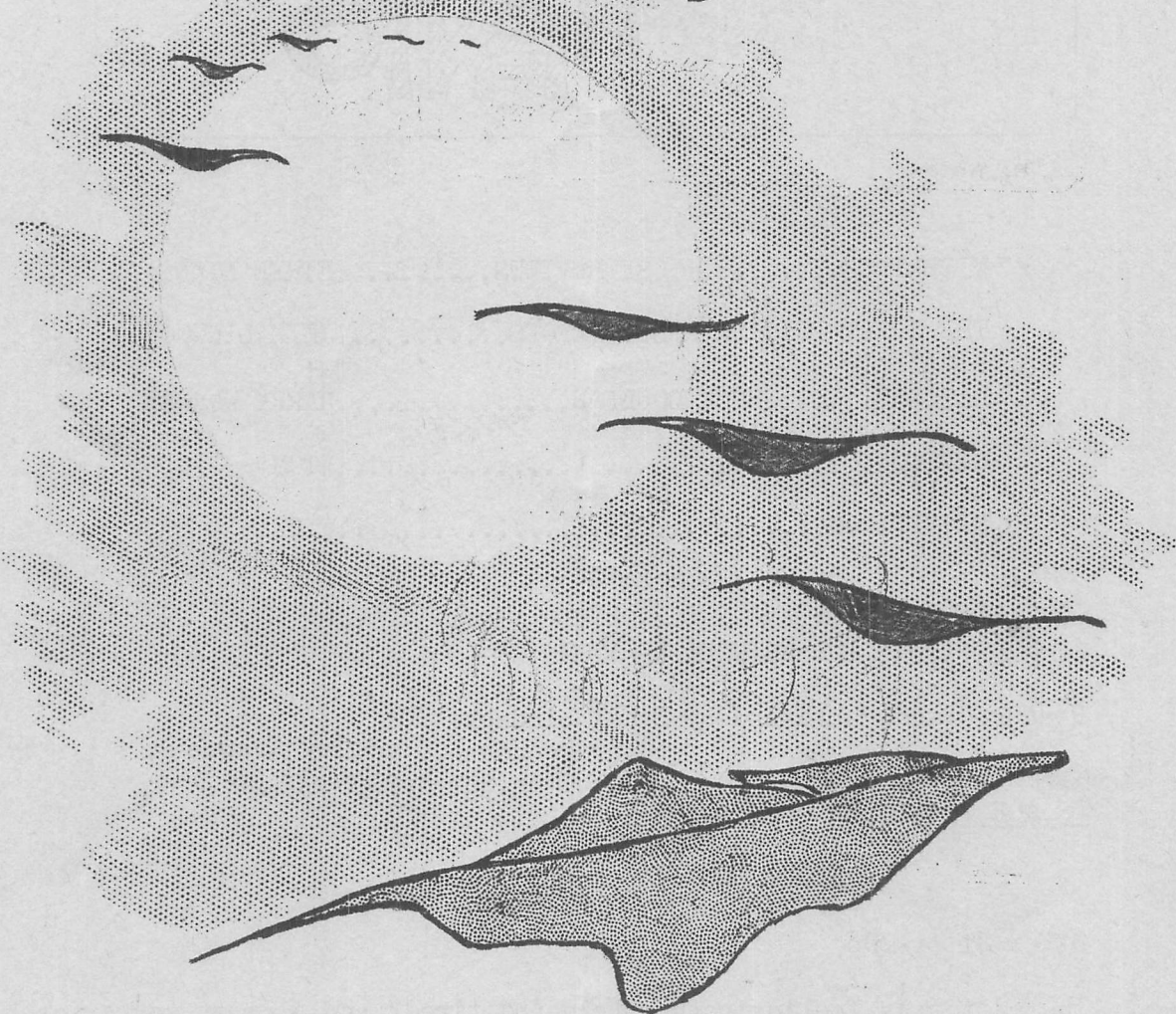


Scottish



Atom

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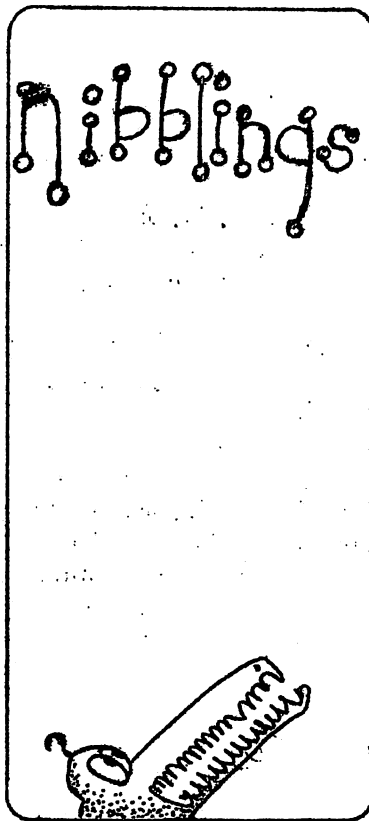
ALL ARTWORK BY ATOM

Produced and published by Ethel Lindsay,
Courage House, 6 Langley Avenue
Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 6QL, UK

US AGENT: -Andrew Porter
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The editor is feeling rather "old and tired" and is very sorry for the
typos!



Panther Paperbacks.

MASTERS OF THE VORTEX by E.E. 'Doc' Smith. 35p. This is the seventh and the last in the epic Lensman series. In this one the menace is a nuclear vortex; and the man to combat it is 'Storm' Cloud. This classic series is of course, a must for the serious collector who wants to study the roots of SF. It's all very well studying Wells and Verne, but one cannot leave Doc Smith out of any history of SF.

THE STEAM-DRIVEN BOY AND OTHER STRANGERS by John Sladek. 35p. For the want of a better expression I must fall back on that over-worked phrase 'New Wave' to describe this collection. It is in two parts, first 13 short stories. **THE STEAM-DRIVEN BOY** is typical in that, to me, it is not believable, and all the characters are repellent. The second half consists of parodies - the type that are likely to send me back to the originals. Mind you, I will admit that it takes some skill to parody Ballard! In fact the writing skill is quite considerable, it is just that this reader is quite out of sympathy with the futures of Sladek.

THE CHAMPION OF GARATHORM by Michael Moorcock. MAYFLOWER SCIENCE FANTASY. 30p This is the second volume of the Chronicles of Castle Brass and is more fantasy than SF. Dorian Hawkmoor is mourning the death of his wife Yisselda as the story starts. He is at last persuaded to take a journey because he thinks that Yisselda still lives. Intricately worked out fantasy.

