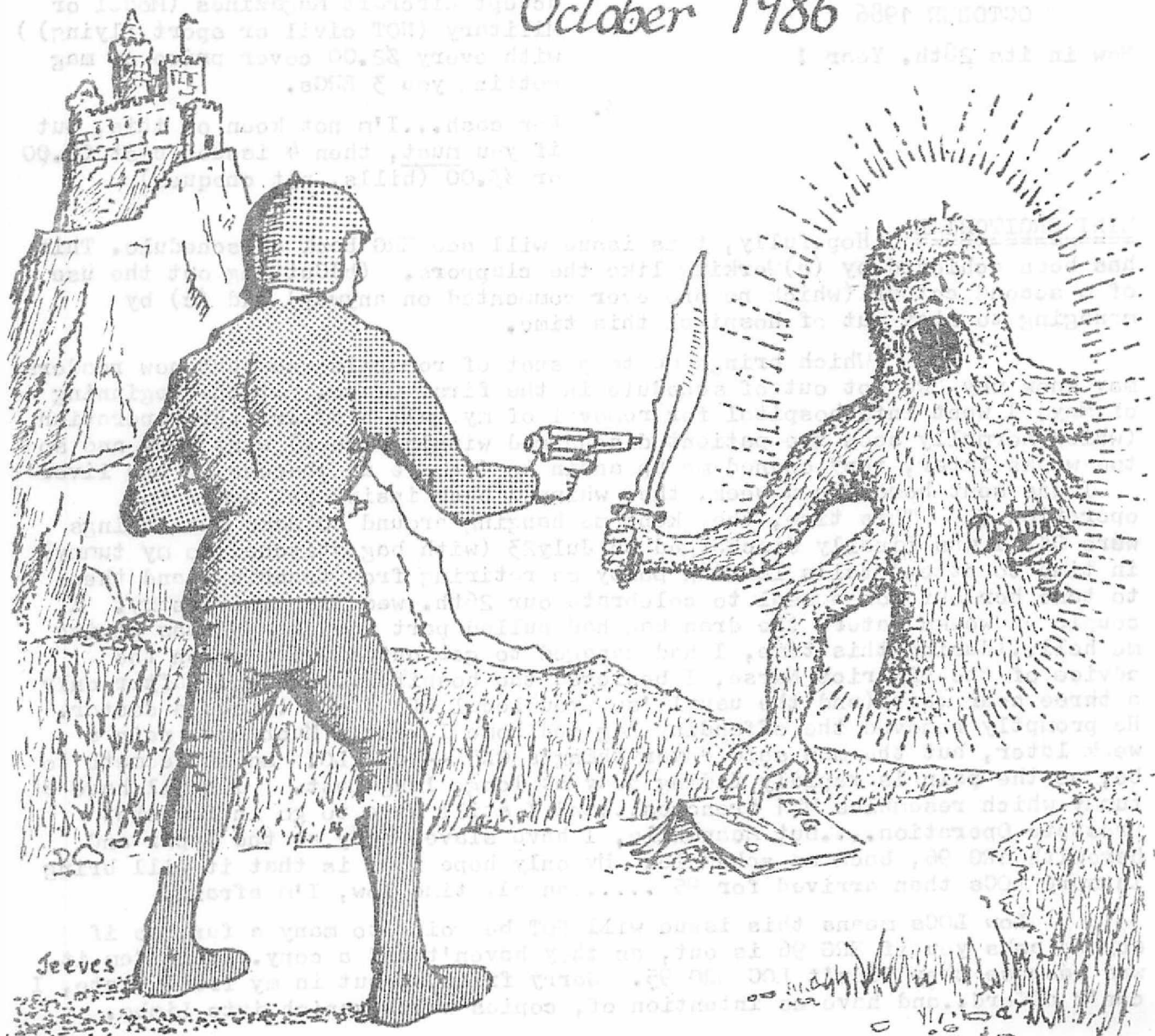


# ERG 96

Quarterly

October 1986



## The Last Copy

If you enjoyed this issue and would like to get the next, you can do it by :-

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Now in its 28th. Year !

1. Writing a LOC on this issue and add two second class stamps (Omit the stamps if you live outside the U.K.)
2. By trade..but not for fanzines, I can't handle any more of those. I'll accept Aircraft Magazines (Model or Military (NOT civil or sport flying)) with overy \$2.00 cover price of mag getting you 3 ERGs.
3. For cash...I'm not keen on this, but if you must, then 4 issues cost \$2.00 or \$3.00 (bills, not cheques)

## MINI EDITORIAL

MINI EDITORIAL Hopefully, this issue will see ERG back on schedule. This has been achieved by (a) Working like the clappers. (b) Cutting out the use of a second colour (which no one ever commented on anyway) and (c) by managing to stay out of hospital this time.

Which brings me to a spot of recapping so that now readers may know why ERG got out of schedule in the first place. At the beginning of May, I went into hospital for removal of my gall bladder..this operation (which normally sees the patient discharged within a week) went awry and so two weeks later, they opened me up again to 'remove an abscess on the liver'

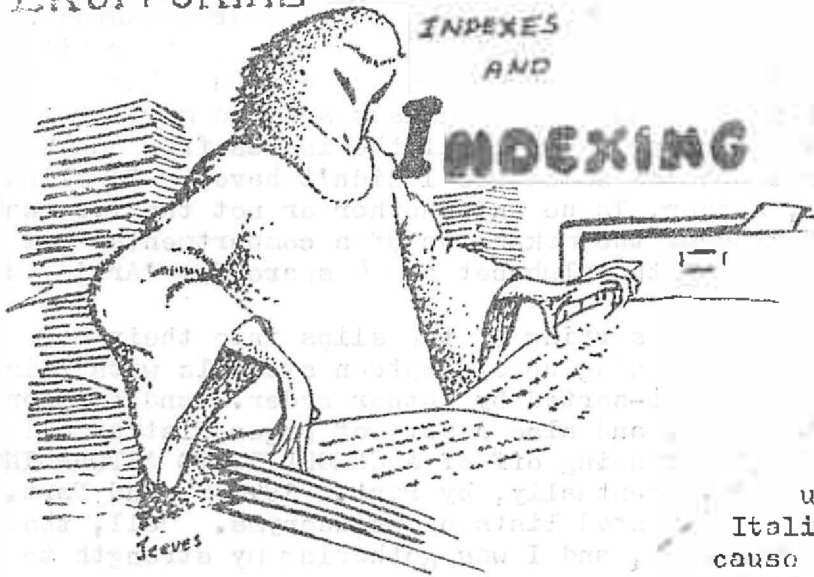
I was sent home for a week, then whipped back inside yet again for operation 3. This time, they kept me hanging around to make sure things were OK. I was finally discharged on July 23 (with bag stitched to my tummy) in time to attend Val's leaving party on retiring from teaching..and then to take her out for a meal to celebrate our 26th. wedding anniversary. A couple of weeks later, the dran bag had pulled part way out and was giving me hell..(during this time, I had managed to get out ERG95), so on the advice of the District Nurse, I besieged the hospital...and lo! After only a three hour wait (and the usual 'see you local GP) I got to see a doctor. He promptly removed the offending bag and home I went. Much more pain a week later, but the man said "Everything's OK" -- and LO! so it seemeth to be, as the pain is rapidly fading away at long, long last. I still have a tummy which resembles WW1 trenches...and I still have to go in for that Prostate Operation....but meanwhile, I have slaved away at the typer and herewith ERG 96, back on schedule. My only hope now, is that it will bring in more LOCs than arrived for 95 ..... an all time low, I'm afraid.

Low LOCs means this issue will NOT be going to many a fan, so if anyone asks you if ERG 96 is out, as they haven't had a copy...tell 'em it was because they didn't LOC ERG 95. Sorry friends, but in my frail state, I can't afford..and have no intention of, copies which vanish into Limbo.

So I trust you will all get cracking and write in with your comments on this issue.

All the best, Terry

# ERGITORIAL :-



I've always been addicted to making lists, indexes and compilations of this, that, and the other.

As a youngster, I wasted many an hour in listing all the best (i.e., pretty) stamps in my album. Not the valuable ones, as I didn't have any of those - apart from those rather dull Abyssinian issues which the dealers told us (on the packet) that the Italian invasion there would cause them to escalate in value. It didn't...anyone want to buy some?

Being keen on drawing and the illustration of anything with blank margins (such as my school text books) I had an interest in lettering - so one of my early lists was a compilation (never completed) of those 'Old English' or 'Gothic Style' letters used to splash the names of the newspapers across the front page. In those days, I had yet to discover the cavernous stalights of the public lending library and its shelves of art books, math puzzle books, aircraft books and the like, and since newspapers steadfastly avoided such names as any involving Q, X, Z and the like, I never did complete my listings.



Then came 1936 and for my 14th birthday I was given a Royal Portable typewriter. Incidentally, that machine served me (and sundry fanzines) up until the early sixties..when it was handed on to my son, who STILL uses it! Now, with the means to hand for creating neat and tidy lists (errors and typos omitted), I sailed in to listing with a will. In short order, I had lists of the planets, their mean distances from the sun, moons and other data. Thanks to the badly dated (1927) Children's Encyclopedia which was my main source of information, my planetary listing had many a gap. Naturally, one of the first compilations tackled was a listing of stories in my copies of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. I listed the titles down the left hand side of the page, and opposite each title was a brief precis of the story. This proved very useful in the lon school holidays, as it was my practice to load up the saddlebag of my bag with a dozen back issues, then head off into the country, there to settle on some grassy knoll and read my favourite mag. The listings made it easy to select which issues to take.

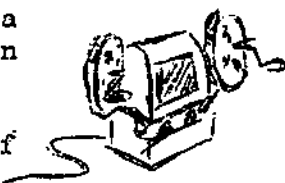
This was also a period of Grammar School Physics and Chemistry..both of which, along with mathematics, I took to like a duck to water - so my lists soon included tables of the elements along withhChemical Symbols, Atomic Weights and suchlike important information which one might need at the drop of a balance weight.

That first story/precis listing for ASTOUNDING didn't satisfy me for long, but with a war intervening, it was only in the fifties that I began to give the matter of a real index, some thought. What I wanted was a quick reference list giving Story, author, length...and any other bits of information I could squeeze in. Thus began my series of 'Checklists of Astounding' (They were really indexes, but Checklists sounded more important).

The listings began by my ploughing through all the issues from Jan 1939 to Dec. 1939 (I got help for the 18 or so issues I didn't have). On slips of paper, I listed Story title, Author, Issue and whether or not the item was an article. Next came the making up of a compartmented box holding 30 little sections (26 for the alphabet and 4 spare for 'Articles' or whatever).

Then followed a tedious sorting of the slips into their boxes by alphabetical story title....and a typing up of umpteen stencils with this information. The slips were then re-sorted by Author order...and further stencils typed. Articles followed, and also a set of pages listing all the contents by issue. Then came the running off of A CHECKLIST TO ASTOUNDING, Part.1 1930-39. It was followed..eventually, by Part.2 1940-49 and Part.3 1950-59. These latter parts also boasted lists of pseudonyms. Well, that covered thirty years of the magazine, and I was gathering my strength to tackle the next segment when Mike Ashley contacted me with the suggestion that we both work on THE COMPLETE INDEX TO ASTOUNDING/Analog. The deed was duly did...and Ken Slater may be able to get you a copy...Weinberg USA, at a horrendous price.

