

ERGONIC

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JULY 1983

QUARTERLY

STORIES OF STUPID SCIENCE



Status
Box

ERG Quarterly is edited, published and perpetrated by,

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ENGLAND

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do something about it...so PLEASE DO
RESPOND...I don't want to mail ERG into
a vacuum.

MINI-ERGITORIAL

Greetings ERGbods,

For openers, a plug for Walter Sommergruber whose
address is:- Mittelschulweg 8, A-4840 Vocklabruck, AUSTRIA. Walter
wishes to sell his SHARP PC211 micro and buy a ZX81 (Check out the
new Acorn 'Electron' first, Walter). He wants 2750 Shillings which
I figure is about £90.

The ERG calendar for 1984 is in preparation and I
will give full details in the next issue...meanwhile, with the end
of GO WEST OLD FAN in this issue, I can now offer the complete USA
trip reports for 1980 and 1982 (which first appeared in ERG) in one
36 page booklet....price £1 or \$2.00 (in bills, not cheques) which
also includes postage. A limited number of copies...so first come..!

ERG TAPES 1,2 & 3 still available at £2.00 or \$4 a
throw...so order now and enjoy old favourites and much new material.
Incidentally one fmz reviewer enjoyed the tapes, but queried the cost
...out of the £2 per tape comes the cost of a blank cassette AND
20+ pence postage...not to mention the time and effort in FIRST
making the tape, and then the time spent dubbing it and finally
packing it for postage. Can YOU buy a pre-recorded tape for less?

This stencil is being cut on the Brother golf-ball
machine using a stencil kindly supplied by Terry Hill. Being a
thinner type of stencil, I'm hoping that it will prove suitable for
use with this machine.

So many people wrote in and urged me not to fold
ERG in two/three years time, that I am now investigating the costs
of going over to photo-lith. If any of you out there can give me
a few sample prices (Noel Hannan ??) I'd appreciate it. Meanwhile,
our Labour Council continues to divert our rating money...£10,000 to
a CND officer, a large donation to CND, £20,000 a year on an anti-
Tory 'free' newspaper full of downright lies. If this is Labour
democracy, then give me Maggie's lot every time. Yes, Pete...I'm
one of those PROUD to have voted for her...and who shudder at the
thought of feckless Foot and the unilateral disarmers taking over.

Bestest to all....(except Foot)

Terry

EDITORIAL



OPINION

Every so often, someone raises the thorny question of censorship and their aversion to it. This frequently employs a 1984-ish type of 'double-think'... for instance, a recent editorial in a video magazine said:-

"I'm not in favour of censorship in any form, but hardcore pornography should be restricted to viewing by adults. The consequences of allowing children to see scenes of gang rape, wholesale slaughter and sick-making mutilation, fill me with horror, and for that reason I would

strongly advocate that those features be subject to some form of control."

Whilst heartily applauding the editor's reasons (Yes, I'm a Mary Whitehouse supporter), I can't help but wonder if that writer realised that after coming out against censorship 'in any form', he then went on to advocate one particular form which suited him.

My dictionary defines censorship as..."the act of examining books, plays, etc., before they are published to see that they contain nothing immoral, seditious or offensive//...to control or delete objectionable matter"

Now would all those readers who subscribe to the 'no censorship in any form' write that out 100 times before pushing it through that little hole between their ears..the one where normal people keep their brains. In some way, WE ALL practise censorship...i.e. 'controlling or deleting objectionable matter' from our speech and behaviour..in certain conditions. Where we may differ, is in the amount of such censorship and the very subjective assessment of what we term 'objectionable'. Take a few 'for instances'..

Those of us with children tend to censor the language we use in their presence. I can't imagine any responsible parent teaching his infant how to use the four-letter words beloved by the media-trendies..or putting 'Soldier Blue' on the video as a replacement for 'Noddy'. Those without children still control their words and actions to avoid offence to others. They refrain from urinating or defecating in the nearest gutter, they do not stroll starkers from bathroom to front garden to prune the roses and a marked change appears in their vocabulary when someone's mother joins the stag group in the saloon bar. One could cite numerous similar cases, but no doubt you can think of your own..the point is that there are times when even the most way out anti-censorship plugger restrains himself to avoid giving offence. So that should establish the point that some form of censorship is both needed and employed.

Which brings me to the idea of an appointed censor. Personally, I'm in favour of a strong, Government-backed body to do the job. By all means let an adult (judged by IQ as well as age..because institutionalised morons can be legally 'adult') go to a shop and buy books, films, tapes etc., if his tiny warped mind demands them. What I object to is slightly different. All such items should be clearly labelled..so that if an otherwise normal book, film or tape contains offensive material...I don't find out after I've

bought it. I'd class that as 'Passive' censorship. However, I would also advocate a 'Dynamic' censorship which starts by labelling CLEARLY all films shown in cinemas and all material shown on TV. Given such forewarning, I can stay away from the cinema or leave the 'box' switched off. So far, most people might agree with me..but I'd have those censors go even further and prohibit the use of obscenities, and other offensive jargon being inserted into what would normally be considered 'family viewing'. One can leave the set off for a clearly-rated blue movie...but when one is halfway through a seemingly inoffensive 'Play for our time'..it is a bit too late when the nastiness starts to come through. I consider such insertions and usages as invasions of my personal privacy. In the old days of the Hays' office, most films were arguably bland and over-censored, but at least one could take a child to any U rated film secure in the knowledge that the material would be suitable. This also applied in the earlier days of TV..(and in the SF books and magazines). Why can't we have a censor who will do a similar job and either clearly label an item as 'Possibly objectionable'...or cut out, at the production stage..such offending material.

At this point, someone is bound to say, 'No normal human being should need someone else to water down their entertainment'...but look at it this way... I expect others to apply and maintain hygiene standards with my food; maintenance standards on the car I buy; comfort and safety standards when I travel, and police to protect me against criminals...as well as silencing the obnoxious transistor radio which the local yobbo carries on his shoulder with the volume control at 'full' whilst wandering through the local park. It seems only logical to expect a similar control of the standards and protection against their infringement when material is aired via the public broadcasting systems of radio and TV.

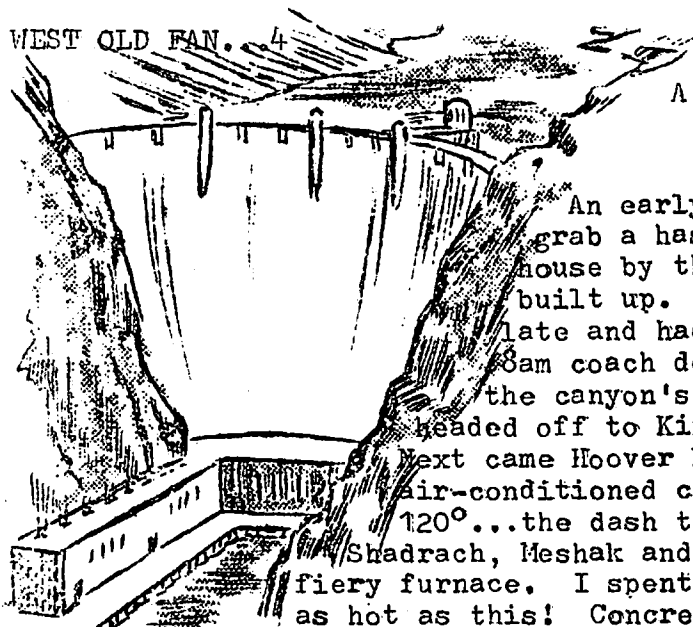
So much for media, what about books? Well, as I said, I'm in favour of their being clearly labelled as being (say), pornographic, offensive in language, or unsavoury in other ways. However, such is not the case..I still recall picking up a copy of New Worlds..which up until then I had always known as an unobjectionable, if somewhat bland magazine. This time, it had a new editor, carried 'Bug Jack Barron' and was chock full of matter which I wouldn't have touched with a barge pole had I been forewarned. As if that were not enough..I was infuriated to find that £15,000 of Arts Council money had been poured into its coffers. Naturally, I was delighted when Smith's gave it a thumbs down on distribution.

The point about all this, is that I apply my own, personal form of censorship when I can. If an item is labelled 'sword and sorcery', or 'True Book Of Football', I can leave it and walk away. But with titles such as that issue of New Worlds and much media TV..there is no warning.

On the Mary Whitehouse tack...I am an atheist..but strongly agree with her lawsuit against the play depicting Jesus Christ as a homosexual. I can imagine just how offensive that must have been to literally millions of people. Maybe they could all stay away...but without suitable opposition, such obnoxious material could become the norm as would-be trendy producers try to make a quick buck from the appetites of the weak-minded.

Yes, I'm in favour of censorship. If we had a bit more of it, maybe rapes, crimes of violence, murders and armed robberies would not be on the increase....as they seem to be since the TV boys feature such delights in so many of their programs.

IT'S NOT THE FBI CHIEF, IT'S NOT
A VACUUM CLEANER...IT'S...
....HOOVER DAM



An early (6-15 am) rise allowed us to grab a hasty meal in Fred Harvey's eating house by the Canyon rim, before the queues built up. Some of our party came down too late and had to miss breakfast to catch the dam coach departure. After a drive along the canyon's rim and a brief photo stop, we headed off to Kingman where we lunched in Arby's. Next came Hoover Dam, where we stepped out of the air-conditioned coach into a temperature pushing 120°...the dash to the Dam entrance was akin to Shadrach, Meshak and Abednego doing their bit in the fiery furnace. I spent four years in India..and it wasn't as hot as this! Concrete walls and abutments reflected the heat like crazy, but happily, we only had a moment or two to wait before the next (30+ passenger) elevator to arrive at the top of the dam. Down we went into the cool interior..if you like numbers, the dam is 726 feet high, took 3¼ million cubic yards of concrete, and when its 17 generators get going, they produce 1344 MEGAwatts. We toured the lot before ascending to the furnace above and heading off for Las Vegas.

Our Las Vegas Hotel was the Marina..at the end of a seemingly endless strip of casinos. This proved handy as when we ventured out for a stroll, we were able to do it in 200 yard crawls before nipping into the next (air-conditioned) casino to cool off. Naturally, we tried the one-arm bandits..but without winning the 1.8 litre sports car parked luringly by the slots. Nor did we win the \$10,450 jackpot. That didn't stop other addicts busily shovelling coins..including cartwheel-sized silver dollars out of buckets by their sides and feeding them into the machines. One hand did the machine-feeding, the other was usually busy feeding the operator from a tray of fast food & drink. Nobody dared leave their post lest some other gambler stepped in and scooped their pool. The Marina had also supplied us with freebie booklets entitling us to.. 'One Free Drink At The Island Bar', 'a bonus Keno' ticket and other highly resistable delights. Keno by the way is a sort of build-your-own-card bingo..but on working out the odds it turned out that you could ALWAYS be sure of winning five dollars..IF you always gambled fifteen. Yet still the suckers played it for peanuts. After losing a full 75c on the machines, we tootled back to the hotel (where I lost another 60c on an inoperative drinks machine)..on the way we dined in Sambo's..on salad with 1000 Island dressing, coffee, clams deep fried in sauce, french fries and rolls..four bucks apiece. Then there was just time to catch a swim in the pool.

