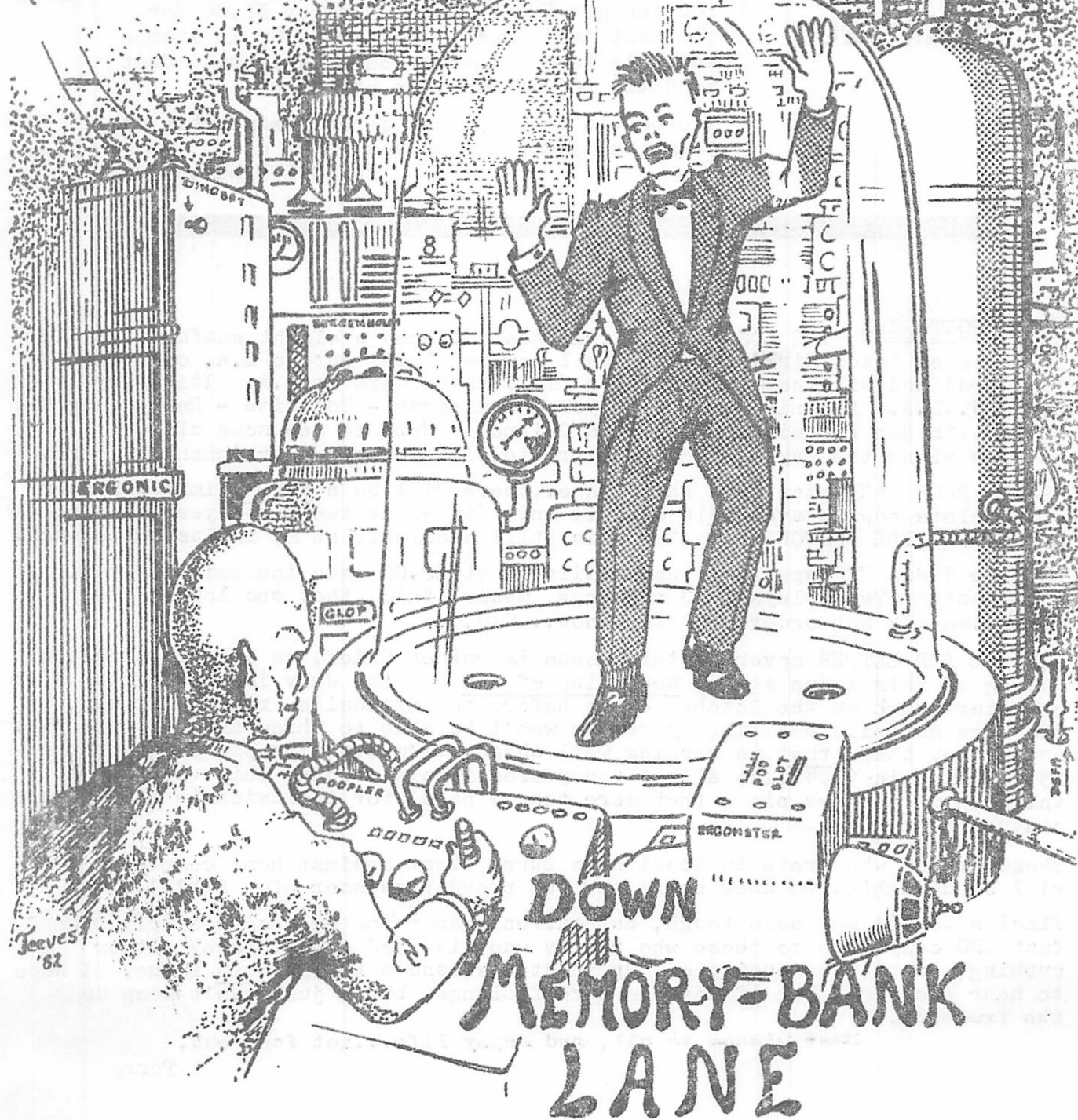


ERG

NO 79

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1982

QUARTERLY



ERG

QUARTERLY

ERG is edited, published and perpetrated
by :- Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd.,
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ENGLAND

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DO SOMETHING..please

MINI-ERGITORIAL

THE LOS-ANGELES trip has suffered a slight snafu after the
collapse of Laker Airlines. We shall now be flying out to L.A. on August 4,
(not 3rd) and will not be staying a final three days in L.A. Itinerary is
Aug.4-5..L.A. Phoenix - Grand Canyon - Las Vegas - Yosemite - Reno - Aug 14
and 15..in San Francisco - San Luis Obispo. Hope to see some of you
ERGbods along the way. If on that route, let me have your 'phone numbers.

MEMORY BANK LANE starts in this issue..there will be a very limited number
of complete copies available when it ends (in about two-three years time),
Meanwhile..THE BOSTON TRIP (1980) is still available at £1 including postage.

ERGtape 1 and ERGtape 2 are now available at £2.00 each inclusive of p&p.
They contain Tape Plays, ERG readings, music, this, that and lots of the
other..so why not order your copy now...C.W.O.

FANZINE AND LETTER coverage this issue is rather brief, as I'm starting the
duping of this issue at the beginning of May for the July issue, so that I
can start work on the October issue before the Stateside trip. That way,
the huge mailpile awaiting my return won't be able to throw ERG off schedule.
And if you think that is working well ahead...I'm starting planning for the
25th Annish in 1984...so all of you professionals reading this..how about
thinking up a short piece (not more than 1 page) for inclusion in the quarter
century issue ?

Those of you who wrote in about Alan Burns blast against home computers
will be delighted to know he is now the proud possessor of a ZX81!!!

Final note..it may seem tough, but current paper/postage costs simply DEMAND
that ERG only goes to those who really want it..and show this by either
subbing, or by the sending of 30p in stamps, and a LOC on this issue. I hope
to hear from you, but if not, no hard feelings, but I just can't keep up
the freebies.

Best wishes to all, and enjoy life...not fan feud,

Terry

EDITORIAL



THE MORONIC MENACE

Computers are gradually working into every walk of life. Our power bills, renewal notices, bank accounts and library checkouts have long been handed over to such moronic prodigies.

Prodigies? Well any computer worth its electrons can calculate the cost of X therms, at Y pence, plus VAT and any standing charge; all in the flicker of a gnat's eyelash. Being a prodigy isn't enough. If some idiot programs the thing badly, telling it to do the above and then mail out the

bill, our machine will quite blindly send you a demand for £0.00 if that is indicated. If you ignore this idiocy, it follows up with a 'FINAL NOTICE' before blacklisting you and ordering your supply to be cut off.

Such things may be fun to read about, but where do they end? Let's digress a moment to see that not only are computers both prodigies and idiots, but also lack any moral or ethical sense.

A recent Analog item related the actions of a bright young man who received a wad of computerised deposit slips from his bank. Dashing off to the local branch, he shared them out among the little boxes of non-coded slips for those who had forgotten to bring their own. Customers arrived at the bank, picked up and completed these forms, passing them to the tellers along with their lolly. The tellers simply checked that each little space had been filled in, ignoring how this had been done, and passed them to the computer. The idiot machine ignored all writing, but scanned the customer identification code and credited all the money to that account. A couple of days later, our criminally-minded fellow closed out the account and vanished with the boodle.

In another case, a Los Angeles student rooting in the garbage cans of the Telegraph Company, discovered a stack of procedure manuals and codes which enabled him to phone-in orders directly to the wholesaler's computer and thus rip-off enough material to open his own component shop. He even re-painted a second-hand van to resemble those used by the Telegraph Co. as an aid to collecting the goods. Things only came to light when as his own 'company' expanded and took on staff, a disgruntled employee tipped off the Telegraph people and thus ended the fiddle.

Perhaps the neatest fiddle of all was cooked up by a bank clerk who realised that banks and computers 'round off' fractional cents appearing in some transactions. Thus, if a sale nets \$2345.008¢, the computer drops the .008¢ and merely records \$2345.00. Our anti-hero simply programmed his bank's computer to credit the .008¢ to his own account. By the time he was caught, it had awarded him no less than 1½ million dollars !!

Computers will do such things...and worse, if that is what their program commands. Moronic....prodigies...sans morals or ethics. Where does all that lead us ????

We now have computerised accounting whereby a light pen or play-back head can scan a bar code or magnetic strip on your purchase and do all sorts of clever things with the information. Not only does it mark up the bill, but if so instructed, will adjust the stock-in-hand list and if needed, will order more. Innocent ? Maybe,..but consider:-

1. Computers can read a code magnetised on a tiny magnetic fragment and use the information in many ways.
2. A recent 'Tomorrow's World' items showed a method of entering such data, so it could ONLY be erased by a special machine.
3. Computers are neither moral nor ethical and the key item...

4. It has been suggested that prisoners on probation should have such coded strips surgically implanted in their bodies to facilitate keeping records of their registration and movements. A simple box with a hole for insertion of the wrist would enable the code to be scanned and the computer would then record attendance..thus saving queueing time and work for the probation officer....

...and think what might follow. First the scheme would be extended to prison roll-calls. No chance of a false answer, the inmates march past the box each sticking in their wrist and the computer ticks 'em off. H'm, but this wouldn't STOP escapes. Well, suppose we put such boxes at every rail, road, air and sea terminal? Escaped criminals would be noted as soon as they 'wristed in'..and of course, innocent people would submit to shoving their arms in a box in the interests of law and order !!

But why stop at detection? Put some sort of handcuff device inside the box and as soon as the computer detects an 'illegal' number is closes the manacle and traps the escapee.

Having set up such a checking network, it would seem logical to extend it. By implanting such a strip in everyone we could speed up elections, identification in banks, offices, security places, libraries, clubs etc. The list is endless and because such an implant could only be removed by surgery, it could not be lost, stolen or exchanged. Wrist boxes would appear wherever humans gathered. It could be used to catch parking offenders, debtors, cheque forgers and the like...but since the computer is heedless of what it does..it could also wipe out your life savings in a flash.... Naturally, such a giant machine could not be trusted to private hands. It would have to be a Government monopoly. The programs fed into it must have been approved (dictated) by the ruling party...

