 of his books in my collection, but I enjoy his stuff very much. As you so rightly say, the joy of his work is the tantalising glimpses he gives of his futures which really stays with one for a long time, Sorry, it's not you but Alan Burns, my mistake, ((I was starting to get worried)) Paul E. Thompson

101 Westhill Road
King's Norton
Birmingham B38 8SX
(No LOC, but a sub,
and this illo



Brian Tawn
29 Cordon St.,
Wisbech
Cambs PE13 2LW

Much to my surprise, ALL of the LOCs on ERG 54 agreed with my Ergitorial comments on Concorde. Let's kick off with David E. Lewis of 8 Akdis Ave., Stowmarket, Suffolk, "As to Concorde, I

find myself in agreement

ERG 52 abd 54 are delightful, Your articles on stencil cutting are of special interest as I am in the process of changing from having my zinc photostated to duplicating it... my first attempt at such a task. Ken Slater is a great asset ((I must get one)) towards setting me in the right direction and making the task a thing of joy - and your articles have greatly added to the interest. Excellent timing. I hope you persist in the idea of putting the articles together as a one-off. Terrific ! ((Well, each time I run off a section, I also run off an extra 60 copies, so there will most certainly be at least that many complete books))

R.P.Harrison
18 The Withan
Grange Estate
Daventry
Northants.

How much I agree with your views on Concorde. It's a pity so many people chose to become 'anti' considering that so much

is at stake for France and Britain in our times of trouble. As history shows us, once an increase in the speed of transportation becomes economically viable it always becomes accepted ((Except by the back-to-the-horse-and-buggy people..."If we were meant to fly faster than sound we'd have been born with pointed noses". You can't convince them))

Eric G. Hayer ((Sorry about that extra 'y' in there Eric))

R.D. No.1

Halls

Pennsylvania

18515

U.S.A.

I've been making a bit of a comeback after a year or so of gaffiation, I hope you'll re-instate my sub to ERG. I've enclosed a doodle which I intended to send to Eric Bentcliffe - but I'm sending him a humorous piece anyhow. I've already commented in my Triode LOC on your criticisms of fan art - which I agree with. You seem to be one of the few people who like 'Space 1999'. I tried the first episode myself but after a while I found the special effects couldn't make up for the predictable plots. ((He too, plots are rubbish, acting non-existent, but I'm a sucker for special effects...now if only we could get the cast of Star Trek...and good yarns!)) ((Sorry, couldn't fit in you Polly Wolly (doodle) T))

PAUL S THOMPSON ((address on last page..I just found his LOC)) Nice pic of Concorde. With the nose up, the thing is or is going to start or has just stopped flying supersonically. With the undercarriage down? ((Yes, naturally.)) Rousing stuff in the editorial, I agree. Pretty picture too. Good bit about Sinak. Recent Reading looks useful, one thing which most book reviews are not. Letters all very interesting. The last section makes one wish for more space time and a bit of money to play around with. What more is there to say, except 'Great Stuff'. ((No put you out of your misery re that Concorde...I drew it just the way I saw it..hanging on thread from our wall divider..kit by courtesy Airfix))

Keith Richmond

23 Hazlemore Rd.,

Penn

High Wycombe

Bucks. HP10 8AD

Much as I think you talk out of your proverbial arse on such matters as poetry ((You picked the right place where poetry is concerned chum)) it was good to see your Ergitorial on Concorde. It was a well written piece (at least until the 'descend from soap-box' point. Why not keep it serious just for once? ..and I agree entirely with your sentiments. Good on yer Terry !! Nice to see some small mags reviewed by the way. Free communication = freedom. And reviews are a great way of getting nearer that communication. After all, if no one knows your mag exists

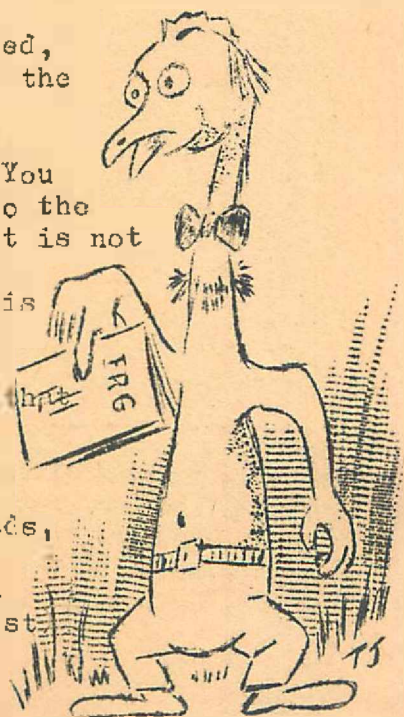
Alan Burns,

19 The Grosvenor

Walks on Tyne

Consider everything well praised, particularly the excellence of the perspective in the drawing of