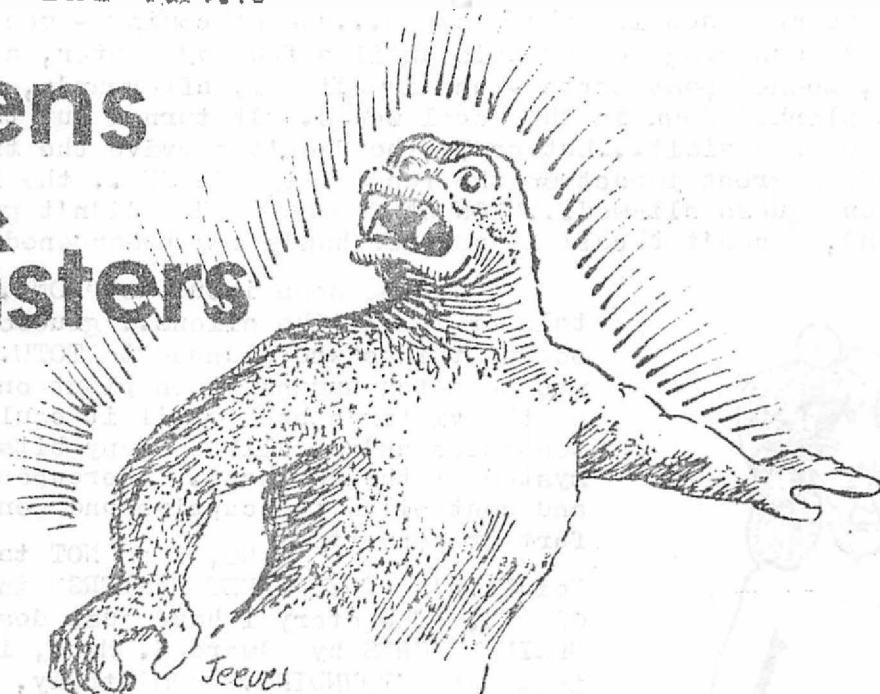
On the side, I have also compiled lists for Galaxy, Cosmos, International SF, Orbit, and quite a few others, as well as lists of all my recorded (audio) tapes and cine films. Another project was to have all the assorted ASTOUNDING covers and associated contents pages on one..or maybe two rolls of Standard 8mm cine film. Tests showed that by single framing each shot, this was feasible...BUT, my new sound projector lacked a single frame projection facility....well, then why not use the film editor. More accessible, easy to inch through a frame at a time, and usable without setting up screen and blackout. The idea worked for covers..but the resolution wasn't good enough for index reading of the contents pages. In the end, with the arrival of the COMPLETE INDEX, I settled for taking a set of colour photos and housing them in an album which I made specially for the purpose (another of my hobbies is bookbinding), so I am now up to 1959 and still working on that project....I take a year at a time (six photographs) on each reel of 35mm I expose.



Checklists, indexes etc., should make finding a particular item as easy as possible...so I got a ZX81 plus RAMpack and began indexing ERG.. but that insensitive keyboard drove me bonkers..so I invested in a BBC 'B' and Epson FX80 printer. JOY! A proper keyboard, fast sorting and a print out of whatever I wanted. I was able to produce a correlation list linking USA/UK issues of Astounding/Analog, and numerous other projects..and when I make a typo, it can be changed on the file next time I LOAD up. At the moment, I'm using cassettes -- but have just ordered a disc drive and 256K RAM Solidisc (Challenger 3, from Opus). Now I can have LONG indexes, fast LOAD/SAVE....and hopefully for ERG101 onwards, complete computer typesetting. Indexing may be fun...but with a computer, it's a joy as well.

Terry.

# Aliens & Monsters



In case the title of this instalment seems a bit ambiguous, maybe a bit of explanation would help sort things out. Yes, I know that aliens can be monsters - and vice versa....or even that such characters can belong in both categories. Just as an arbitrary...very much arbitrary...definition, let's say aliens have intelligence whereas monsters are just sheer nasty for the hell of it.

About the first aliens I can recall, were probably in the pages of Wizard, Rover, Boy's Magazine, and the like. These were invariably hostile, 90% of 'em came from Mars and all wanted to take over the world. Nowadays, that ambition would denote sheer crackpotism. However, such aliens were about as memorable as a post-war British Restaurant meal, and the only near-monsters I remember from that little lot were...(1) The Wizard's Martians introduced a fast -growing weed to Earth...and it covered everything at a high rate of knots. Steve Cram might have got away, but it was tough going for everyone else. (2) Some Tibetan monks set out to TOTW (Ok junior, that means 'Take Over The World...try to remember will you ?) and their chief weapon was the 'Worms Of Doon'. ..which could nibble on steel as if it were chocolate. It brought the house down...and the Empire State, Mifel Tower and Forth bridge before someone invented a new form of DDT. (3) Some subterranean, crab-like monsters in Boy's Magazine. These monsters emerged through Wembley pitch in the middle of the Cup Final (the monsters won) which to my football-hating mind, was a very sensible thing to do.

After a surfeit of such ininical creatures, it was a refreshing change to encounter Ray Gallun's OLD FAITHFUL. His ageing Martian scientist had made radio contact with his Earth counterpart. Having learned English, or at least a 'pidgin' version (And HOW do you teach that by dots and dashes or

R/T ???), he kept sending the message..."Comet coming - man of Mars coming" The Earthman was croggled by this until a few days later, a comet zipped past Mars, zoomed past Earth - and immediately afterwards, a glowing meteorite plonked down in the local woods. It turned out to be our Martian friend come on a visit...but sadly, he didn't survive the trip. Naive, yes, but it made a great impact on the readership of ASF .. the inevitable sequel...one guess allowed..."SON OF OLD FAITHFUL" didn't go down so well, and offhand, I can't recall if another handy comet happened along for him.



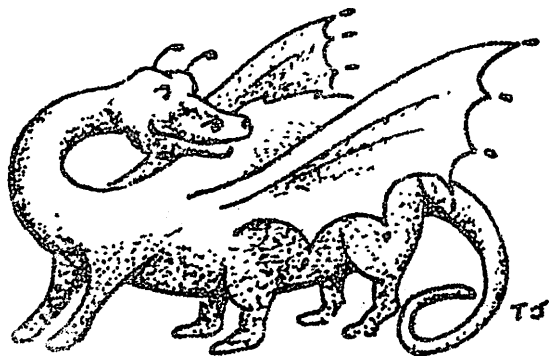
In the same issue as "SON..." appeared a tale of leech-like aliens...gruesome, protoplasmic oozing things who planned to TOTW. Their system was to catch humans, then plant one of their kind on the victim's back until it could wangle its tentacles and suchlike droopy bits into the nerve system of the new host. Whereupon, the alien rode and controlled the captive and went hunting for further converts. NO, I am NOT talking about Heinlein's "THE PUPPET MASTERS" in a post-war GALAXY. The story I have just described was... BRAIN LEECHES by Edward S. Mund, in the July 1935 issue of ASTOUNDING. Admittedly, I do wonder where R.A.H. got his idea from.....

THRILLING WONDER STORIES appeared on the scene in 1936...with a cover which included a bulbous-headed alien pooping off with a ray gun. The magazine was devoted to 'action SF', and it wasn't long before no less a person than John W. Campbell Jr. had a series running therein. His Penton and Blake were a couple of space explorers

temporarily exiled from Earth because they had built an atom-powered space ship. Until the fuss died down (they were ostracised by an earlier version of CND/Anti nuclear protest), they visited various planets of the Solar System...having terribly exciting adventures on each. Landing on Mars, they encounter the 'thushol' - aliens who could duplicate perfectly, any life form which may happen along. In no time at all, Two Pentons and two Blakes were faced with the problem of getting rid of their counterfeit copies. J.W.C must have liked this sort of theme alien, as he brought it back, frozen in ice, in his memorable "WHO GOES THERE". When defrosted, it began to ravage an Arctic camp, and since it could become anyone (or thing) fixing its wagon proved quite a problem. Sadly, when made into a movie, 'It' had been converted into a vegetable...fair put me off salads that did.

Anyone wanting to read about Penton and Blake, might hunt up the ACE Double G-585, 'THE PLANETEERS' published c.1966. You get five P&B yarns..and backing them, JWC's 'THE ULTIMATE WEAPON' which first saw light as the 2 part serial 'UNCERTAINTY' in 1936.

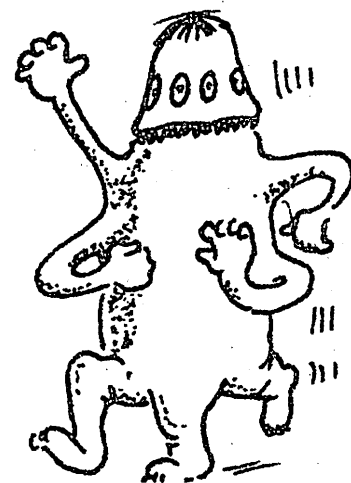
Campbell created sundry aliens and monsters, but his contemporary rival in the space opera stakes, E.E. 'Doc' Smith PhD. was no slouch at the game either. Amphibious aliens, other-dimensional aliens, wheel-men and wheel-creatures, all rubbed fins, tentacles or shoulders with frigid-blooded creatures, monsters with claws, spines, mental powers and suchlike...but it wasn't until 'Doc' started his Lensman series that he produced a really



memorable alien. Very early in his career (GALACTIC PATROL), Good old Muscles' Kinnison acquired the (at first) timid and defeatist, Worsel as a sidekick. A rather unusual sort of pal, as Worsel was a rather large dragon. Sadly, Doc was too early to profit from the current fad for any title which included that magic word. In recent years, David Kyle was more astute. When he began extensions to the Lensman series, he did the Worsel story under the title of 'DRAGON LENSMAN'. I wonder how

many fen thought that it was a McCaffrey spin-off ?

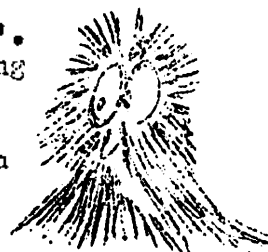
Just before Hitler's World War 2 put a severe crimp in the dribble of available SF magazines (we had virtually NOTHING in films, books or such modern offerings), we saw TALES OF WONDER appear in the UK. One of its yarns...was it Russell's 'PR-E-E-ET' or THE PERFECT CREATURE (Wyndham?)...I fancy the latter. This was a laboratory created monster which was intended to be perfect and free of all the design drawbacks inherent in the human form. Multi-legged, it could run in any direction without turning around - similarly, eyes on all sides allowed vision without needing a vulnerable neck for head-turning. The mouth was designed on the same principle, and of course it had boneless, tentacular arms. Since it was made an omnivore, the thing naturally set off chasing its creator with the admirable aim of having him for lunch. Luckily, its perfections didn't include swimming, so that when it fell into a lake, the poor thing drowned.