...and how long do you think it would be before such a party decided to help democracy along a bit? (a recent Labour MP said that if elected, they would not have a referendum on the E.E.C, as the electorate could not be relied upon to vote the right way). Cast your vote for the other side and you may find delays every time you use a wrist box...your bank account drops mysteriously; car tax and driving licence get out of date. When shopping, your credit check shows you lack the required funds..only an error, but you suffer the humiliation of the delay. Cheques get delayed in transit and penalty clauses are levied. Of course, such 'glitches' vanish the moment you start voting the 'right' way.

Such steps would be mild compared with what a real totalitarian state could enforce via the 'wrist box'. Care to be mistakenly locked to the box for an hour or two? Every movement could be monitored, every meeting

recorded in 'Big Brother's' files. If the program says you don't work, or you don't eat, the computer won't mind. If you die, it simply adjusts its statistics and records and moves along to other business.

Being moronic, it couldn't care less. Being a prodigy, it can enforce its commands no matter where you run. And being totally devoid of morals, it won't shed the slightest tear.

There's no doubt about it. A computer-based society is at the mercy of those who run the computer.

We have the technology NOW. The question is, how can we avoid having it used on us ????

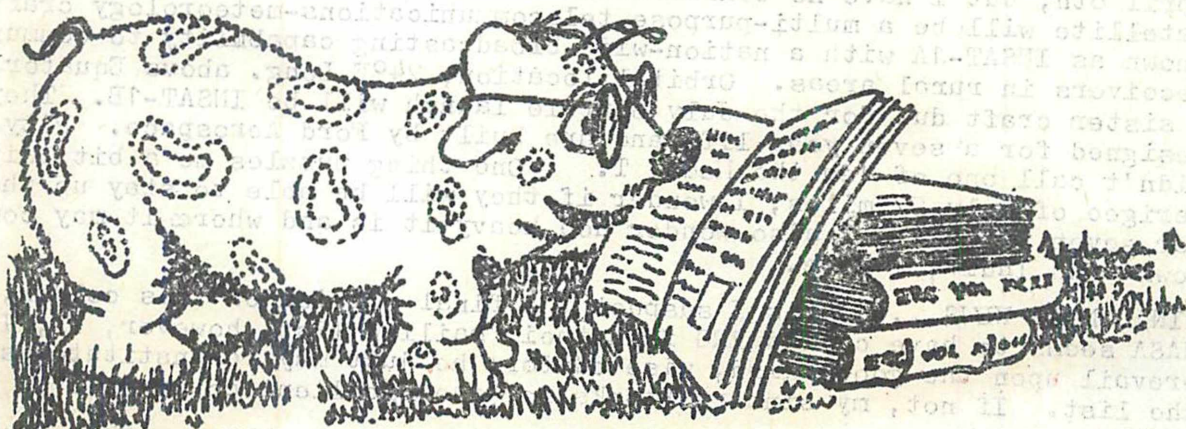
The above is a revised version of a piece I originally wrote for the first issue of QUARZ published by Rob Robinson and Geoff Kemp. I don't think our mailing lists will have very much overlap, so I run it here for the benefit (or otherwise) of ERG's readers. T.J.

PLEASE PASS YOUR COPY TO A FRIEND

HARD FACTS of an ERGitorial nature

Each copy of ERG costs approximately 20p to produce. It costs a further 16¹/₂p (inland) or 19p (overseas) to mail out. Thus each copy costs ME, at least 36¹/₂p to produce. So those of you who get ERG via the 30p postage plus a LOC are getting it cheap. I don't mind this, it's part of the game...but often people forget that 30p (you don't do you?) Throw in the trade and publisher's copies and ERG costs me quite a bit. Which of course is expected in a hobby. So far, so good.... .BUT....

ERG simply cannot be mailed to those who do not respond via the post and LOC method, or by subscribing at 50p a time...big deal that 13¹/₂p 'profit' isn't it? So PLEASE..if the status box is ticked and you WANT the next issue, do something about it will you. I'm not trying to be snide, just to keep ERG going another 23 years !!! And if you Really want to help, then would you pass this copy to a friend...to a friend..to a friend.



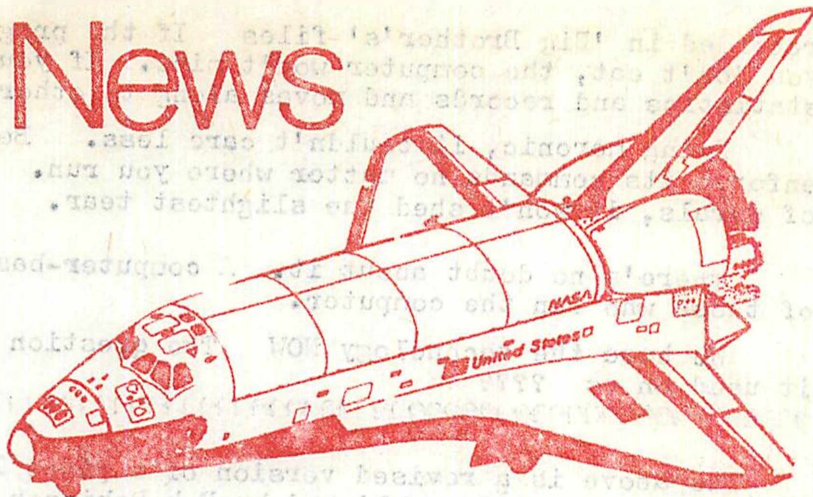
NASA News

Six years after their arrival on Mars, Viking Missions 1 & 2 have been declared a complete success.

Two orbiters and two landers reached Mars in 1976 and all four returned valuable information longer than first called for.

Significant discoveries include:--'measurements

near two solar conjunctions of the round-trip time of radio signal; ~~have~~ shown delays caused by the Sun's gravitational field which confirm Einstein's prediction to an accuracy of 0.1% -- 20 times greater than any previous test.



GREATLY REDUCED POWER USAGE will result from a new compact radio wave amplifier invented by NASA's Dr. H.G.Kosmahl. The device is a multi-stage depressed collector which increases the intensity of radio signals transmitted by comsats. The device may reduce radio station power consumption by a third to a half. Invented in 1969 and tested aboard a comsat for 3½ years it has produced the most powerful signals transmitted from space.

FOUR and possibly SIX, new satellites of Saturn have been found using data from Voyager 2's encounter in August 1981. This brings the known Saturn satellites to 21 or 23.

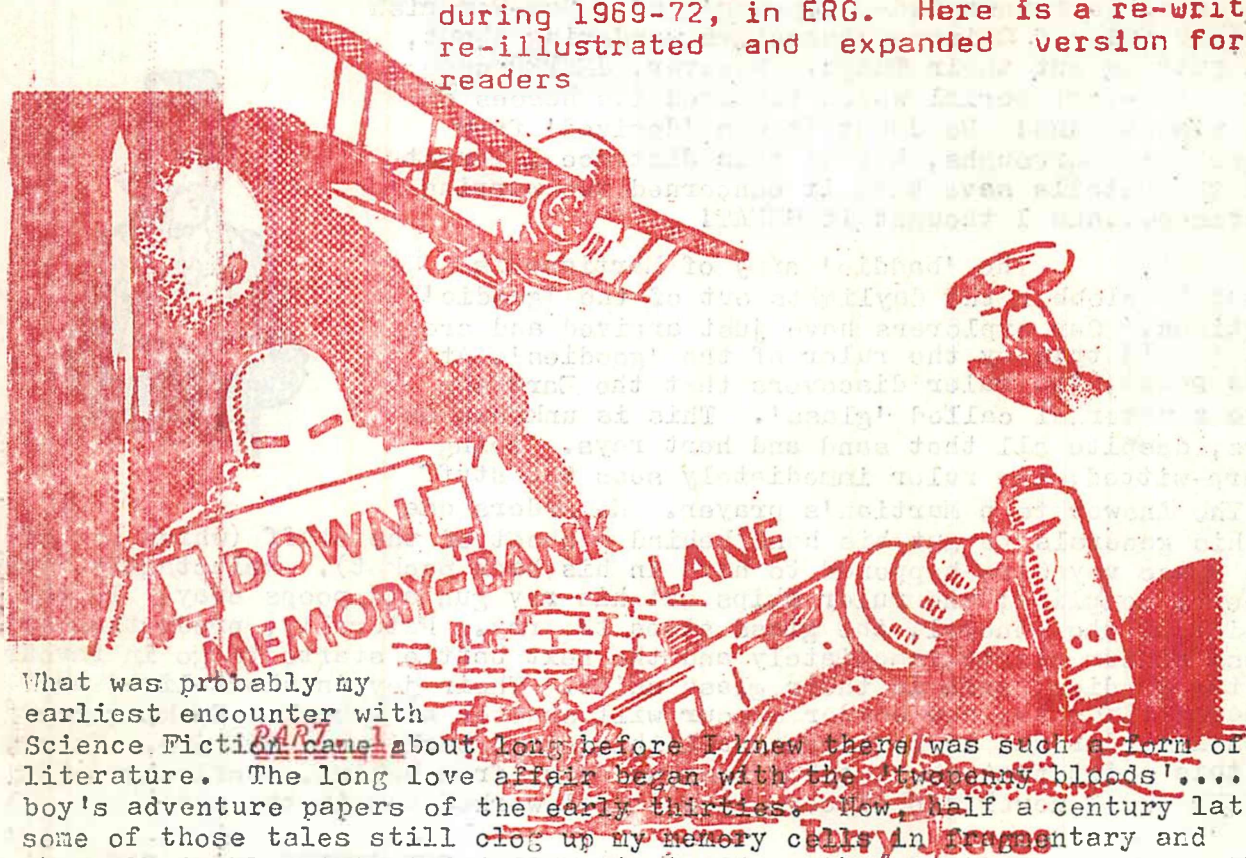
CREWS FOR NEXT THREE SHUTTLE MISSIONS..STS-4 Thomas K. Mattingley and Henry W. Hartsfield, due early July on a 7 day mission in Columbia. The last of four orbital test missions. STS-5, Vance D. Brand and Robert F.