Concorde ((Aren't you going to complain that the pilot has his pants down ??)) You lament the lack of honour and financial backing to the prophets, but consider it this way. An accountant is not an engineer and is trained in prudence and the ultimate decision on what to spend the money at his disposal. Just as I prefer a sure-fire return of 6% from the building society to a speculative 62% on a nag. ((Yes, but suppose everybody did that even the builders. Where would the new, better houses come from? You can't sit in a mud hut forever gloating over your 62%. Somebody has to speculate by making or doing something, be it roads, food, medicine, defending the kraal, or whatever. You illustrate my point exactly..when we start to live on past triumphs (or building society interest we stagnate.))



With apologies for the small coverage this issue, but
space was running out. T.J.

FANZINES

QUANTUM. Al Curry 1171 Neeb Rd.,
2 Cincinnati, Ohio 45238

\$1.00, or 6 for \$5. 67 pages. excellent art, editorial matter, Fmz
and book reviews etc. Expensive, but very good.

GEHEMSCHWEIN. Eric Lindsey, 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge NSW 2776.

26 Australia. 62 Qto pages, Fabian cover, D'Amassa, Iodhams,
reviews and articles. Variable in duping quality, but a good zine.

ACHETTING ELSE Shayne McCormack 49 Orchard Rd, Bass Hill NSW 2197. Austr.
5 Fabian & Rotsler art, letters, ramblings and a nice bit
of humorous SF bibliography. Not great, but very likable.

KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE Mike Meara 61 Borrowash Rd, Spondon, Derby DE2 7QH
4 Two coloured, well produced zine. Mainly letters plus a brief
review spot. I like this one too, even though it carries little editorial
or general material. Right friendly and chatty sort of zine

INFERNO Paul Skelton 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport)I hope I
15 remembered it properly, as he forgot to put it in the zine(This
is another friendly, letterzine..with nice responses. Well duped and
a pleasantly compact zine.

SCRIBE Brian Tawn, 29 Cordon St., Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 2LW 30+ Qto pages
3 Reviews, personal reminiscence (great) Fmz reviews, records. You
can get Scribe for SAE or LOC..and you'll enjoy it. Not pretentious, but
good general coverage and interesting items..my favourite being the HGV
ramble whorby Brian gets his HGV licence.

WEILTANSCHAUNG (Phew!) Stephen Dornoman, 221 S. Gill St, State College,
Pa.16801. USA Articles, letters, plenty of art. 1st occ on
Esperanto for you fen. 30c/issue or the usual

CHELTENHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP :..Ambitious, photolith, A4. 16 pages
SPACES 1 all with plenty of well reproduced and excellent art.
Get it from Graham Pool, 23 Russet Rd., Cheltenham Glos..30p or one
dollar (and well worth it) Poetry (ugh) Crosswords, Fiction, rock music,
Film making, news, ooks, letters...generally sarcasm, but probably the
best item of this nature on the market at the price.

FANZINE FANATIQUE Keith Walker 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd, Lancaster.
17 This lists just about every current fanzine to hit the
Walker mailbox recently. Excellent for anyone wanting to know just what
to try out as it gives contents details, price, size etc, in far greater
detail than I can do here.

Which wraps me up for now. Most zines I have sent a separate LOC, but
the above struck me as being so good that they deserved a further bit
of EGOBOO plugging in ERG. Sorry if I missed out many others, but will
try to rectify the omission next time.

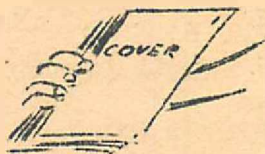
Bestest, Torry.

COLLATING

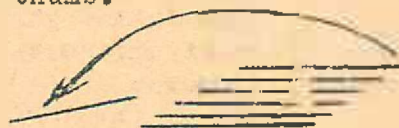
Having got all your pages neatly duplicated, the next stage is to assemble them into magazine form. This happy pastime is termed 'collating', and like most fanzine processes, it can be done in many ways. Collating machines are available, but in essence, these are simply trays in which each set of pages is staked. One sheet at a time can then be drawn from each box in turn until you have a full set. Whereupon, staples are rammed home, and you have a fanzine. Devices like this are useful where money is more plentiful than space. Their drawbacks are firstly, that use by more than one person is rather tricky, if not downright impossible, and secondly, since one does not see the 'under' side of each page as it is withdrawn, it is very easy to collate one-sided printings into a fanzine.