Nibblings 2

THE FAR-OUT WORLDS OF A.E. VAN VOGT. by A.E. Van Vogt. Sidgwick & Jackson, £1.95
This contains a dozen examples of Van Vogt's fertile imagination. I think I liked the first story best, about the ex-Marine who met an alien; it had a grim humour that I enjoyed.

AGE OF MIRACLES by John Brunner. Sidgwick & Jackson. £1.75. A good SF story with enough elements of mystery to be solved to please me a lot. Aliens have invaded Earth - but show no interest in humans. Therefore humans have to cope with a new way of living..some people try to ignore the fact that Earth is no longer as it was--others take advantage of the chaos--and still others become interested in the aliens, and become "weirdos". Satisfying story.

SCIENCE FICTION SPECIAL (7) Containing THE MURRAY LEINSTER OMNIBUS and the PHILIP K. DICK OMNIBUS. Sidgwick & Jackson. £2.50. A really bumper size book. The three Leinster novels are OPERATION TERROR..INVADERS OF SPACE..CHECKPOINT LAMBDA. The Dick three are THE CRACK IN SPACE..THE UNTELEPORTED MAN..DR. FUTURITY. Quite an interesting contrast between the two authors. Leinster has a simple, direct way of telling his story; his characters are direct and the plot uncomplicated. With Dick it is vastly different. no clear-cut heroes, but men who puzzle their way out to sometimes problem-filled endings, and plots that curl and curve and take you on a trip that demands thoughtful reading. Try dipping from one to the other..it's interesting to note that these stories were all written much about the same time.