GOLDEN
NUGGET
GAMBLING HALL

CASINO

Next day we booted off to the opulent Caesar's Palace to see an 'Omnimax' film. I gather Britain has one or two of these..so if you get the chance..don't miss it. You sit in chairs akin to astronauts couches..tipped back, so all you can see is the 360°

screen arcing above you. When the film starts, you ARE IN IT! We saw a show about two characters racing to win an inheritance...and using every conceivable mode of transport..in which we also rode...a horse drawn sulky, motorbike, donkey, vintage car, hovercraft (which had us ducking to avoid branches along a river..and grabbing the chair arms to keep us from falling out)..and a magnificent..and dizzying..flight in a hang glider as it flew out over a cliff edge. From the 'Palace' we attended the 'Mickey Finn' show in another casino and on the way, drove past Liberace's house..where I was able to get a shot of his station waggon..each side was customised into the shape of a piano keyboard!

After an evening meal, we had another stroll along Las Vegas Blvd..where some very friendly ladies welcomed me to their city. I think they might have been waiting for a bus..but happily, several kind motorists stopped to give them lifts. Friendly folk in Vegas. A bit further on, we entered the Las Vegas Hilton and dined on roast beef with all the trimmings..all amidst sumptuous surroundings.

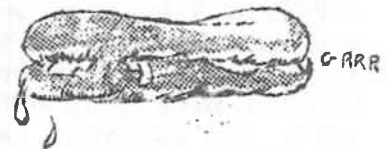
Next morning we hit the road and after skirting Death Valley and lunching in Beatty, we headed for the Sierras and Bishop. Before leaving the UK, we had arranged to meet some friends (car-touring) there...they wanted to see the place, as their name happened to be Bishop as well. In the event, they didn't make it..instead, they stayed nearer the seacoast in the hope it would be a bit cooler. That night Val walked about three miles to church. It had been listed as No.2007 Soandso Ave...and that was right by the Best Western Hotel in which we were staying..the snag was...2007 was three miles along the flaming thing. Happily, friendly people brought her home in their car...AND invited us to stay with them for several days. Now THAT is true Western (American) hospitality..but sadly, we had to decline. Incidentally, the Best Western had humming birds nesting about three feet from our room window...and of course, its own pool.



On past Mono Lake to chalet 270 in the Yosemite Valley Nature Reserve (but with far better weather than the Queen had several months later) After greeting the squirrels which lived beneath our hut, we made a quick dash for the Post Office (first one since L.A.) to find that because of the late hour..nearly 3pm, it had closed for the day. It makes you wonder how Americans manage so much fanac with such a retiring Postal Service. We found Yosemite beautiful, and after a general tour in a motorised cart, we hired bicycles to wander around off the beaten track. One annoying aspect though..Curry Camp had only one eating place..and unlike the rest of the USA's food places..it did NOT open from 6am until midnight or later..this canteen would open for only 1½ hours at a time..so queues were colossal as you couldn't eat off the rush hour. Another snag was the bath/toilet block. Communal, Butlin's style..and inadequate..so you queued there as well..I gather it was worse for women as many took their hairwashing & drying gear and settled down for long spells at washbowls and baths. Because of this, we were quite ready to leave Yosemite, beautiful as it was, and head off to lunch at Fort Clemens (famed for Mark Twain's jumping frogs). Then on to Lake Tahoe, where we left the coach to board the SS Dixie for an evening dinner cruise around the Lake. A hefty steak and all the trimmings later, we came ashore at 11 pm, caught the coach on to Reno and got there at 12-30.. with the prospect of a 6-45 reveille the next day. Keeps you fit you know. A few hours sleep and off via Donner Lake to Sacramento.

Fortunately, we were on time in Sacramento..as Joan and Victor Klima were waiting for us. They whisked us out to their beautiful home and a resplendent luncheon..which sadly, I was unable to do full justice too as I had one eye on the time. The coach was only stopping in Sacramento 1½ hours and I had to be back on board to shepherd our luggage to 'Frisco while Val stayed the night with the Klimas. These generous people wanted me to stay as well, but I suspected that if I did, our luggage might well go AWOL on arrival at the hotel (When I saw that hotel..I KNOW it would have). Vic showed me around house and home..most of which he had made or converted himself..his workshop has equipment for doing every possible job. The garden boasts nut-trees, and a neighbour's cat has adopted them. A quick run back into town and I was off to San Francisco. Val, had a lovely time at the klimas..and next morning breakfasted at 'The Nut Tree' a superb eatery, so famous that people actually fly in from 'Frisco for their brekky! (A cut above the fly-in 'Chicken House' brothel we saw outside Phoenix).

The Yerba Buena hotel in 'Frisco proved to be a dump..with our room giving lovely views of the side alley (where they loaded and unloaded garbage cans all night) and within earshot of the fire station opposite..with a four alarm turnout every two hours. Immigrant Filipinos lurked along the corridors as if hiding from the Tax Inspector and eyed me suspiciously as I dumped my bags and went in search of food..in a Chinese eatery where I daringly consumed a strangely filled sandwich for an exorbitant \$3.80. Another strange thing was the total lack of cats and dogs in the area. However, one big advantage proved to be its proximity to the transport centre at the foot of Powell Street. This was a terminus for the Cable Cars..which clanged in and out festooned with people hanging on all available points. The BART and MUNI both left from here, so we were pretty central. 'Frisco proved much cooler than all the other places we had visited..we were even cold at night.



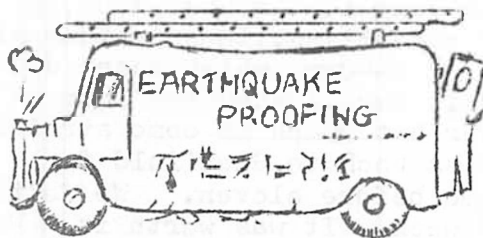
Next morning, Val arrived in the Klimas car and they took us off to church, followed by a tour of 'Frisco and then off across the Golden Gate bridge (with a superb view of Alcatraz) for lunch at the Seven Seas Restaurant in Sausalito. Whilst strolling around the place, we were amazed to see a red British 'phone box by the roadside. Then it was back over the Bridge to a tour of Chinatown. Vic trustingly handed his car over to the

parking lot attendant..who, trained by Stirling Moss, shot the car back and forth like a jet plane before nestling it securely in a space leaving 6" leeway on either side. We wandered around Chinatown on foot..and I got a photo of a which bore witness to a lurking fear of all who live near the San Andreas fault....

EARTHQUAKEPROOFING For Houses & Buildings.

Vic and Joan herded us into the Hyatt Regency Hotel..up in an illuminated elevator and out

into the rooftop rotating restaurant where we sat and sipped Pina Coladas and watched the city rotate by. Anyone leaving cameras or handbags on the window ledge would find them slowly dropping out of sight behind. The whole place was mirror-walled and gave you the impression of being inside a giant Kaleidoscope. On descending, we wandered the hotel's foyer..a fantastic sight as the INSIDE of the building is a sort of inverted pyramid formed by stepped, ascending balconies and studded with pools, fountains and hanging plants ..with the colourful elevators going up and down on the outside of the walls.



After a wonderful day's outing, the Klimas dropped us off at the Yerba Buena (carefully avoiding the 'trippers' sleeping it off in various doorways, and set off on their long drive back to Sacramento. They had given us a grand welcome even though it had been nigh on 20 years since we had last seen Vic on the UK. (a few days after we got home, I got a package from them..huge air to air photos of a B24 and a B17...lovely!) As I keep saying, Americans are both friendly ..and generous.

Next morning, we foolishly breakfasted in the hotel..along with several tons of Japanese tourists. Naturally, the Filipino cook was overwhelmed..our order was half an hour late..and then turned out to be what someone else had ordered. Off we strolled to the BART/Muni terminal and after hazzarding dollar bills in the ticket machine, boarded the Muni for a couple of stops, then hiked two blocks to the Civic Art Gallery..naturally, it was closed! Back along the main street..past a strange building which bordered a supermarket and into which hordes of people kept entering via small, turnstiled doors. No doubt an alien H.Q. After filming the cablecars clanking up and down Powell Street, we finished off the day with a hefty meal at the 'English Grill'...good food, marvellous service..\$27.49 the pair.

After that, it was downhill...we left 'Frisco next morning, saw the old airship hangars, ogled the seals basking on the rocks at Seal point and followed the coast road down to Monterey where we lunched in boardwalk cafe...and because we were non-smokers, got two of the best seats overlooking the harbour and the thousands of boats. Val also invested in half a gallon of assorted shells before we moved on to the private(heavily guarded) Carmel where I picked up a Revel 'Moonlander' kit. On down the coast..admiring the bays, the numerous seals, friendly squirrels (chipmunks ?). We paused too briefly at the entrance to the Hearst castle. He was the chap who bought a newspaper, used fantastic sales hypes and gimmicks and built a news empire. His story formed the basis for the film 'Citizen Kane'. Another stop at the Santa Barbara mission, then to Solveig..a Dutch village which started out when one chap transformed his house to the old style..and gradually, the whole place followed suit.

A night at the Olive Tree Inn in Santa Barbara (where we dined alongside the Sheriff) then on down the coastal strip..Malibu Beach..(no sign of James Rockford's caravan)..Point Mugu, the rocket site..and finally..and very sadly..Los Angeles airport..where we met up with the Bishops who were catching the same plane back to the UK. Leaving L.A. around 10pm, a six hour flight saw us land again in Bangor for refuelling..then another six hours and it was down into cold, wet Manchester at 5-40pm..which meant a 4 hour wait for our coach back to Sheffield. When it came,loaded and left at 9.40, the Les Dawson look (and speak)alike driver hit 95mph on some stretches (I kid you NOT..I sat beside the speedo) to get us back to Sheffield for 10-20. We hailed a handy taxi and were back home before eleven. We felt great..then. The ensuing jet-lag lasted a full week. It was worth it. Now, if only the pound can rise against the dollar..we'd love to go back again and see some more of that marvellous country. There's so MUCH of it we want to see.

