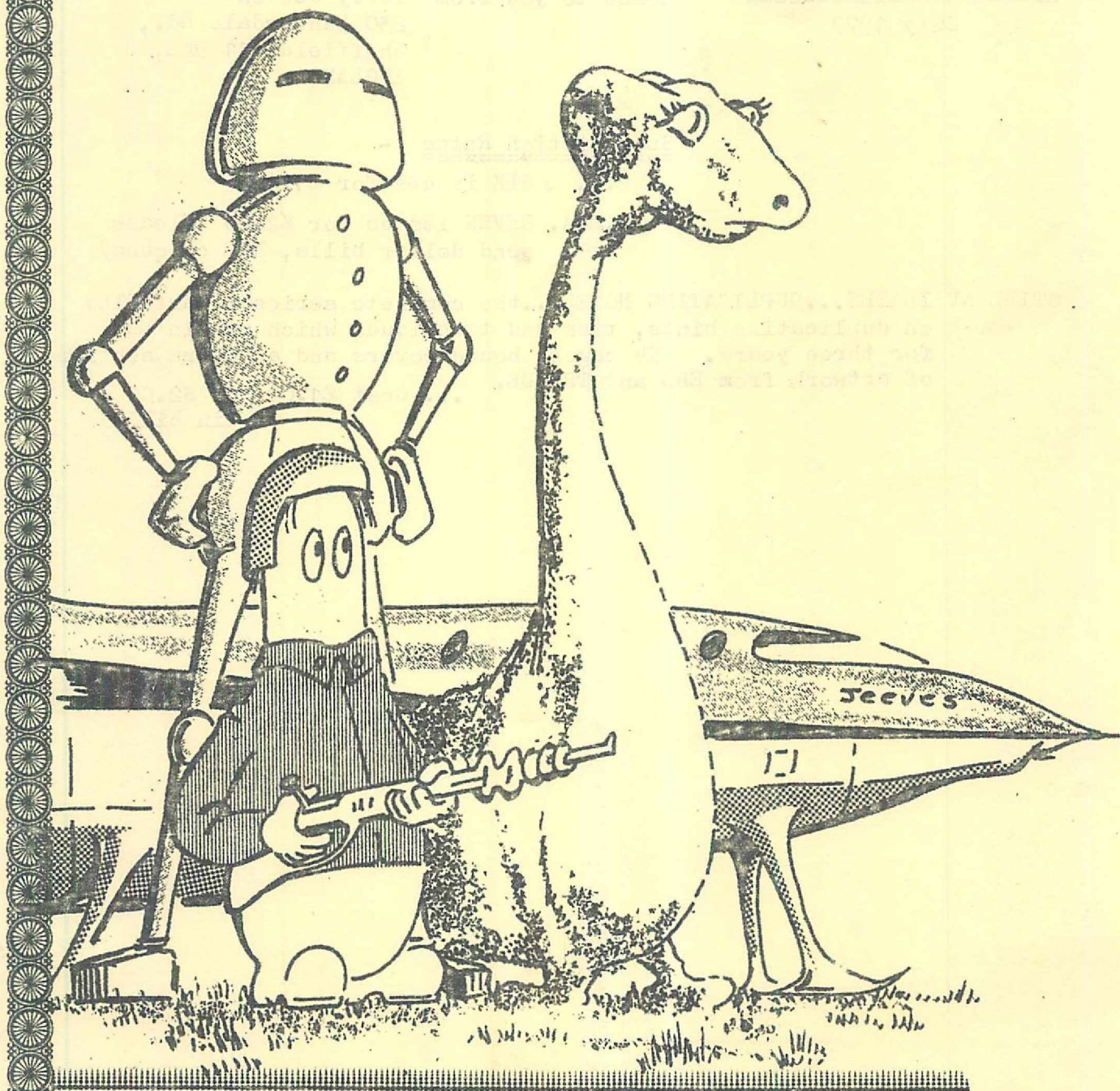


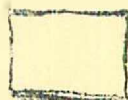
ERIC

QUARTERLY

59.

July 1977





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ERG (Quarterly) No.59
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July 1977

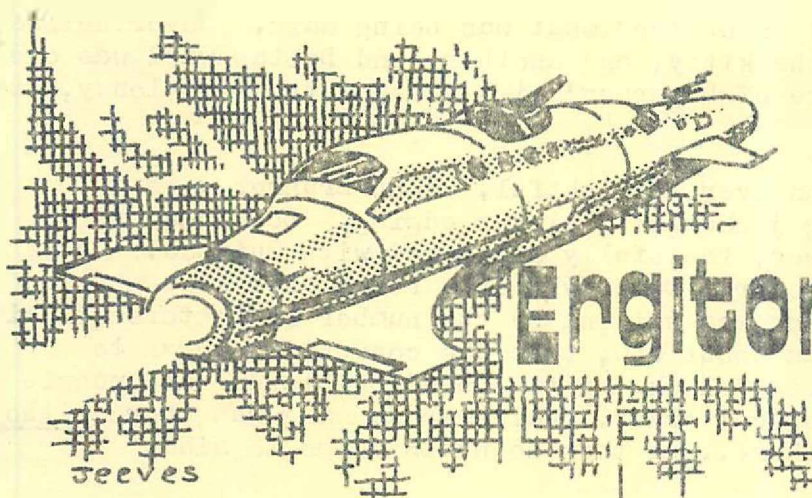
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ERG 59

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JULY 1977

Editorial

THE COVENTRY CAPER

Having donned earthing rods, anti-static helmets, and doused our legs with water, we were shattered to discover that some genius had de-staticed the De Vere Hotel. Removing our gear and depositing it in a handy ashtray, we registered, collected our room key, and headed for our week-end base - which proved to be on the heavenly floor. Room 742 being supplied with oxygen equipment and a hitching post for any passing angel to tie up his cloud. We quickly unpacked essential con equipment (fanzines, cine projector, stack of paintings, con badge, a portable Burgess pic-tester and a length of rubber tubing for pinching drinks out of unguarded glasses) and descended to the Con Hall.

Pauline Dugate was 'introducing celebrities'...traditional and admirable though this practice is, it was hampered somewhat by the evident fact that Pauline only appeared to know six of the people present, apart from a Mr. Un-er, that is...he got several mentions. Ah well, she tried...indeed, she was very trying. Next came the first of a plethora of panels...the things bespattered the programme, interspersed by an occasional speech, an auction or three, and one or two ancient films...well, there was one new one, but that with brilliant forethought had been scheduled for Monday morning. Not to worry, good old 'Things To Come' was shown twice.

After a four star banquet at the adjoining Wimpey we carted my trusty Sunig projector into the Con Hall to show two of the three Delta competition films. First was 'THE 62p MAN' running for 35 minutes, we had to 'ellotape extra sides on my take up reel to accommodate it. It was extremely innovative and had some brilliant gimmicks. Next came my own animated 'SUPERFAN' with a running time of 5 minutes. These had both been Standard 8mm, so now I whisked my little Sunig clear to allow the monster, 6ft tall behemoth projector to screen the 'TRYZAIHIAN UNILIE'. Sadly, it had been filmed at 16fps and was projected at 18, thus making everyone resemble a chipmunk in high gear. The plot was a

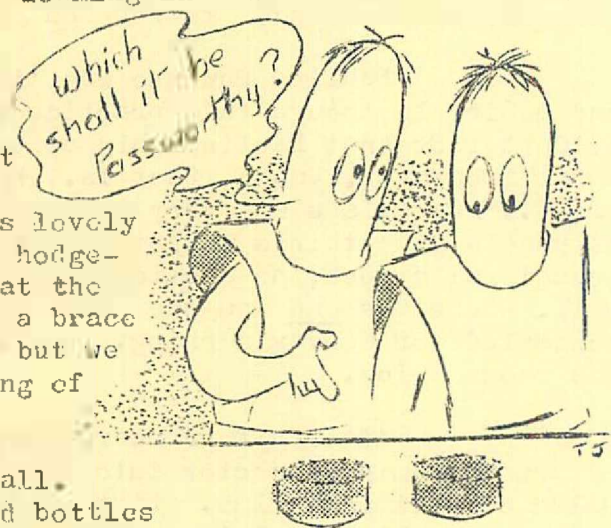
(* we...is not the editorial 'we', it comprises Val, Sandy and me)

a bit vague as no one could understand what was being said. Nevertheless, TRYBURNIAN KILES scooped the kitty, and another good Delta Award was over and followed by a 'Adventure of Dupernan' with a sound track so lousy, it ended up being run silent.