A.E.Van Vogt burst onto the SF scene and created a reputation with his first two stories of alien creatures. 'BLACK DESTROYER' saw Coeurl, one of the last few of a dying race, boarding an exploring space ship. Coeurl bumped off the crew to extract their 'id' .. no, not a Freudian slip, that was his term for potassium. Able to control energy flows, the creature proved a formidable opponent .... as did a follow-up story using the same crew (later to appear in the collection VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE) against a new monster. DISCORD IN SCARLET introduced Ixtl, last of her race and seeking host bodies in which to lay her eggs. She could adjust her atomic structure and move through walls and so proved an even tougher nut to crack. Film buffs will no doubt recognise the stories as having very strong resemblances to the film ALIEN - a similarity which I gather proved very lucrative, law-suit wise, for Mr. Van Vogt. I wonder if ALIENS.2 had any similar origins...and if so, maybe some other SF writer is rubbing his hands in glee as he toddles along to the friendly local lawyer.



Even the fantasy oriented UNKNOWN featured some memorable monsters, my favourite being Sturgeon's (?) 'IT'. This delightful creature arose spontaneously from a rotting mixture of woodland humus wrapped around the skeleton of a long-dead body, and enriched with a delicate sprinkling of assorted fungi. After dissectioning a dog, and chasing a (stupidly infuriating) little girl - all in a spirit of innocent scientific investigation, it managed to fall in a stream. Its curiosity caused it to stay there and check on its feelings as it gently melted away. Well, what other way can a writer kill off something already dead?



Another UNKNOWN epic was (again, Sturgeon's) KILLDOZER wherein an energy controlling creature was awakened by, and entered into a bulldozer being used to hack out a landing strip on a remote coral atoll. I really enjoyed the life and death struggle between work crew and the killer machine - and happily, when made into a film, they stuck pretty closely to the story.



Treading the borderline between alien and monster were the intolligent mutant rats hiding in the walls of a spacecraft...and emerging to kill off the human crew. That was the Bertram Chandler yarn 'GIANT KILLER' which soon earned itself the subtitle of 'The Rat's Tale'.

It was Hal Clement who brought us a series of aliens, which, though differing in shape from humans, all had very human thoughts, motives and actions. In the case of the central characters, these often became prison, pedantic and a tutorial pain-in-the-neck. The yarns were good however. Who can forget the amoeba-like detective (?) hunting a criminal of the same type? Able to ooze into a human body (and considerably improve its disease resistance, etc.) the problem was one of finding which body the criminal was hiding in. Even though limited to the inhabitants of a small island, it still posed a problem until the criminal's own instincts betrayed him. Who knows, we may yet see 'NEEDLE' on the big screen...after all it would need a minimum of special effects - or would the absence of ray guns, robots, laser beams and space dogfights make it a no-no? Then of course, there was the great yarn, MISSION OF GRAVITY, set on the world, Mesklin which was a massive, disc shape rotating very quickly...thus gravity was crushing near the centre, but light towards the edge. Problem..to rescue a spacecraft probe which had crashed in the high-g area. It was solved by calling in an earwig-like alien, Bar-Lennan, to help out. Clement also gave us 'ICEWORLD' which was Earth. Well, Earth would be cold when compared with the home planet of the alien criminals who had come to barter for the deadly drug...a one-shot-addictive (to them)...namely tobacco. When their dupe is sent down to get supplies, the sheer heat of his spacesuit sets the local forest on fire. Since he has been forcibly addicted to tobacco, Clement had quite a few problems to solve before alien Ken could be freed, the criminals given their comeuppance, and the wise and practical Earthmen edged into the profitable side of the deal. The author wrote quite a few other alien/problem tales, but these are the ones which remain firmly fixed in the old memory banks.

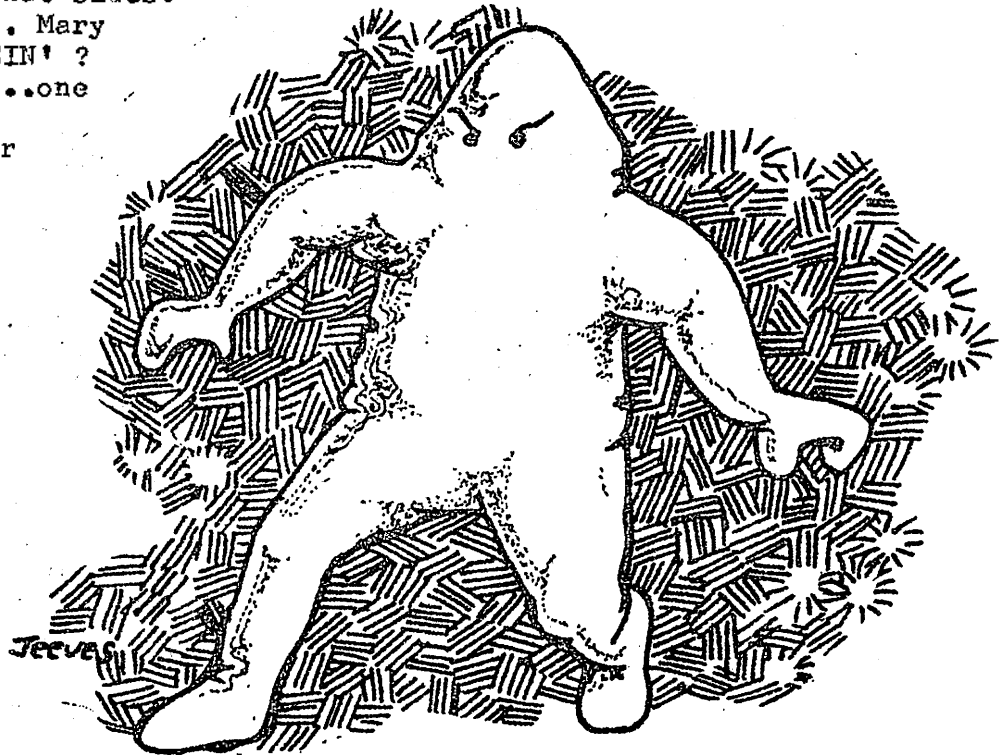




In a much lighter vein, Galaxy gave us 'CABIN BOY' by Damon Knight. This saw a Terrestrial ship stuck to the outer surface of a giant spacecraft which began to assimilate the Earth ship as food! However, the prankish 'Cabin Boy' contacts the husband-wife crew of the endangered rocket..by making controlled stinks. He takes pity on them, then earns his skipper's wrath (and their freedom) by pooping off in such a way as to make the skipper (who happens to be the alien craft) involuntarily release the captives and their craft.

Eric Frank Russell was no slouch at creating aliens..I fancy he created the 'PR-E-EET' I mentioned earlier. However, he most certainly created those invisible energy-beings, the 'Vitons', which thrived on human emotions at scenes of disaster..and first arranged same. A scientist discovers a way of making them visible, and an all-out war begins as the Vitons seek first to eliminate the few who know about them, and then the whole human race. I reckon this is another novel just waiting for the right producer to happen along. Perhaps my favourite Russell alien appears but briefly in his superb, 'HOBBYIST' wherein a stranded space scout discovers a gigantic building which contains statues (or stasis-frozen samples?) of every conceivable species of alien..and human...the Creator of the collection passes only briefly as a flashing light...but we are left in no doubt as to who He is. Russell also created the touching alien of 'DEAR DEVIL', the mind-parasites of 'CALL HIM DEAD' and that highly evolved human of 'METAMORPHOSITES', not to mention a raft of rather brainless alien troops bent on TOTU...and failing through their total lack of understanding Earth's climate, or the English language. Then of course, EFR also gave us the robot spaceman, 'Jay Score' and the two, chess-playing and multi-tentacled Martians of the 'Mechanistria' series which saw hard covers under the title, 'MEN, MARTIANS AND MACHINES'.

But why, you may ask, haven't I mentioned that oldest monster of them all... Mary Shelley's 'FRANKENSTEIN' ? Well, for two reasons..one is that created human as it was..and monster type in behaviour, it was really human in origin. That isn't the main reason for leaving the old boy out of the memory banks though. I loved the film..but found the book one of the most tedious narratives I have ever read... so it just made only that impression in my memory. I now await the postal bombs.



Closely akin to 'FRANKENSTEIN' in tediousity must come Dean Swift's 'GULLIVER'S TRAVELS'. Once again, as with Shelley's masterpiece, the slow and over-the-top narrative style gets in the way of the Sense Of Wonder - this despite the encounter with minute Lilliputians, the meeting with the talking horse (Houhnyns ??), the yahaos and the flying city of Laputa.

Runner-up in this section might just be Bram Stoker's 'DRACULA' with his sinister Count hotly pursued by van Helsing and hindered by the stupidity of the heroine. A darned good monster, old Dracula, but a rather heavy-going story.

Much more readable, and much more prolific was Herbert George Wells. Like some 90% of the fans of my generation, his writings were the first samples of SF to come along the highway. I still shudder when meeting a jellyfish, and my first encounter with an octopus when swimming off Bombay's Juhu beach, quite gave me a turn. The reason for such cowardice stems, I'm sure, from reading HGW's 'THE SEA RAIDERS' in

which octopus-like invaders off Land's End begin to vary their sea food diet by chewing up the occasional unwary boatman, or seashore paddler. On the other hand, I can't blame 'THE VALLEY OF SPIDERS' on my loathing for arachnida, that yarn just strengthened it. Remember the explorers riding up the valley as the floating threads

bear spiders down on them? Yecch...another gripping, chilling and memorable tale...as was

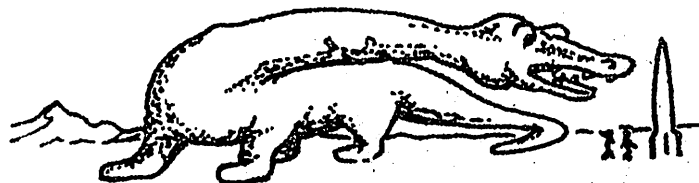
'EMPIRE OF THE ANTS' and of course, the one which must have kept many a keen gardener from growing exotic plants in his greenhouse... 'THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID' A tale which has been plagiarised more times than Sinatra retires from showbiz. For newcomers, an orchid fancier grows a new variety, only to nearly succumb to its taste for human blood.

Another yarn with more theme-swipers must be his 'IN THE ABYSS'. This tells of a bathysphere descent which sees the diver trapped by the dwellers in an underwater city. My own favourite features, not exactly a monster, but 'THE INEXPERIENCED GHOST' which, having materialised, has forgotten the passes needed to dematerialise. It finally gets then right, but is then emulated by a character in the story as he tells his friends about meeting the ghost. He repeats the gestures...and drops dead. Then of course, we had the striding machine operators bent on TOTW in 'THE WAR OF THE WORLDS'. Some people decried the film of this, but I found the almost total absence of a Martian appearance actually adding to the menace...as did the weird, ray supported war machines. 'ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU' was of course jammed with monsters made from animals...or humans and again, we got but the

briefest idea of the vampire-bat-like monster of 'IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY'

Nevertheless, such creatures are unforgettable in their slow-building menace, and still make better reading than many a yarn of spacemen bumping into giant dinosaurs on the planet, 'BACKAWAY IV (Lolli).

Happy memories.....T.J.



# LETTERS



IF YOU'D LIKE THE NEXT BAG...  
...WRITE IN ABOUT THIS ONE!