DAW PAPERBACKS..all at 95¢

No 45: GARAN THE ETERNAL by Andre Norton. Grana is a flyer who enters a fantasy world and there encounters many adventures - and also finds himself back in time with more weird experiences to endure. There are also two short stories in this book - the second one will interest admirers of the Witch World series.
No 46: KING OF ARGENT by John T. Phillifent. Lampart has been set down on a planet to report upon it. He soon determines to keep it for himself--until it is all complicated by the arrival of Dorothea spoilt child of the man who had given him his chance to become more than human and so survive on the planet Argent.
An entertaining yarn

No 47: TIME STORY by Stuart Gordon. In the paradoxes of time travel there has been material for many plots; and this is as convoluted one as I've read! The characters are all interesting, if not particularly sympathetic. The two main (or should I say four?) characters weave in and out of each others lives in a desperate effort to safeguard themselves..suspensful till the end.

No 48: THE OTHER LOG OF PHILEAS FOGG by Philip Jose Farmer. Farmer once again takes another author's character and plays around with some ideas of his own! A secret diary, he maintains, reveals that the famous journey of Fogg actually cloaked two alien races trying to take over Earth. Only a great deal of scholarship of the original tale, could produce such an unusual affair as this.
No 50 STRANGE DOINGS by R.A. Lafferty. A very good title for anything written by this author; and here he offers 16 stories. I suppose gruesome humour is the best way to describe many of these stories, which nearly all have a sting in the tail.

No 51. WHERE WERE YOU LAST PLUTERDAY? by Paul Van Herck. This is an EUROPA award novel. Sam meets Julie and wants to date her again. Her answer being .."next Pluterday" sets Sam off on a hunt for this eighth day of the week that he'd never heard off before. Decidedly whacky and fun.

Nibblings 3

DAW Paperbacks contd.

No 52 THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. Donovan is the planet on which the action lies..a fascinating place that has colonies of artists that attract tourists in droves. The narration moves from character to character and keeps the reader on the hop. There are some lovely concepts here - the animaloids, the artist's colonies, and the planet with its unique 'artist's light' itself. Vastly entertaining.

No 49 THE SUNS OF SCORPIO by Alan Burt Akers. Another story of the adventures of Dray Prescott for those who enjoyed TRANSIT TO SCORPIO.

No 53 THE 1973 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF. Edited by Donald A. Wollheim. The editor discusses the many anthologies that appear nowadays and expresses his opinion that the best SF still comes mainly from the magazines. This starts off well with GOAT SONG by Poul Anderson which portrays a future world in which the teller uses myth to destroy myth..fascinating to watch the dark religion of the Goddess creep back again. There are nine other stories of the same high calibre; and all of a decent length.

No 54 MAYENNE by E.C. Tubb. To those who have enjoyed the other Dumarest novels - here he is still searching for the planet Earth which everyone assures him is mythical. This time he starts by meeting a singer from Ghenka on board a spaceship and then the spaceship is wrecked upon a planet which is one whole intelligent entity. An interesting situation well explored.

No 55 THE BOOK OF GORDON DICKSON. The first story rather glorifies man in the face of aliens; but later in DOLPHIN'S WAY mankind is humbled in the face of aliens. There is a gruesome story about a man going forward in time and finding he can only talk to the children. However there are some amusing stories too to lighten a fine selection.

No 56 FRIENDS COME IN BOXES by Michael G. Coney. The record of one day in 2256 tells the story of a time when brain transference is the key to immortality. The trouble began when less and less people would have babies - and so the brains had to be put into boxes to await their turn. So the tradition arose of taking a 'friend in a box' to keep them company whilst they are waiting for a baby to be free. The day's record shows how this sort of a society is beginning to fray; and the individual characters introduced well portray the difficulties that such a society would produce. Mind you, much as I enjoyed the originality of this, I could not believe that a whole people could be so selfish as to take their own children's futures.

No 57 OCEAN ON TOP by Hal Clement. A future in which power is limited causes a member of the Power Board to gasp with indignation when he finds a portion of the sea bed flooded with artificial light. He then finds that there are people who have adjusted to living in the sea. Lots of science in this one which is what we would expect from Hal Clement.

No 58 BERNHARDT THE CONQUEROR by Sam J. Lundwall. Bernhardt is breaking rocks on a prison planet when a mile-long space-ship appears and he is able to escape in it. Not that this is the end of his troubles, in fact as he is deposited down a refuse-chute, almost operated upon by robots, and encountered a door that is in love with him, it would be safe to say his troubles had only begun. Whacky, but fun.