Bar time was as ever, delightful. John Brunner wore a delightful burgundy smoking jacket with silver edging. Bob Shaw had a delicate, smoke-aged pullover, tastefully spattered with Guinness. James White was as impeccable as ever. Dave Kyle in a red blazer kept getting mistaken for a letter box, as was evident by the number of letters sticking out of his left ear. It was about now, that the convention began to assume its regular bleary-eyed look and time binding blended all people and events into un-chronological order. Waldemar Kunning was there without a camera. Hans Loose was there..but then he NEVER seems to miss.

Somewhere in the middle of all this, Peter Weston conducted a 'Mastermind' quiz. Not being a mastermind myself, I can't remember who participated..or who won. This one tended to drag a bit..maybe a future quiz might have several, shorter opening bouts to warm up the audience. Being rather sleepy by this time, the Jeeves clan headed for the lift and found it being operate by a toddler who was having a great time whooping up and down in her own private magic carpet. Fixing us with that un-blinking, stare which small children reserve for adults she watched us in silence as the lift climbed slowly upwards and in blind robotic obedience, stopped at each floor, opened and shut its doors to nobody, before moving on to the next..the little wight had pressed EVERY button! If anyone has lost a little girl, you might try looking in a water tank on the 7th floor.

Saturday dawned...as did yet another panel. This time, Pamela Dulner was chairing, 'The Role Of Women in SF'. My two women thought it a good item to avoid, so we went out for a stroll around Canterbury and its lovely cathedral. Outside, an architectural hodge-podge, but beautiful within. Back at the de Vere we were just in time to dodge a brace of speeches and a couple of auctions, but we did manage to catch the first screening of 'Things To Come'.

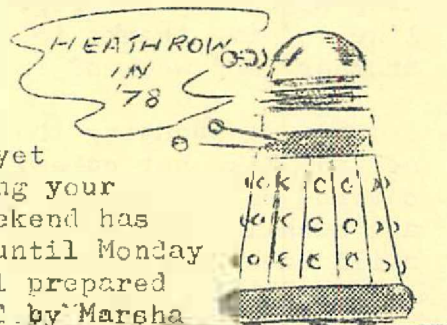


With evening comes pie-fall. Brian Burgess was huckstering pies and bottles of milk..at bargain prices. I know they were bargains, as I had priced the pies in Marks & Spencer earlier that day..at 1p more than Brian was charging. A real saviour of mankind is Brian (Which is why I have his pies a free ad in 'Superfan'. Then it was Fancy Dress time. I had promised to push Pamela Doal in her wheel chair...and was astounded at the superb way in which her family had rallied round and converted it into a Dalek-style control chair..and Pamela into somebody called Charon or suchlike.

Whatever she was, it was terrific - and justly deserved the prize she won. Other guises were a superb 'Batman & Robin', a simply terrific Viking hero, Cat Woman...and a very well designed young lady whose costume was not only brief, but lacking in the stress design department, so that when she hurried, she became the most outstanding woman in the show. I pushed Pamela around once, ogled a very brief costume, and prepared to push Pamela a second time...Holy Klono, my strength had vanished! It took two more abortive attempts before I realised that the mini costume hadn't sapped my energy, but Pamela had shoved on the brake on the wheel chair.

Sunday saw the Daleks invading Earth yet again (on film, and for the umpteenth con time). Luckily, I had a date with a thrilling B&FA meeting in the Fairfax room before rushing back to the voting for next year's Con site... a rather academic affair, as there was only one bid. Maybe that was lucky, as when Ken Slater yelled out to ask, if a double room cost £13.80 without breakfast, how much did a breakfast cost, he was told that no hard figures could be given so far ahead. True, but when I asked what they were charging as of right now, a lack of preparatory work was evident, as the proposers didn't know that either. Nevertheless, it is HEATHROW HOTEL in '78 complete with an unspecified breakfast cost...so better bring a frying pan and a couple of eggs.

This year's huckster room was excellently set out, and full of oodles and oodles of goodies...but no genius has ever yet solved the perennial con problem of budgeting your book buying before you know how much the weekend has cost you. Normally, I don't find this out until Monday after the shop has closed. Also very well prepared and organised was the Art show, masterminded by Marsha Jones...and an excellent job she did. Sadly, the art auction had to be curtailed, as auctioneer Rog Peyton arrived half an hour late from flogging fanzines in the very well appointed...and well used, fan room. Highlight of the auction was the sale of a beautiful Eddie Jones painting for around £150.



Hot on the tail of the auction came another panel...of publishers. By this time, everybody (with £4 worth of banquet ticket scorching in their hands) was starting to avoid food in order to create cargo space. Toastmaster was Peter Weston, and an admirable job he did of it. Speaking of Peter reminds me that this was yet another con, where TAPF was neither plugged nor explained to attendees...which is a pity as some had obviously got the idea that it was some kind of reward for longevity in fandom. TAPF needs publicity...and finance, and if we don't make something of it at each convention, then it will soon be misunderstood and fade away. Which is also the time to announce that this year's worthy winner was Peter Roberts (who is NOT an aged and weary fan) He polled 104 votes, I raised 89, and poor old Pete Presford came in third with 12. So at

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this point, I'd like to thank all those good kind people who voted for me. Sorry folks to let you down, but it seems I just ain't TAPP stuff.