Overmyer, 5 day mission in Columbia to deploy commercial comsats. STS-6 will be the first flight of Shuttle Challenger, for Jan.83, a 2 day mission to deploy Tracking and Data Relay Satellites. Commander Paul J Weitz and Donald H Peterson as pilot.

NASA will Launch INDIAN NATIONAL SATELLITE SYSTEM-1...date was to have been April 8th, but I have no confirmation of this at the time of writing. The satellite will be a multi-purpose telecommunications-meteorology craft known as INSAT-1A with a nation-wide broadcasting capability to community receivers in rural areas. Orbital location, 74°E Long. above Equator and a sister craft due for the July Shuttle launch will be INSAT-1B. They are designed for a seven year life and are built by Ford Aerospace. Pity they didn't call one of 'em the Model T. One thing puzzles me a bit..with a perigee of only 97 miles, I wonder if they will be able to stay up there for seven years?? I also wonder how heavy it is and where it may come down? On India, I hope.

FINAL NASA NEWS...this is I suspect the final edition of this column, as NASA seems to have culled ERG from their mailing list..however, IF, I can prevail upon the good, kind, wise editor, he just may re-institute us one the list. If not, my sincere thanks for the excellent coverage over the last two years. Far more material than I can run in ERG, so I've tried to use items which demonstrate that space exploration helps EVERYONE.

This series first appeared in Lynn Hickman's excellent 'zine, 'THE PULP ERA'....and later, during 1969-72, in ERG. Here is a re-written, re-illustrated and expanded version for new readers



What was probably my earliest encounter with Science Fiction came about long before I knew there was such a form of literature. The long love affair began with the 'tinypenny bloods'.... the boy's adventure papers of the early thirties. Now, half a century later, some of those tales still clog up my memory cells in fragmentary and chronologically distorted form. Pinning down the exact era, or even the correct sequence is beyond me. Nevertheless I still get that feeling of nostalgia (Sense Of Wonder ?) when, for a few seconds, they flash across that inner eye and take me back, once again, 'Down Memory-Bank Lane' I hope perhaps that they will do as much for many readers.

A very early memory concerns a blue-paper-printed, horror of a comic called 'THE JESTER'. This featured such time-worn (even then) characters as 'Weary Willy and Tired Tim', 'Nero and Zero' and various other comic strips. Willy and Tim were a pair of tramps for ever trying to rustle up their next meal. 'Nero and Zero' on the other hand were a couple of Roman Legionaries who never seemed to get into battle..only a new form of trouble every week. These characters were of course in the strip cartoon style of the day...wherein each 'frame' carried beneath it, about four lines of miniscule type describing the action. This was more of a sop to 'educationalists' because the pictures..and speech balloons were quite adequate for this purpose, and I for one never dreamed of looking at the small print jammed under each illustration. Offhand, I don't think anyone else did either, but such redundant information was a feature of British 'comics' for many a long year before it finally vanished into Limbo.

In addition to the comics, the JESTER always carried a couple of stories. One of these invariably concerned a dashing Arab Sheikh bestriding a white stallion (baddies always rode black ones) and brandishing a long sword in his right hand. Draped tastefully..and fully clothed.. across his left arm, he wore a white woman, usually one who was busily fainting. Since I had never heard of the white slave trade..or S.X, I was never able to understand the reason for this particular encumbrance, and decided it was just another peculiarity of the desert dwellers. The other story in this weekly feast alternated between the perennial, 'poor-wandering-lost-unwanted-sheep-dog' and a Sax-Romerish mystery full of Chinese characters wandering about, all putting out their Tonges. However, JESTER once ran a two-part serial which featured its heroes on the planet MARS! No doubt it was 'derived' from Edgar Rice Burroughs, but at this distance I forget all the details save that it concerned two warring factions...and I thought it GREAT!



The 'baddie' army of Martians is about to clobber the daylights out of the 'goodie' Martians. Our explorers have just arrived and are being told this by the ruler of the 'goodies'. At this point, the ruler discovers that the Earthmen have a material called 'glass'. This is unknown on Mars, despite all that sand and heat rays. Being sharp-witted, the ruler immediately sees the stuff as The Answer to a Martian's prayer. He orders one of his generals to put his hand behind a sheet of the stuff (which one of the space voyagers happened to have in his back pocket). Reluctantly, the general complies; the ruler whips out his ray gun and poops away. To the relief of the general, the glass stops the ray. Naturally, production of glass armour starts immediately and the next battle starts to go in favour of the goodies, safe in their glass suits. Their joy is short-lived as someone finds the new wonder armour will shatter at a bonk. Bonking is then in order and in no time at all things are back to square one. It was at this point that the teacher came up on me from behind, confiscated THE JESTER and I never did discover how it all worked out in the end.

Printed on even bluer paper than THE JESTER, was THE BULLSEYE, between the two, you were guaranteed eye-strain every week. THE BULLSEYE was a 20 page, quarto horror, aimed for the sensation-seeking devotee of higher literature. It carried no strip cartoons but featured various short yarns, several of them in series form. 'The Phantom Of Blackfriars' concerned a ghost who haunted that area of London. He was actually one of the human characters who appeared in the series, but in his secret life, spent the time flitting around Blackfriars disguised as the Phantom. He wore a black coat and his face was heavily coated with luminous paint. A superlative knowledge of all the secret passages and tunnels built into every London Building enabled him to appear and vanish as he wished, and escape from any trap. However, when he returned for a second series, the writer began to give the Phantom 'real' psychical powers and this soured me off the old boy for good.

Another 'BULLSEYE' favourite was John Gaunt, a crippled explorer who lived alone in his 'House Of Secrets'. No longer able to take his thrills at first hand, he gained a vicarious excitement by paying a crisp £100 note to anyone who could tell him a true story of thrills.

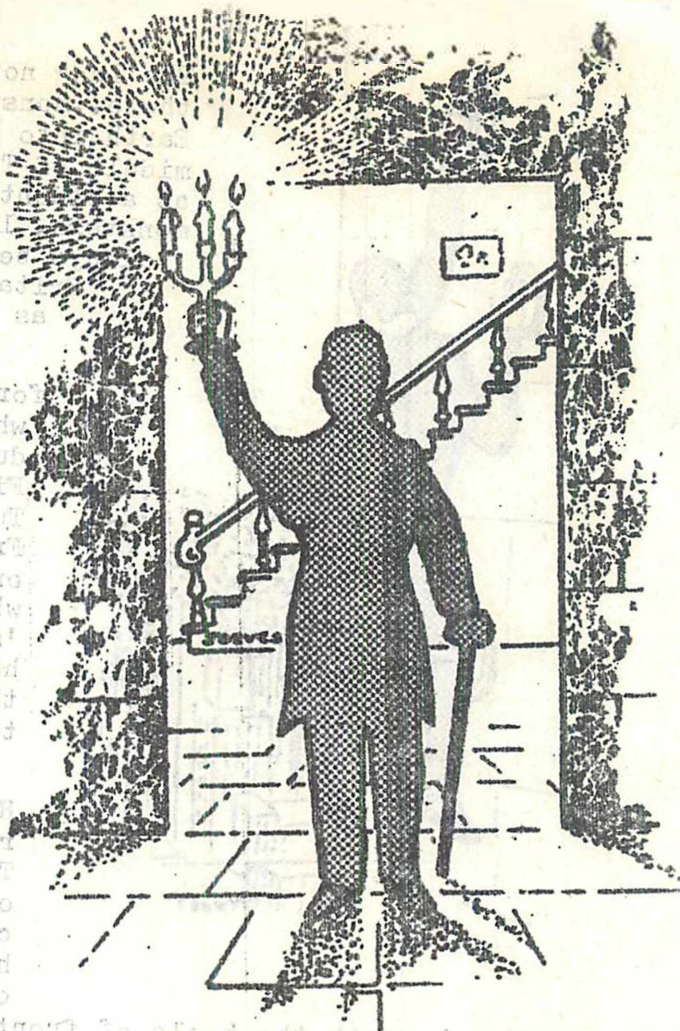
In true Hollywood tradition, these visitors invariably arrived, alone, at the dead of night...often during a terrific thunderstorm. Gaunt would open the door to them, holding high an antique candelabra (which the storm never seemed to blow out) whilst the electric light behind him threw his body into a black silhouette. On one such night, the perpetual bad weather in that area involved both John and his nocturnal visitor in an unexpected adventure. Heavy rain had operated a catch holding shut a secret, pivoted flagstone just on his front door step. Both men dropped through into a vault beneath, but thanks to the skill of the caller, they escaped and a £100 went into the man's pocket.

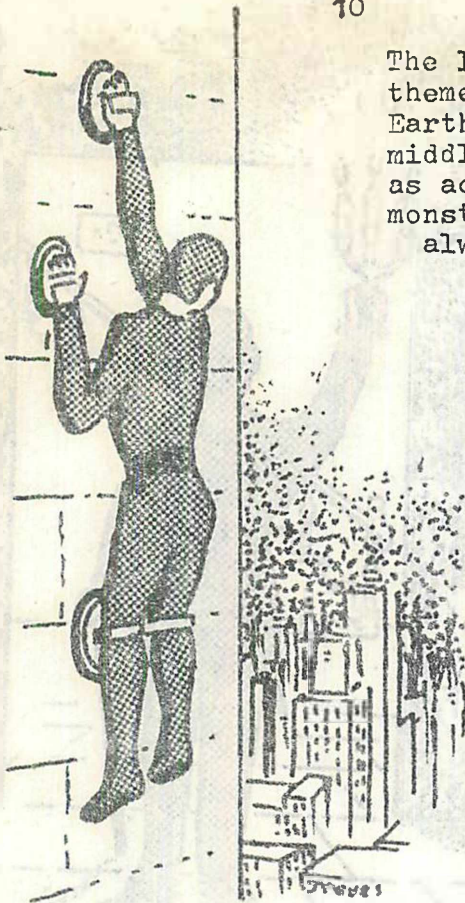
On another occasion the £100 was earned by a man who related how he had been imprisoned (by a Mad Scientist) in a huge glass bell-jar as the air was being pumped out, (see the cover of ERG 79) and a variety of other gases being pumped in.