A similar effect to the above, but without the cash outlay is one favoured by many fans. The stacks of numbered pages are laid out in order. The collator then goes along the line picking up one sheet from each pile until a fanzine is assembled. This method has the advantage that as many people (within reason) as you can coerce into helping, can work on the job at one time simply following each other along the line. The disadvantages of this system are again, it is still possible to collect and staple up a one-sided sheet. Also, it needs considerable laying down space. On the other hand, with skill it is possible to collate a fanzine in each hand...but frequent 'straightening up' of each pile is necessary, and it is rather fiddly to pick one sheet every time.

My own method keeps such snags to a minimum. Having tried the 'pick up' system, I prefer to glue the routine, and lay down each sheet. If you are opposite handed to me, simply reverse the method to suit. Pick up the first sheets (pages 1-2), fan them slightly sideways to separate the edges, and lay the bundle on the right arm, with page 1 (cover) on top. (Fig. 1.) With the left hand, take up the top sheet by the right hand edge, flick it over and lay it down in the collating space. Take the next sheet, and do the same. Continue until you have laid out as many copies as you have space for. Put the rest of the pile on one side and go along the collating line with page 3-4, and so on until you have a row of complete fanzines ready for stapling. Each run starts with the odd numbered page facing up. The point of this and the turn over on putting down, is so that you automatically see both sides of the collated sheet...and a blank page stands out amidst all the rest of the run like a sore thumb.



1.



Exaggerated view of 'fanned edges' with one sheet turned over and put down.

The advantages of this method (which takes far longer to describe than to actually do) are :- As many or ~~as~~ few copies as you want can be collated at a time. One sided sheets are kept to a minimum. Several people can work together. The fanning and subsequent pick up minimise the chance of getting two sheets alike, and the whole layout of each page shows at a glance if you missed on on the put down. The only drawback is that you can't leave off in the middle of a run..unless you have a spare room to leave the set up.

KNOCKING UP is simply the tapping of the collated fanzine on a firm surface, first one way, then the other. This lines up the pages and make for a better looking fanzine.

STAPLING...is a bone of contention, but to me, having put out much effort in producing a fanzine..and much cost..it seems idiotic to then use only one staple so that the sheets hang limply by one corner. Perhaps the fanned who does this knows subconsciously that his product is then ready for use in the smallest room. For quarto, use a minimum of two staples, and for A4 sized zines, preferably three. Staples are the cheapest item in the whole fan publishing budget, so don't spoil the thing for the sake of 0.0000001p a copy.

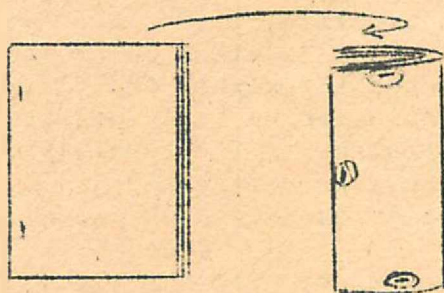
FILE COPIES. You'll want these sooner or later..so make it sooner and get good ones. Earmark two or three collating piles for YOUR FILE copies (I file myself two) and on to each heap, put specifically well-produced pages. Normally, I make several very careful prints. of each page, two for me, and one for each publisher under review. I collate these carefully and file (or address) straight away.

ADDRESSING This is one of those things which looks obvious to all. & MAILING Nevertheless, you can save work, time and money by using some common sense. I assume you made a weight check at the dummy stage (and included a mailing wrapper or envelope) while keeping a weather eye on your Post Office Guide. Indubitably, the best method is to nail the zine flat in an envelope, but with the extra weight and envelopes at 1 or 2p, it is also the most expensive. Some faneds make the outside page a mailing wrapper, then simply fold and staple the magazine. This is a good plan, but involves (usually) redoing a new outer cover for each issue...or, adding 'PRINTED PAPERS' by hand. I get round this by running off a stack of A4 sheets bearing the ERG logo, plus return address, and the legend required by the Post Office for Overseas mail at cheaper rates... 'PRINTED PAPERS' Reduced Rates. This service is no longer available for inland mail, but still affords a considerable saving on overseas postage. However, there are a few regulations which many fan seem unaware of in this connection....for instance, the fanzine should bear the full title and an indication of the frequency of issue on the cover or top of the first page if no cover (Which is why ERG is now ERG QUARTERLY) ...and all that must be on any detached sheets ..such as TAFF Elicers. Another little goody, is that 'At least one third of the publication must consist of articles of a literary character'. There are other regulations, but you get the idea. The point being you can save

a bit of cash on your overseas mailings. Having run of a stack of such 'PRINTED PAPER' wrappers, I blank off that bit and run some plain ones for Inland use. I can type on these wrappers if I wish..but that is a bit tedious, so..... Get some quarto or A4 size white gummed sheets from your stationers. Type your mailing list onto these (You can take a carbon to save work next time) then cut out and stick on to your envelopes, mailing wrappers or fanzines. This is MUCH better than addressing each one separately. My ERG wrappers are sealed with a bit of brown gumstrip. Naturally, I still mail publisher's copies out flat in envelopes..together with a separate set of single-side-duplicated review pages.