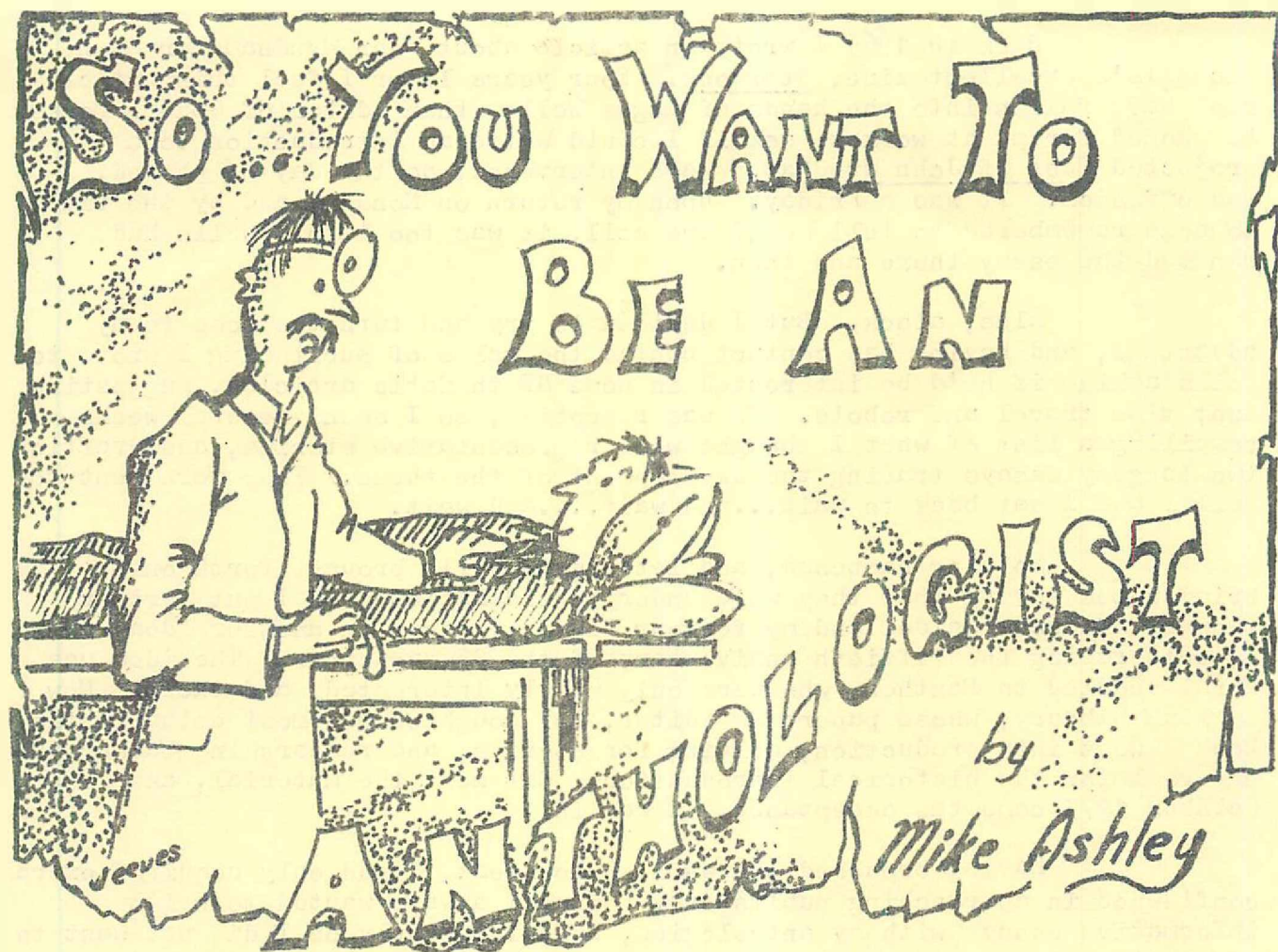
Following the BANQUET came the DANCE, a lively and highly enjoyable session wherein we all did our asserted things to the great music provided by Gray Charnock and his men as they served up some three hours of red hot rhythm. Anyone who didn't enjoy it must have had three left legs. One suggestion though, good as the music was I'd like to have seen a bit more variety added to the one waltz and a couple of quickstep rhythms which interspersed the modern (?) twist beats. Perhaps another time Gray we could talk you into a few chachas, runbas, tangos and slow foxtrots for the s&c among us.

And so came Monday morning, a quick breakfast, off up the 341 and home. We didn't stay to see what seemed to be the only 'new' film on the programme - 'Zero Population Growth' as it wasn't due on until 10.30 on Monday. In retrospect, another good, enjoyable Con, but if I had my druthers, I'd like to have seen less sermon (panel, speech, panel, speech etc) and a few more general fannish or audience participation items. Whatever happened to the Liverpool Tape Operas, the 'This Is Your Eannish Life', the 'Twenty SF Questions', the Pan quizzes and so on which used to liven up the large gaps which keep appearing in programmes nowadays. Otherwise, I for one would like to give thanks to one more Con Committee for having given us another good weekend to renew old acquaintances.

Changing the subject completely...DUPLICATING NOTES is selling like hot cakes. For newcomers, this is a 54 page, board covered collection of all the duplicating articles and tips hints and suchlike which have appeared in ERG over the last few years. I still have thirty copies left...Price \$1 in the UK, \$2.00 in DOLLAR BILLS please from the USA. I keep emphasising that DOLLAR BILLS, but people still keep sending cheques and money orders. Please folks..DON'T. It takes me about three weeks to get a bank to clear 'em..and they take almost half in charges. Every time I get a Stateside cheque, I lose money on that sale. Victoria Wayne, who can be excused American dollars (at least I assume you can't get 'em in Canada) sent me a money order (Canadian)..which could have been cashed had it been made out in sterling..but it was in dollars, so the local P.O. wouldn't shell out. They advise trying the main office...but I can only get there by making a special trip on my valuable Saturday morning. So PLEASE...bills only, no cheques or money orders (etc),

FANZINES...This issue contains a brief section on same. I had intended to have more of these, writing them as each zine arrived...but this issue saw so many book up for review that both fanzine and letter sections had to be pruned. Pity as I had some very good letters this time. I hope you'll keep 'em coming even when I can't run a letter section. And to answer a query..the Tucker page was by Bob Tucker..NOT me. So now you need to subscribe to the TUCKER TRANSFER...and bring him here in '79.

Terry.



The general consensus of opinion is that a mandatory qualification in being a science fiction fan is to be riddled with a streak of insanity. SF fans would agree with that, and non-SF fans are convinced of it. This comes as an invaluable asset if you want to edit science fiction anthologies. Because if you want to do that - you must be mad.

Mind you, publishers don't want anthologies - SF or horror. That's what they keep telling you, and this must prove therefore that the constant flow of anthologies that one finds on the stalls must be a mirage, perhaps some kind of mass hypnotic illusion perpetrated by the publishers to satiate the silent majority of SF and Horror fans.

You get to learn this the hard way. By culling masses of rejection slips and stereotyped letters from people who think they've published all the 'sci-fi' that matters, or who never stoop so low as to consider that part of their programme. I struck lucky, if that's the right word, by seemingly getting the right idea at the right time and contacting the right person. As in everything, it's not what you know - at least not at first - it's who you know.

Back in 1969 I wrote an article about John Wyndham for Stan Nicholls's excellent zine, Stardock. Four years later I feel this article must have fallen into the hands of Angus Wells, then editor of Sphere Books. He phoned for me at work to ask if I could write an introduction to a projected Best Of John Wyndham. Fate intervened, as the day he phoned, I was off sick. It was a Friday. Upon my return on Monday, and by the time someone remembered to tell me of the call, it was too late. Wells had wanted the essay there and then.

Alas, alack. But I decided to try and turn the loss to my advantage, and having had contact behind the walls of publishing I wrote to Wells asking if he'd be interested in some SF thematic articles, suggesting two; time travel and robots. He was receptive, so I spent several weeks compiling a list of what I thought were representative stories, and drafting two lengthy essays tracing the development of the theme. They were sent to Wells, and I sat back to wait...and wait....and wait.

Nothing happened, and letters to Wells brought forth only brief notes saying that they were under consideration. So I put further thought of those aside, and my fervour fired, I began on another idea, that of celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the SF magazines. The idea was first peddled to Panther, who were only mildly interested, and then to New English Library, whose paperback editor, Dot Houghton was most enthusiastic. Back I went into production, delving for stories, and researching background material for the historical introduction. Off went the material, and in October 1973 came the acceptance. I was in !