Another caller told of being strapped to a giant pointer which spun on a pivot attached to a huge vertical 'board of chance'. As the pointer and man rotated, they passed divisions labelled with such titles as : MONEY POWER DEATH etc. According to which one the pointer stopped against, so was the victim treated. The 'game' was a vast gamble entered into by tramps, derelicts, bankrupts etc. A close variant of this was employed by a 'Secret Society' which used it to punish those who spied on their activities. This time, the victim was held between giant claws which rotated above a horizontal 'board'. Some of the segments carried money, others sharp knives, blank spaces or deep wells into which, if the victim landed in them, offered an unknown fate. In all cases of 'winning' the victim had to promise he would not reveal what had happened to him before he was released. Other types of 'freedom' involved forcible enlistment into the French Foreign Legion.

Most of these stories were cover-coppers. Who could resist hazarding a measly 2d (Less than today's 1p for you decimalised youngsters) to find what was going to happen to the popsy-on-the-pointer or the joker-in-the-jar ?

Still in the technicolour department was THE BOY'S MAGAZINE, half foolscap in size and coloured a shocking shade of pink. Contents were usually one long yarn, and a shorter one. Its only concession to the cartoon market was a single frame, 'Useless Eustace' by Jack Greenall who until very recently, continued to grace the pages of the 'Daily Mirror'





The long novel would often be on a science fiction theme..monsters emerging from the bowels of the Earth into the centre of a football match or the middle of Trafalgar Square..which in those days was as accident-prone as the Empire State Building. The monsters, led by renegade Germans or Italians were always bent on taking over the world..i.e.

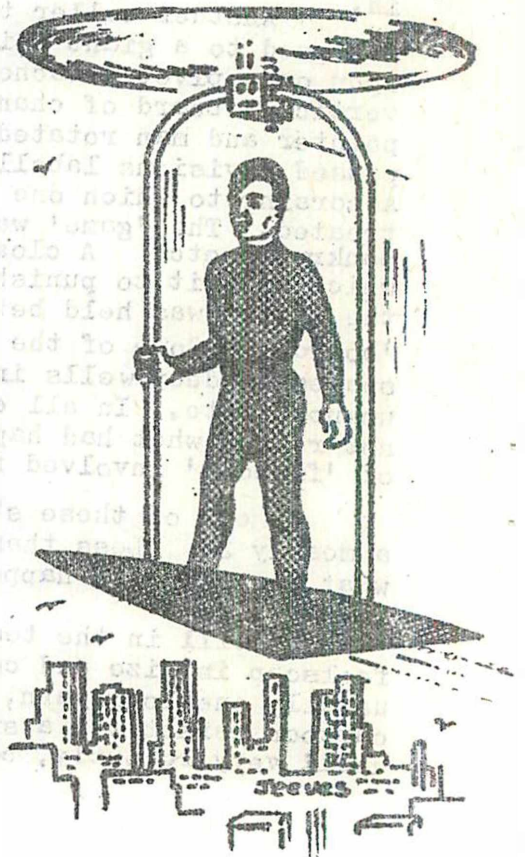
Britain. The tales were highly forgettable, as I have highly forgotten them.

BULLSEYE and BOY'S MAGAZINE catered for the more depraved reader. For those whose parents carried out their censorship duties more addidiously, we had 'The Big Five' ADVENTURE on Monday, WIZARD on Tuesday, ROVER on Thursday, HOTSPUR on Friday and SKIPPER on Saturday. The gap on Wednesday was filled by BOY'S CINEMA which featured film stories complete with 'stills'. I'm not sure what saved us from having a SUNDAY SPIFFER, but I suspect that was the day the writers were put out to grass.

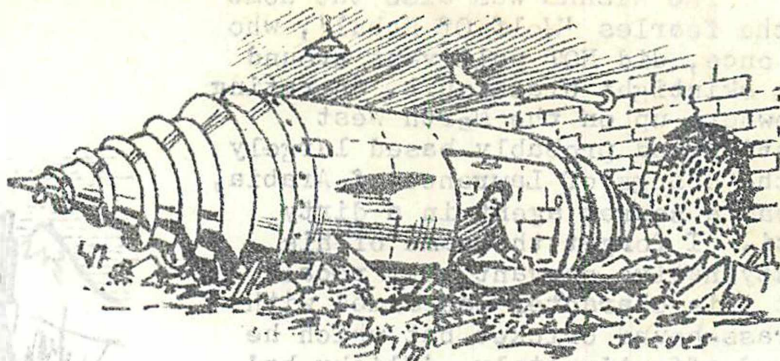
ADVENTURE carried such yarns as 'The Human Fly'. He wore a skintight suit with rubber suction pads at knees and elbows. These enabled him to climb vertical walls or cross ceilings above the heads of the crooks seeking him. He would even cross the

bridges beneath the heels of frontier guards as he pursued his fearless, gang-busting career.

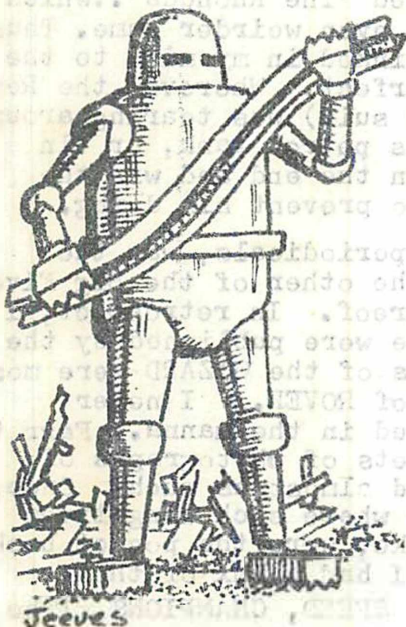
ADVENTURE also feautrred 'Captain Zero', who, in his skintight black suit (Patent Applied For) would charge hither and thither on an electrically powered flying platform. He remained undisturbed by sonic barriers, oxygen shortage, hail, rain or snow as he went about his activities. I'm not sure whether he specialised in gang-busting or bank-busting, but it was probably the former as these yarns had a high moral code. Heroes only broke into banks to emulate the Robin Hood, rob-the-rich-give-to-the-poor ethic. Even then, they were not allowed to make too good a living out of their activities. Each such hero-villain could be sure of having some gaunty detective pounding along only a gnat's whisker behind him in a sort of Colby and Deveral relationship..which for those unfamiliar with Ross Rocklynn's cop and robber series, saw pursuer and pursued grow closer together as their adventures proceeded.



Such an adventurer was 'The Black Sapper' who started out as a 'baddy' who was always foiled at the last moment by the actions of Commander Breeze who usually got there in time to save the loot even if the Sapper escaped. As you might expect, the Black Sapper wore a skintight black suit..and along with his trusty mechanic, Marot would travel underground in his marvellous boring machine, 'The Earthworm'. He could thus emerge undetected in vault or strong room for a bit of 'pick n' mix' among the jewels, bonds and banknotes.



Another twopenny blood', the WIZARD introduced our old friends the Martian Invaders..with a different gimmick. They wore skintight suits of silver! Thunking to Earth at high velocity in their dart-like projectiles, their na' weapon was a paralysing ray-gun. They also brought their own food in the shape of a fast-growing weed which threatened to engulf Britain.



Another WIZARD character was 'The Smasher', a squat, monstrous robot who trampled a trail of destruction through page after page in his effort to prevent the railroad going through on time. Fires, rifles, even dynamite left him unharmed..until a fall off a cliff into a rushing river stopped his gallop for a few issues..wherupon, 'The Return Of The Smasher' gave us further thrilling adventures in the wilds of Canada.

Many years later..after the 'bloods' had metamorphosed into 'comics', I recall seeing in one of my son's papers...a much changed 'Smasher'..now converted into 'The Iron Teacher' and firmly on the side of the goodies.

Another series concerned 'The Worms Of Doom' -- a sort of super-termite capable of nibbling happily through iron and steel to the general detriment of such edifices as the Forth Bridge and the good old Empire State Building. The worms were the main weapon in a Tibetan attempt to dominate the world...and gave me a life-long distrust of maggots and the Dalai Lama.

Also appearing in one of the 'Big Five' was a Western Sheriff who had thrown away his guns. Instead, he relied upon two wooden clubs which he could draw and throw with devastating accuracy long before the gunman's weapon had cleared its holster.

The WIZARD was also the home of the fearless 'Wolf Of Kabul', who for once, did NOT gallivant around in a skintight black suit. Operating somewhere up on the North West Frontier and probably based largely on the doings of Lawrence of Arabia, he was a secret agent in a dirty dhoti. I forget the name of his trusty native servant, but recall that this character was armed with a brass-bound cricket bat which he termed affectionately, 'Clicky-ba' as the nearest he could get to the English name.



In those days, my geography was not quite as accurate as it might have been. Kabul was a place somewhere outside England where one might expect to meet hordes of howling natives around every corner. This sort of mental impression was still with me when I actually did get to India...and although not to Kabul itself...where I would have looked around for traces of 'The Wolf' or a few splinters off 'Clicky-Ba'...I did get up to the hill country and viewed the mighty Himalayas...but never a howling mob of natives in full charge.

As with Kabul, so with a place called 'The Rhondda'..which to my mind must be even further away, as it had an even weirder name. Thus, 'The Red Rider Of The Rhondda' was always firmly linked in my mind to the deserts of Australia. Oh well, we can't all be perfect. Wherever the Red Rider hung out, his speciality (in a skintight red suit) was tearing around the valleys on his motorbike. Despite sugar in his petrol tank, or tin tacks in his tyres, he would always come through in the end and win the race..or whatever it was that the baddies wanted to prevent him doing.