Oh yes..I forgot lots of things..panning for gold at one stop...the multi-ethnic eating counters in a 'Frisco cafe...seeing 'Frank Sinatra tonight' on the hotel board we stayed in in Palm Springs...loads of unbuyable SF... ..'Gay Olympics..track meet' signs in San Francisco...a Dutch windmill..the great falls in Yosemite...etc etc. etc. If any of you Statesiders have influence at the White House..get the President to devalue the dollar will you....as far as the USA is concerned..we don't want it to be... THE END,

LETTERS



Wherein the reader gets a chance to say one or two words..no more. (((ERGitorial interjections come within these nifty triple parentheses)))

E.P.Hughes
10 Kenmore Rd
Whitefield
Manchester

ERG 82 received and devoured with avidity (((It tastes better with H.P.Sauce))) A really professional issue. Front cover, excellent.

Can't fault your draughtsmanship--including all the humorous cuts sprinkled throughout the issue. DMBL attracts much comment. It is apparently a winner with more than yours truly. Can all your readers belong to our age group?(((No, some start at age 14))). It's pure nostalgia for me, but what's its appeal for the younger end? (((Anyone care to answer that ?))) News on the writing front: I got a card from F&SF to let me know my 'THE MASTER STROKE' would be published in the May issue. Very heartening. Back to ERG, The paper stock is fine. (((Costs a bomb, but I feel it's worth it)))

Alan Burns
19 The Crescent
Kings Rd Sth.
Wallsend On Tyne

Can it be over 24 years since thee and me became fen? (((Don't know about you, Alan..I started fanzines in 1947 and attended my first Con in 1948...36 years a fan..and if you count letters, I read (and wrote to) ASTOUNDING in the early thirties))) A slightly better than usual issue for an anniversary. Damn you for reciting your computer troubles. You know I intend to get a new one as soon as I've recovered from paying for holidays..and I'd like to get a BBC 'B'. Memory Bank Lane, well you missed out on the most important characters of the lot. What about Luke and Len, the odd-job men and Timothy Top-knot, the comic's own office boy? (((Sorry, mate, but I never came across them..it is memory you know, not a walk through the British Museum Files))) Book Reviews..I'd say that these are the best part of ERG that I really enjoy reading, without fail, every issue. (((Many thanks, Alan...as I say, the reviews are to tell people what's around..NOT to display airy-fairy erudition or to KTF to pieces, so it's nice they are appreciated)))

Phil Harbottle
32 Tynedale Ave
Wallsend
Tyne & Wear

Just a few lines of appreciation for ERG 82. I read it right through at one sitting, and it struck me that it was like reading a good newspaper or magazine. 'As Luck Would Have It', in particular, struck me as a piece that might easily have appeared in a weekend newspaper. One reason for ERG's longevity may not so much because of your wide-open policy, or lack of one, but because it is well-written and sincere. DMBL was as good as ever and I imagine I won't be alone in getting something extra out of it insofar as it evokes memories for the reader, outside those you are sharing. Thanks too, for the plug on my JRF booklets. I've another at the printers right now..40 pages from TALES OF WONDER No.1 JRF's SUPERHUMAN and SEEDS FROM SPACE..with an introduction I wrote some 10 years ago to honour Wally Gillings. I'm wondering if I wasn't subconsciously pushed into it by your MEMORY LANE item (((Memory-jogging comes much easier than plain jogging))) I've redrawn the front cover, same as you did (((You could have had a copy of mine))) whilst a little extra is a back cover reworking of Hannes Bok's illo to SUPERHUMAN when STARTLING reprinted it in May 1941. (((There you are JRF fen..get in early with your orders..further details in Recent Reading I hope)))



Kevin Rattan
23 Waingate Close
Rawtenstall
Rossendale
Lancs

(((Kev asks me to print the following..))) "What I meant to say is, "SUGGESTION THAT THE DOLLAR EMULATES THE POUND" In the text you say that the dollar is in a hundred parts, emulating our pound - as the pound was divided that way afterwards, I was suggesting that the emphasis was wrong. Of course, the dollar is more influential on the rate of the pound than vice versa (though as I understand it the economic factors that make the dollar what it is are more direct influences (((Influences' ???))) on the rate of the pound than the dollar itself). (((H'm, yes. How true)))

Eric Bentcliffe
17 Riverside Cresc
Holmes Chapel
Ches

Your Doug Young has me puzzled, too...its quite probable he didn't meet me at the '49 Worldcon, but he could have met me at the Medcon where he did not meet J.W.Campbell Jnr., but did possibly meet H.J.(Bert) Campbell (editor of AUTHENTIC. Bert was welcomed to the Medway Con by Tony Thorne and most of the other fen, by a barrage from massed zap-guns. Bert hurriedly left, returning minutes later with what can best be described as the first portable water-cannon and quite a battle ensued. ...I'm sure that will clarify the whole affair. Liked your extrapolation of spelling reform, but must stress that should you try to use any of those in our next bout of Scrabble, you will be beaten about the head by whatever dictionary comes to hand. (((I'll order a pocket dictionary.)))

Ethel Lindsay
69 Barry Rd
Carnoustie
Angus

Congratulations on reaching the 24th anniversary, I can't think of another zine which has topped that. My goodness, Joy Hibbert's letter sure breathed fire and brimstone. I cannot understand her at all - why, some of my best friends are men... 'As Luck Would Have It' came in nicely after that, making me smile. Why is it after you are addressed up and ready to go out, you find the hem of your dress has come undone? (((Funny, that never happened to me, Ethel, but I once got a mile from home before I found I was wearing carpet slippers)))

Bernard Earp
21 Moorfield Grove
Tonge Moor
Bolton

Joy Hibbert...mmmh Potential rapist am I? Well I've got the equipment, but not the desire or need. Looks like one of those arguments that go..."Cats have four legs and fur...this animal has four legs and fur, therefore it is a cat." Feminists do have a case for discrimination but won't win any supporters with this kind of diatribe, indeed, stand a fair chance of alienating the one who should be on their side (((Bernard sent a long, interesting letter, but much of it was on the general topic of ERG going 'litho' or in the case of a certain fmz..all DNQed..but very interesting and welcome)))

Noel K Hannan
24 Aldersey Rd.,
Crewe

Joy Hibbert's LOC..women's lib is all very well, but why can't Joy stop imposing it on others? I'm sure many women would live perfectly conventional lives without questioning whether they were 'slaves' or not, if some rabid female didn't come and tell them how pathetic their life was. (((Agreed..I'm all for equal rights for women..but if a woman wants a home and babies etc. then let her have 'em without being labelled an idiot slave..oh yes.as for equal rights..wish I could draw my Old age pension at 60))) Is Duplicating Notes still available...I'd like a copy. (((Sorry, sold out..but I am trying to sell an updated version to a publisher))) Yes I'd be interested in an ERG calendar. (((That's three or four 'ayes'..so I'll see what I can do..it makes a better show than reprinting chosen ERG covers in the 25th anniversary next April. Bernard Earp suggested this..but it would chew up space)))

Joy Hibbert

11 Rutland St. "I'd be interested to know what is the oldest single-ed
Hanley fanzine..I suppose ones that have had different names don't
Stoke-On-Trent count. (((BRG is the oldest one-editor/one name regular
quarterly))) "You seem to be mistaken in thinking post is
going up soon..only 1st class is, and only by 1p (((Sorry, it's you that is
wrong..ALL rates have gone up with the solitary exception of the basic 121p
Second Class))) Thought 'Duplicating Notes' was Vinç Clarkes (((Nope, he put
out 'Duplicating Without Tears". My DN runs to about five times as many
pages))) It's a pity Jean thinks her reasons for being childfree are irrel-
evant. There are still plenty of women who could do with reasons for being
childfree to use on people who think it un-natural not to want to cause
overpopulation. (((Why? Haven't they the strength of their own convictions
to simply say.."I don't want children"? Interesting that you say 'childfree'
rather than 'childless' as if you consider them as an encumbrance..and then
use the 'overpopulation' excuse to hide behind. Incidentally..as far as I
know, Western birth rates are falling..not rising. It's all those 'poor
iggerant Indians and Chinese' who are breeding like flies.))) The main
difference between feminists & masculine society is that feminists respect
women's right to be anything. (((Then why do they spend so much time telling
others to get away from the drudge of home & kitchen? Let 'em just do their
own thing..add leave homelovers to stay there))) Do you respect the right of
domestic-type men to be househusbands and the right that goes with that for
the female breadwinner to earn enough to keep her husband and children?
(((Of course I do...I retired three years ago when Val got a full-time post
in teaching. Now, I do all the cleaning, washing, shopping and cooking and
she is paying our daughter's way through several very expensive years of
college...sorry to disappoint you))) I suppose you think the nuclear family
is the only way to live (((What is a nuclear family? I'm pro nukes if that
is what you mean)))

...Also, you have a very middle-class view of things.
Few working class women have ever had the option of being full-time house
wives..they've generally had to work outside the home & do the housework.
(((I don't know about being 'middle-class'..I was raised in a delapidated
terrace house, ONE cold water tap and all bath (and cooking) water had to
be heated in kettles on the coal fire..then we used a galvanised iron bath
and the loo was outside across the backyard...so just maybe, I may have had
a wider..if not richer..experience on which to base my comments. Incidentally
apart from you making the full-time housewife option sound as if you think
it desirable...the great increase in working wives was brought about largely
by women demanding equality and getting jobs. This increased their family
spending power..and thus disadvantaged the single-wage earner family and made
a second wage more essential.))) By the way, try not to show your ignorance
of the English language by assuming that all words containing 'man' refer to
'adult male' (((May I riposte by saying sorry you lack a sense of humour..as
that was what I intended by 'personatees' instead of 'manatees')))

I shouldn't expect to get any real sense out of someone who uses words
like 'femfan'..a word that implies that female fans are freaks and shouldn't
be confused with 'real fans' (((Just how blind (and young) can you be, Joy?
The word has been around fandom for ages..the fem-fans themselves used to
publish a women only fanzine called 'Femizine' and the term is only degrading
in your (blinker) eyes. If you can use 'feminist' and 'female' why can't
hundreds of fans..men and women use the 'femfan' to save writing "a female
fan". You'll be demanding 'amateur magazine put out by a fanatic' instead
of 'fanzine', next)))

Joy goes on to strike out in all directions at various things..which seem
to summarise down to..."There is only one true opinion...mine"



DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE

'The PULPS'

I'm unsure of just when SF entered my life..although it was at the age of 10 with the short stories of H. G.Wells. A bit more sure,

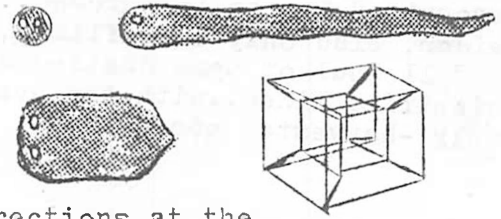
is the fact that my first bought magazine was a copy of Gernsback's WONDER from around 1930 or '32..and costing a whole three pence! The cover still sticks in my ~~brain~~ memory..it was probably the only pulp cover of that era which your doddering old maid, Aunt Emmelina could have carried in public without blushing like the friendly neighbourhood fire-engine. It was inspired by Gernsback's editorial, THE WONDERS OF COLOR..which explained how crafty printers would use thousands of tiny red,blue and yellow dots to produce Frank R Paul's multicoloured paintings. To drive home the point..and maybe give Paul a weekend off, the normal cover illustration was replaced by hordes of red,blue and yellow dots, each about 4mm in diameter. They romped all over the front like a king-sized dose of measles..so maybe Aunt Emmelina wouldn't have carried the thing lest she be shunned as a new 'Typhoid Mary'. Hugo's explanation made all things clear..the real printer's dots were much smaller, so that from a distance, they blended to give the appearance of many more

shades than the original three. I remember taking a magnifying glass to those big dots to see if they were composed of even tinier dots..you can never trust printers.