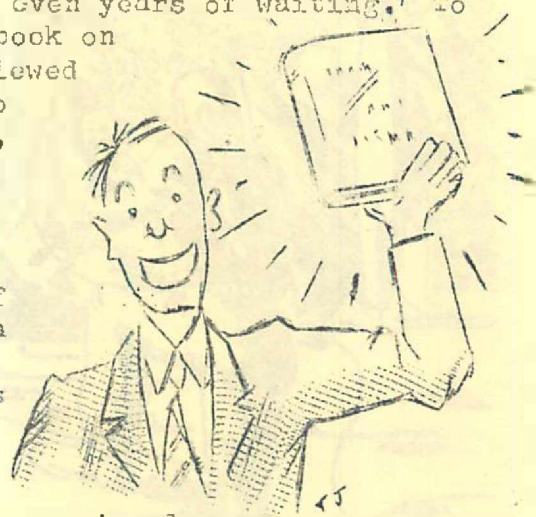
Having breached the wall so to speak, I suddenly acquired extra confidence in approaching publishers. Since I always wanted to write informative essays with my anthologies, I decided early on I did not want to spend time on them if they were not going to find a publisher. So, I compiled draft synopses of scores of suggestions and mailed these out to numerous publishers. It was like the parable of the sower. Some publishers were receptive, others not. But certainly, there were more interested than I had hoped, and by the end of '74, I was engrossed in preparing some ten anthologies. Meanwhile Angus Wells changed his mind and returned my first anthologies. The robot one, suitably revised, appeared this year as Souls In Metal, from Robert Hale.

Then came problems. Publishers don't like parting with money, and you have to push to get enough to pay the authors whose stories you are reprinting, plus something for yourself and to cover agents fees. Phil Harbottle acts as my agent and does far more work than I could expect any full-time agent to do. But the biggest surprise is that, having paid an advance against royalties for the anthology, the publishers do not then rush into print. Instead, the books vanish into some obscure limbo from which one wonders if they will ever appear. Because mine are full of facts, I found they were soon becoming dated, and I was having to keep adding revisions so as not to make too much work at the proof stage. Very soon, just keeping the books I had already compiled on an even keel was becoming a full time job, which of course it couldn't be. And the financial return was minimal.

In the end it became very clear. You have to be devoted to editing and SF to be able to put up with the whims and idiosyncracies of publishers. Helpful though they will always appear at first, thereafter they could just not seem to care less. And you, as editor, begin to feel more and more just like a cog. To continue, you must be mad.

But like everything, it has its compensations. To see the book in print at last after all the months, even years of waiting. To read reviews (good or bad), and to see the book on the shelves. To find yourself being interviewed on radio or by papers. It all boils down to self-indulgence. But it is exhausting work, and is best left to single men with no responsibilities. Not married men with full-time jobs.

No, now I have had the taste of something else. I have recently completed a Who's Who In Horror & Fantasy Fiction, a thoroughly researched reference book that is all my own work. It was intensely more satisfying than editing, far more enjoyable and far more rewarding (egotistically and financially). So in future, except for the occasional anthology that opportunity may make worthwhile, my period as an SF anthologist has passed. It's reference books for me now, and hopefully novels, if I can get the time to concentrate on them.



But I shan't regret my time spent editing. It brought me into contact with a vast number of people, opened up many useful doors, and taught me an awful lot about the publishing business. It's one way to learn what goes on behind the scenes, but it's a maddening, infuriating, diabolical and absurd way. Just the way a science fiction fan would expect.

Mike Ashley.

Editor's Note Being a modest type, Mike neglected to mention his excellent series of anthologies currently appearing under the New English Library imprint. When complete, the series will give an thology coverage to the fifty years of magazine SF which has just been completed. The title is:

THE HISTORY OF THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE.

So far (unless I've missed one), three parts have appeared. They average close to 300 pages each, ten or so stories, PLUS large helpings of historical and background data to both period and story...and also some nice appendices and glossaries and suchlike. These will eventually become collector's items, and to the SF reader who wishes to have both story...AND background, they are indispensable. T.J.



The Movie Treasury of MONSTERS AND VAMPIRES

by Alan Franks.
Octopus £2.50

Being a companion book to the Treasury of SF Movie by Phil Strick reviewed here last issue.

However, where Strick tended to be painfully 'flip' at times, Alan Franks has much more feeling for his theme and treats it with devotion and obvious affection, which makes for highly interesting reading throughout.

Almost half the volume is given over to Dracula and vampires in general. A further large section is dedicated to Frankenstein and other 'androids'. The final part is given over to monsters from space, from radiation, and from within the Earth. Close on a hundred 'stills', many in full colour, this is a book which should appeal to SF and monster buffs alike, and is of course a 'must' for film addicts. Incidentally, one reason for it being such good value and a steal at the price could be due to it having been printed in Hong Kong. My only complaint being with whoever tacked the flippantly inane (Ackerman-type) captions on many of the stills. Puns such as 'Fangs a Million' do NOT improve the quality of an otherwise excellent volume.

A WORLD OUT OF TIME

Larry Niven
Macdonald & Janes
£5.95

As a Niven fan who enjoyed 'Ringworld', and the 'Mote In God's Eye' collaboration, I was delighted to plunge into this one...and it didn't disappoint me. Jerome Branch Corbell (Is that a pun?) is a cancer-avoiding corpse who awakens to find his memories inhabiting the body of a brain-wiped criminal. The State has revived him to undergo training so that he may pilot a Bussard Ramscoop on a 300 year planet seeding mission around the galaxy. Corbell has other ideas and once into space, applies them. An encounter with a black hole alters the time scale of his trip by several million years...and things can change a lot in that period. Gripping from first to last despite a few glossed over points...how did Corbell survive his years of solitary confinement for instance. This may not win any Nebulae, but it is still an enthralling yarn and almost credible despite the fantastic scope of Corbell's saga. Niven is never dull, and here he shines at his best.

SCIENCE FICTION SPECIAL No.20

Sidgwick & Jackson £4.95

Three full-length books in one cover. Poul Anderson's Orbit Unlimited opens the collection. Built from three magazine stories from '59 and '60, loosely linked by the lineage of Jan Svoboda, it describes how the Constitutionlists are manoeuvred into leaving a decaying, decadent Earth and fleeing to the planet Rustum. Singularity Station, arguably Brian Ball's best yarn is next. Losing his own craft in a black hole, Commander Buchanan takes a one man ship to investigate the singularity. Meanwhile, his fiancée, passenger on a prison ship is captured by escaping cyberneticist Maran, and all meet in the singularity. Finally, and towering above the others, comes The Best Of John W. Campbell. After a Blish foreword comes, 'Double Minds', (Penton & Blake on Ganymede); 'Forgetfulness', (would-be invaders from the stars); 'Who Goes There', (The best man v alien, ever written), 'Out Of Night', and 'Cloak of Aesir' (Oppressed Earthmen find a champion to aid them against the Sarn invaders.

I reckon that's at least £10 for less than a fiver, and if you want a good collection on a budget, then this series is what you are looking for. Highly recommended. ***

SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET

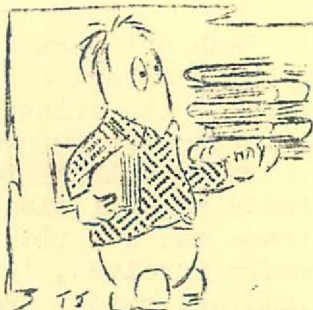
Clifford D. Simak
Sidgwick & Jackson
£3.50

Carter Horton wakes from a thousand years of deep sleep to find his ship landed on a strange planet and his companions dead. His only companion is the robot Nicodemus. They soon encounter Carnivore, and alien who arrived via a one way hyperspatial tunnel. They try to unlock the controls and are joined by Tunnel Explorer Eloyne...and various other life forms strut briefly on Shakespeare's stage (A space explorer named Shakespeare died there and was eaten by Carnivore). As usual, Simak's characters placidly accept outre situations without blinking. The yarn reads well, but there are too many loose ends and unlikely coincidences for my taste.