One unforgettable feature of these periodicals, was the free gift. Whenever sales were slumping, one or the other of the Big Five would offer a super-duper free gift..or series thereof. In retrospect, I fail to see the logic behind this step, as all five were published by the same publisher. Cash was limited..so greater sales of the WIZARD were most likely balanced against a slump in the readership of ROVER. I never worried my tiny nut over such theorising..just raked in the manna. Farr too often for football-hating me, such premiums were sets of photographs of footballer...or perhaps cricketeres (who I disliked almost as much. Once, they were even printed on sheets of tin! I wonder where such long-lived ephemera can be today? The gifts that I did like, were the pocket books of facts, cartoons, comic strips etc. For years, I had a box of these goodies stashed away in the depths of a cupboard. SPEED, CHAMPIONS, 'The Bumper WIZARD Fun Book' and many others. Lurking alongside them was a monstrous stack of BOY'S CINEMA...and by the time I joined the R.A.F., it was ranged alongside a complete file of Britain's first true SF weekly, the fabulous SCOOPS.

Sadly, this mine of treasure trove did not survive the war. No, it didn't get devastated by landmines or bombs....during my absence from home, all the lot were pressed into use as fire lighters! Next issue, I'll look back at SCOOPS.

=====

For

QUARTZ.2 40pp/A4/mimeo from Rob Robinson, 23 Raygill, Wilnecote, STAFFS.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG 20 & 21. 44pp/A5/Mimeo from Brian Earl Brown,
 ===== 16711 Burt Rd., No.207, Detroit, MI 48219. U.S.A
 60¢ will get you a copy of this..or trade. It must list almost all (well,
 you can't really expect 'whole' can you?) fanzines produced around the
 world..with details of contents and availability etc. WoFan also runs some
 good illos and occasional pieces in the 'Stalking The Perfect Fanzine'series.
 If you want to know what goes on..or choose a zine to suit you..GET THIS!

FANCY FANNING IN FINLAND ??? It's all happening there with...the superb fanzine..AIKOKONE..1 & 2 now out, 42pp near Qto. Printed and crammed with excellent art and material, (including a Bester story)..rather makes Vector look sick. ,SPIN 1/82 (May issue will be mostly in English) 28pp photo-offset, more fannish than Aikokone, but even better art/photos. FINNISH SF runs only short stories (fanzine) All these are of course in Finnish, so if you speak the language , drop a line to Tom Olander, P.O. Box 3, SF-00251, HELSINKI 25, FINLAND, for full details of any of the above ..and of course for full details of what went on at KING-CON in Sweden, last May. If I'd known of this earlier..and hadn't been going to the USA...we might have made it there. Another year, maybe, Tom? Thanks for all the information and maps, brochures etc. The big snag is they frustrate me ..I can't read Finnish, so just have to drool over the artwork....but I'll find the H.G. Wells booklist in English very useful. Bestest, Terry

LETTERS



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

(((ERGitorial interjections marked thus)))

Rob Robinson,
23 Raygill
Wilnecote STAFFS

Congratulations on 23
years of publication. It
would be interesting to
see some of the earlier issues.
I thought the cover art was very good,
who did it? (((Ex-Nebula & New Worlds
artist Alan Hunter.))) The idea of your
'Down Memory Bank Lane' appeals to me,
I think it would be of interest to many
fans (((It starts in this issue..how's
that for service?))) 'Upon Reflection',
I liked. It is the sort of story I
enjoy, short and snappy. 'Counterblast
To Home Computers' I'm a bit biased here
as I am intending to treat myself to an
Apple II system, any thoughts on that?
(((I did my first programming on an
Apple..a very nice machine))) As usual,
the NASA News is excellent. Where do you
get your up-to-date info? (((As credited,
from NASA News from Washington))) Book
reviews are excellent, but I was surpr-
ised to see you come out so strongly
against 'The Roswell Incident'. (((Well
I hate this 'secrets we may not be told'
and baseless sensationalism.)))

Alan Burns
19 The Crescent
Wallsend On Tyne

The Hunter cover reminds me of a Galaxy cover of many
years ago called 'A Miniature Invasion'. It showed an
officer lying over his desk which was swarming with
little men in spacesuits. Hunter's was beautifully
drawn and the duplication excellent. For the rest of ERG, I should think
Domby Grork was unplaced, the only place for it is in the waste bin. (((Sir,
you have no appreciation of true art))) On the reply to Judith Buffery, I'm
a bit confused. Surely the only way you can judge the quality of any
literature is on a personal basis. (((Dead right clobber. This is the point
I've been hammering for ages. One man's meat and all that. Moreover, you
can't take it for granted that the majority taste is 'good' either..if we
assume there is such a thing as 'good' or 'bad' in this context)))

Roger Waddington
4 Commercial St.,
Norton, Malton,
North Yorks.

Enjoyed reading your 'Top Twenty' list, though I can't
agree with all of 'em. I can agree with 'Hobbyist'
though. My Sense Of Wonder was stirred by the idea of a
spaceship fuelled by lengths of wire. I wouldn't agree
that there hasn't been much pleasure after 1950. I didn't
really start reading SF until 1965, so maybe I can claim a more measured
judgement. There's ANGEL's ERG by Pangborn; THE LIGHT, and THE MAN WHO CAME
EARLY by Poul Anderson, and how can you leave out his 'HIGH CRUSADE' (((With
the greatest of pleasure))) I liked 'Upon Reflection'; the only thing was,
I kept reading with the thought it would turn into a devastating critique
of that sort of writing, such is the Jeeves manner I've come to know. But
if you can't print your own fiction in your own fanzine, where can you
print it? (((On small pills sold as 'Insomnia Cure', perhaps ???)))

DONALD FRANSON
6543 Babcock Ave
Nth. Hollywood
CA 91606

Your article on time is the most interesting in the 77 issue, but you must have been dreaming when you proposed the difficulty of understanding speeded-up or slowed-down speech. You even mentioned tape recorders in the same paragraph..the easy solution (((Not so, it would still take ages to record the message coming in at .005 "/sec, before playing it intelligibly at 3 $\frac{1}{4}$. Then the astronaut would have to slow down your message to hear it. It would be possible..but decidedly NOT easy..and most tedious for each end))) Judith's article repeats an old complaint of the literary establishment not respecting Science Fiction. Peter Straub, a fantasy writer says, "As a kid I was interested in science fiction. Now I can't read anything where the people have funny names, ~~th~~ 'Erthor got up, put on his Illiath and walked out on the plains of Gimm'. So now we get no respect from Fantasy as well as main stream. What Straub is talking about is really Science-Fantasy. It's too bad there is so much around that it gets the name of Science Fiction in trouble (((Agreed, and the TV version of SF is no help either)))

I wish you would hire a proofreader..'the aircraft flew near strom edges' sounds like harrassment of Senator Thurmond. Since you don't stencil direct and don't have the corflu problem, you can use 'Tipp-Ex' (((Hold on there podner..I do type onto stencil..I do use corflu...but the odd typo always slips through. Part of life's rich tapestry, you know)))

JUDITH BUFFERY
Hall Green
Birmingham

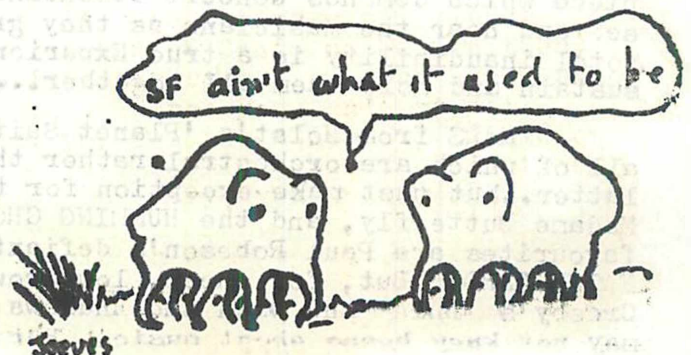
I thought Alan Burns' article on home computers rather silly. I thought the whole point about them was that they are FUN. They don't have to be useful do they? (((Dead right, Judith. And as for Alan saying you can't cuddle 'em..he drools over his video recorder..you can't neck with that either...or can you, Alan??)))

To be honest, I got rather confused over what Robert Mapson was saying. I got the impression that he takes his stand from within Fandom, not the world at large..which was just the point I was trying to make. However, I did agree with your addendum; I do think that durability is the only true test of any work of art. If a lot of people like something for a long time then it must have some value. I find the NASA column most interesting, keep it up. I was delighted to see you reviewing THE MANY COLOURED LAND. I haven't read it yet, but I'm looking forward to doing so after your remarks.

BERNARD M. EARP
21 Moorfield Grove
Tong Moor
Bolton

'Upon Reflection'..the only thing wrong with this little gem, is its so condenses. Was there a wordage limit? (((Yes, my own laziness))) 'Counterblast To Computers' I agree with Alan that the computer is a status symbol for the man/woman wanting a hobby. (((Not so..I need another hobby like a hole in the head..but my ZX81 hooked me.,,the things are FUN)))

One fault I find with your fiction list is that you give away some of the endings...'Doorbell' and 'To Serve Man'. (((Minor worry in telling of a good story..people still read the Bible, although they know what happens to the hero in the end))) Fancy putting an ad for ERGTAPE 2 right after typing.."This is probably because I like the sound of my own voice"..you've talked me into, I enclose my cheque for £2. (((You forgot..but tape is mailed,,hope you liked it)))



My FAVOURITE Music



Having listed my favourite fiction and non-fiction in earlier issues of ERG, I thought it might make a nice change to list some (not all by any means) of my favourite music. Being a musical moron unable to tell a canon from a gigue, I simply list those pieces of music which give me repeated pleasure over the years.