((With ERGitorial comment  
hidden tastefully within  
these pretty triple parentheses  
to make life easier for you)))

MIKE ASHLEY I imagine you'll  
Chatham receive a fair number  
KENT of letters about the

nuclear issue. I think Chernobyl  
has swung the balance, though, now.  
I don't think that the arguments  
of more deaths from car accidents  
or whatever, have any relevance.  
A car accident or mining disaster  
doesn't leave the countryside for  
miles around devastated, or a  
wasteland. It doesn't cause  
surrounding nations up to a 1000  
miles away to live in fear that  
they have been contaminated.

((True, Mike...it was an unfair  
analogy...but the Italian blow  
up did cause chemical contamin-  
ation over a large area..but you  
are dead right on your main  
point.))) As for alternative

energy, it still doesn't seem to

me that sufficient investment is being made into wind and wave and solar  
power. ((I agree, with reservations. Wind power can NEVER touch our main  
power needs when fossil fuels run out. Wave power..I doubt it. Likewise  
Earth-based solar power isn't going to do it. Satellite collection might  
have a chance, but as of now, our real (and only??) chance is fusion power.  
Apart from being 'clean' as distinct from fission power...it is the only  
source likely to meet future energy demand. A key point here is HOW DO  
WE DISTRIBUTE FOOD FROM RAILHEADS or PORTS ?? It seems the electric car is  
going to be the only answer..unless we revert to horse and buggy)))

ALAN SULLIVAN  
53 Eccleston Sq  
LONDON SW1 1PG

((Alan expressed very similar sentiments to Mike Ashley,  
and of the cover....))) "A very slick piece of cover art.

I notice the ship has the latest hi-fashion, swept forward  
wings - nice touch. Come to think of it, I'm sure my dad had a car that  
looked a bit like that. ((With wings ???)) 'The Good Old Days', I hate to  
get into politics, but I have a strong dislike of the Conservative Party on  
many policy issues. ((Me too, but I dread the thought of the Militant Left  
taking over))) and I don't like Maggie T. - too fond of following Regan for  
my liking ((Better him than Scargill, or Red Ken etc))) but that's beside the  
point, as is the fact that I've heard a lot of talk from militants, but seen  
no results that benefitted those who were suffering ((Ah, but if the  
sufferers are Militant relatives, voters for, or the like..they soon benefit  
from jobs, handouts and the like)))

((On this non-nuclear argument...does any  
reader have viable suggestions as to alternative energy sources ???)))

TED HUGHES

40 Kenmore Rd.,  
Whitefield  
Manchester M25 6ER

Really magnificent cover. Who cares if Joeves can't draw people -- neither could Dold, Van Dongen and numerous others. As a matter of fact, the constant use of faces and figures by Analog's current crop of artists, Janet Aulisio in particular, chokes me off. (((Me too.))) Val Lahey is the only one with any idea of how SF should be illustrated. (((Whilst agreeing en tirely, I'd add that the same could be said of Analog's current crop of authors...I loathe Robinson's 'bar' stories, Turtlersen's 'sin' stories and all the crop of 'be kind to dolphins etc.))) Liked 'It Ghost To Show', you achieved a perfectly logical surprise ending. Agree with your comments on Vinz Clarke's letter about modern author's ignorance of current scientific theory. But, on the other hand, try writing a story about quarks or strings or any of the weird ideas postulated by modern scientists. Joe Skidmore got some mileage out of Posi & Nega, but I reckon no one could get away with it again. (((Wasn't it Campbell who did..with the 'Tubby' stories???))) Modern readers wouldn't stand for the fantastic leaps from theory to practice that authors used to pull off. A process Campbell used to describe as 'flanging up'. ((( Sadly, all too true. I strongly suspect that SF as we used to know and love it, is a thing of the past. Oh, Benford, Brin, Niven etc still write 'hardcore', but their themes are generally sociological. Tomorrow's growth.(heck, today's) industry seems to be 'sword,sorcery,magic and the inevitable trilogy of good v evil (magic).)))

ROGER WADDINGTON

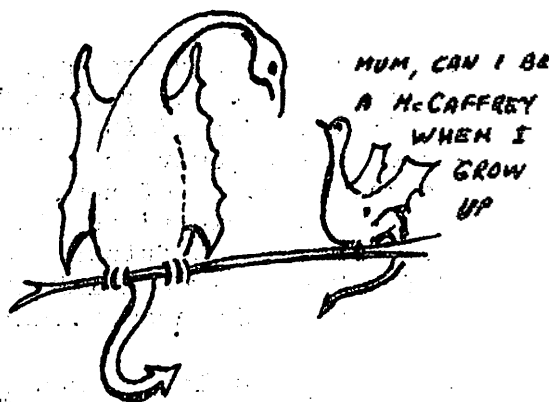
4 Commercial St.,  
Norton, Malton,  
Nth Yorks. YO17

Re 'The Good Old Days' and our present problems..have you read Schmidt's editorial in the August Analog?

It makes most of the comments I have here, superfluous; but briefly, if we could have been born in the 'Good Old Days' we'd have found as many problems looming just as large. For every era there's always been the end of civilisation as we know it, whether by Moorish Invasions, Black Death, Greek Fire (ancient equivalent of the A-bomb), or the Roman Invasion of Britain. Every one meant the end of a settled, comfortable way of life - and yet, we're still here.

(((I fancy people would argue that now, we CAN destroy every form of life))) I believe that

problem solving is the way that humanity grows. Faced with problems, humanity instinctively solves them, as otherwise, the race would doo out. (((I hold a similar view..that we only progress by facing and tackling problems, NOT by hiding our heads in the sand, turning our back or similar 'give-in' tactics))) For all the apparently unsolvable problems of t'day, I'd lay any money that people living in the future...faced with their problems, will be calling our era..'The Good Old Days' (((Very, very likely - assuming that there are any people alive to do so.)))



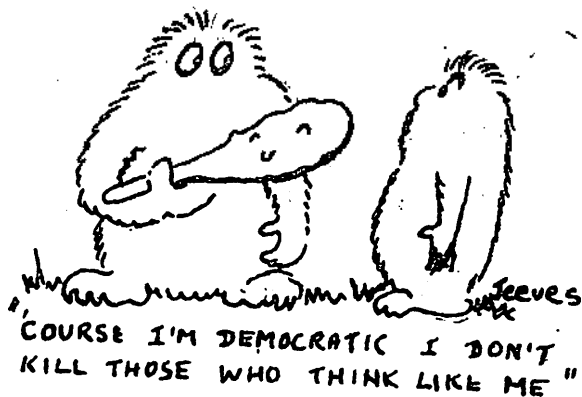
((((Having read so far, don't just think about LOCing ERG, be like these readers...and DO IT NOW!))))

ROB GREGG  
103 Highfield Rd  
Romford  
Essex RM5 3AE

I hate to start a LOC on a negative note, but 'The Good Old Days' was the worst piece I've ever read in ERG. You seem to confuse a natural concern with the problems of the world and a desire to get back to the old days. I don't think any progressive, caring person wants to return to the harsh times when society was even more unequal than it is now. Then you go on to spout forth a load of pathetic excuses for the evils of the Western World. Those excuses simply don't stand up under argument. (((Ouch, Rob, you pack a mean punch. My piece said that some people (not me) express a longing for the 'good old days' - and I then tried to point out some of the modern evils they always cite to support that stance...not MY points. I didn't 'spout...pathetic excuses', but offered three main factors..NOT the only ones..for the troubles in famine countries..namely Over-breeding, poor farming methods and the venality of local rulers & officials. India is trying to introduce birth control and curb the population growth. India and Africa (speaking generally, still use ox-drawn sticks for ploughing, and not only do taxes get slapped on 'relief imports', but aircraft are likely to be shot down. These are all facts, and support my points. However, my main platform remains unchanged...overall, we are far better off nowadays than say two hundred years ago.))) The forthcoming books page was a waste of space, as we all receive the lists from dealers anyway. ((( Do you all ???))) (((Rob makes quite a few other points about the bad present days...all valid, but not relative to the basic argument ... wine lakes, butter mountains, nuclear power, etc. Yes, we have idiocies, but the quality of everyday life for the main in the street is far, far better. - keep 'em coming, it was a darned interesting LOC)))

TOM FERGUSON  
90 Carnhill  
Shantallow 3  
Derry BT48 8BE  
N.Ireland

I see that you're a great fan and advocate of the uses of the computer in producing your zine, and general communications. It has been my experience however, that such uses of the computer are limited to expensive systems (like your BBC and disk system). Three years ago, my mother bought me a Dragon-3 (cassette based) for £175 to aid me in my A level computer studies. After dropping that course in the second year, the use of the computer fell to games and finally to disuse. This is because although I could and would use it for writing letters and short stories, I estimate at present prices, it would cost up to £500 to update and equip myself with the necessary printer/disk, cables, program and monitor. (((Well, I only fitted my Challenger disk/256K RAM a week ago..I used cassettes for all work until then..I use our portable TV as monitor, and you can get printers for 3200 and Wordwise under £60. However I wouldn't advise people to buy computer equipment for fannish purposes etc..BUT, if you have a set-up, then DON'T limit it to games, but investigate other ways in which it can help you. I seldom LOAD a game, but find the Beeb totally indispensable for umpteen writing and listing chores. By the way..second hand Beebs can be had for about £150 if you look around.)))



KEN LAKE

115 Markhouse Ave.,  
LONDON E17 8AY

I refuse to be drawn on Ted Hughes' alphabetical additions, but am open to offers of anything useful. How about switching the subject to that other alphabet, the one that starts "A for 'orses, B for mutton, C for yourself"? (((I prefer 'C forth Highlanders')))) I don't recall all that one either, though I admit that a few striking bits still make me smile, among them, E for Adam, F for vescence, H for consent, I for Novello, J for oranges, K for Ances, and of course, L for bet (or L for Leather), then there was 'M for sis, R for mo, T for two, U for me, V for la France, X for breakfast and Y for girlfriend'. anyone care to fill in the gaps? (((D fer payments, E for a pint, G whiz, H and scratch it, I for the girls, N for eggs, O for another pint, and P when you've had one. Q for song, W up with laughter and finally, Z I to myself. A few cheaters there, but it's all for fun. Any more??)))

While we're on the subject, can anyone date the invention of this? I continue to find your Recent Reading reviews infuriating as obviously we share few likes/dislikes, but they're invaluable all the same, never let anyone persuade you to quit offering your personal views on SF books.

(((That has me puzzled..why should my tastes infuriate you? Yours don't infuriate me. Again, I only précis the story and add a single line of personal comment. The WHOLE IDEA of RR is (a) To let people know a book exists (otherwise they can't even think of buying it) and (b) To give some idea as to content so they can decide whether or not they may be interested. Actually, my preferences don't mean a damn, I only include them as a guide to those who find they have similar tastes to mine. OK??)))

=====

RECENT READING...continued from page 26.

### THE COPPER CROWN

Patricia Kenneally  
Panther £2.95

The good ship 'Sword' is about to boldly go home after a five year mission, when it meets another ship crewed by Latin and Gaelic speaking aliens - originally from Atlantean imigrants from Ireland. That's the background against which Queen Aeron of Keltia (who has the kenning power) is already faced with hostility from the Imperium and 'The Phalanx'. This is now complicated by the arrival of the Terrans (Surely, ex-Atlanteans would use Doc Smith's more correct Tellus/Tellurians ??) and a complicated three-cornered power struggle begins. First novel of the 'Keltiad' with maps and a lineage chart...but read the back first, for words and suchlike are explained. Quibble: Annoying way in which 'Latin speaking' Keltians begin to speak in 'perfect English'/Gaelic after a cultural gap of 3000+ years.