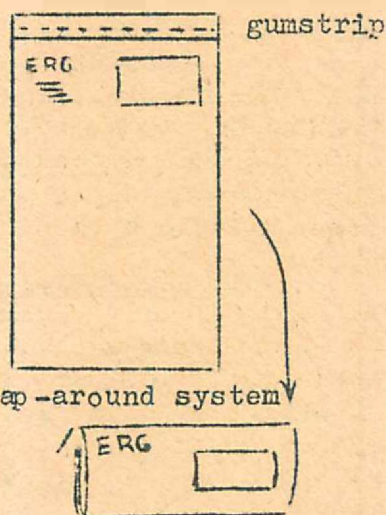
The technique of folding the fanzine and then stapling it up as a mailing unit is quick and economical...but fraught for the recipient who has to unstaple the thing. Apart from badly torn finger nails, he usually ends up with a fistful of loose leave...unless you were thoughtful enough to indicate which staples should be left fastened.

THE FOLDED AND STAPLED
FANZINE



It helps if you ring the staples which are to be removed. With the wrap-around system the job is a bit more tedious, but it offers a bit more protection for the magazine.

THE 'ERG' STYLE WRAPPER



RECORDS are essential if you don't want to continue mailing your brainchild to people who make no response. I type up my mailing list in sections.... Publishers, Subscribers UK, Subscribers Overseas, Freeloaders UK, Freeloaders Overseas. This enables me to make a quick count of the number of each postal item. The address goes down the left, and cross the top, the issue number of ERG. The mailing of a copy is ticked, and a note made of sub time, trade reason, or other response so that I can see at a glance if that particular person is worth keeping on the books. Friends, trades and suchlike come under 'Freeloaders' and you must make your own rules as to who, what and how long anyone stays on such a list.

		PUBLICATIONS				
NAME	ADDRESS	50	51	52	53	54
				✓	✓	✓
		6 Hc		7 pds		
TIME	IN A	✓	✓	✓		
		0	0	0		
		STOP				

STORING & CLEANING

Once upon a time, Messrs Gestetner would clean a stencil for you for a few old pence, they would even sell you a storage folder. For all I know, they may still do. As usual, I opt for the cheaper do-it-yourself method.

Remove the stencil to be stored from the machine and lay it flat between two pieces of newspaper. Smoothe out gently, remove stencil and chuck away the old newspaper. Clean the backing sheet in the same way, then lay the stencil carefully on the backing sheet. You may do a bit of extra cleaning first if you wish, by laying the stencil on further sheets of newspaper and wiping off with either the special cleaning fluid, or paraffin. Wipe dry, then place on the backing sheet. If further protection is required, place the whole thing between two sheets of newspaper....but DO label the backing sheet and keep an index. It will save you wading through piles of the messy things in search of the one you want. In practice, I find I seldom need to use any cleaning fluid on a stencil..indeed, all I do is to remove from the machine, lay it flat on its backing sheet, and file the thing away in an old stencil box. The essential thing is to ensure that the stencil is smoothed out perfectly flat on to the backing sheet. If this is done properly, I find I have no difficulty in putting the stencil back on the machine when it is needed.

The same storage method can be used to preserve electro stencils of cherished illustrations, either inserts or in full. For inserts, it is simpler to just cut it out leaving a bit of old stencil (about 1/4") around the edge of the electro stencil 'path' and then store as above...except that you can use smaller envelopes to store the pieces until you are ready to patch them in again. Again, it is essential to label the envelope with whatever is inside.

With reasonable care, stencils seem to store indefinitely. I still have in the files, some of the electrostencils we used on the first series of TRIODE, some twenty years ago...and if the fancy takes me, will probably use one of them in the illustration section of the full booklet when it appears, just to show how well they keep.

One other point about a stored stencil...you can use a different colour through it on its second run, and have no worries. Simply ink up with whatever colour you happen to be using, and away you go..... and in case anyone was wondering, once you finish the run, the stencil can be put back into store again in the same way. I am still using the ERG wrapper stencil which I did several years ago. Each time I run out of wrappers, I dig it out, and run off another batch of wrappers.

Electrostencil patches have one interesting advantage by the way. When you take 'em out of storage and re-patch them into a stencil, you can reverse them to get a plane etc. going the other way....but do watch out for left-handed swordsmen and suchlike.