First off, there's the superb second movement of CONCERTO D'ARANJUEZ played by the guitarist Rodrigo. Its stately evocative grandeur never fails to move me as it recalls (to me) visions of a sleepy, sun-baked village gradually coming to life. On a more gentle and plaintive note is Faure's PAVANE Op.50 with its slow seductive development. It raises no images other than sheer pleasure. Then of course, Tchaikovsky;

his ANDANTE CANTABILE with the soft but insistent cello, counterpointing the theme is a haunting melody..as is

his ROMEO and JULIET music which is also on my play-it-again list together with the opening waltz movement from his SERENADE FOR STRINGS. For sheer, lilting enjoyment, it is hard to beat.

Then there's Albinoni's marvellous ADAGIO IN G MAJOR which starts softly and remains so as it works its way into your heart..it was recently used in the Wendy Craig, TV programme, 'Butterflys' and then in a carpet advert. Indeed, it is in danger of becoming a musical cliché as the (Bach's Air for G String ??) of a cigar advert. Pachelbel's CANON AND GIGUE in D MAJOR is another stimulating bit of music with its sombre, gentle start merging into a tapestry of runs and delightful cascades. Then there's Grieg's PIANO CONCERTO in A Minor, first movement, a terrific piece from its opening triumphal notes.

Prokofiev's LIEUTENANT KJIE suite following a life from cradle to grave is another 'must'..particularly one sequence which invariably calls to mind a desert camel-train. From the Carmina Burana set of bawdy songs (in Latin, so I don't understand 'em) comes REX FORTUNATA MUNDI, the superb orchestral/vocal chant..which was also used in James Burke's 'Connections'.

In general, I prefer listening at home to concert-going. but one piece which demands concert attendance is Ravel's incomparable BOLERO. To see and hear the musicians as they gradually raise the music from almost total inaudibility is a true Experience..and to see the drummer who must sustain and hold them all together..words fail me on the delight it gives.

MARS from Holst's 'Planet Suite' is another hit as is LA GOLONDRINA, all of which are orchestral rather than vocal...in general I dislike the latter..but must make exception for the magnificent aria ONE FINE DAY from Madame Butterfly, and the HUMMING CHORUS from the same source. Other vocal favourites are Paul Robeson's defiant, SONG OF THE PLAINS and SONG OF THE FATHERLAND. But, for sheer, low-brow performer enjoyment, who can beat Crosby's 'BAIA' and with the Andrews sisters, THE THREE CABALLEROS ? I may not know beans about music...but I DO know what I like. Fair enough ?

Teffy



THE CRYSTAL SINGER

Anne McCaffrey

Severn House £6.95

Originally a four part series in Elwood's 'Continuum' (1974) and here, expanded and linked into a novel..to my mind, a vast improvement over the separate parts.

Ballybran crystals forma vital part of the Galaxy's technological societies. Mining them is a hazardous and penalty-demanding job requiring singers of perfect pitch. Failed opera-singer Killashandra Ree sets out to become one of the renowned and often hated, 'singers-of-crystal' one of the qualifications for which, is to accept the risks of death or mutation by a symbiote. Minor quibbles are that Killashandra has a rather (very) lucky streak, and sexually, seems more neuter than female. Nevertheless, build up and background are impeccable with a scope and detail far exceeding that of the 'Dragon' series. I found the yarn one of the most enthralling I've come across in many a long read. Get it and enjoy!

THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR

Gene Wolfe

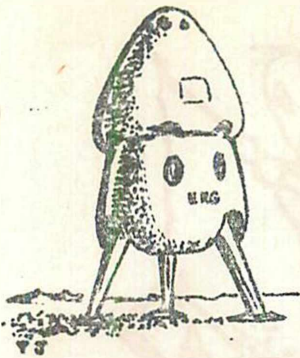
Sidgwick & Jackson £7.95

Third in the 'Book Of The New Sun' series opens with ex-apprentice Torturer Severian in the role of Lictor carrying out the Archon's justice.

Becoming disenchanted with the task, Severian flees the city to resume his travels. Joined briefly by a young lad he re-encounters old enemies, new ones, strange monsters and assorted adventures. The pace slows briefly for a 'bedtime story' bit of padding, but we are soon back with the enthralling, on-going story..to me, it seems the best of the three to date, so if you a lover of the series...here's a treat. For newcomers, the two earlier titles were... THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER,

THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION LISTS... Mike Ashley Virgin.£2.95

How Mike does it, I do not know, but here's another of his epic fact assortments (His last was THE COMPLETE INDEX TO ASTOUNDING/ANALOG) and here we have an absolutely fascinating compendium of this, that and the other pertaining to SF. Nigh on 200 pages, plus photos and artwork from all over the field. Divided into four section..stories, opinion, record holders and oddities. Want to know the most popular artists, Asimov's 5 favourite stories, the 10 rarest books/magazines, 10 story origins, 5 most important British magazines, the ten top SF people..etc etc. I make it some 166 different sets of highly entertaining and surprising material. You'll keep coming back again and again to dip into this treasurehouse, so get your copy before they run out of stock at the booksellers.



THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR

Gene Wolfe
Arrow \$1.60

Second in the series where Apprentice Torturer Severian, having acquired the 'Claw Of The Conciliator', a jewel of strange powers, pursues his quest. Together with the steel-handed Jonas, they enter the lair of the half-men; are captured by a band of criminals and hunted by vampires. With passages reminiscent of 'Gormenghast', this is a beautifully constructed and almost credible alien society..alien, yet human. No wonder it is taking all the Award nominations. And now you can get it in pb.

PETER DAVISON'S BOOK OF ALIEN MONSTERS

Sparrow 95p

In case you didn't know it, Mr. Davison is the latest in the 'Dr. Who' line. Here we have a neat little, nine children's story anthology covering a labyrinthine 'Tombworld', carnivorous mushrooms, a form swapping alien, talking semolina, an alien space game and even a silicon eating caterpillar. Not to mention a colony world and invisible alien and a mechanical visitor. Not only did I find 'em all enjoyable and highly suitable for younger readers (only one by Dyan Sheldon being written down) but each tale fitted my definition of a real story...having beginning, development and a proper ending..instead of fading out with a whimper. If you want a good present for a youngster of either sex...get 'em this one.

THREE WORLDS TO CONQUER

Poul Anderson

Ganymedan colonist Frazer is in contact with Theor Sidgwick and Jackson \$6.95 a centaur-like creature down on Jupiter, when a rebel ship takes over Ganymede. The aim is to manufacture nuclear weapons there and so overthrow Earth's rule. We follow the intertwined stories of Frazer and Theor as one fights the rebels, the other a tribe of invaders. Their adventures are in true space-opera tradition, but I'm never happy about such two-level yarns as the threads tend to get lost in change-over. If you like conflict in space or alien world, then this could be yours. Three worlds ?? Why, Earth, Ganymede and Jupiter..though Earth hardly comes into it.

OATH OF FEALTY

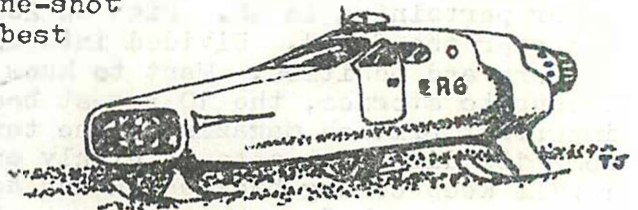
Larry Niven &
Jerry Pournelle
Orbit \$1.95

Todos Santos in Los Angeles is a city-skyscraper of a quarter of a million people with its top people mind-linked to the computer Millie. Angelinos hate and resent TS and ecofreaks seek to destroy it so when three youngsters make an illegal 'bomb' planting raid, action is swift - and lethal. Which brings the Security Head to trial and a confrontation with the police and others. It isn't often a yarn keeps me up till the small hours to finish it, but this one did..better than 'Mote' or 'Hammer', a real smach hit and the best Messrs Niven and Pournelle have given us to date.

ICEWORLD

Hal Clement
Del Rey \$1.25

Teacher Sallman Ken is called in by police to infiltrate a band of drug-runner. His mission takes him to the low-temperature world of Earth and exposes him to the one-shot addiction of tobacco. One of Clement's best when it appeared as a 3pt ASF serial in '57 and they've had the sense to use Van Dongen's excellent ASF cover on the jacket. I'd rate it above Needle or even Mission of Gravity..and be warned..if you're not a Clement addict..this could make you one.



COSMIC ENGINEERS

=====
 Clifford D. Simak the illegal test flight of an inter-Magnum £1.50 stellar craft built by Tommy Evans, detect a derelict spacecraft. They retrieve and revive the body of Caroline Martin who has been in suspended animation for a thousand years..and conscious all that time. She warns of mental contact with 'Engineers' at the end of the Universe and their plea for help. A space time machine is built and off they go to avert disaster to the Universe. Originally a 3pt. ASF serial in 1939, little has been changed for this edition (There is even a Hellhound menace which originated in a 1932 Simak tale) By today's standards, it creaks at the seams, but if you want hell-bent action with 'goshwow' piling high, then treat yourself to a load of nostalgia and dig in.

I NEVER TRAVEL
 WITHOUT A
 LIFE-SUPPORT
 PACK

THE ALUMINIUM MAN

=====
 Society Indian Rudolf and alcoholic, G.C. Edmondson genetic engineer Flaherty help an alien Hale £6.75 in distress and acquire the means for producing aluminium from bacteria. Their rags to riches scheme runs into big business opposition and to complicate things, Tuchi, the alien comes to reclaim her equipment and at the same time, begins to spawn. A fast-moving, light-hearted romp with Flaherty and Rudolf always just a fraction ahead. Who-gets-who (and what) remains neatly undecided right to the end. If you recall Gallagher the drunken scientist, then this is right in that humour groove.