No 59 RHAPSODY IN BLACK by Brian M. Stableford. This is another story about Grainger the man who shares his mind with an alien wind..a symbiote, and an at times very tart commentator upon his adventures.

Nibblings 1

DAW Books Contd

No 60 WHAT'S BECOME OF SCREWLOOSE? AND OTHER EQUIRIES by Ron Goulart. Ten stories in which man and machine battle for supremacy, told with wit and wry grim humour. Liable to cause you to cast a suspicious eye on your refrigerator!

PAN SCIENCE FICTION. Paperbacks.

MINDSWAP by Robert Sheckley. 30p. Marvin always wanted to travel in space and so when he saw an advert to mind-swap with a Gentleman from Mars, he decided to take the plunge and do so. Alas, there is a hitch and Marvin finds himself seeking refuge in temporary bodies in an effort to get back to his own. This is amusingly told at a brisk pace, with a high degree of invention.

DAY MILLION by Frederick Pohl. 35p. Ten stories. The title story of how boy loves girl in the future might turn out is short, sharp, and tellingly effective. THE DAY THE MARTIANS CAME also has a sharp point buried in its midst. Pohl is, of course, excellent when he uses SF to take a dig at our present culture and here he presents quite a few stories in this style.

PROFILES OF THE FUTURE by Arthur C. Clarke. 40p. This is sub-titled An Enquiry into the Limits of the Possible. It originally appeared in 1962 and has now been revised. These speculations on the future -- on how man will deal with the problems of speed, gravity, pollution, make fascinating reading. He even speculates upon the obsolescence of Man! It should also, be fertile ground for budding SF writers.

BEYOND TOMORROW. Edited by Damon Knight. 40p. 10 stories, very varied and by good writers such as Bradbury, Clarke, Simak, Wilhelm. Some really exceptional classics here. Asimov's NIGHTFALL being, I think, the finest. There is also Van Vogt's awesome THE SEESAW which never fails to move me. A fine addition to anyone's SF collection.

PAN/BALLANTINE

THE NIGHT LAND: Vol 1 by William Hope Hodgson. 40p also THE NIGHT LAND Vol 11 also at 40p. A handsome edition with attractive covers. Undoubtedly this must be called the classic of adult fantasy. The story line is simple -- the young man who travels to rescue his love and bring her back safely. As the introduction by Lin Carter says. "Since most of the story takes place in the very far distant future when the sun has gone out and the earth is wrapped in unending darkness, you could call it science fiction". However the setting of mystery and the night-land through which the youth travels teem with strange and fantastic images. No fantasy fan will be without these books.

Sphere Books Paperbacks.

DEATHWORLD No 1 by Harry Harrison. 30p. The hero's name is Jason and, like his flame-sake, he starts off on a voyage. He reaches the planet Pyrrus where he finds the people have to be superhuman to stay alive as the whole planet seems to be deadly to man..even the grass! When he finds out that there are other people who can live outside the closely guarded settlement, he tries to understand the reason. The mystery keeps the reader engrossed; and Jason is the kind of character that arouses the sympathy.

DEATHWORLD No 2 by Harry Harrison. 30p. Just as Jason is happily planning a new life for himself on Pyrrus, he is kidnapped by an obsessed man called Mikah intent on taking him back to 'justice'. Mikah must be the most infuriating character ever invented, always so sure of his own 'truths' and oblivious to reason! They are shipwrecked on a primitive planet where Jason's knowledge of

Nibblings 5

science gets them out of trouble again, and again, usually to be foiled by Mikah's sense of 'right' - or one should say righteousness! This one gives a very good picture of the impact of science on a primitive world; and there are also plenty exciting adventures.

DEATHWORLD No 3 by Harry Harrison. 30p. In this Jason collects some Pyrrans and persuades them to emigrate to another world. Knowing how accustomed they are to constant battle, he takes them to Felicity where there is constant tribal warfare. Again Jason's adventures are used to show the culture of a nomadic race - of marauding barbarians who are tricked by an old, old trick. I have enjoyed this series very much, and have only one quibble.. Jason is forever being 'knocked -out' at the end of a chapter!