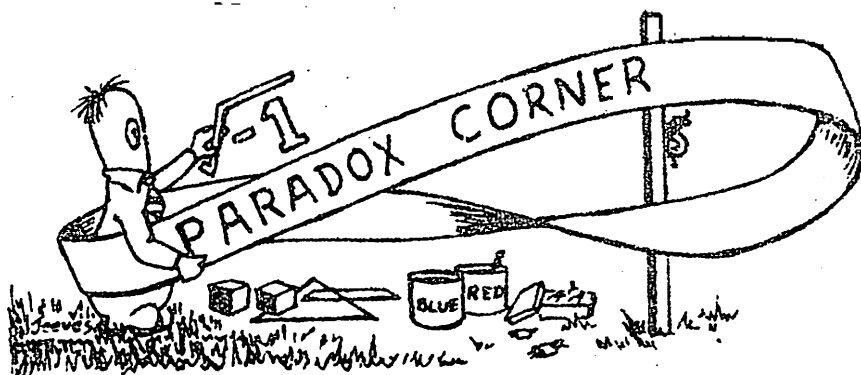
### SWORDS IN THE MIST

Fritz Leiber  
Grafton £2.50

A collection of short stories involving those old friends I first met in the pages of UNKNOWN. Fafhrd the huge barbarian, and his diminutive companion, 'Gray Mouser'. We follow the indomitable pair as they fend off an attack by the ectoplasmic creation of a strange cult; tilt with religion; have an underwater adventure; confront an adept at magic, and more. New material has been added to link the stories, though these are essentially lightweight fantasy this is redeemed by the dry humour and engaging characters. No 'Castle of Iton' here, but still a good 'read'

=====

RECENT READING continues on page 18



No doubt you will have come across one of those cards, each side of which bears the wording --

THE STATEMENT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS CARD IS FALSE

This is supposed to be a paradox - but isn't. If side A is true, then B

must be false...i.e. it is NOT true to say that A is false..therefore, A is true. This is where we started, so no paradox is involved. A is always true, and B false. However, if you only print on one side and say that...

THE STATEMENT ON THIS CARD IS FALSE, or simply THIS STATEMENT IS FALSE then you do have a paradox. If the statement tells the truth, then it must be false...which means it is untrue to say it is false...which make it true and therefore it's false...and so on.

Head spinning? then how about the old chestnut about the little village where the barber shaves everyone who doesn't shave himself. Who shaves the barber. If he shaves himself, then by definition, he isn't shaved by the barber..which means he doesn't shave himself..so he must be shaved by the barber...and off we go again.

In a slightly different vein, how about the 4mph hare which gives the 2mph tortoise a mile start. The hare races that mile...but the tortoise in that time has done half a mile. The hare reels off the half-mile only to find the tortoise still  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile ahead. Each time the hare covers the gap, it is to find the tortoise is still half that distance ahead. It may be a smaller and ever smaller space...but the hare can never catch up.

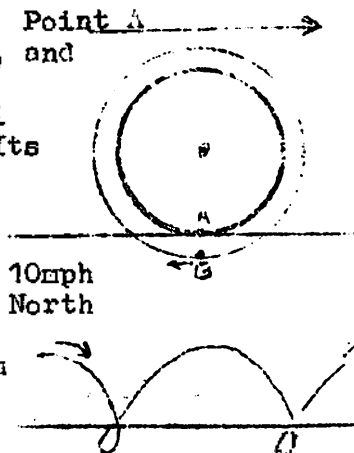
Just as whacky is the variation where you set off across a room to touch the opposite wall...with one proviso..you must stop at the half way mark..and again and again each time, halving the remaining distance. The remaining space will get ever smaller, but you will never actually get to touch that wall!

The hidden kicker in such seeming paradoxes lies in the deliberately confusing wording. You can set up oral paradoxes.. after all, isn't it in 'ALICE' that we meet the sentence.. "Words mean what I want them to mean" ? On the other hand, can we find any in the real world? I recall meeting a lovely one as a schoolboy. It was in W.W.Rouse Ball's epic 'MATHEMATICAL RECREATIONS AND ESSAYS'..now revised into boring obscurity. It was months before I located the fallacy in his proof that  $1 = 2$ . Can you bear a spot of elementary algebra? Then here goes. If  $a = b$ , then  $a^2$  must equal  $ab$

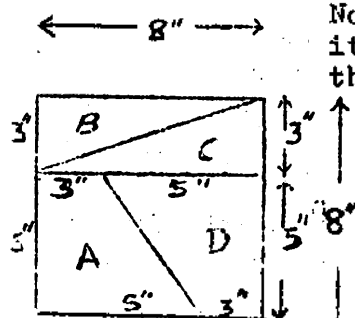
By subtracting equals from equals, we must get equals, therefore  $a^2 - ab = a^2 - b^2$  OK so far, so let's factorise both sides. By doing so, we get  $a(a - b) = (a + b)(a - b)$  If we now divide both sides by  $(a - b)$ , we are left with  $a = a + b$  which means  $a = 2a$  and if we now divide each side by  $a$ , we are left with the fact that  $1 = 2$  H'm, who said that mathematics is an exact science ?



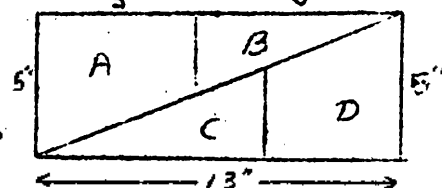
Croggled? Then how about the fact that part of a flanged railway wheel is always moving backwards when the train is going forwards? Look at the highly technical diagram on the right. Point A is the point of the wheel in contact with the rail, and B is a point on the edge of the flange...which is below the pivotal point A. Therefore, as the wheel turns point B actually moves slightly backwards. Its actual path through space being shown in the lower sketch.



Another poser for BR is what happens when a suicidal fly heads South for the Winter at (say) 10mph and runs slap into the front of an express heading North at 60mph? Naturally, the fly ends up slightly squashed and heading North.. BUT if it changed from 10mph South to 60mph North...at some point in its reversal, it must have been moving at 0 mph...and if the fly stopped..however briefly, then the train must also have done the same. Would anyone care to write to BR and ask if flies DO stop their trains?



Now how about the 8" by 8" square on the left. Obviously, its area is 64 Sq. inches. Cut it into four pieces of the dimensions given, and re-addemle then to form the rectangle on the right...which is 13" by 5" ..or an area of 65 sq. inches. Try it with a chunk of cardboard for yourself. Seemingly, 5" you've converted one into the other and gained a square inch in the process. Oh, like the 1=2, there's hidden catch -- but can you find it?

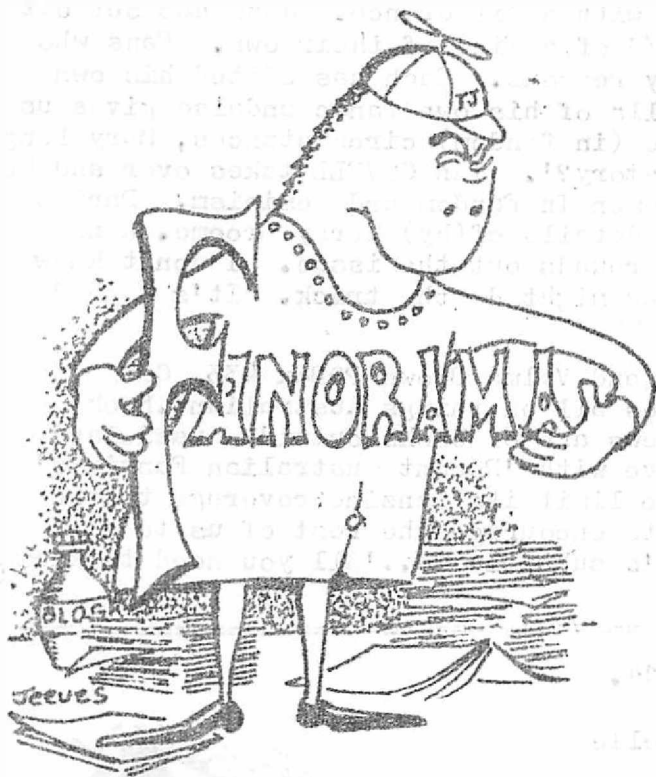


Finally, another oldie which still catches people out. Three men enter a restaurant, have a meal, and share the bill which comes to £15. They have just left, when the proprietor discovers he has over-charged them by £5. He sends an apprentice after them with the refund, but the lad is not as honest as his boss, so pockets £2 and hands the men £3, which they share between them. Now, they have paid a total of £12 for the meal (Three lots of £5 less £1 refund). They have paid out £12, the boy has pocketed £2...question is, where has the other £1 gone?

One could of course quote another hoary old teaser..."Which came first, the chicken or the egg?", but I reckon that's quite enough to show that paradoxes..or something resembling them, may be found all over the place. Now do any of you have a favourite brain crozzler to send in?

SOLUTIONS IF YOU MUST PEEK. If  $a^2 - ab = a^2 - b^2$  then both sides are zero, and thus  $1 \times 0 = 2 \times 0$  and dividing by zero is a no no. In the case of the square and rectangle..the fit isn't perfect..there's a long and very thin gap up the middle equal to 1 sq. inch..but it's so narrow a model won't show it. Finally, why should £12 plus £2 equal £15. The proprietor only accepted £10, the boy took £2... a total of £12 - which is what the men actually paid.

Enjoy, live long and prosper..... T.J.



How strange it is to meet old friends hiding behind brand new faces... or putting it another way, here comes GROGGY 28 without its usual superb ditto cover. Eric Mayer (1771 Ridge Rd. East, Rochester, NY 14622) has deserted the old familiar format for once and this issue 16 excellently reproduced (photocopy??) pages is quite something. Lovely cover, nice interior art...and ...ah memory .. a drawing of a FANFOLEY board and story. Didn't you know Eric? Eric Jones, Eric Dentcliffe and I actually constructed such a game in the fifties..played it for hours too. You collected sets of prozines or fanzines and charged subscriptions - not rent.

Groggy also has a natter on the US Postawful system. Skel on GAFIation and a nicely compiled lettercol. A nice friendly zine, but one you will have to faunch hard to get, as Eric limits his print runs.

Then there's a massive 28 page LAN'S LANTERN from George 'Lan' Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA. It's crammed with articles, very good artwork, book and film reviews, LOCs, fiction, writer's camp and much much more. I particularly enjoyed Hickman on the 'pulp' and the Heinlein piece. Get LL for LOCs, contrib, or \$2.00.

How does one pronounce BANGWEULU? Not to worry, just read this well produced 14-pager from John & Lori Purcell, 5830 Reseda Blvd. No.151, Tarzana, CA 91356. It's a perzine which opens with a comment on some negative-natured LOCs..which seemingly put down Lori. How's this for a quote...from John, "I realise some of you guys are familiar with my writing style; I only hope you don't expect her to be of equal quality." Oh, John, what have you doodled? Very good art, interesting (personal) events and LOCs.

WHIMSEY comes from Jeanne Gomoll, Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701-1443 and is another very well produced and illustrated affair. What happened to the old scruffy mineo of fandom? Jeanne natters on 'squiggle artwork' (I used that when I taught art Jeanne), then comes a looong lettercol. Get your copy for the usual.