THE PECULIAR EXPLOITS OF BRIGADIER FELLOWES

Sterling E. Lanier
Sidgwick & Jackson £3.95

Seven tales originally from the award-winning Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, and related by the brave Brigadier to his club friends. They cover such events as an encounter with Anubis, some strange sea-monsters; a Dracula-like American hunting family, a meeting with Paleozoic man, an ancient monster on a Greek island, the menace of a pack of half human, half animals and finally, his encounter with giant crabs. Definitely on the fantasy side, and with more than a touch of the Gothic horror tale, there should be enough variety here for anyone.



ALL the books covered in ERG's review section are obtainable from :-

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Fantast (Medway) Ltd.,
39 West St
Wisbech,
CAMBS P.E. 13 2LX

(Why not send
a 10p stamp
for a list?)

THE 21ST CENTURY

Joe Haldeman
Macdonald & Jakes

\$3.95

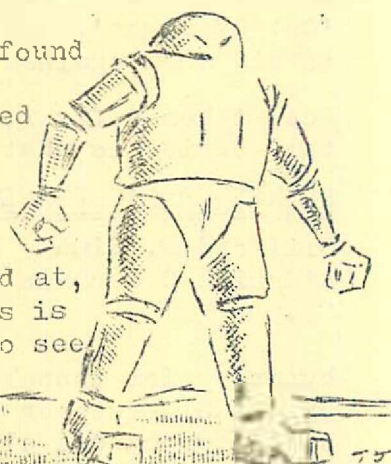
The 21st Century, and man has started to explore the stars by way of matter transmitter, but with limits on duration of stay. Jacques Lefavre's first mission turns up a telepathic creature with a built-in snag, and the n-later missions introduce an even stranger and more menacing life form, the L'Vrai. Haldeman writes so convincingly and with plenty of pseudo-documentary inserts, that the whole incredible thing assumes reality. Superbly written, carefully detailed and with particular care taken in working out the background details for the whole 'Tamer' (star explorer) operation. One of the best deep space yarns to come along in quite a while and simply crying out for expansion into a trilogy or even a series. Oh yes, and there is a superb, if unconnected, Toss cover.

INVASION FROM THE EARTH

Robert Silverberg
Sidgwick & Jackson

\$3.50

When intelligent life and valuable radioactives are found on Ganymede a high-powered advertising agency is called in. 3rd. Level executive Ted Kennedy is put on a team with the purpose of perpetrating a gigantic hoax on humanity to allow for exploitation of the find...at the expense of the Ganymedans. The powers of the latter are only hinted at, which is rather a disappointment. Nevertheless, this is Silverberg at his best..and I for one am delighted to see him abandon the morbid death-fascination of recent stories (This one first appeared in 1958). His construct is credible, and given unlimited space flight, and the discovery of other life, you feel this may well be how things turn out. A highly entertaining yarn, and only the Hardy dust jacket is way below this artist's normally HIGH standard.

MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Robert Silverberg
Sidgwick & Jackson

\$3.50

Roy Walton, Assistant Director of Population Control (Popcek) uses his powers to save a child from euthanasia...then in fast order, his boss is assassinated, thus moving Walton into full Directorship, a secretly-built starship returns with news of alien life and inhabitable worlds, an attempt to Terraform Venus comes on-stage, and to add further zest, Walton's brother sets out to blackmail him. Coincidences (and improbabilities) abound, but Silverberg moves his theme along so smoothly that they do not detract from one's interest in what is happening to Walton as he meets each new challenge and rises to meet it. Very good reading, but again, Hardy has given it a jacket which does his undoubted ability little justice.

THE UNICORN

Roger Zelazny
Faber & Faber

\$3.95

This is the third in the author's 'Amber' series (The other two being, 'Nine Princes In Amber' and 'The Guns of Avalon') In this volume, the princes and princesses of Amber are under attack from forces led by a traitor in their ranks. Their ability to move between various planes of existence, and communicate at will via their 'Prumps' makes it no easy task for Prince Corwin to trace the culprit. Not having read the earlier tales, I found this extremely involved, though fascinating reading. The fantasy is both different..and delicately done.

A PLASMA OF DEMONS

Keith Laumer
Coronet 60p

This one opens a bit like Heinlein's 'Puppet Masters', when agent John Bravais discovers aliens infiltrating Earth by stealing human brains to make bodies. It quickly expands to the scale of a full space-opera with the hectic pace sustained throughout. Not cerebral stuff, but thoroughly excellent, can't-be-put-down SF.

TOWARDS TOMORROW

Isaac Asimov
Coronet 70p

Another collection of the good Doctor's essays explaining science in simple terms and each just the right length to make the point without labouring it. 14 items, plus a brief essay, and divided into three sections :- 'In Space' covers lunar landing and what next ? plus the future of women and entertainment. 'On Earth' covers personal flight, computers, overbreeding and world wide communication. 'In Science Fiction' has the perfect machine, prediction, serious sf. All these plus various other possibilities are explored in a light hearted, yet serious vein.

HADON OF ANCIENT OFAR

Philip Jose Farmer
Methuen 'Magnum' 75p

Set, 12,000 years ago in an area bordering an inland African sea, this heroic fantasy tells the story of Hadon as he enters the Games held to choose a new king. However, the old one has different ideas and Hadon is despatched on a suicide mission to find a beautiful, lost 'god'. If you love mighty warriors, this could be up your street..and I suspect, despite the ending, others are to follow.

CRYPTOZOIC

Brian W. Aldiss
AVON \$1.25

Edward Bush is a 'mind traveller' (A process sketchily worked out, and full of inconsistencies) and on his return from a trip to the prehistoric, he finds a revolution has changed things somewhat. He is pulled into the military police, and after training, sent into time to assassinate a wanted man. It is pleasant to find this is actually a story by Brian, as distinct from incomplete vignettes or loosely linked word-pictures, but I felt that after a good start, this one tailed off quite a bit.

STARBURST

Alfred Bester
Pan. 60p

An eleven story collection which includes such gems as 'Disappearing Act' about time-teleporting war veterans, 'Fondly Fahrenheit' with its homicidal android, and the child with the chilling ability to realise its wishes in 'Star Light, Star Bright'. Then there's 'Starcomber', 'Adam And No Eve' and all the rest, with only 'The Pic Hard' lowering the standard. I'd have liked an index, but that's quibbling when Bester writes such good yarns.

CONTINUUM 4

Ed. Roger Elwood
Wyndham 'Star' 70p

I've heard rumours of this one, but this is the first copy I've seen. Essentially a standard paperback, but with a new idea. A selection of authors and each one has created his fictional world and returns to it for a further story with each issue of Continuum. Jose Farmer has a serial, then there's Anderson, Oliver, Scortia, McCaffrey, Wolfe and Pangborn. I welcome the idea..and now I'm wondering where I can get the first three copies.

THE MARS OF TIME

Robert Silverberg
Wyndham 'Eandem'
30p

When Vornan 19 appears from the future, Leo Garfield, physicist specialising in time-reversal phenomena is called on to verify his authenticity. The world Government hopes he is, as this would silence the unruly Apocalyptics who believe the world has only one year left. Garfield and a small band of scientists accompany Vornan on his chaotic tour, and the Apocalyptics get a new faith. Plenty of sex action, but the yarn flags towards the end.