THE JUPITER LEGACY by Harry Harrison. 35p. Formerly published as PLAGUE FROM SPACE. When the spacecraft from Jupiter returned, only Commander Rand staggered out -and he was dying with an alien disease. Dr Bertorelli happens to be the one who first reaches him and becomes involved in the puzzle of why the disease spreads so quickly. Fine straight science story

RINGWORLD by Larry Niven. 40p. On Louis Wu's 200th birthday he is asked by an alien puppeteer to join him in an expedition -without being told the purpose. Louis' boredom tempts him to go and the eventual crew is himself, the puppeteer, another species of alien called kzin, and Teela a human bred for luck. The universe conjured up by the author's imagination is vast, believable, and truly fascinating. I liked all the characters - well rounded-out and interesting. This is more than just a space adventure, there is plenty of hard science and culture analysis to please everyone.

CRYPTOZOIC by Brian Aldiss. 30p. Frankly, I dislike this book, but that apart, I would say it is brilliantly written. Edward Bush is a mind traveller who can go as far back in time as he wishes. He is also a man obsessed by his mother so that one can take two meanings from the story. Either Bush is right in his discovery that time runs backwards - or he is mentally ill due to his obsession combined with too much mind-travelling. I dislike the book for two reasons.. Bush is not a character with which I can be in sympathy; and the concept of a time flow which has the food regurgitate onto our plates leaves me nauseated.

THE ELECTRIC CROCODILE by D.G.Compton. 35p. Always an intriguing writer who never follows the path of well-worn SF. In this we meet Mathew who has been invited to join the Colindale Institute which houses a new computer. To do so he and his wife Abigail must go there to live and take oaths of secrecy and be subjected to having their house 'bugged'. The background of this future is painted in with very little, but compelling detail. Abigail believes in God, Mathew does not really - this becomes a vital factor in their reaction to Colindale. There are no black and white characters in this book; just people trying to cope with a rather plausible future.

ARROW Books, Paperbacks.

THE WINDS OF GATH by E.C.Tubb. 35p. Dumarest is a Traveller, one of those who move from planet to planet. Most do so aimlessly, but Dumarest now does so in an effort to find his way back home - to Earth. Everyone he meets tells him earth is only a name for dirt, and that there is no such planet. Dumarest however, remembers leaving Erath, a stowaway at the age of 12. Now he is on the planet of Gath, stranded. He can only join the workers who help the tourists at the time when the winds of Gath blow. He becomes caught up in the intrigue that surrounds the Matriarch of Kund's desire to choose a successor. Fine dramatic adventure.

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ARROW Books. Paperbacks. contd.

DERAI by E.C.Tubb. 35p. Once again Dumarest seeks employment to help him in his search. He undertakes to escort Deraï, a talepath to her home on Hive. We are once again introduced to a Cyclan, a man who has had all his emotions removed 'so that he may become part of a vast cybernic complex. At the end of his adventures on Hive Dumarest has at least one clue, the Cyclans know something about Earth.

TOYMAN by E.C.Tubb. 35p. Life is rough on Toy, and Dumarest is soon in the midst of a battle which he must wage - if he wins all he could desire-if he loses nothing but death. In this continuing series I am beginning to be intrigued by the Monks of the Universal Brotherhood whose spoken creed is 'There but for the Grace of God go I'. Dumarest is on Toy hoping to consult its computer library for news of Earth; but he becomes enmeshed in much treachery and witnesses much of the cruelty that makes up life on Toy. At the end he has only another name --Terra! A series that grows upon you.

ACE POCKETBOOKS

SNOWMAN IN FLAMES by Clark Dalton. Perry Rhodan No 25. 75¢. Another dastardly alien is out to destroy Earth with Perry to the rescue. Some of his mutant assistants provide amusement in this space opera series that is proving so popular. Letters and a film review make up this issue.

STAR GUARD by Andre Norton. 95¢. In this future Earthmen are hired mercenaries and that is their only worth to those who rule the galaxy. Kana is a new recruit and we follow his adventures as he discovers what Earthmen are really doing out in space. Fast action, which holds the interest.