While on fanzines, this might be as good a place as any to reiterate that THIS issue of ERG will have no second colour artwork for two reasons...(1) To minimise the workload and enable me to get back on a post-hospital (and three operations) schedule .. and (2) Only ONE person has commented on the colour work in a year or so..and that was to ask for the use of a third colour. So what do you think...do you want colour back, or couldn't you care less?

TRIPTYCH comes from John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 9AZ, but this is a zine with a difference. John has set out to give three fans a chance to edit 1/3 of a zine of their own. Fans who normally couldn't manage it for sundry reasons. Each has edited his own section thusly:- ROGER WADDINGTON tells of his own fanac and also gives us a piece by Ed Meskys on his own unique (in fandom) circumstances, Mary Long has a piece and Paul Archer a short 'story?'. IAN COVELL takes over and he discusses fandom, Rape, Censorship, 'Women In Fandom and Feminism. Part 3 sees Iain Byers who gives us personal details of (by) Terry Broome. A nice article on publishing by Iain himself rounds out the issue. I don't know how you can get a copy...but grovelling might do the trick. It's a good idea, and well executed.

THE NOTIONAL comes from Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown POBox 433, Givide Co., ACT 2608 AUSTRALIA..and has 20 A4 pages all on things Australian..books, Cons, Reviews etc. At least the reviews are of books outside Aussieland, but we get back in the home rule groove with 'Recent Australian Fanzines'. NOTIONAL isn't the only Aussie zine to limit its fanzine coverage to the home product..not exactly guaranteed to encourage the rest of us to send trade issue down there coppers. Oh M's subtitle is..'All you need to know about SF in Australia'

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RECENT READING...Continued from page 14.

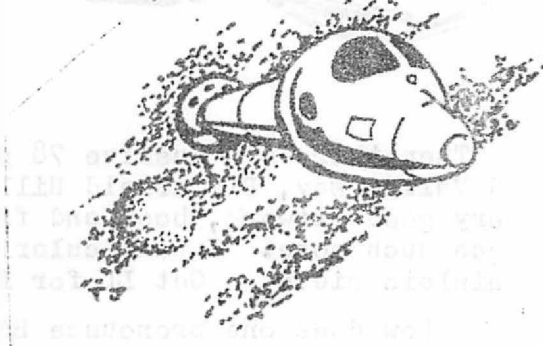
FOOTFALL  
===== Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle  
Sphere £3.95

When a giant spacecraft is observed heading for Earth, it is assumed to be friendly. But, the Russians suspect an American plot, so begin to mobilise..so the USA does likewise, and one survival group heads for its hideout. The aliens arrive and attack, destroying the Russian space station and worldwide ground installations...which leads us to the usual fast degradation of normal life. The aliens also have troubles, as the 'longsleepers' want the planet, whereas many of the 'spaceborne' opt for that environment. Contact is hampered by differing life nodes..the aliens expecting war to precede discussion, and planning for Earthpeople to eventually join their 'Herd'. We see SF writers called in for advice, watch out for 'Robert Anson' etc - and a captured senator does his bit too. Crammed with interesting characters, situations, and a gripping plotline, this is one of the best yarns yet from the Niven/Pournelle team and should scoop a raft of awards. If you like hardcore, don't miss this.

WOLVES AT THE DOOR  
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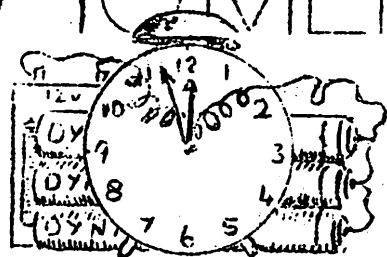
Tabitha King  
Grafton £2.95

Not SF, but 'mainline nastiness'. Liv's marriage is foundering, so she takes her daughter off to a country cabin...where she is discovered by three hillbilly yobbas. Rape, sadism and other sick-making events ensue, but I gave up when this set-up began. If you go for near-porno stuff then this is for you. Otherwise, avoid it...and if it's any help, Tabitha is the wife of Stephen King. A well-matched pair I'd fancy.



# MOMENT of DECISION

by Terry Jeeves



"The Bomb exploded in the crowded airport concourse, killing three people and seriously injuring...." In a sudden fit of temper, I crumpled the offending newspaper into a tight ball, before ramming it fireably into the litter basket beside the park bench on which I was seated. A startled movement from the other end, informed me that I wasn't alone; someone must have taken a seat whilst I was reading about the terrorists. Sheepishly, I gave a self-conscious grin at a seedy-looking youth with long hair, unshaven jowl, dirty anorak jacket and patched jeans. Damn it, the fellow actually looked like a terrorist.

To calm my nerves, I focussed my attention on the peaceful scene before me. A serene blue sky, dotted with an occasional fluffy white cloud formed a perfect backdrop to a view of carefully tended grass surrounding a large lake. Swans sailed serenely to and fro, or hurried busily to snatch fragments of bread thrown to them by children. Mothers with perambulators strolled importantly along; their older, more mobile offspring ribbiting noisily about them. Here and there, pic-nickers had established refuelling bases, whilst scattered sunbathers broiled gently beneath a sweltering sun.

It was a hot, peaceful, Summer's day, and my tension eased away as I relaxed and mused on how beautiful everything looked -- 'Everything, that is, except for the scruffy fellow on the other end of this seat,' I thought with some irritation. I sneaked another look to my right and was pleasantly surprised to see that the anarchist-type had departed whilst I was day-dreaming. 'Good riddance', I muttered...then froze!

Tucked away beneath the bench where the yobbo had been sitting, was a battered carrier-bag with the legend, "TURNER'S...Dublin" across the front. From the half open top straggled loops of thin black wire!

'Could it be...??' A quick glance round at the peaceful scene reassured me. 'No, it couldn't be a bomb...here, Or could it?' This was just the sort of innocent-seeming place where terrorists loved to plant their hellish devices. I edged timidly along the bench, and with one trembling finger, gingerly hooked wider the top of the bag. Sinister red cylinders, shiny canisters, some nasty dull black objects and tiny, wasp-like things nestled evilly amidst a cat's cradle of wires. My heart beat wildly in panic!

What to do? If I ran for help, the ghastly thing might go off before I could find any. Children were all around, one running past might trigger it. Mothers, babies, pic-nickers and sunbathers moved blissfully only a few yards away. Up on the bandstand, uniformed musicians were setting up their instruments. What could I do?

It was a long, agonising moment, but then, I had the answer. Snatching up the carrier bag, I yelled at the top of my voice, "A BOMB ... Get out of the way!!!"

Then, as fast as I could go, I began to run for the lake. Legs pounding, heart thumping, lungs straining, the deadly bundle clutched tight to my chest, I wove a zig-zag path between a mass of surprised faces as I sped for the water's edge. Frightened people scattered to right and left as I raced against time.

With a final, gasping stagger, I reached the lakeside. Putting all my remaining strength into the effort, I hurled the carrier bag up and out over the water. Indignant swans scabbled away with raucous cries as the deadly bundle arched above them. At the top of its flight, the paper ripped open. Cruel-looking objects showered out and dropped away. Then everything splashed noisily into the water. Bubbles surfaced, ripples spread and vanished, the swans settled down again...and all was horribly quite.

The silence lasted for one brief moment - then an excited crowd began to form around me as I leaned, panting on the lakeside rail. The hubbub and the questions grew louder...and louder...but above it all, I was still able to hear the voice of a scruffy-looking young man at the back as he asked plaintively,

"Has anyone seen a bag of computer parts I left over by that bench?"

===== the end =====TJ=====

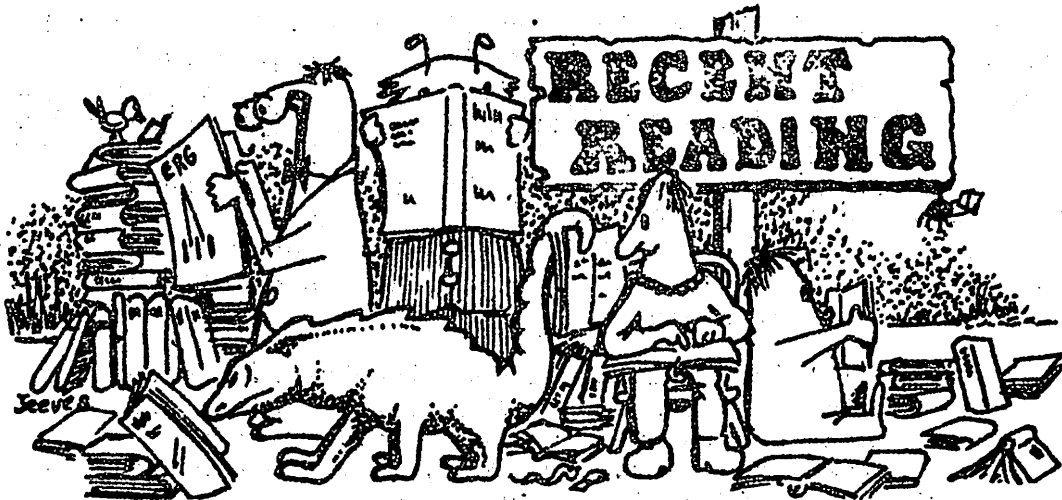
ANSWERS TO PRIZE CROSSWORD in ERG 95

Across. 1.Assess 4.Forage 10.Nickel  
11.Europa 12 Inter 13 Romero 14. Tardis 15. Nerve 18. Radon 19.Serif  
20. Bears 23.Senior 25.Trenco 27.Whelm 28.Robots 29.Bridge 30.Orrery  
31. Tender DOWN. 2.Sacrum 3.Silicon 5.Operate 6.Ground 7.Under Pressure  
9.Tales Of Wonder 8.Meteor 16, Eye 17.Var 20.Browser 21.Argent 23.Stumble  
24.Number 26.Needle

Folks, I'm disappointed! NOT ONE solution (even partly complete) has come in, so rather than run another contest, I have decided to give the three Author/Artist signed and lettering free prints of the Killashandra cover kindly donated by Transworld Publishers, to the writers of the three best LOCs on ERG 95.

Winners are:- 1. Thomas Ferguson, 90 Carnhill, Shantallow, 3  
Derry, Belfast BT48 8BE N.Ireland  
2. Ted Hughes, 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield  
Manchester M25 6ER  
3. Alan Sullivan, 53 Eccleston Sq., LONDON SW1 U1PG

Now, shall we have any other competitions with prizes? and if so, what sort? Crosswords seem a no-no, so let's be having your ideas for and against. Incidentally, at the time of writing, only one small ad has been received. Unless more come in, I'll have to omit that page this issue. Remember...it's free, so advertise your wants/sales in ERG 97..but try to keep the ad to 8 lines or less.



### HEART OF THE COMET

Gregory Benford & David Brin Bantam \$9.95

21

A mixed crew (many of them gene-manipulated 'Percells') is shipped out to Halley's Comet. Most of their 70 year trip will be in deep faeze 'slots', but for part of the time, they will be setting up gear to shift Halley's orbit and effect a closer-to-Sun swing so that it may be mined. Along with them, they bring their Earth politics and prejudices with the normal 'Orthos's' hostile to the Percells. Then a strange virus kills the captain and an alien life form poses a further threat. Losses, fear, and changes in crew balance bring the prejudices to the surface...whilst back on Earth, the fear of the now plagues evokes harsh measures....