Of the stories within, unlike pickled onions, only one comes back. That was THE POOL OF LIFE by Arthur G Stangland. Some explorers were trapped by aliens in an underground cavern. It may have been on another world..or just the Amazon basin (in those days, that was another world). The aliens plonked their captives on plinths and proceeded to pour plastic of a quick-setting, transparent variety over the poor clots. Rather like our modern technique of embedding specimens in resin. Ghu knows why the brave explorers stood for it, but no doubt they were under the baleful influence of one of those sinister Oriental (or South American) poisons known only to thousands of natives, Fu Manchu and all master criminals. The accompanying illustration depicted a cavern full of these artistic stalagmites..with one hero being turned into a paperweight. But, as you might expect, by stretching their mighty thaws, the white men escaped..although their trusty black servant ended up as an objet d'art.

Elsewhere in the issue was a Science Discussion Forum. Some twit had asked.."What is the fourth dimension?"..seems it kept cropping up in stories but couldn't be found on his tape measure. Such a question may have caused lesser mortals to quail..or even chicken (would you settle

for 'turkey'?)..but not Uncle Hugo. With the aid of a cruddy diagram he set out to unscrew the inscrutable...via the old route of a point which had no dimensions; a line which had one; then a two dimensional plane..and on to a tesseract. However..the diagram was so crude, and used some sort of worm..that everything had extra dimensions of thickness thus causing much crogglements to my poor noddle. As for the tesseract..that didn't extend to the fourth dimension..but closely resembled a demented cat's cradle as it tried to move off in all directions at the same time.

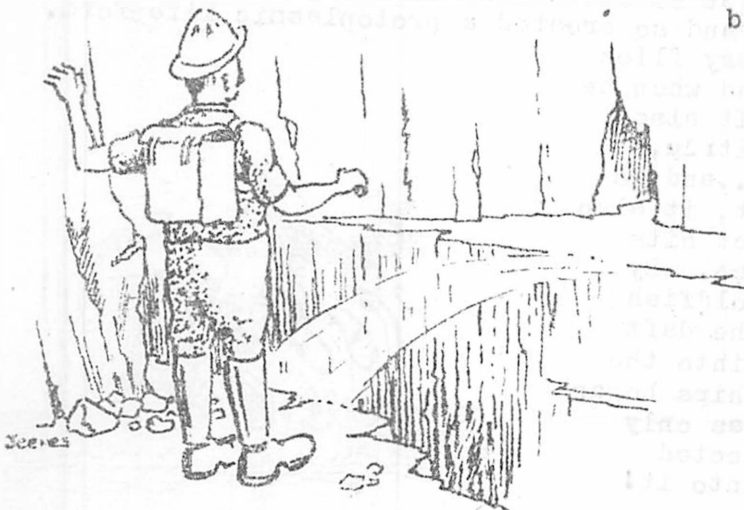


It was about this time that I acquired by trade, a stack of assorted (and coverless) issues of AMAZING and various Science/Air WONDER stories. I unloaded a heap of my old, battered, 2d 'bloods'; Adventure, Rover and the like on-a-pal..who in return gave me those dusty gems of priceless literary merit. I walked home to a period of blissful reading. He walked home to a thick ear..when his elder brother discovered his SF collection had vanished. Serves him right for having torn off all those covers so he could carry the magazine in public..or maybe he was courting Aunt Emmelina.

However, the stories were intact..and through them I met various strange people and places..among them, a spaceman, who, raised on Jupiter, was capable of hurling a screwdriver with the speed of a rifle bullet. No, it wasn't Aarn Munro...but it so happened that he happened to be stroking his pet screwdriver when pirates boarded his craft..so he shot them with it.

Then there was Hyatt Verrill's BRIDGE OF LIGHT..inspired no doubt by some obscure thesis postulating that if light has pressure, then it must have mass and substance. Anyway, come every full moon, a bridge of the insubstantial stuff would form across a bottomless cavern deep in the..yes, you guessed it...the Amazon jungle. Most of Verrill's yarns featured this setting; maybe he had been raised by an anaconda, or possibly because Frank R. Paul could only draw his heroes in explorer's jodhpurs. Whatever the reason, I grew up firmly convinced that South America teemed with anacondas, blow-pipe-carrying Indians, hidden (or lost) civilisations, jewels the size of ostrich eggs...and of course, stacks of beautiful, nubile white maidens. Most of the latter had got there as babies when their parents got killed off

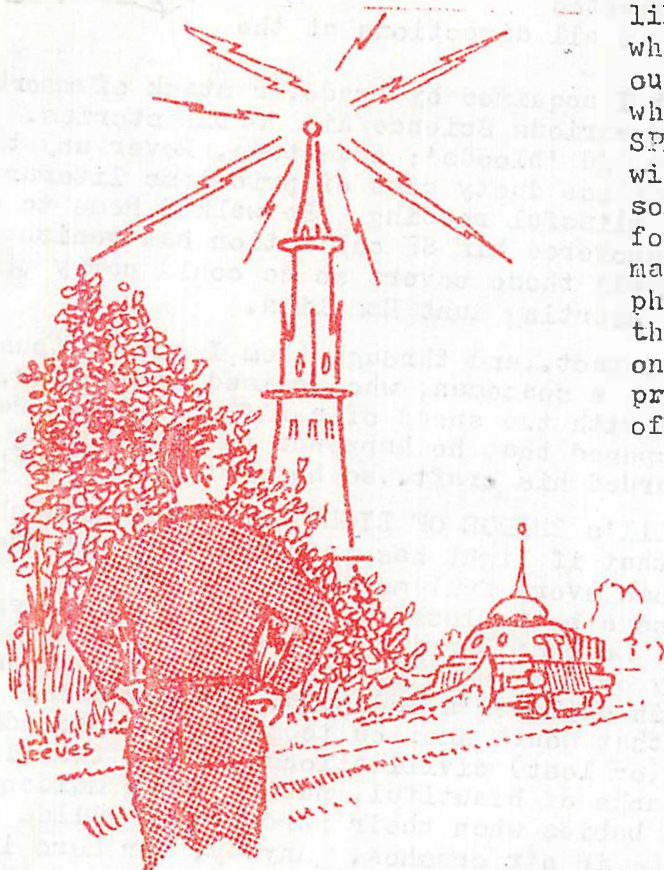
in air crashes. Anyway, our hero in this yarn, successfully crossed the bridge, foiled the natives, grabbed the jewels and made it back home with the nubile maiden...although it never said what he did with her.



WONDER tended to feature reprints of yarns written by foreign (i.e. European) authors. One such epic came from Gottfried Von Hanstein and was titled ELECTROPOLIS.

This concerned a new Utopia being created in the African jungle..and since everyone knew that electricity was the coming thing, this story had

oodles of the stuff..sparking off in all directions. Paul went to town on the illustrations. Multi-gearred machines and radio-controlled combined plough and harvesters romped merrily beneath insulated towers busily shooting off electricity in all directions. The inevitable, jodhpur-wearing hero stood in the foreground...and somewhere out of sight lurked the nubile maiden, clad only in a flimsy, white Grecian robe..just waiting for her cue to fall foul of some nastiness. The whole shebang was conducted on super-scientific lines..with the hero finally escaping death inside a packet of newly -harvested cornflakes.



WONDER also featured the tales of Van Manderpootz, a whacky, Gallegher-like (but sober) scientist. His whacky inventions usually got tried out on a Bertie Wooster-like young man who called round regularly. PYGMALION's SPECTACLES saw him falling in love with his Galatea..before losing her to someone else. In THE IDEAL, Manderpootz foreshadowed the anti-car lobby by making a machine which when offered a photograph of a car, would chew the thing to bits. This one metamorphosed on the cover into a giant predator prowling New York's streets in search of vehicular food. Ralph Nader would have loved it.

Another cover depicted a large battleship hanging upside down over New York (Everything happened either there..or down along the banks of the Amazon). This was illustrating DREAM'S END..wherein all our universe was but a dream in a superbeing's mind..and when he started to wake, things began to fall apart.

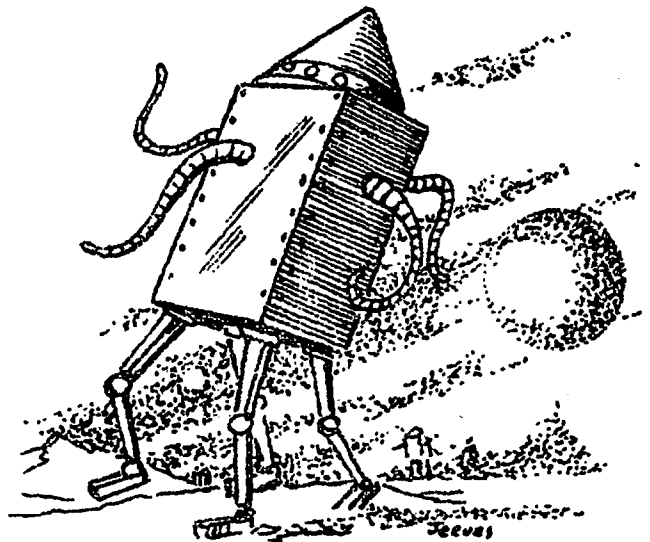
Perhaps my favourite yarn from this era dealt with the usual inept scientist who mixed up a beakerful of bits of this, that and the other and so created a protoplasmic life form. This started off by scoffing unwary flies and had a go at the creator's hand when he happened to lean on the stuff. It also flourished on killing diets of nitric, sulphuric and hydrochloric acids..and as any SF reader could have forecast, it also defied high voltage shocks, direct hits with hammers and burning by Bunsen. By chance, it was discovered that goldfish could eat small quantities..so the daft scientist dumped the whole mess into the Atlantic Ocean. Months later, ships began to vanish! The growing menace was only destroyed when the scientist injected himself with cancer and jumped into it!