THE PURSUIT OF DESTINY

Muriel Bruce Hasbrouck.
Wyndham 75p

With the arrival of tea-bags, gypsies must be slaving to find a substitute for leaf divination. Here we have a book setting out to teach you how to understand yourself and others through a combination of para-astrology and the cards of the Tarot. Zodiacal signs and the Tarot are explained..plus the 'four basic qualities', the 'nine potentials' and sundry other items. The formula for their application is rather 'wooly' to a sceptic like myself, but for those who like arcane lore, self divination and the gentle art of prognostication, it could be a hit.

THE BEST OF C.H. KORNBLUTH

Ballantine \$1.95

Remember the uneasy feeling you got from, 'The Words of Guru' ? the futuristic medical gear in 'The Little Black Bag', the fake, racing car in 'The Marching Morons' ? The insidious voyeurism of 'Mindworm' ? All these, and many other top level yarns making a grand total of 19, plus a Pohl introduction, and a too-brief autobiographical item. A fistful of goodies to which you can return again and again. Great stuff !

CHARISMA

Michael Coney
Pan. 60p

John Maine encounters a beautiful girl who makes love to him, then vanishes. From a parallel world opened up by the activities of a local research station, the passage can only be made by those whose Doppelganger has just died. John seeks his love in other tracks, but his search is complicated by the murder of his employer..and Maine's own inept actions which bring suspicion upon him. Intricate, and you never know where the thread will lead next.

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER

Roger Zelazny
Avon \$1.25

'Carl Corey' awakes in hospital to find he has amnesia. Discharging himself, he starts to hunt for his memory. The trail leads to the strange city of Amber, on a plane where Earth is but a shadow, and Corey, finds he is Prince Corwin, has many royal brothers and sisters and becomes engaged in a battle to save Amber and win the throne. Magic and deftly lined backgrounds make this an intriguing near fairy tale.

IMPERIAL EARTH

Arthur C. Clarke
Pan 75p

Duncan Makenzie, member of Titan's most powerful family, comes to Earth for the Quincentennial celebrations and uses the trip to forward plans of his own. The first two thirds of the book examine his reactions to Earth and its gravity. Eventually, Duncan begins investigation into secret Titanite sales, but somehow, for the first time ever, this is a Clarke yarn which, for me, never got off the ground....icing, but no cake.

BIG PLANET

Jack Vance
Coronet 65p

Claude Glystra comes to Big Planet on a mission of investigation when a new ruler starts expanding his operations. Sabotage puts his craft down some 40,000 miles from the Earth Base, so Glystra and companions set out to walk! Their adventures amid the varying communities and customs met with along the route make for exciting reading..and to complicate matters there is a saboteur in their ranks. Good reading, but I preferred 'Showboat World'.

FADE-OUT

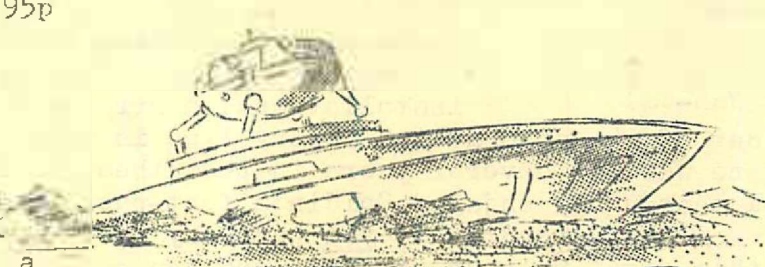
Patrick Tilley
Sphere 95p

Chilling authenticity mark this pb version of the \$4.50 hardcover published earlier by Hodder & Stoughton. The Cold War nearly erupts when an alien object blacks out all radar screens for 20 minutes when it reaches and lands on Earth. A taut, first-contact situation arises as all electrical devices malfunction and a strange spider-like machine emerges. Five other landings are reported and a race develops to A-bomb them before a power blackout grips the world. This is one of the most gripping bits of 'real-life' fiction in a long time. Tilley has fully researched his backgrounds, and the whole thing is a bargain to hardcore SF lovers who get over 400 pages for their 95p

TOUR OF A ROBOT

Barrington J. Bayley
Orbit 70p

Jasperodus, a newly constructed, sentient robot sets out to prove he is a conscious entity. He overthrows King Zhorn of Gordona before moving on to a variety of adventures (including a spot of sex action). The setting is a hodgepodge of nuclear/coal power stations, space shuttles and satellites alongside wilderness dwelling barbarians, steam-cars, mugs of sour ale in cut-throat inns and suchlike incongruities. Purists will no doubt scream, but I enjoyed it as a lighthearted trifle.



THIS AND AGAIN

Clifford D. Simak
Bethuen 'Magnum'
75p

Asher Sutton returns from a 20yr interstellar voyage, complete with a mind-partner. A visitor from the future has forewarned Earth to expect him and to kill him on arrival. Sutton it seems is due to write a book on destiny which causes (or will cause) and android uprising. So Sutton is hunted by those who don't want the book, by those who do, and by the Earthmen scared of his mind partner who got Sutton to Earth in an airless, disabled spaceship...with no food and water. It gets kinda complicated and tends to flounder a bit at the end..but otherwise, good, reliable Simak.

THE LAB IN THE MAZE

Robert Silverberg
'Wyndham 'Tandem'
70p

Altered by aliens so that he gives off an unbearable aura, Muller becomes a hermit at the centre of a booby-trapped maze on a dead planet. However, his ability is needed to meet attacking aliens, so drone robots brave the labyrinth to lead men to him. This is Silverberg at his best, the maze is frightening yet utterly credible. If I could write SF, this is the sort of yarn I would love to have written. It holds you throughout and never flags for a moment.

CEMETERY WORLD

C.D. Simak
Methuen 'Magnum'

70p

In the far future, Earth is one vast graveyard. Fletcher Carson, accompanied by the 10,000 year-old robot, Elmer bribes his way there to create a multi-media 'composition' Hunted by 'Cemetery's' operators, he flees into the wilds along with Elmer, Bronco (a 'compositor' robot) and treasure hunter, Cynthia Lansing. Chasing hither and yon, not to mention back and forth (in time) they meet up with a robot wolf pack, giant killer war-machines, unexplained ghosts, and a mysterious census-taker.

Originally a 3-part Analog serial, this is smoothly written, 'folksy' Simak (so folksy that the Gestalt spokesman for 'five intelligent scientists says, "...he didn't protest none")...Jeds, Lukes etc. abound, 'as does the back-to-nature theme (without the nasty bits). Entertaining, but it tails off a bit at the end...and has quite a few unresolved ideas around.

WHIP

Martin Caidin
Corgi 85p
(Non-SF)

'Whip' is Captain 'Whip' Russel, a B-25 'Mitchell' pilot commanding a squadron operating out of Australia against the Japanese. Whip gets his planes 'souped up' with multi-cannon installations, a stratagem which enables him to knock hell out of the opposition. Story line is slim, characterisation likewise but as one who had several years in that theatre of war (and with a bomber squadron) I thoroughly enjoyed Caidin's fast-paced gripping style and rated it as an excellent 'read'. If you have any taste for air-war yarns, then you'll find this right up your street...and you get 240+ pages for your money too.

CATS

of the world
Matt Warner
Ridge Press Books
(Transworld) £1.45

This is of course, not SF, but a hard-cover pb (if you understand what that is) covering just what the title says...which may not be just what you think. I had anticipated meeting cheetahs, leopards, pumas lions and so on..well, they get four pages. The book is really for the cat (domestic variety) lover..and as such it is a very good buy. Coverage includes all about a cat, how to buy one, mating, exhibiting, care of cats, and various breeds of same. Then comes the kicker. The book is illustrated throughout with a profusion of high-quality colour photographs 150+ pages, hard covers !!! Cat-people can't go wrong at the price, and it would also make an excellent present for young and old.