BORN UNDER MARS by John Brunner. 95¢. Ray Mallin is a Martian, that is of human stock adapted to live on Mars. This had been Man's first test of how they could adapt. But now man has progressed beyond that and Martians are left as a useless mutation. Mallin only begins to discover that there are other possibilities when he returns from a voyage and finds himself embroiled in a strange intrigue. A plot to keep you guessing.

VERUCHIA by E.C.Tubb. 95¢ The further adventures of Dumarest as he travels in search of his home, Earth. He lands on the planet of Dradea and joins the games arena to make money. By his winning of a fight he meets Veruchia and is asked to help her. So he becomes her helper as she struggles to gain her rightful place as Owner of Dradea. This time the book finished with Dumarest being tempted to give up his quest and relax in the best situation he has found so far. The end of this series? I doubt it! And hope not!

BATTLE ON VENUS and THE THREE SUNS OF AMARA by William F. Temple. ACE DOUBLE. 95¢ When the first spaceship lands on Venus, it finds itself in the middle of a thousand year's war, and the problem is how to show that they are neutrals! George, with the help of a Venusian girl, sets off to solve the problem and finds much adventure on the way. In THE THREE SUNS OF AMARA. Sherret finds a very odd society indeed; but then he has left a very odd society on Earth where Goffism now reigns. This is the belief from a psychosociologist who advocates absolute rule by each qualified worker in a local community for a month, and absolute obedience by the rest till their turn came. As this idea hits his spaceship, he decides to leave it and so encounters the strange ways of the world of Amara. Odd concepts worked out with some humour.

THE BEST SF FOR 1973: Edited by Forest J. Ackerman. \$1.25. Quite a torrent of these anthologies, but it is always interesting to see what different editors choose. Here are the names of Bloh, Pohl, van Vogt, Silverberg, Farmer etc to show that this collection stays in the mainstream of SF.

Nibblings 7

SCIENCE BOOKS

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION. No 6. Edited by Harry Harrison & Brian Aldiss 35p. Quite a contrast from the previous anthology. The first story being one of those aimless contemporary style things rather put me off. However Brian Aldiss' AS FOR OUR FATAL CONTINUITY amused me so much, I was able to go on and enjoy the majority. This is SF branching out, some I like some I very much dislike - but it cannot be ignored.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER by Robert E. Howard. The action takes place in the Hyborian age, and Conan is a super-hero who swash-buckles his way through it in highly exuberant fashion.

CONAN THE WARRIOR By Robert E. Howard. This follows the previous book and again takes the reader through many adventures. More fighting as Conan meets his enemies, some of whom are supernatural! Still high adventure.

NEW WORLDS: No 6: THE SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY. Edited by Michael Moorcock and Charles Platt. 40p. Quite a fat volume with lots of stories by young authors both British and American. Some are -sigh- I must use it - 'New Wave' and these bore me, their lack of direction of substance cannot hold my attention. Others are good - such as THERE IS NO MORE AWAY by Steve Cline, an interesting example of the over-population problem. Fantasy is featured too, notable Keith Robert's THE BEAUTIFUL ONE.

From An Ultimate Dim Thule: A review of the early works of SIDNEY SIME by George Locke. Ferret Fantasy Ltd. 27 Beechcroft Rd. Upper Tooting. London. SW17. Although the names of Beardsley and Rackham are well-known to collectors Sidney Sime is less well-known apart from the work he did for the books of Lord Dunsany. Here the editor has gathered together many beautiful specimens of the art of Sime, taken from magazines like THE IDLER, PALLMALL and the SKETCH. These magazines of the 19th century were usually profusely illustrated but it must have taken painstaking research to gather this collection together. They are weird and fantastic, often humorous in a grim sort of way; the very handsome reproduction does justice to their brilliance. As the editor say, sometimes the work invites comparison with Charles Adams. The influence of Beardsley can also be seen; but the artist has a strange world completely his own. In addition to the artwork there is a biography of the artist plus a bibliography. A real collectors item; and one which must send the collector on the hunt for the work of Sime. Price £2.50.