If SF was meant to predict the future, one writer in AIR WONDER STORIES managed a real bullseye. A new high-speed aircraft under test, disintegrated as it roared 700mph. Naturally, being disintegration-proof, the hero took up another model and found that the disaster had been caused by the aircraft hitting the 'sound barrier'. Old hat nowadays, but as a bit of spot on prediction..at a time when the ultimate speed record was under 400mph, it was pretty good going. Sometimes I wonder if that is what caused my model aircraft to fall apart in mid-flight.

One of these days, someone is going to institute a Golden Turkey Award for the most boring writer/editor. T.O'Connor Sloan of AMAZING would have won the award outright. His assumption of the Gernsbackian seat heralded in an era of soot-and-whitewash drawings by M rey, drab covers and uninteresting yarns. Sloan was not a believer in spacéflight..and so his editorials stuck to what he (used to)know..which meant they read like high school chemistry texts. In the story line, people like W.K.Sonneman wrote such tales as 'RULE OF THE BEE' and 'GRETA QUEEN OF QUEENS'..both of which concerned intelligent bees. In ADRIFT IN THE STRATOSPHER (which I think was the title..though it might well have been ABOVE THE STRATOSPHERE..take your pick; two spacemen took off in a new rocket..and crashed through an invisible sheel surrounding the earth. They got out of the craft and wandered around..to find a new world full of invisible creatures..well, invisible from Earth..once up there, they were as clear as could be! On the other hand, AMAZING did give us John Russell Fearn's two time-travel yarns..LINERS OF TIME and its sequel ZAGRIBUD..and one cover gave me nightmares for weeks..as it depicted a man strapped in a chair and having his flesh dissolved down to the skeleton by a strange ray. Henry Hasse gave us HE WHO SHRANK in which our hero took a new potion and began to shrink..down and down into inter-atomic space. Doc Smith's TRIPLANETARY first appeared here, and of course, it was here that Professor Jameson died, was buried in space and millennia later, was resuscitated by the wandering Zor'nes as one of themselves....a conical-headed, square-bodied robot with four legs and four tentacles. Now an ambling tin can, the Professor joined in a variety of adventures..only being saved from a second death by the fact that he had arranged for a heat ray to be built into one of his tentacles. This saved he and his mates so often, that I wondered why the heck they didn't all have 'em fitted at their next servicing.

A favourite theme of the pulps was the Cosmic Disaster...as detailed by Clifford (Hellhounds Of The Cosmos) Simak, and that old cover copper, John Russell Fearn. The latter writer could always be relied upon to destroy the Earth every month in the pages of ASTOUNDING...Giant Brains, Monstrous machines and all sorts of strange fates flowed from his pen. My favourite was MATHEMATICA (and its sequel, MATHEMATICS PLUS) where a strange piece of metal had the



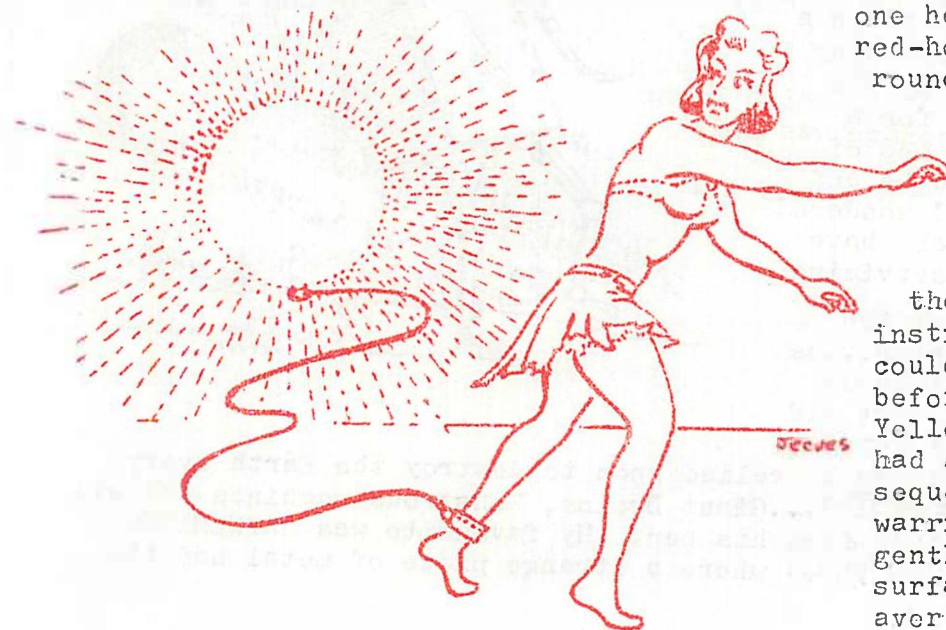
power to materialise thoughts. This had our hero dream up a bulging-brained creature called Polathon..and an eventual journey to the source of all mathematics. Sadly, JRF's mathematics only extended to multiplication and a spot of division, so we didn't learn much once we got there. He was similarly limited on the scientific front..all his rays, inventions, beams and other 'inventions' hinged upon magnetism..but they were fun.

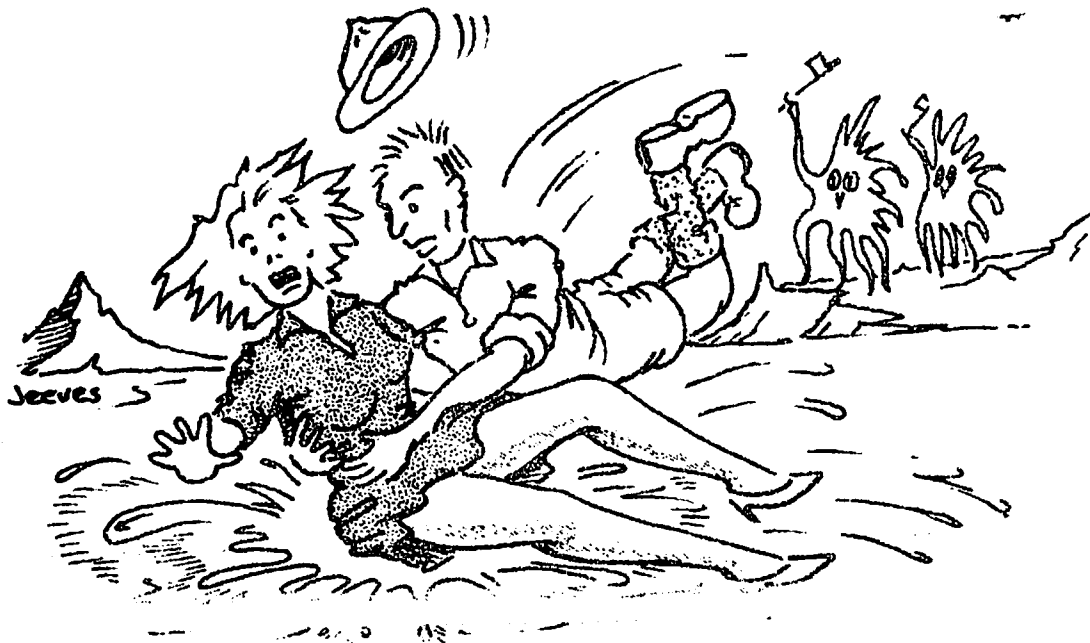
In more recent years, authors have been content to threaten only the Earth rather than the whole of the Universe. Triffids killed people, THE DEATH OF GRASS faced us with starvation and the Vitons milked us as cattle. Hack writers inevitably brought down their hordes of aliens to enslave and pillage. Plutonians drooled over our coal (which they called 'bobo') in one WONDER yarn but if the pulp covers were anything to go by, most of all they wanted our women! I often wondered just what a ten tentacled, chlorine breathing arthropod from Sirius wanted to do with the beautiful blonde. I suppose he might do her more good than the normal college boy hero who never even got to kiss her. No sex please, we're SF fen.



All this changed with the arrival of MARVEL and DYNAMIC. The first issue of the former (purportedly 90% of it was written by Henry Kuttner) brought sex to SF. Each story featured a winsome heroine who invariably got stripped to her scanties within a few pages. The lead story had her stripped on every planet of the Solar System as horny, crab-like creatures drooled over her recumbent or struggling body. However, as far as sex was concerned, Henry was definitely in a rut (ouch!) with repeated phrases such as..."The wispy garment tore away to reveal the milky white globes of her breasts..." Had the illos lived up to the text, MARVEL

might have held my attention for a bit longer...but I still recall one heroine, chained to a glowing red-hot ball as it chased her round an arena. DYNAMIC was a bit more conservative, but did feature a yarn in which American survivors of a treacherous Oriental attack, sought refuge in underground caverns. As they were short of men, they instituted polygamy so the race could survive for generations before emerging to clobber the Yellow Peril..as I recall, it had a rather sophisticated sequel in which the emerging warriors found a peaceful and gentle race of Chinese on the surface...so another war was averted.