Thanks to the 'slot' system, we are able to follow one set of central characters throughout their traumatic experiences as Halley follows its ponderous orbit. A terrific yarn of an indomitable fight against all the odds. Reminiscent of Campbell's 'The Moon Is Hell', but on a far wider and more colourful canvas. Hardcore SF at its unbeatable best!

### THE POSTMAN

David Brin  
Bantam \$9.95

Brin has taken his two IASFM yarns.. 'Postman' and 'Cyclops' and linked them into one hefty novel about itinerant ballad singer and story teller, Gordon Kranz. 16 years post-A war, Kranz escapes a band of thugs and finds an old mailman's uniform, badge and bag. Donning them, he continues his travels and finds that his appearance is reviving memories - and hopes for a new future, so Gordon accepts, and amplifies the role thus creating a self-fulfilling sequence...then he encounters master computer Cyclops, seemingly working to similar ends - but is it?, and why not? A different twist on the back-to-barbarism theme, plus a spot of Tuckerism in 'The Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Centre' However folks (and encounters) tend to be a bit over-simplified and naive, thus robbing events of much of their drama. Kranz himself bears a charmed life in his self-imposed and dangerous mission.

An excellent pair of hardcovers...the 'Comet' running to 468 pages and 'Postman' (Why not 'Mailman' since it is written, and set in the USA?) has nigh on 300. Strengthen your bookshelves before buying!

ISLE OF THE DEAD

Roger Zelazny  
Methuen \$2.50

Multi-billionaire, Francis Sandow, is not only 1200 years old, but he also has various powers, including a mind-link with the alien god, Shimbo. He has three calls upon him, A plea for aid by Ruth, a dying alien friend wants him there, and the Secret Service is calling for his help. Setting off to discharge these 'duties, he finds himself heading into a trap baited by clones of long-dead friends..and enemies, all designed to satisfy an alien's desire for revenge. What follows is a space-age James Bond-ish adventure with a touch of Vogt/Hull's 'Arthur Blord'..plus a spot of mysticism. Good, fast moving and always entertaining SF

TO DIE IN ITALBAR

Roger Zelazny  
Methuen \$2.50

'H' is a walking disease incubator. He can cure, but his touch can also kill, so that when stoned by a mob, he sets out to kill all he meets..and is aided by a god who takes him over. Dr. Pels, is a deep-frozen, waldo-mobile pathologist seeking a specific disease cure. Commander Malacar (aided by a telepathic alien) seeks H as a weapon. Francis Sandow has his own reasons, but all of them want to locate H to satisfy their ends. The trails finally converge, with the final outcome in the laps of the (opposing) gods. As before, fast-moving, mystic..and even confusing in its swift and unposted changes of character/scene.

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

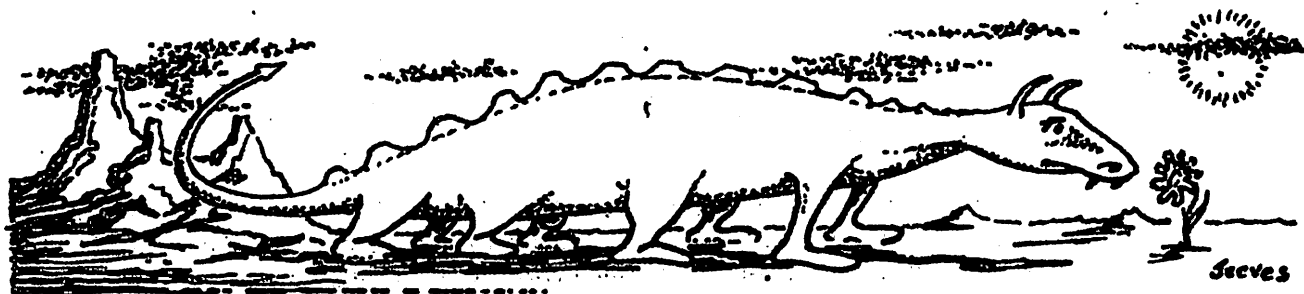
Terry Pratchett  
Corgi \$1.95

Discworld is borne on the backs of four elephants, which in turn, are on the back of a giant turtle which is heading into a giant red star. The giant book of spells, 'Octavo', erupts, casts a spell over Discworld and saves failed magician, Rincewind (who holds a missing spell in his head) from his fall over the edge. Also rescued is tourist Twoflowers (who fell off and thus got a 'free launch'. There's also 'Luggage', the many-legged and aggressive travelling trunk. All must save Discworld..but the nasty magician Trymon seeks his own ends. Good fun is had by all in one of the most hilarious romps in ages...atrocious puns make this America's response to the HitchHiker series..but much, much better

KILLASHANDRA

Anne McCaffrey  
Corgi \$2.95

The paperback edition of the sequel to 'Crystal Singer' sees Killashandra sent to repair a broken crystal organ on Optheria..with the side duty of snooping on the natives to find why they never want (are allowed) to leave their world. Assaulted, kidnapped and marooned, she eventually acquires a new lover and the Optherians secret. Several quibbles (How does an isolated native come to quote Shakespeare?) Otherwise, even better than Crystal Singer.



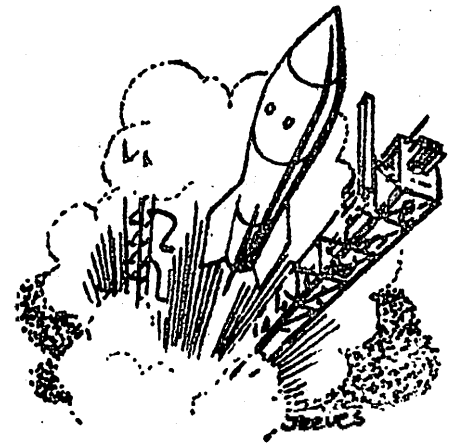


SHADOW OF THE SWAN

M.K.Wren  
New English Library  
£2.95

2nd. in the 'Phoenix  
Legacy' series, and for  
new readers, there's also  
a synopsis of Bk.1.

Lord Alexand, 1st son of the powerful  
WoOLF family assumes the role of 'Alex Ransom'  
to aid the Phoenix society and prevent the  
ultimate decay of their three-tier, stratified  
society. The elderly genius Andreas has just  
developed a long range matter transmitter when  
he and Alex are trapped by the ruling Concord,  
thanks to the treachery of Predis Ussher. Alex  
is rescued, but Andreas is harder to free..and  
Alex's love Camine becomes betrother (against  
her will) to another. Against this is the on-  
going battle with the Concord. More involute than Bk.1, and so more reader-  
demanding - but equally rewarding as it builds to its climax.

THE RITUALS OF INFINITY

Michael Moorcock  
New English Library  
£2.50

Professor Faulstaff, head of a group seeking to  
preserve the remaining 15 alternate Earths against the  
D squads seeking to destroy them, gets an urgent call  
to Earth 15 where the D's have set off an Unstable  
Matter Situation. Also operating between both factions are the scavenging  
'Salvagers' and a mysterious fourth group fronted by the strange Steiffelmeiss.  
Events escalate rapidly, reality..and alternate Earths are changed and  
Moorcock's excellent descriptive powers get full rein. A yarn nearer to  
fantasy than cerebral SF, but it holds you to the end.

MAGIC KINGDOM FOR SALE (SOLD!)

Terry Brooks Macdonald £9.95

Lawyer, Ben Holiday answers an unusual  
advertisement offering the magic kingdom of  
Landover for sale. He takes up the offer

and finds himself King in a land of dragons, kobolds, fairies and a few  
other unusual items - including his living castle 'Sterling Silver' and the  
erratic magician Questor Thews as his chief aide. Ben soon discovers that  
all is not well with his kingdom, his rule is disputed by 'The Mark' demon  
ruler of the Netherworld, and his purchase has a few unexpected strings to  
it. However, a knightly ghost, 'The Paladin' is on his side as Ben seeks to  
re-unite the kingdom. A pleasingly different S&S set-up in which the  
central hero is not a mighty-thewed, all-powerful magician. Read it and  
have fun...especially when Thews' magic goes awry!

DRAGONS OF WINTER NIGHT

Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman  
Penguin £2.95

Part 2 of the 'Dragon Lance' trilogy sees  
the same motley band of half-elf, kender,  
knight, mage, etc once again embarked on

another heroic journey as Krynn is again threatened..this  
time by the Dragon Lord and his forces. To win they seek the Dragon Orb  
and Dragon Lance.

With such sagas, one is reminded of the old film serials  
or TV 'soaps' .. little changes, numerous incidents, minor successes and  
small losses before final (?) victory...and the hint of another villain  
or menace lurking over the hill. This is the bane of the trilogy, little  
changes...oh for more 'one off' and original idea stories. All these  
s&s clones even when as well written as this series tend to sound so much  
alike.

THE MERCHANT'S WAR

Sequel to 'THE SPACE MERCHANTS' (Gravy Planet) set in a Frederik Pohl world of pedicabs, rampant (and ultra high pressure) advertising, and ruled by the Agencies. On Venus (populated by 'criminal'..i.e. anti advertising people) a small Agency Embassy seeks to convert the 'Veenies'. Dirty tricks man Tennison Tarb and his girl friend survive an attack on their lives before returning to Earth. Back home, Tarb becomes addicted to a new drug/drink, whilst Mitzi Ku, his girl acquires her own agency...with a mysterious campaign. Tarb eventually joins her after a wildly oscillating career. Lively as the original but less naive and with more plot twists than a pretzel. Darned good read.

THE CELESTIAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

Michael Coney Orbit £2.95 In the far future, humanity has evolved into five species:- True, Wild, Quickies, Specialists... and the humans who dwell - and dream - in 'The Domes'. Beachcomber Manuel joins with Zozola and the nameless girl to form the Triad, which is manipulated by the 5 in 1 near God Starquin. There's also the pure intelligence, Allan-Blue-Cloud which can see past and future. A bit fragmentary, evocative, unusual new words and excellently descriptive. This is one you'll love or hate.

JERUSALEM FIRE

R.M. Meluch Orbit £2.95 Aliahad, scourge of the Na'id oppressors is saved after a space battle only to crash land on lost world Yri, along with his rescuer, Harrison Hall...another fighter against the Na'id. Rescued by the Iteri, they find themselves in a world of witches, warlocks, familiars, flying warriors, all with strange powers and a purpose...until Allihad steers them against the Na'id. Ms. Meluch has come up with an unusual blend of straight SF and fantasy, so you get the best of both worlds.

A TAPESTRY OF TIME

Richard Cowper Orbit £2.50 Vol.3 of 'The White Bird Of Kinship' sees the Church Militant still powerful in Britains seven islands, but the Kinship movement has flourished in the past two decades. Now once-priest, Tom is touring Europe with a small troupe of entertainers, along with the girl Withhet. Bandits attack them and rape the women. Tom uses his power for vengeance before seeing there are other ways. Wandering and separation follow before he gets a closer insight into 'The Bird'. Finally, 'The Cartwright Papers' link the time of the Bird with the modern world.