Foundations: The Review of Science Fiction: Nos 2 & 3: Published quarterly 50p from The Science Fiction Foundation, N.E. London Polytechnic, Barking Precinct, Longbridge Rd. Dagenham. Essex. RM8 2AS. In the first editorial the journal's aim is discussed. The editorial board wish it to be a platform where SF is taken seriously, and which will attract academic interest. "On the other hand, we do not want to sink heavily to the bottom, weighed with footnotes". I thought this was admirable in summing up their intent and feel that they have achieved their object. The articles, such as various writers using the theme THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCIENCE FICTION WRITER are of great interest. I also liked John Brunner's discussion of PARALLEL WORLDS. There are reorts, such as the one on the Eurocon. The reviews are handled by Ken Bulmer, so, needless to say really, are very good. All in all a very hopeful sign on the SF scene; and one to be supported.

Nibblings 8

THE WORLD SHUFFLER by Keith Laumer, Sidgwick & Jackson, £1.75. With a multitude of alternate universes to play with, the author has his hero Lafayette O'Leary slipping from one adventure to another in his desire to get back to the universe in which we first encounter him. As at that time he is feeling bored - the stream of hair-raising exploits that follow, sure wake him up! Amusing.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF 22: Edited by Ken Bulmer, Sidgwick & Jackson, £1.75. This edition is dedicated to the memory of Ted Carnell; and contains a foreword by Ken Bulmer about him and about the fact that Carnell's many author friends wished to take part in this book. There are 11 stories. Harry Harrison has an entertaining hero who believes in proper pay for an honest day's work - even if it is to save the Earth. EC Tubb describes a man and his spaceship with an odd sad ending. AC Clarke describes his forthcoming novel SPACEGARD. James White proffers another clever SECTOR GENERAL story. THREE ENIGMAS by Brian Aldiss found me out of sympathy with his style; but WISE CHILD by John Rackham in which an alien tries to bridge the 'generation gap' was back to the kind of SF I like. Donald Wollheim also held the attention with a new type of spaceship. Sydney Bounds has a neat little nightmare to offer. John Kippax has an intriguing time story. Laurence James has a new solution for an old mystery - but in the last story by Chris Priest I got impatient with the mystery. Still a very good batch and a worthy tribute.

ACE BOOKS

INFINITY FLIGHT PERRY RHODAN 24: by Clark Dalton, 75¢. Apart from the lead novel, and the shorts and letters, this one has the news of a Perry Rhodan film!

THE WARLORD OF THE AIR by Michael Moorcock, ACE SPECIAL, 75¢. Bastable is a man of 1902 who finds himself forward into the world of 1973. Not the 1973 we know, but a fascinating alternate. Plot worked out well.

DRAGON MAGIC by Andre Norton, 95¢. A very delightful story of four boys who find a jigsaw puzzle in an old house - and through its magic power each travels back in time - in such a way as to change their whole lives.

HIERARCHIES by John T. Phillifent and MISTER JUSTICE by Doris Piserchia, ACE DOUBLE, 95¢. The Phillifent half is an adventure-tale (less original than his usual) which features two agents who have a mission that encounters quite a few setbacks. MISTER JUSTICE is much more involved - a time-travelling man of justice... or is he? Fine puzzle, and plenty of action too.

ARROW BOOKS

ELRIC OF MELNIBONE by Michael Moorcock, 35p. High fantasy as Elric clashes in rivalry with his cousin Yrkoon. Not for me, but a highly successful series with the fantasy fans.

KALIN by Ted Tubb, 35p. Dumarest, that man who searches for Earth, becomes side-tracked when he meets the woman called Kalin who has the power to see into the future. Such a power might sound wonderful - but Dumarest learns that being able to foresee danger does not always help. Good reading.

Sept. 14th, 1973. Ethel Lindsay.

The GREAT BRITISH RADIO HEROES

Jim Linwood



FADE IN

In 1967 a book by Jim Harmon was published called THE GREAT RADIO HEROES (available as an ACE PB:A-27). It is a nostalgic recollection of the radio characters who had a strong influence upon Jim's formative years; Jack Armstrong, Tom Mix, Batman, and Superman better known over here in comic book formats.