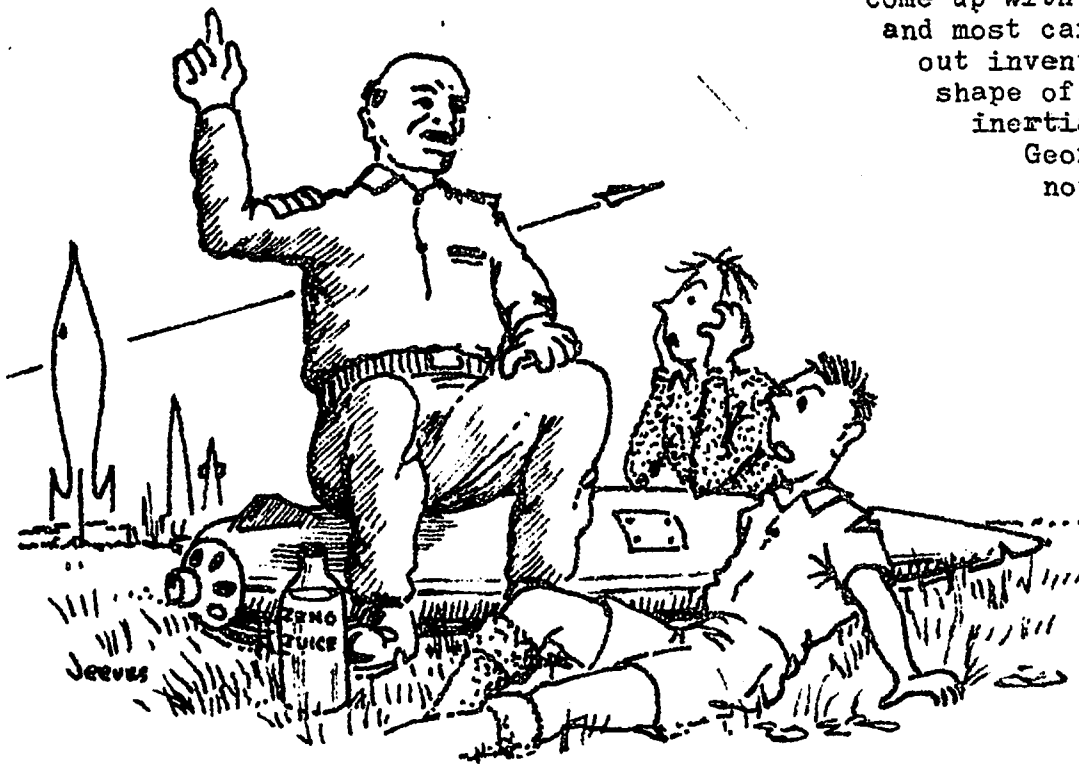
One thing we always got right up my nose, was the frequent scene in which the heroine is rescued from the pursuing aliens/falling rocks/coming deluge, or whatever..."Hank scooped up the girl's recumbent form into his arms. Lungs bursting, he ran across the scant half-mile of desert to the..." Often, he had enough head of steam for even further..plus the ability to poop off with a ray gun, or swing a club against the skulls of attacking aliens. Well mates, if any of you have ever tried the bird-lifting bit you will be fully aware that it is a back-breaking chore just to get her off the deck...and then to RUN !! No way. You might manage a few staggering steps in the manner of a waddling, pregnant duck before..bl..y ! Your legs fold three ways from Sunday and down you go, ker splat on top of the popsy (about the only enjoyable part of the whole proceedings. Nevertheless, every hero worth his salt could perform this minor miracle whilst popping off seven or eight attackers with a burst from his six-shooter.

Equally incredible were the stereotypes of the pulps. They regularly featured ex-college boys in search of any (honest) job. Such men were the inevitable prey of the mad-scientist who prowled the city streets in search human guinea pigs. All such mad scientists came fully equipped with mighty laboratories and beautiful daughters. These were usually known as 'real true bricks'..which presumably meant such girls were red-faced squares. Such females served two purposes..first to supply a mild, watery and totally sexless love interest. The second duty was to get herself caught by Fu Manchu/aliens/time warps, or whatever form of nastiness was currently in fashion..which of course would allow our ex-Yale-fullback to scoop her up in his arms and run. Not to the nearest bed, either. Heroes were all tongue-tied and bashful oafs. Girls could only gaze with limpid eyes.. which couldn't have been fastened in very well, as they were always falling when the hero looked at them.

Other outstanding items from the past were the 'inventions' Wells gave us 'Cavorite'. Karel Capex, in R.F.R. invented 'robots'. In the yarn RALPH 124C41+, Gernsback accurately described radar. Clarke used a Wireless World article to postulate comsats...but it fell to Doc Smith to

come up with the greatest
and most carefully worked-
out invention in the
shape of the Bergenholm
inertia nullifier.

George O Smith may
not have invented
the matter
transmitter,
but he
explored
its uses as
well as
those of
beamed
power, in
his VENUS
EQUILATERAL
series.



UNDER PRESSURE saw Frank Herbert come up with the oil-carrying sub tanks which became 'Dracones' in WWII..and no doubt Buck Rogers gave the idea of his flying belt to the U.S.Army's jump belt. Heinlein of course supplied atomic research workers with the WALDO..although his design was to enhance the feeble physical powers of a genius.

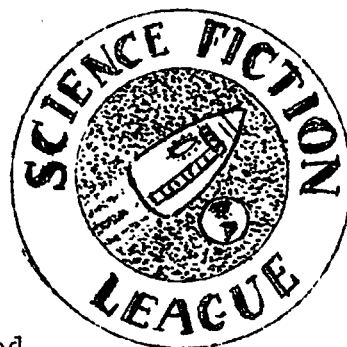
Lettercolumns appeared everywhere...ASTOUNDING printed its letters virtually without comment other than an occasional headline. In WONDER, Gernsback gave more effusive replies inciting everyone to go out and spread the gospel of SF. In AMAZING, O'Connor Sloane was heavily pedantic..but for the faaanish type of reader, there was always SERGEANT SATURN crammed with 'Zeno juice' and pseudo space jargon aimed at those whose I.Q's were right off the measuring scale...in a downward direction. Similar columns were to be found in the AIR magazines where the 'old pilot' would patronise the fledglings with his expertise. Surprisingly, no magazine came up with an 'agony' column. Think of the missed opportunity as 'Old Mother Centauria replied to 'Worried Blue Eyes' and told her how to keep dry rot out of her magazine collection.

Other trivia of the pulp era were societies such as the S.P.W.S.S.F.M. (If I've got the letters correct)..Society for Prevention of Wire Staples in Science Fiction Magazines. This surfaced over the practice of binding the magazine 'signatures' with such staples. The tended to pull through the flimsy paper and the mag would disintegrate (yes, we had planned obsolescence even in those days). I think it was Bob Tucker who came up with the mythical society. Not to be outdone, the opposition (there's ALWAYS an opposition) came up with a society for preservation of the staples. Then there was the brouhaha over 'trimmed edges'. Those of you appeared on the SF scene after the mid thirties will be unaware of the ragged, saw tooth edges featured on virtually all the pulps of the day. Apart from looking unsightly, these

stuck together and made page turning difficult. Personally, I solved the problem by trimming mine with a straight-edge and sharp wood chisel..but the lazy letter-hacks wanted it doing for them..just one more service we old-timers won for you newcomers.

The 1936 metamorphosis of WONDER into THRILLING WONDER STORIES rather caught me by surprise. I was in the habit of making a regular, Saturday morning pilgrimage to the city market and touring the bookstalls. This had to be done EVERY week if you wanted to catch the goodies on offer before someone else snapped them up. On this particular Saturday, I browsed, bought a copy of Astounding..ogled the girly covers and then saw a cover bearing a scaly, trident-bearing monster attacking a motley crew of cowboys, Roman soldiers and the inevitable girl...the thing was titked Thrilling Wonder...and it didn't resemble any sort of SF that I was familiar with..so I passed it by..week after week, until I finally risked my 3d on a copy. TWS aimed at action fiction..and to hell with the science. Issue 1 for Aug. 1936 saw the start of a cartoon-style SF strip...ZARNAK drawn (abysmally) by Max Plaisted...it raised such furore that it was withdrawn after only a few episodes. Of the tales in TWS..I recall, ROBOT'S REVENGE..with its illo of a robot ripping a shirt and wig to reveal a machinery-filled chest and brain case. The lead novel was one of those time-travel yarns in which people were drawn from all ages..and united against the common menace of the aliens. Later tales featured the two adventurers Penton and Blake (written by J.W.Campbell), the HOLLYWOOD ON THE MOON Kuttner yarns..and the female explorer, Gerry Carlyle who did a Frank Buck, 'Bring 'em Back Alive' thing around the planets of the Solar System.

There was also a page or two devoted to the Science Fiction League promoted by Gernsback in the early days, and continued now under the magazine editorship of Mort Weisinger. The SFL had people like Torry Ackerman as directors, and although was of course, meant as a recruitment (to WONDER), it also did a useful service in bringing fans together. Chapters were formed all over the USA..and some in England..although none within spitting distance of Sheffield..they also had their own badge which enabled fen to meet one another and be recognised at a glance as belonging to the 'Star Begotten'.



To digress a moment..before the war, GALAXY was one of the English digest-sized magazine I used to buy...about a5 sized and not unlike Popular Science in that it contained articles on current science, new discoveries and general details of what was happening in the technical world. Such a name was too goo to let drop when the magazine died...so it surfaced again in the USA with the birth in October 1950 of the new, GALAXY. Other names have done the same..here in the UK, we have had a pre-war FANTASY..and a post war FANTASY. There was another near copycat operation over good old ASTOUNDING...Campbell began to diminish the 'Astounding' and changed the 'stories' to 'Science Fiction'..with the ultimate aim of publishing the same magazine, but under the slightly more dignified title of SCIENCE FICTION...but along the way, it was pointed out to him that he had already been beaten to the post by...Hugo Gernsback! March 1939 saw the appearance of the 10 story, Paul-illustrated SCIENCEFICTION..actually, it was edited by Charles Hornig..but the Gernsback influence was there. Of the stories, nothing was memorable..but 'Ephraim Winiki' (Good old JRF) was there with Leeches Of Space..and Derwin Lesser had an article on the HAZARDS OF SPACE FLIGHT which included 'Madness' caused by the monotony and endless stars!

The literary giants of those days were people like Stanton A. Coblentz, Lloyd Arthur Esbach, Miles J Breur Arthur Leo Zagat and many others with equally strange..yet soon to be familiar names. Strange how Titles, authors and stories remain inextricably linked in many cases..to recall one is to remember the lot. For instance, a favourite yarn of mine was THE ETERNAL WANDERER, written by Nat Schachner and detailing the way in which a rebel against Martian domination was translated into a million bits, each of which retained his intelligence. Two other tales which saw regular re-reading were SPAWN OF ETERNAL THOUGHT by Eando Biner (where the hero links himself to ten brains and becomes a genius) and PACIFICA on the theme of creating a new continent by raising the ocean bed..that one had a beautiful cover. How times change..nowadays, I seldom remember a story a day or so after reading it.