DEEP SPACE PROCESSIONAL

=====
 R. Snowden Ficks and fares best..and by the 25th Century, her Empire is Roger Beaumont interstellar. Manoeuvre Admiral Lord Northumberland Hale £6.25 a strategic genius is normally kept in 'deep sleep' until his services are needed. This time, he is recalled to aid in battle against the alien Vronovians. Aided by a mind link to a giant computer, he first foils an attack on Queen Anne II and then uses his expertise to aid the Empire. Characters are agreeable, with Queen Anne mixing in well. Court events and intrigue are very well handled though at times a touch of anachronism creeps in. This proved to be one of the most agreeable 'future monarchy/intrigue' yarns I can recall reading. It avoided the standard blud and thunder trap and concentrated on a real story

THE SCIENCE FICTION SOLAR SYSTEM

=====
 Ed. Isaac Asimov bulging with 13 items, each linked with a planet-Panther £1.50 -ary body or other part of the Solar System. Among the goodies are Nourse's 'Brightside Crossing, Blish's incomparable 'Bridge' and Carr's 'Hop Friend' The author line-up reads like Who's Who..Clarke, Anderson, Sheckley, Leiber, etc. To ensure that reading about fictional planets doesn't mislead you, Asimov adds a brief essay to each tale, detailing the currently known facts and theories of its locale. In addition, there's a potted biography of each author squeezed in at the back. Apart from plain old reading pleasure, this one is ideal for school libraries and gift seasons. It's a gift at the price, especially if you go for stories that are stories and not vignettes of the 'fade-out-with a-whimper' variety.

ERGTAPE 2 now available (ERGTAPE 1 likewise) packed with plays, music, bits from back issues of ERG etc etc. £2.00 each from the editor.

WORLDS

Joe Haldeman
Orbit \$1.75

Marianne O'Hara was reared in the free living/loving society of New New York, one of 41 hollowed-out asteroids made into orbital worlds. She comes to Earth for a post-graduate student year in New York and gets involved in a power struggle between Governmental lobbies culminating in a final shoot out. Her semi-biographical-cum-letter-cum-diary experiences are entertaining and exciting with even a touch of Heinlein style narrative, but for me the ending proved a disappointment. However, Haldeman is a lively writer, and Marrianne's freewheeling activities are enjoyable reading in themselves.

SYZGY

Frederik Pohl
Bantam \$1.25

The planetary line-up known as syzgy is approaching, causing various cults-of-unreason to howl doom. Coincidentally, a Jupiter probe is destroyed, and a super nova, solar prominence and other events join in. A shady estate agent sets out to cash in, as does a senator and a psychic pecturer. Throw in a few other issues and an excellent assortment of characters mixed and stirred by events to give an excellent yarn with an unexpected..if rather weak, ending.

INSIDE OUTSIDE

Philip Jose Farmer
Corgi \$1.25

After death, Jack Cull is trapped in a spherical Hell holding a central Sun. Created when the influx of humans exceeded the number of available demons..thus converting demons into slaves. Cull sets off on a fact-finding mission, enters a strange underworld and survives the collapse of Hell, only to find a truth with a new beginning. A rather formless inchoate adventure which demands much of the reader, but gives little in return. The yarn reads well, but lacks a more concrete plot.

EXILES AT THE WELL OF SOULS

Jack L. Chalker
Penguin \$1.95

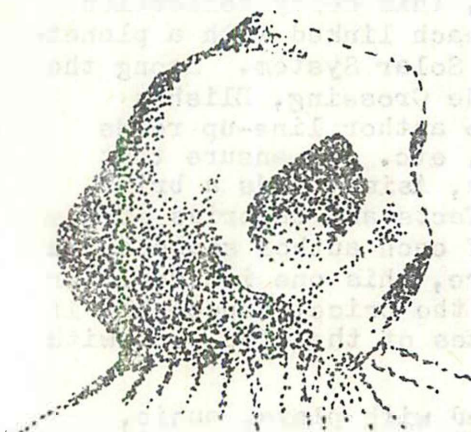
Second 'Well World' story, in which Antor Trelig seizes control of Obie, the intelligent, reality-changing computer, then sets out to control a federation of human worlds. Adventuress Mavra Chang is hired to foil his plans, but is only partly successful; both she and Trelig end up in different bodies in scattered hex lands on the Well World. Almost two stories in one, with the initial sequence having the edge over the multi-character-body-environment of the second part. Once complete. this stands a good chance pf becoming one of SF's classics.

THE INTERNAL DESIRE MACHINES OF DOCTOR HOFFMAN

Angela Carter
King
Penguin \$2.25

When the elusive Dr.Hoffman begins to distort reality it falls to Desiderio to try to put a stop to his activities. The trail leads through an on-going series of weird and incredible adventures in a dream-like fantasy where anything can happen.

Unfortunately, the very dream-like atmosphere inhibits the development and obscures the narrative. Many will enjoy this type of moving event patterns, but in my own case, it just failed to make the grade. Definitely a case of try it for yourself..and if it is in your line..then enjoy.



Jeeves

JESUS ON MARS

Philip Jose Farmer
Panther £1.50

The first four astronauts to Mars are captured by the 'Martians'..an alien/human society of Orthodox Jews leading a near-idyllic existence, but a rigorously orthodox one. Living in underground caverns lit by nuclear 'suns'.. in one of which Jesus lives. He descends, meets the astronauts and his miracles begin to undermine their religious beliefs. Things come to a head when the Martians set out to bring the true faith to Earth. Good characters, excellent plotting and good pace make this one of Farmer's best..and that to my mind includes Riverworld..so Farmer fans, here's a treat.

MIND OVER MATTER

Kit Pedler
Granada £1.95

Based on the TV series, this sets out to establish that psi powers act outside 'normal' physics, but within the realm of quantum effects. Covering experiments in esp, telepathy, telekinesis, spoon-bending, precognition and other areas right through to a 'Do It Yourself' chapter of experimentation. There is a wealth of interesting material, but whilst I enjoyed this, I was not so happy with the nebulous link with modern theories...Einstein's weight-from-train experiment is poorly presented, and Pedler manages to confuse time dilation with the Doppler effect when tackling relativity.

However, he is on firmer ground with his main theme, and if you accept his integrity..and statistical evidence, there's a lot of fascinating meat for the interested reader.

MANIFEST DESTINY

Barry B. Longyear
Orbit £1.75

A hefty volume holding four tales of Man's expansion into the Galaxy..linked by some rather pointless 'Legislative Records'. Two yarns use the theme of alien defeat/exploitation by war or commerce. A third deals with a friendship developing between two warrior-castaways and the final item follows the lines of 'Starship Troopers' and 'Forever War' in its account of a soldier's life and bravery. Slightly 'down beat', but if you enjoy the conflict of human and alien (of the noble savage variety) then these are well written and should be right down your street.

CIRCUS WORLD

Barry B. Longyear
Orbit £1.75

Seven tales from IASFM covering the would-be attack on Momus, a world settled by a circus troop which survived the wreck of the ship, 'City Of Baraboo'. Lord Allenby is sent to persuade the citizens to ask for aid and the seven tales give some superb, Vance-like insights into various aspects of the world where even the simple question, "What time is it?", requires payment in the copper-bead novills before an answer is given. Excellent SF, it never loses sight of where it is going, nor does it bog down in needless verbiage. I found it a pleasing, unfraught 'read' and reckon it by far the better collection of the wto..don't miss it.

ELFQUEST Book 2

Donning have now issued the second in this beautifully illustrated work by Wendy and Richard Pini... ..softback..\$10.95 and a limited \$40.00 hardcover. Due next October.



THE ONE TREE

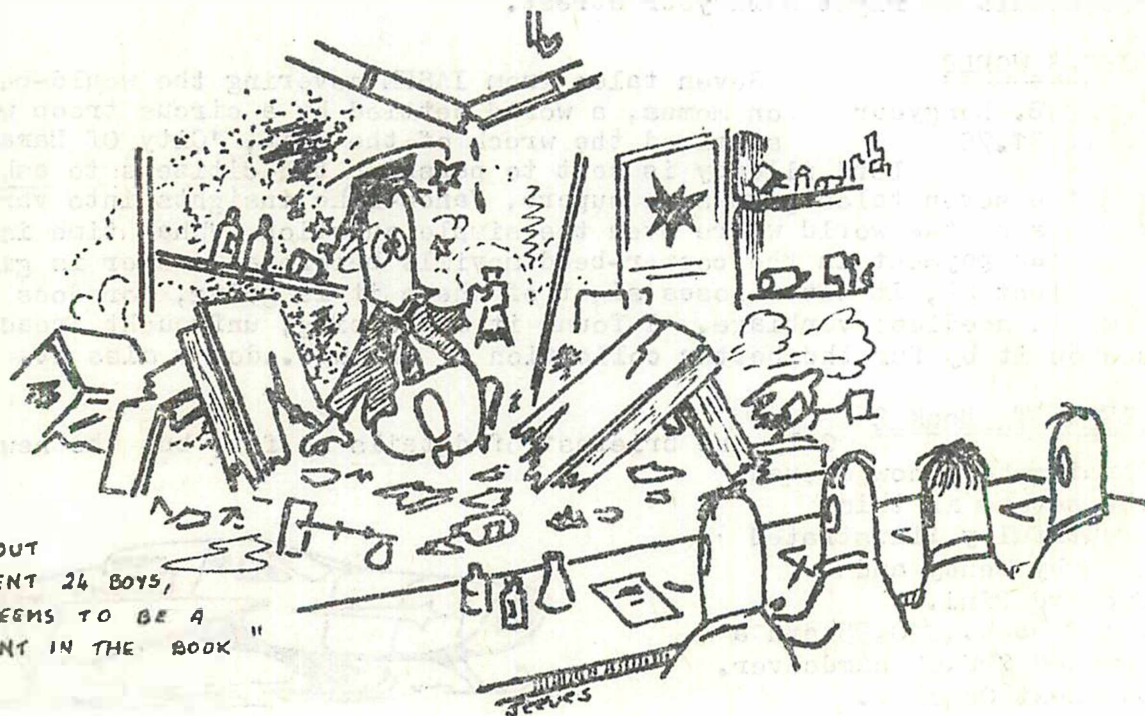
Stephen R. Donaldson
Sidgwick & Jackson
\$8.95

Second in the new series of Thomas Covenant, Unbeliever sees the Sunbane spreading its devastating grip across The Land as Lord Foul's power rises. Covenant and Avery set sail on a granite ship of the Giants to find The One Tree from which to make a new Staff Of Law; their only hope against the menace. But Covenant is flawed by power, Avery introverted so their heroic quest does not proceed along conventional lines. Disaster causes Covenant to lose heart and Foul seems ready to triumph. Once again, Donaldson spins his fluent word-magic with rich description of the land to which Covenant is pulled in times of peril. Lovers of the earlier tales will find no cause for complaint here..save that the weight of this massive, volume may prove the final straw in collapsing their creaking bookshelves. The first series became a 'cult' book..and I'm sure this will follow suit.