STAR MAIDENS

Ian Evans
Corgi 60p

1 The planet Medusa, torn from the Proxima Centauri system by a comet, crosses the gulf to the Solar System (well it's better than Space 1999's atomic explosion). The jacket says Medusa enters Earth orbit..the story implies it ends up near Pluto where Earth scientists cannot detect it. Medusa is run by a matriarchy, so two men steal a spaceship and flee to Earth..at half light speed, so that their ship gets red hot before they get here.. Happily, they have learned to speak English via a machine, so can communicate on landing. Their pursuers have a robot which cures a blinded man in half an hour (but can't revive him from the anaesthetic). I gather this was originally a TV series...thank Ghu it hasn't come North yet. I don't know who is more culpable, some nameless TV producer, or Ian Evans, but this is the sort of writing which gives SF a bad name in many circles

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS

Parts 1 & 2 80p each
 Edited by Harlan Ellison
 Published by PAN SF

In case you wonder why this should be divided into two parts...reflect on the fact that each runs to some 450 pages, or twice the thickness of the average pb. Once again, the authors are given free rein to write about whatever takes their fancy, and with no holds barred. In general, this means drugs, pollution, plenty of sadism, and sex (straight and variegated), the use of all the standard four-letter cuss words, plus goodly dollops of downright sleaziness.

All the 'big-name' authors are here, 20 or more to each volume..plus an Ellison foreword and an author's afterword to accompany every story.

This is not the kind of SF on which I cut my eye teeth, it tends to lack the traditional build-up and climax which marks my personal taste. Better to call it 'speculative', 'experimental', or even 'New Wave' fiction where in most cases the authors tend to write around their topics before leaving you to do the rest of the thinking. However, if you go for this style, then those two volumes must indubitably be THE best value for money since the Louisiana Purchase. Cover art is not credited...I'd guess at Foss on No.1 and Jones on 2, plus Ed Emshwiller doing the story heading vignettes.

HOW TO TEST AND DEVELOP YOUR E.S.P.

Paul Munson
 Abacus 87.25

A 150+ page, digest-size pb, which opens with a brief account of E.S.P.'s history, continues with and explanation of the various types, theories, drawings tests, cards, Rhine Experiments, and how to conduct your own trials. Then it goes on into ways of developing your ESP powers in various ways. There are also chapters on out-of-the-body experiences, psychonesis, ghosts, and a set of appendices covering Exercises, Technical Journals, Notes and References, a Glossary and a Bibliography. Surprisingly, Hieronymous machines, De La Warr devices or photo diving are not mentioned. Nevertheless, the author, (who also has books on Witchcraft and Demonology to his credit) has made an excellent job of exploring and explaining E.S.P. in easy to understand language and gives workable guide lines for those wishing to carry out their own experiments in the field. One for the reference library.

SHOW BOAT WORLD

Jack Vance
 Coronet 65p

Well removed from the normal run of hum drum SF is this tale of two rival showboat captains who ply their trade along the Vissel river on Big Planet - a vaguely hinted at splinter colony from Earth, where individual communities stud the river length, and manners and customs are quaintly archaic and rather gentle. Vance skilfully evades the twin pitfalls of sex and sadism as he creates an almost fairy-tale-like; different, society. The humour is gentle but deft in a way which keeps the tale always entrancing and never agonising. I enjoyed it and feel that Vance lovers will rate it very highly.

THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD BEGINS

J.T.McIntosh
 Corgi 70p

Ran Burrell, millionaire space-hand, jumps ship on pleasure satellite Paradise and gets on a tourist trip to Earth despite barriers raised by Starways. Partnered by the beautiful Roberta Murdoch, he investigates the mystery of Starways hold on Earth and sets out to do something about it against the virtually all-powerful, but do nothing, Starways. A fast-moving adventure with Burrell tom-cattling around in between the incidents.

PSYCHOMORPH

(Space 1999)

Michael Butterworth

Wyndham 'Star' 70p

Memory tells me this title was used in 'Unknown', but here it covers an energy hungry 'Space Amoeba' encountered by Moon Base Alpha. The thing first enhances psi power and turns one Alphan into a killing psi-maniac, it then assumes the guise of a vessel from Earth, complete with crew. There is also an Alphan, Psychon who can assume the form of any animal ! Hampered by a lack of characterisation (presumably readers will already have their own mental images formed from the TV screen), this is one of those things 1999 fans will go for..and you get several pages of still photographs as a bonus.

BLO DROGUE

Karl Edward Wagner

Coronet 85p

'Sorcery, sword play and super-science' says the cover to this new series telling the saga of the mighty KANE, a Conan-type superhero in the old tradition. Kane is not only a swordsman, but an adept of the Black Arts. In this tale, he discovers the power-giving Bloodstone and uses it to help him in his battles only to discover it is not quite what it seemed. Good rattling adventure, blood thunder and fun.

RAUM

Carl Cherrill

Avon 31.50 v

Sorcerer Jord conjures up the Devil, but instead gets one of his minions - Raum. This anti-hero sets off in search of the Wizard Merlin who he believes can explain his destiny. Mighty battles ensue as Raum tangles with Vikings, King Arthur and his Knights, plus a few pitfalls prepared by Asoroth, an overseer from Hell. Gradually losing his immortality and spellbinding power and taking on human qualities the demon-knight nears his goal via sword, sex and sorcery. Though disliking s-s- and s as a general thing, this one I really enjoyed..a pleasure enhanced by the superlative Fabian illos scattered thinly through the text.

LATE ITEMS.. The Jeeves' family have just returned from the GRAND TOUR in which we visited..France, Belgium, Austria, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy..which explains the hiatus in outgoing mail...apologies all, and further apologies for no letter column this issue. Some excellent LOCs were received, but all were squeezed out thanks to an oversize Review section..and the two items by Mike Ashley and Michael Banks. Keep the letters coming, I hope to have them back in No.60..plus expanded room for fanzine coverage.

Further apologies are due for a paper change in mid-issue when a stack of 'ERG quarto' proved to be 'TRIODE A4'. Rather than hold up the issue, I wound up using some available white stock.

WANTEDA..Can any Statesider help ? Sample copies of any or all of.. MODEL AIRPLANE NEWS, AIR PROGRESS, or AVIATION WEEK..and any other similar aero/space mag. When I find a good one, I'd like to take out a sub. Any help in this line would be appreciated.

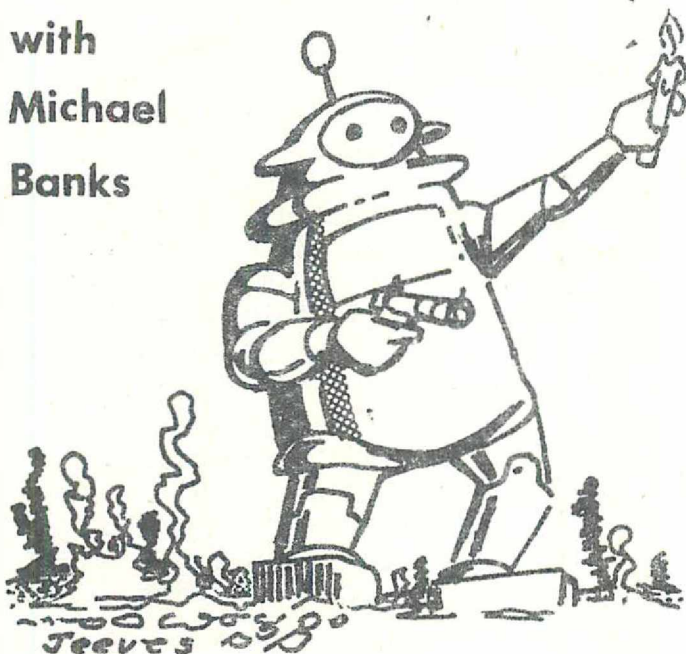
POSTAL RATES are up again (ough)..so sorry, but a lot of strong silent people must drop from our lists unless they write, sub or show proof of their continued existence.