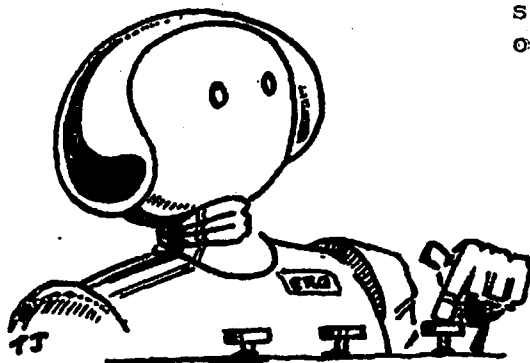
Gone are the mad scientists, the college boy heroes and the moon rockets built in the back garden. No more does Hawk Carse hunt down the dreaded Ku Sui, or Colby and Deveral pursue their cat-and-mouse chase among the planets of the solar system. Nowadays, the Universe is seldom faced with extinction and the dangers to Earth are almost always from atomic war or germ warfare. Spacemen can no longer plod through the swampy jungles of Venus or breathe the thin air of Mars. It is easy to look back and judge (or sneer) over such yarns. By modern standards, such stories are hack-written, lack literary merit and have over-simplistic plots...which of course is true. Pick up a pre 1940 magazine now, and you'll have great trouble in ploughing through it. However, in their day, and in their period, those stories and those magazines and those illustrations formed the base for what we now call a Sense Of Wonder .. a time when we first met with ideas and concepts woven into story form. My generation got it from the pulps, the current generation got it (I sincerely hope) from seeing Neil Armstrong and others walk on the moon. It is all inextricably linked with one's formative, adolescent years. Nothing that comes after can ever quite measure up that great period of discovery.

Each generation must, and will, find its own Sense Of Wonder..but no such Golden Ages will ever be measurable on any objective scale. The old SF is inferior in virtually almost every way from the modern crop. It does however, have one factor which seems to be missing these days...it had vitality and a willingness to write/deal with/use the wildest ideas..sadly, the current crop is hamstrung by its search for 'literary style', a demand for accuracy in ALL its science, and of course..the great cry for a social message. As Sam Goldwyn is reputed to have said.."When I want to send a message, I'll call Western Union". One thing about the old SF scene..it was FUN. We read it for pleasure, enjoyment, new ideas and the contact with like-minded other readers. If it hadn't been FUN and PLEASURE, then it would have died right there...and there would have not been any SF around for the media (and 'literary', message-demanding.fan) to desecrate.

No, I am NOT asking that we put back the clock to a period of hackwork, space pirates, ray-guns, black and white issues, simplistic plots and abysmal literary style. But it would be nice to get back to a stage where a story DID have a plot..and followed it from start to finish with the idea of entertaining the reader...instead of displaying 'style', 'new lack-of-style', sheer cleverness, message-purveying or pot-hunting. If you think this means economic suicide for the writers/publishers...ask your why so many best selling SF...is composed of golden oldie reprints. And with that thought, I'll leave you until the next instalment of NBL.

Good

F A N A L O G...F A N A L O G...F A N A L O G Wherein I natter briefly about one or two of the fanzines received at the Stately Crumbling Jeeves' Mansion...now read on.



MICROWAVE 5, Terry Hill, 41 Western Rd, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8NE. No less than 78 pages of well-mimeod, superbly illoed (mainly by Atom & Cook) and entertaining items. Too many to cover here..but to whet your appetite..'Cannabis'(pro), Ving Clarke, an ERG reprint, Birchby, Skel, Willis, Ashworth..and many many other goodies. How Terry has shot his zine to the top of the heap in so few issues, I don't know..but that's what he has done. Get it for RESPONSE, trade or 6Op in stamps Get a copy before he runs out!

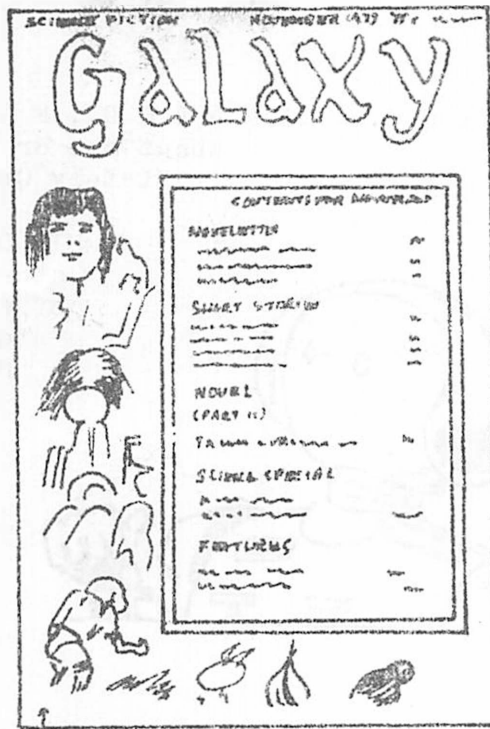
CATENARY TALES ↑ (The cover has it as 'Catanary Tales') is a hefty, 50 page mimeo item from re-surfacing fan,

Elliot Weinstein under the imprint of the St Louis SF Soc. PO Box 15852 Overland, MO 63114, USA..for Loc, art, contrib or trade. Elliot has a long editorial on the movie 'Picnic At Hanging Rock', there are two fiction items, one short and inept, the other longer and with a much better ending. Book & Fmz revies; 'Driving In Mexico'; Cartoon strips, letters and all sorts of other goodies. Well produced, good artwork, and if you must send cash...it's \$1.00 a copy...and worth it.

RATAPLAN 21 (34 mimeo, A4pp) from Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Square, A.C.T 2608 AUSTRALIA is rather short on art (there isn't any) so the pages seem overloaded. For openers, Leigh explains how Rataplan is taking over good old Ornithopter. Then Bruce Hillsepie tells of not reading SF. Personal notes follow; a trip account; Lengthy reviews of 3 fmz; and on to letters. The overall impression is (to my mind) rather s&c..and the lack of spacing, art, or paragraphs make the whole rather indigestible..but if you like such fare, then Leigh will send you a copy for LOC, contrib, trade or \$1.00

WEBER WOMAN'S REVENGE March 1983 18, A4, mim. pages + 16 more pages of Eric Lindsay's (latest) trip report. WWR is staunchly women's lib, anti-all-sorts of things...even the book reviews are sexist..i.e. women only. Opens with natterings on..genital mutilation, castration etc as reflected (or not) in SF. Joy Windrow describes a trip to Ireland and 'doing what felt right to do' at various pagan sites. A good and hefty lettercol, as to be expected, touching largely on the chauvinist/male/rape@lib themes. This could be an excellent zine with a little more variety, Jean has many valid points and makes them well...but in rushing to talk on normally 'fanzine/SF tabbos' many other fascinating by-ways get omitted. Get it for trade/contrib/LOC/art or A\$.60 a copy. Despite the bias, this is one of the liveliest zines from down-under. Co CSIRO, PO Bx 1800, Canberra City ACT 2601 Australia

SMALL FRIENDLY DOG 22 50 (1/2 F'cap)mim. from Paul & Cas Skelton, 25 Borland Close, Offerton, Stockport Ches S2 5NW Diary style zine where Paul natters at random on whatever crops up as he goes along. Dates appear here and there so you know where he is. A friendly, life-is-fun sort of affair, but I still don't like the obscenities so liberally bespattered.



PUZZLE CORNER...Can anyone help?

I did the above sketches from two copies of Galaxy in my collection. They look normal enough..until you notice that they bear identical cover dates..both November 1973. The left one is a normal colour cover..that on the right has the colours reversed..i.e. its GALAXY is in red and the rest of the cover is yellow apart from the illos which are plain black and white pen sketches. Otherwise, the issues are absolutely identical..so it isn't a new price test in a small market..and since all prices and sales numbers are the same, I don't think that they are separate UK/USA issues. What offers for the pair? (or collection?)

Easier Puzzle Can any reader identify the inspiration source for the cover of this issue of ERG ???

UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL ..All electronic stencil in this (and for many previous) issue/s of ERG are done by H.J.Bridge, Rectory Row Press, 363 Kennington Lane, Vauxhall, LONDON SE11. Around 99p a stencil, but send an S.A.E for latest price and other offers/details. Service is incredibly rapid...and on the many times I've made a clanger in the master preparation, Mr. Bridge has often supplied extra copies free to allow me to experiment. I recommend his service..and mention ERG if you write will you?

WANTED...certain paperback copies of Doc Savage..if you have any to dispose of, drop me a line..likewise if you have any pre-1935 ASF, etc.

DAVE WILLIS (Room 1/4 Ballard Hall, Ranmoor Pk Rd. Sheffield) asks how he can send subs to foreign (mainly Aussie & US) zines. Various ways..Go to Thos. Cooks and buy the dollars or whatever you need..for a small fee, and mail 'em direct. Go to a Post Office and buy International Reply Coupons which the recipient can exchange for Overseas Letter rate this costs a lot more..and you need to know their postal rate to work out how many you need. Or..use an International Money Order from a Post Office. At a pinch you can even do it through your bank...but Cooks is the easiest way.



BEYOND THE JUPITER EFFECT

John Gribbin & S. Plagemann
Macdonald £7.95

Readers of the earlier, 'Jupiter Effect' will know by now that the disasters predicted for 1982 failed to occur. Now, the authors re-examine their postulates and set out to establish that planetary positions do effect the Earth. Via plate tectonics, continental drift, the lengthening of the day and its correlation with cosmic rays and sunspots, they cite current experimental data such as the fact that the Earth's rate of rotation seems to slow during spot maxima..which in turn seem to link up with planetary alignments. From all this emerges the prediction that not only can California expect serious earthquake disaster, but that the whole world is heading into a minor Ice Age..with resultant crop failure and famine. It may be as yet unproven extrapolation..but it IS well presented and ought to make one think on how fragile is our hold on life under current conditions.

A SECRET HISTORY OF TIME TO COME

Robie Macauley

Corgi £1.95

Set in a post-war world devastated by conflict between blacks and whites, the story follows the destinies of two, mind-linked characters. One experiences (and records) all the horrors of the fighting whilst the other, Kinkaid, a barely literate doctor, roams the wilderness of what he knows as 'Esso' from the road map he uses. He encounters mutants, struggling communities, slavers and violence with his story playing a slowly developing counterpoint to that of the narrator. At times, reminiscent of 'Earth Abides' and indeed, inevitably of all other post-holocaust sagas. However, the thoughtful writing and well developed settings as well as the overall atmosphere raise this one above the standard run of such tales.