LIMITS

Larry Niven Orbit £2.50 Eleven stories and a superb article on an unusual method of nuclear waste disposal. Yarns include ghosts protecting an isolated island restaurant, building a space colony, seeking a magician's treasure, a Modea (Harlan's World) yarn, as well as the problems of new world colonisation and 5 tales from Draco's Bar.

An excellent and well-varied anthology, a feast for Niven lovers ..but I can't resist the quibble that deviating from the axis of rotation on an O'Neill world would NOT increase the gravity effect...UNTIL air resistance gradually accelerates one up to the rotational speed...and thus creat a centrifugal force. Clarke made the same clanger in 'Rama', so old boobos never die...nor do they fade awgy.



THE VENGEANCE OF THE DANCING GODS

Jack L. Chalker Orbit £2.50 Part.3 of the 'Dancing Gods' trilogy sees Macore the thief making a pact with a demon in order to escape pursuit. The demon lays a geas on him which leads to the prevention of any Council Member, including Ruddygore, head magician, from moving back to Earth via the Sea Of Dreams. Thus, when the Dark Baron acquires computer-produced spells and a magician to operate them, Ruddygore can't get back to fight as Earth heads for Hell - Luckily, demigods Joe and Tiana are bored with their idyllic life, and agree to take up the battle. A lovely fun romp of a fantasy, and I particularly liked the spell, 'Mutsut Ralston on the Rillorah' which only old fogeys like me will probably recognise.

THE SULTAN'S TURRET

Seamus Cullen Orbit £2.50 'Princess' Dinah, daughter of the Sultan's physician, sneaks into her father's workshop and seeks to use magic to ward off kidnappers sent by the invading Ferdinand. The result is unexpected, but releases her innate powers and so leads her into danger and intrigue as Ferdinand's invaders seek to win the Sultan's domain. Still lively and different, this sequel to 'House Of Light' lacks some of the sparkle of the earlier tale. Nevertheless, the lovely, worldly demons etc. are here, though some may be offended by certain sexual attributes which they possess, or conjure up.

TAILCHASER'S SONG

Tad Williams Orbit £2.95 The near poetic story of the cat Fritti Tailchaser who, when his beloved Mushpad vanishes, sets out to find her. His journey is beset by various perils..squirrels, giant cats, enslavement, and being hunted by Ma'n. He has some lovely companions...including the kitten Pouncequick and the half mad, Eatbugs before finding his lost Mushpad - and a domesticity which sits ill with a now fully mature and independent Fritti. Lovely descriptions, side vignettes and plenty of surprises make this a fascinatingly different read.

SPACE WARFARE: An Illustrated Guide To

David Hobbs Salamander £4.95 The author has a string of high level qualifications including the Directorship of Scientific and Technical Committees. This shows in the comprehensive coverage which opens with a brief Introduction before you're into Strategic Defence, problems of ballistic missiles. MAD and various forms of defence. Then an excellent background-setting chapter on the 'Space Race' which is followed by an exhaustive section on all aspects of Military satellites. Then Anti-Satellite weapons.. 'Star Wars', MHV and ASATs. Finally, all aspects of Ballistic Missile Defence and manned space projects are examined. Both USA and USSR vehicle/satellite programs are fully covered. Not only is the book lucidly written in layman's language, but every page has at least one..if not two or three colour photos, maps or explanatory diagrams. I don't know how they do it at the price, but if you need a fully detailed and easily understood introduction to how space is becoming the next front-line combat zone, then get this book. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

THE ELVES AND THE OTTERSKIN

Elizabeth H Boyer  
Corgi £2.50

Ivar has been apprenticed to Birna the witch, then, when she is killed by the Necromancer, Lorimer, he is left stranded in Elfland...faced with the role of hero. However, he is aided by fire magician, Gizur and a motley band of inept outlaws - whose aim is to gain enough gold to pay off the weregild ransom incurred by accidentally killing the son of Chief Svartarr (whom Lorimer seeks to dethrone and usurp). Their task is made difficult, since the otterskin expands as more gold is placed on it. Task one is to acquire the magic sword Glimr and use it to slay the dragon Fafnir who guards a gold hoard..but of course Lorimer keeps butting in as well as a nasty trio of witches. Fairly light-hearted, lovely characters.. apart from the rather wooden Yvarr plus plenty of action and a nice touch of humour raise this out of the humdrum-quest class.

ONE MILLION TOMORROWS

Bob Shaw  
Panther £2.50

By the 22nd Century, immortality is available for everyone - but for men it entails the change from being a functioning male ('Funkie'), to an impotent 'Cool'. Then Carewe is offered the chance to try a new treatment which avoids this side effect. Since the drug will prove extremely valuable, people will kill to get the secret - or to protect it. As a result, Carewe's hitherto quiet life is radically changed. Shaw develops his idea well, and doesn't neglect its side effects, nor does he miss a spot of 'Tuckerism' with 'Wogan' and 'Willis' in the yarn. Smooth flowing, and a delight to read.

DAYWORLD

Philip Jose Farmer  
Panther £2.50

Picture a society where each individual lives for one day, then stasis-sleeps for six. At any one time, 6/7ths of the population is in stasis on a rotating basis, thus reducing demands on food, housing and space, etc. Jeff Caird, a 'Daybreaker' dodges this system, has seven personas, and is never in stasis. He is also a drug-created near immortal, 'Immer'. In his police role, he must catch a psychotic Immer out to kill him and expose the group. Complicating the hunt are the chess-playing Gril, and enigmatic Inspector Snick, legally moving temporarily and possibly investigating Caird. A taut, fast-moving yarn develops as Caird various identities mix in murder and violence. With his one waking day in seven, Farmer has come up with that miracle, a new idea in SF...and made a great yarn of it.

HELLICONIA WINTER

Brian Aldiss  
Granada Triad £2.95

Third in the HELLICONIA trilogy sees this planet heading into its 300 year winter. It is orbited by the artificial satellite Avernus, placed there by Terrans. However, inhabitants of the worldlet have regressed to barbarism, as have the peoples of Earth after nuclear war. Down on HELLICONIA, the forces of Pannoral have been defeated by those of Sibornal in a battle which sees Lutin Shokerandit distinguish himself. The army heads home, but the Oligarch orders that all be killed since they bear the Plague (which is really a virus which mutates survivors into a form capable of withstanding the Winter). One officer warns Lutin and together, accompanied by Lutin's female captive, they escape and seek freedom from the Oligarch's forces - which proves a self-defeating task.

Not as multi-layered as 'Spring', but still wide ranging, packed with incident and fascinating characters.

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'RECENT READING' is continued on page 14



I seem to have so many oddments which need clearing to make SPACE for an ever-growing collection, that a whole page of ERG-ads seemed a good idea.

DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE. The complete parts 1 to 12, along with the covers of ERG devoted to the series, and the two parodies 'LAST STAGE REFLECTORMAN' and G-8 and HIS BOTTLE ACES. £2.50 or \$4.00 a copy. post paid.

ERG IN THE USA Still a few copies left of my 1980 & 82 trip report. £1.00 or \$1.00 post paid.

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ERGTAPE.3. ORSON CART THEATRE,'NARTAZ OF THE BABOONS'..Shine.Commercial..PANORAMA looks at the arts..books films etc...Boeing Wallbanger Untruthful Falcies..Return Of Nartaz..Panorama.2. Albert And The Monster..Swords Across The Pecos..The News.

ARTWORK FOR DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE..Cover, interiors etc. virtually all the art used in the series, with the exception of the odd hand-cut illo, Going to the best off of £2.00 or over

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ERG.85 Jan.84 Father Christmas on reindeer sleigh orbits rocket. £1.00

ERG.60 Oct.77 Space soldier and moon crawler £1.00

ERG.92 Oct.85 Machinery for printing ERG £1.00

ERG.91 Jly 85 Composite paste-up Spacecraft against stars

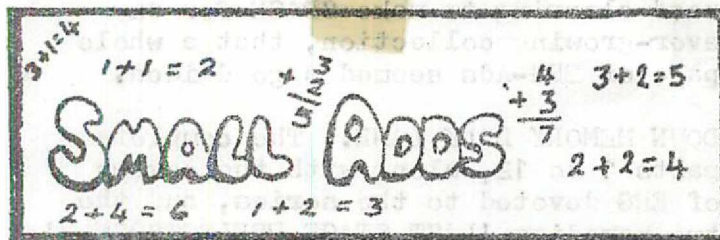
ERG.95 Jly.86 Rocket car heading into space £1.00

SANDOR SF cover..Swordswoman on 'dragon' type monster £1.00

From erg93 on, all covers are pen & ink.

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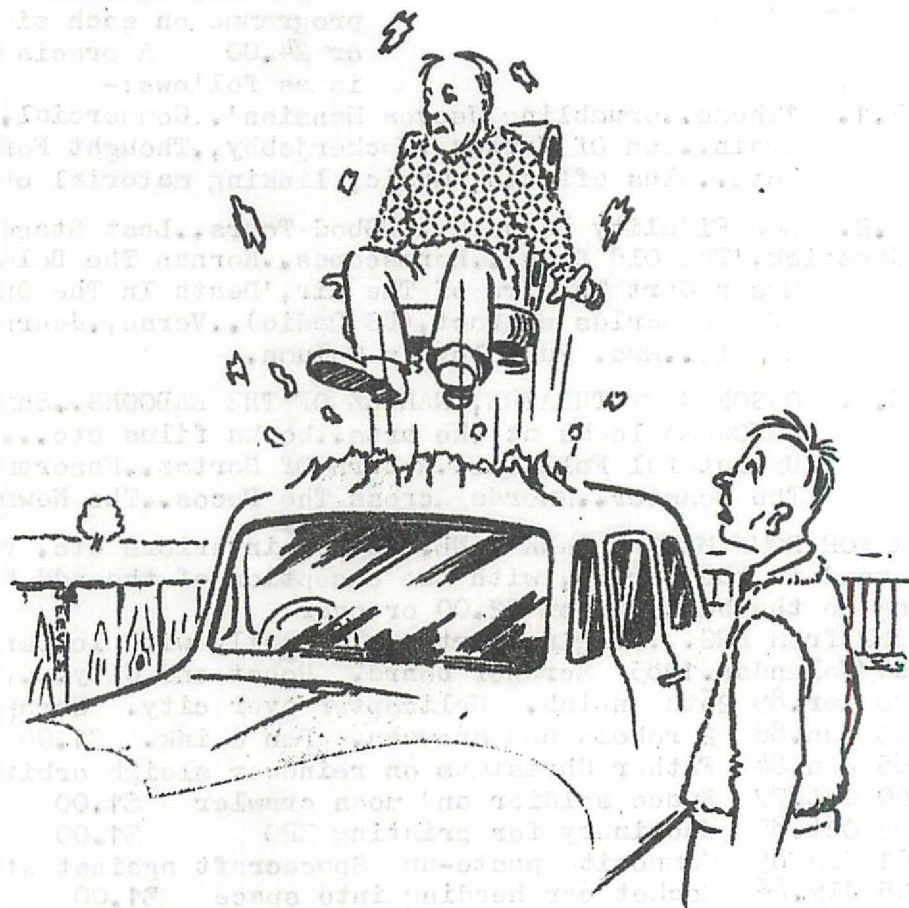
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Well, that's the ONLY small ad. received... a very small Ads. Section indeed. So let's be having yours for the next issue...it's FREE!



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