Best wishes,

Terry

A Short Interview Gene Wolfe

with
Michael
Banks



M.B. How long have you been reading Science Fiction ?

WOLFE Since I was in Junior High School, that would be around 1943-44. I can remember very vividly the first SF book of any kind I ever saw; "The Pocket Book Of Science Fiction", edited by Theodore Sturgeon, and I believe it was the first paperback collection of SF stories - all from the magazines, - that had ever been published.

M.B. When did you begin writing SF, and why ?

WOLFE I began writing in 1956. I had just got married, my wife and I were living in a furnished apartment, and we did not have enough money to buy furniture. We had no savings, and I decided for some reason that I could write a book and sell it for enough money to buy

furniture. I did write the book; I did not sell it.

I wrote more or less regularly from early 1957 through the Spring of 1965 before I sold. I wrote several books, and probably 30 or 40 short stories before I sold a thing. After I did sell, I sold some of the old short stories which had been written a good time before my first sale, but I never sold any of the books I had written before that first sale.

M.B. Do you write on a regular schedule ?

WOLFE I try, if I'm doing first draft - which is what I've been doing now for about the past two years because I'm trying to develop a trilogy. When I'm doing first draft, I try to do 3 pages on weekdays and 5 on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays... any day I don't have to go to the office.

M.B. How do you go about writing/building/creating a story, once you have the basic idea ?

WOLFE That's very difficult to answer; I don't think you can answer it meaningfully. The first thing I look at, after the basic idea, is another basic idea. I don't think that one-idea stories are likely

to live long; almost all successful stories contain more than a single idea. What I usually find is not that I get a 'basic' idea, but that I have, say, 6 or 7 ideas dangling around in my head, or filed away somewhere. Eventually, 2, 3 or 4 of those ideas hook together and I realise that they can all be integrated into one story.

I might take as an example here, my story, 'the Toy Theatre'. The basic idea, I guess, was that it would be possible in the future to build marionettes for entertainment. These would be worked by remote control, and be life-size. I don't mean robots, I wasn't thinking of a mechanism with a real electronic logic element, or a computer brain. I was thinking of a robot body that a man could control. By operating controls, he could if skilful, make the body walk, dance, take off its hat and all that jazz. I coupled this with some material I had been reading about the Italian comedy, 'De La Art', which was the old, formalised, travelling show of Italy.. and later of France and England.. in which certain fixed characters performed a different play for each performance. In this way, it was very much the equivalent of our TV show, in which the same characters appear in each episode, but with a different story.

That gave me 2 ideas, and I was also interested in using the old Pygmalion idea of the man who fell in love with his creation. I put all these together and had a story I still think of with affection, although it never made a smash. Basically, it was the story of a retired puppeteer who fell in love with one of his female marionettes and the characters were those of the Italian comedy I mentioned.

M.B. Writing avocationally as it were, do you find that the type of work you do helps or hinders your writing ?

WOLFE The type of work I do definitely helps. I'm an editor of a technical magazine. I have, in that position, the time and actually the duty to read a great deal of technical material, such as news from NASA. I also have the ability to travel in my work, and that can be a very helpful thin for a writer.

I think it's basically helpful for a writer to have a job which involves writing. Just as a violinist learns to play the violin by playing a violin, a writer learns to write by playing the typewriter.

M.B. Other than what you've just said about learning to write by writing, what advice do you have for would-be writers ?

WOLFE I can't resist the temptation to repeat the classical advice which is "Don't do it !", because anyone who can be dissuaded from writing, should be. In all modesty and humility, etc., writing is one of the high arts, just as the composition of music is a high art, along with acting, sculpture and fine painting. These high arts require a great deal of determination and effort, and I don't think they can be taken up as 'hobbies' and be really satisfactory to the person who takes them up that way, in most cases. Painting



Being a few brief notes on current items in the mailbox.

IT COMES IN THE MAIL.. C.W.Brooks, 743 Paul St., Newport News, Virginia 23605 14 pp, Qto. General breakdown of his mail pile, letters fnz etc. Nicely mineod, and friendly chatter. Nice one, Ned.

CHANDELIERS & CANDELABRAS No.1. 6pp A4 from Rick McMahon, 287 South Lane, New Malden, Surrey. Perzine, notes on

computer-words. Fanz notes and general natter. Mineo, friendly zine.

CO-AX 2 Michael A. Banks. P.O. Box 312 Milford, Ohio 45150. 7pp.Qto (For rates see my plug elsewhere). Perzine, lovely cover excellent duping. This one has promise if Michael can spare it the time from his pro-writing.

KARASS.28. 10pp Qto. Linda Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave. Prospect Park, PA 19076. Excellent newzine giving details of upcoming cons, awards, campaigns, and just about everything else on the fannish and pro calendars. If you can only afford one zine in the line...this should be the one. Five issues \$2.00

JABBERJOCKY. 12pp Qto. Jean Frost, 65 Charbloy Ave, Sheffield S11 9FR (Yes, that's just around the corner from ERGbase) General perzine with Jean dipping her toes into the fanpubbing field. Lovely cover and nice (but faint) inside art. Available for LOC, contributions or trade.

TOCSIN. Harry & Irene Bell, 9 Lincoln St., Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE8 4EE 28 Qto pages. Gen & Perzine, Mancon report, A Turner column on an abortive rocket launch in 1937. Bob Jackson on a trip to Ceylon* (Does the lighthouse still stand in Colombo, Rob ?) *OK, Sri Lanka then. Letters, and some (too few) lovely Bellillos. Another very nice one

GRAPO From..you guessed it, Graham Poole 23 Russet Rd, Cheltenham, Glos. Parts 1 and two (4 and 6 Qto pages respectively) Perzine, letters, buying fanstuff at auction and general news. Brief, but pleasant.

GEGENSCHEIN. Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge NSW 2776 Australia. 40 Qto pages. Genzine using reformed spelling (which grates if you don't subscribe to it) Nicely produced, good (but scarce) artwork and a range of subjects which defies a fair precis. I particularly liked the one on making Kleiner (electronic) jewellery..remember, I asked you for a copy Eric ? Thanks for including the spare. Not a Hugo winning zine, but one of the best, grass roots, bread and butter (OK, I like mixed metaphors) around. A GOOD ONE.

MYTHOLOGIES.11 Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Drive, East Providence, R.I, 02914 76 Beautifully mineod Qto pages, sadly, only 9 illos in the lot. Articles Reviews, author comment, letters. Something for everyone, a super-class zine which you get by RESPONDING, not cash. Highly recommended !

FARRAGO, Donn Brazier 1455 Fawnvalley Drive, St Louis, Missouri 63131. 46pp Qto, good duping, plenty of illos & cartoons, poetry, fiction, articles, letters and a host of other goodies. 75c a copy or 3 for \$2.00..and worth it too.

TITLE (also from Donn Brazier) 24pp Qto mineo. Illos, Photos, letters and news. More faanish than Farrago, but in its own way, just as interesting. Nice one.

FANZINE FANTASTIQUE 25 Keith & Rosemary Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore RD. Lancaster Lancs. 14pp A4, rather patchily mineod, but jam packed with capsule fanzine reviews in similar format to this page...but done much better.