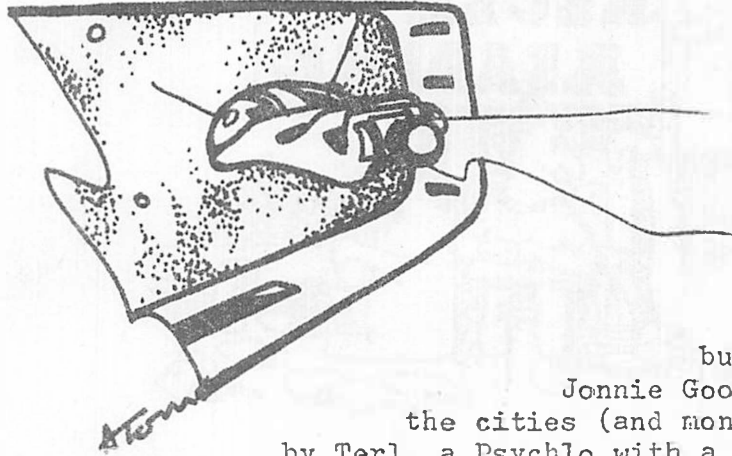
SPACE

James A Michener
Random House

The yarn follows the intertwining lives of the men and women engaged in the space program. Opening with

Stanley Mott seeking out Peenemunde rocket men such as Dieter Kolff and many others. Fiction and reality blend with astronaut 'John Pope' and scientist Wernher von Braun and events move past Kennedy's "We Shall Reach The Moon" declaration up to a mythical Apollo 18 mission. Real, 'as it was' hardcore packed into a 600+ blockbuster of a novel which successfully blends SF into mainstream...warts, disasters and all. It IS fiction..but it reads like fact. If you have any love for the space program..and can get a copy, then read and enjoy...but limber up your muscles as it weighs a ton or so.

BATTLEFIELD EARTH
 ===== by L. Ron Hubbard
 St. Martin's Press \$24.00



Fred Harris of Author Services delivered this one in person whilst on a flying visit from Los Angeles (and added the 12" L.P. which goes with it... 'SPACE JAZZ')

Alien Psychlos have laid Earth waste in search for mineral wealth. Now, 1000 years later, only small, bucolic, human settlements remain.

Jonnie Goodboy leaves his village to seek the cities (and monsters) of legend, but is captured by Terl, a Psychlo with a private get-rich-scheme...which involves machine-educating Jonnie....who then escapes, raises a small army and begins to fight back, not only against the giant Psychlos on Earth, but also against their home world. Things go well for a while, until the treacherous 'Brown Lfuper' at home, and a 16-universe space fleet begin to complicate matters. Characters are pure cardboard and the flow slackens at the mid-point..where this hefty (800+ page) saga might well have been divided into two separate (and powerful) novels. However, the pace is soon accelerated again to give us an action-packed, up-dated helping of Golden Age nostalgia of the kind which made 'Elron' a household name in SF. Humanity, (represented by Jonnie) triumphs against all odds..and without any of today's maudlin, guilt-and-social-message-ridden claptrap. If you want fast-moving adventure and pseudo-science with all the baddies getting their come-uppance from the unconquerable human spirit..then this is your cup of tea. Some will hate it as 'reactionary', others will be ecstatic..you pays your money and you takes your choise...Me? I enjoyed it. The record, SPACE JAZZ is very much a mixed bag..like the curate's egg, good in parts. Much of it I liked, some (the 'vocals') I did not. Often derivative, but full of variety...my favourite bands were 'March of The Psychlos' and 'Alien Visitors Attack'...yours will probably be different. ((Oh yes, Ken Slater of Fantast (Medway) can probably get you a copy.))

CONAN THE BARBARIAN

L.S. de Camp and
 Lin Carter
 Hale £7.75

For Conan lovers, the wheel has come full circle..as this is the 'novelisation' of the film script which, as with 'Superman' opens with Conan as a child. After vandals ransack his village and kill his parents, the lad is taken prisoner and spends many years as a slave until he is bought and trained as a gladiator. A handy earthquake sets him free and he teams up with the thief, Subotai in a partnership akin to that of Fahrd and the Gray Mouser. They set off in search of riches and revenge aided by warrior-maid Valeria. Hideous monsters, heroic battles, strange cults and amorous wenchies are met and conquered by mighty thews, flashing blades and straining sinews before revenge is won. The authors restrict the number of main characters..and are thus allowed to develop them more fully into credible people. Throw in de Camp's considerable historical knowledge and you have a gripping novel. For good measure, there's an excellent jacket ..credited to Universal Studios..but done I strongly suspect by 'Boris'. There's also a brief foreword on Conan and his creator, Robert Howard.

THE PROCESS

Norman Spinrad Jack and Anne Weller are career-hunting Angelinos..until they attend a Transformation-
Arrow £1.75 alist meeting. The cult seems a blend of Scientology, Moonies and a few others, Anne gets hooked, then vanishes into 'processing'. Weller sets out to infiltrate the society to win her back..and finds it more powerful and widespread than he had imagined. Moreover, as he works his way through processing, he finds he too, is changing. This may be borderline SF and holds a hefty slice of assorted-styles of sex play, but is totally compulsive reading despite the ripe language. If it doesn't become a hit film, I'll be surprised..it has far more going for it than such feckless films as 'Carrie' and 'Exorcist'

NIGHT PROBE!

In 1914 Britain signs a secret treaty selling Canada to the USA. Clive Cussler One copy of the Treaty is lost at sea, the other in a rail
Bantam \$3.95 disaster. For some reason, neither country takes any further action and all details are 'lost'..until Naval historian, Heidi Milligan stumbles on the trail. This stirs the two countries to action. Britain seeking to destroy the copies, America to salvage one of them. The various agents clash on land and under water and in between their moves are the scheming plans of a villainous would-be Canadian President. There's even a touch of the supernatural which gets explained in Doc Savage style. An action-packed yarn, marginally SF and ideal for a long train journey.

A CACTUS GARDEN

Paul, mercenary, ex-telepath and anti-hero brings his Jo Bannister battleship 'Gyr' to the planet Mithras in response to a call
Hale £8.75 for help against attackers. Amalthea, cruel ruler of the Hive (a settlement built by spacewreck survivors and served by 'Drones') forms an instant hatred for his associate Shah and after seeing Paul off to fight her battles, arranges Shah's death. Paul faces the 'pirates', finds he has been duped, has to face an attack by Amalthea's Chancellor, the enigmatic Chaucer, in a bid to take over Gyr. Meanwhile, Shah, a functioning telepath, follows a strange thought she has picked up and makes a surprising discovery. Apart from the abilities of Paul and Shah to make miraculous recoveries from deadly assaults, I thoroughly enjoyed this yarn. The characters are well-depicted, settings and action are neatly blended into a gripping whole. I'd rate it better than its predecessor, 'The Winter Plain'..and that was no clunker. Signs are that we shall see more of this unusual pair..and I look forward to doing so.

SHARRA'S EXILE

A 'Darkover' tale of the lost Earth colony where telepathic powers have evolved. Lewis Lanart-Alton
Marion Zimmer Bradley loses a hand and a wife when the Sharra matrix runs
Arrow £1.95 wild. He meets and weds Diotima, but she leaves him when their child is born a monster. Returning to Darkover, Lewis finds the council about to possess his lands; an idiot-king aspires to the throne and the Sharra power reappears when the sinister Kadarin joins with traitor Beltran. Once you get all the characters and places sorted out, you find a story as multi-layered in plot as one of those Oriental puzzle-boxes..and equally pleasuring and rewarding. I particularly liked the fact that the central characters were not only well-rounded, warts and all, but that the author had avoided the stereotyped black and white division between one faction and the other. Motives are credible and the yarn a delight to read.

GUFF 1984..Just got the word... This fanzine supports JEAN WEBER for GUFF
in 1984 JEAN WEBER...JEAN WEBER....JEAN WEBER....JEAN WEBER....GUFF 1984

FALLING ANGEL

William Hjortsberg
Arrow \$1.60

The yarn is almost standard gumshoe fiction when private eye, Harry Angel is hired by the enigmatic Louis Cyphre to locate missing singer, Johnny Favorite.

Two murders into the yarn and a voodoo element enters, closely followed by another grisly murder. Along the way, Angel acquires a cult-member mistress and his client is a master magician. Then the headlong pace moves to the climax of gory, sadistic violence with a completely surprising (but, to me, disappointing) climax, as Angel discovers his quarry..and the murderer. The 'magic' element is minimal apart from the identity of Cyphre and makes almost compulsive reading..pity about that ending.

DOWNBELOW STATION

C.J.Cherryh
Methuen \$1.95

Slow star-travel united the Galaxy, but as ever, mankind partitioned into factions with the outer colonies forming the 'Union' against Earth and 'The Company'. Then the jump drive makes active engagements possible. Traders cross to and fro with Pell station as an uneasy, neutral, no-man's land as it orbits the only 'station' planet to have evolved intelligent life. Problems for Pell start when a load of refugees is unloaded..and escalates from there into a wide-screen epic of space conflict. A hefty, 400+ page, hunk of hard-core SF and the friction man takes with him as easily as a toothbrush.

LENSMAN FROM RIGEL

David A Kyle
Bantam \$2.50

Second in Dave's extension of the Doc Smith 'Lensman' series, (the first was Dragon Lensman). This time whilst ostensibly chronicling the doings of Tregonsee, we also meet Kinnison (Kimball), Worsel, Nadreck and even good old Sir Austen Cardynge. Set around the 'Second Stage Lensman' era, the Boskone 'Spawn' are causing trouble and a mysterious third group is spying on civilisation via 'datadrones'. Plenty of new weapons, thrills, action and superscience. If you loved Doc's epics, then you'll get a real old time nostalgia kick out of these 'add-ons'..and they are FAR better than those formula flops churned out by Goldin.

ANOTHER HEAVEN..ANOTHER EARTH

H.M.Hoover
Methuen \$5.95

I began to realise how female SF readers must feel at the almost constant use of male leads when I read this yarn. Despite the names, both Gareth (doctor to a colony lost for 500 years) and Lee (biologist on a mission which rediscovers the planet Xilan), are women..as are the other central characters. Right from the opening, you are gripped as Gareth is ostracised by her village/tribe for not supporting their attack on a strange cube near the settlement. Further complications arise when Lee's group set down and establish a base. For a while, neither settlement knows of the other, but when contact is made both sides experience culture shock..a point well brought out...followed by epidemics caused by 'germ-swapping'. The story neatly avoids painting either way of life as idyllic, both have their warts and beauty spots...and happily, a total absence of black v white, goodie and baddies. A well constructed, thought-provoking yarn, but one which could have benefited from a slightly stronger sense of conflict or problem. Otherwise, thoroughly enjoyable..and never boring.

HELP ANYONE ??? Michael A Banks, P.O.Box 312, Milford, Ohio, 45150 USA would like to exchange writer's magazines /market advice magazines from the UK, for their American counterparts. Contact me, or Mike direct. This should help British writers to crash the U.S. market..so don't miss the chance. For new readers, Mike has published several books, numerous short stories (in Analog & elsewhere) plus uncounted articles..and is one of the tutors for the WRITER'S DIGEST SCHOOL based in Cincinnati.