MR. MONSTER'S MOVIE GOLD

Forrest J. Ackerman
DORNING \$12.95

A king-sized (8 1/2" x 11") trade paperback of over 200 marvellous, nostalgia-filled pages. 'Over 250 rare and never before published stills and posters' says the jacket..and I believe it..but this isn't just the usual hodgepodge of umpteen pictures and zilch in the way of text. Forry (and others) have done an excellent job of documentation and commentary..both wry and humorous..particularly 4SJ's account of his own film experiences. Monsters, horror, Frankensteins, Traculas, robots, are all here in profusion in a book you will return to again and again. For the real buff, there are even 10 'unknown' stills for you to identify and so get your name into the follow-up volume..which brings my only criticism..Forry makes far too many references to this..."Write in and tell me//It will be in//My next book.." I'll admit that if the second is as good as this, you'll not want to miss it....but I can do without a dozen or more reminders. (((Note to 4SJ..I'll be in Los Angeles in August..hope to meet you at LASFS if possible to renew our mattering in Boston in 1980)))



QUEST FOR FIRE

When a Prehistoric tribe loses its Fire, two rival groups J.H. Rosney-Aine set off in search of a new flame. Thus, from the outset Penguin £1.25 we have the classic 'quest' plus the brooding rivalry between Naoh (the good) and Aghoo (the bad) with tribal power and the desirable Gemmla as prizes. Naoh's journey is beset by encounters with mammoths, tigers, aurochs, bears and other tribesmen but eventually, Fire is found and we have a final confrontation with Aghoo. An exciting yarn with enough violence to suit anyone as the dawning intelligence of Naoh is pitted against his environment. First published in 1911 and recently made into a film (with added sex scenes) the story still reads as fresh as ever with none of the creaking phraseology of its era.

THE TERROR VERSION

After a promising start, this one rather disappointed John Lymington me. Eccentric Professor Jack Odds has evolved a method of mental travel to an alternate Earth on the opposite side of the Sun. Taking Richard Trenton with him, the pair find themselves in a women-dominated society at a time of unrest as the females wish to return to bearing their own children. Which may seem rather contradictory..as is the presence of a Government agent who adds nothing to the plot. The final escape is also to prove not so final. The opening has some nice humour, but this is not sustained for long. The theme lacks credibility and the characters likewise. Sorry, but this one did nothing for me.

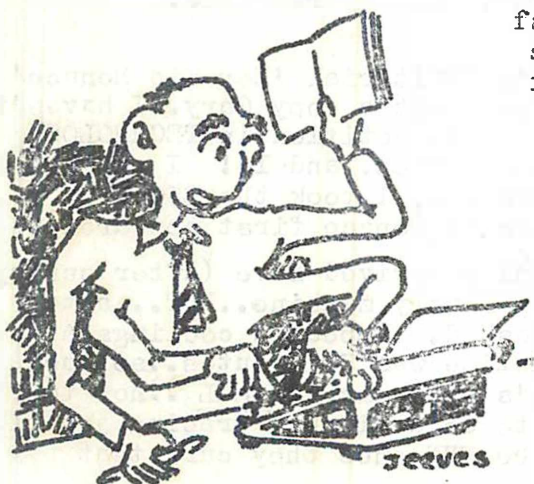
SONGS FROM THE STARS

A post-A-disaster set in Aquaria (formerly California) Norman Spinrad Clear Blue Lou must arbitrate a charge of usage of Arrow £1.60 'black' (science) materials in the 'white' community of health, air and nature. However, the case is just a trap to lure him and Little Mary Sunshine to aid a technical plan to send a spacecraft up to the 'Big Ear' satellite which, for fifty years, has been listening for aliens. The 'with-it' language tends to get in the way of an excellent story, and the hippy-like community seemed a shade unlikely..nevertheless, I'd rate this as one of Spinrad's best. A darned good read!

334

Thomas M. Disch According to my files, Sphere issued this title in Methuen £1.50 1974. Here reprinted, are six tales (5 from various magazines) and concerning the inhabitants of a monolithic apartment block in a frighteningly overcrowded future New York of 2027.

Their lives are sleazy, hopeless, frustrated; likewise their ambitions, struggles and failures. Explicit (and nauseating) sex scenes will appeal to lovers of the tribulations of seething humanity...but I'm afraid it isn't my cup of tea....indeed, I wonder just who gets a kick out of the sickening accounts of some of the sexual antics. Nevertheless, 'you pays your money and you takes your choice' Disch lovers, here's your chance.



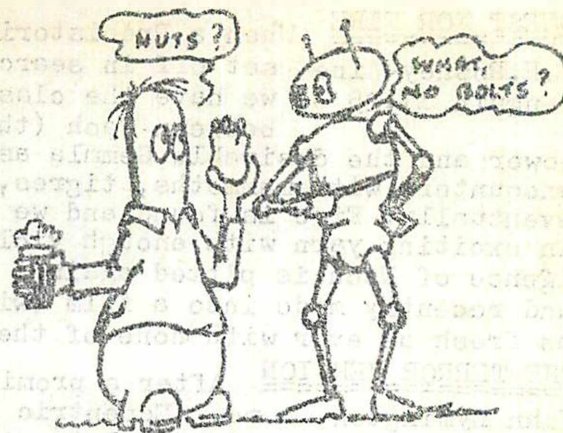
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DOUBLE ANNIVERSARY... Next issue (ERG 80) for October 1st. 1982 also marks my 60th. birthday. I'm right on your tail, Forry.

OPUS The Best Of Isaac Asimov

Panther £2.50

Since my collection holds at least 30 Asimov titles, it's obvious that I rate him highly. Here we have his own selection of bits and pieces from his first 200 works, split into Opus 100 (11 chapters) and Opus 200 (15 of same). We get the best of fact and fictional worlds as he skilfully interweaves his commentary and explanation between items. In the 670 pages, Dr. Asimov covers robotics, astronomy, physics, fiction, history, the Bible and a host of other themes all in his own inimitable and VERY highly readable prose. Indubitably, the block-busting bargain of the year so get your order in now.

THIS TIME OF DARKNESS

Methuen Children's Books

H.M. Hoover

£5.50

Eleven-year-old Amy, unwanted by her mother, lives in a sealed-off, decaying underground city, where her ability to read earns Governmental scrutiny. On discovering her friend Axel entered the city illegally from the mythical 'Outside', Amy talks him into joining her in a bid for freedom. Their journey through machine labyrinths, pleasure domes and across mutant-ridden wastelands make an exciting yarn..which never shows signs of being 'written down'. Personally, I'd rate it far better than many an 'adult' novel, as pace and interest are never allowed to flag. This should make an excellent gift for any youngster in your present-giving area.

GEMINI GOD

Garry Kilworth

Penguin £1.75

By the end of the 21st. Century, mankind has reached the stars, but is declining at home. To safeguard the mobile settlement on New Carthage, an empathy experiment using sets of four-year-old twins is set up. The children are conditioned to react violently to the aliens on New Carthage should a threat arise, and thus give instantaneous warning to Earth. At the first trial, an unexpected side effect arise, and once at the colony, the results prove even more spectacular. Accept the implausibilities of the mobile colony and the advantage of halving reaction time being of much practical value, and Mr. Kilworth has come up with another gripping account of human/alien contact..plus a hint of a spiritual 'overmind'. Highly readable.

STOP PRESS NEWS

As noted earlier, this issue's ERGitorial 'Moronic Menace' was due to appear in Gary Kemp's 'QUARTZ' (How about a copy Gary..I haven't had one at the time of writing this). Seeing a competition in TECHNOLOGY WEEK, I submitted a slightly modified version to them..and lo! I won the first prize of a ZX81...since I all ready have one, I took the £50 cash instead...so if you take TECHNOLOGY WEEK..Moronic Menace first appeared there.

THE BBC COMPUTER I ordered last November finally arrived here (after sundry letters of enquiry) on Saturday, June 5th. A lovely machine..BUT...after running for 50 minutes, it overheated and crashed. Repeated coolings and testing established that its average running time was 30 minutes..so back it must go to Acorn. ((Oh yes, and the User's Guide is ABYSMAL))not to mention that to link it to a recorder I had to do a circuit tracing job plus a five DIN pin solder job. Still, it will be FUN once they cure that overheating problem for me.



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

**Viking News Center
Pasadena, California
(213) 354-6000**

**Viking 2-39
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A LAST VIKING LOOK AT THE NORTH POLE OF MARS — This four-frame mosaic is made up of the last pictures transmitted from Mars to Earth by NASA's Viking Orbiter 2 before engineers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory shut it down July 24, 1978. The region photographed is between 79 and 84 degrees north latitude near the edge of the north polar cap, and it reveals a broad plateau dissected by a canyon. The plateau is formed of many individual layers, and these are exposed where erosion has uncovered distinctive patterns of roughly parallel stripes as evidence of the layering. The season is mid-summer on Mars, and strong solar heating has caused winter deposits of condensed, frozen carbon dioxide (dry ice) to sublime back into the atmosphere — leaving behind bright patches of water ice. The ice clings preferentially to flat or slightly north-sloping areas, while slopes with southern inclinations are defrosted by the greater amount of sunlight they receive. A comparison of these recent Martian-summer Viking Orbiter 2 pictures of the north polar region with those taken during the last Martian summer (1976, also by VO-2), indicate that the north polar cap had significantly less ice cover during the 1978 summer than during the previous summer.