In the forties and early fifties the British Broadcasting Corporation featured many radio thriller series modelled on the lines as the ones Jim mentions and so many Britons hold the same regard for Dick Barton and Jet Morgan as Americans do for Dick Tracy and Flash Gordon. By the mid-fifties the majority of British households had acquired television sets, the mass appeal of radio diminished, and the popular thriller was transcribed to the new medium. I was one of a generation of sub-teenagers who grew up without the influence of the glass teat fitting faces to the voices (often idealised ones of ourselves) of the radio heroes, the villains were pictured as neighbourhood bullies or unpopular teachers, and no TV play could ever visualise the horrors that the voice of Valentine Dyall conjured up in APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR.

I perceived the passage of time as a child by the evening's radio shows, Monday, the week's first Dick Barton episode; Tuesday, JOURNEY INTO SPACE, Wednesday: Phillip Odell. Thursday; Paul Temple, Friday; the week's last Barton episode, and Saturday morning; a whole hour omnibus of the week's Barton episodes. All the great radio heroes did their stuff on what was known as the BBC Light Programme, their other services; the Home Service and the Third Programme featured such boring and incomprehensible things as THE BRAINS TRUST, Dylan Thomas, and Wagner. 1500 metres long wave was where all the action was.

All the radio heroes had a profound effect upon the immature Linwood; I would find myself thinking when having to pass the school bully in the corridor, "What would Barton do if he were here?"—many years later I finally shook the habit, now in my maturity when faced with a tricky situation I wonder what Bogie would do.

THE GREAT BRITISH RADIO HEROES 2

DICK BARTON



"...quick, Jock, Snowy!"

When the BBC launched a daily thriller serial in October 1946 to fill the gap between a light music programme and the 7pm news they could not have known that they were giving birth to the most popular mass-culture hero of the forties- Dick Barton, Special Agent!

The series, created by Edward J. Mason was carefully modelled along the lines of American thriller serials. Each episode began with the fortissimo playing of the theme music, THE DEVIL'S GALLOP, then the announcer's resume of the plot so far, into the action proper with Dick and friends extricating themselves from the mess they had landed themselves in the previous night, then 5 minutes of plot development, followed by the build up to the episode cliffhanger. As all seemed lost the theme music came on strong then fading to the announcer's spiel; "Can Dick and Snowy survive the effect of the gamma-rays, can Jock reach them in time? Just what is Krautzman's plan for destroying London???" - a method developed in the US to induce us not only to listen to the next episode but also the sponsor's message. The announcer, incidently, probably played 2 or 3 minor roles in the series; BBC budgets were that tight in the immediate post war years.

The first adventure began with the recently demobbed Captain Barton playing golf caddied by his faithful batman, Snowy White (the show's token Cockney) regretting "being at rather a loose end with no more action to look forward to". No sooner said than a lost golf-ball involves them with mad scientists, escaped Nazis, giant spiders, and the inevitable death-ray. Dick's efforts to save the Empire were appreciated by Military Intelligence and he was awarded the position of "Special Agent" (why he was so special from other agents was never explained), and acquired another underling, Jock (the show's token Scot), who was a "jolly useful chap to have around".

In the following five years Barton sent innumerable villains and villainess's to sticky deserved ends, no wishy-washy liberal crap about redemption bothered Dick; in one adventure Dick was being pursued by the chief nasty through London's sewer system with the water rising, he escapes by lifting a manhole cover (no mean feat), then drives a truck onto the replaced cover to seal the villain's fate.

THE GREAT BRITISH RADIO HEROES 3

Dick's love life never developed further than rescuing heroines from fates worse than, and a man prone to making remarks like; "For a woman your idea has a little good sense in it", could not expect a happy sex life. The original Barton was portrayed by Noel Johnson, who left the series in 1950, to be replaced by Duncan Carse (a real life adventurer and explorer) after a 2 week absence by Barton from the series in the hope that listeners would not notice the voice change. Snowy and Jock were played by John Mann and Alex McCrindle respectively.

The series was highly prone to criticism for its violence (nasty by even today's no-holds-barred standards), for keeping children from their homework, and by implication for being too popular; anything avidly followed by the majority of Britain must be rubbish, harmful, and a bad influence reasoned it's detractors. The BBC also have a reputation for prematurely killing off mass-appeal programmes.

The series inspired 2 B-quota movies, in one; DICK BARTON STRIKES BACK your mad scientist plans to turn British brains into jello by turning Blackpool Tower into a gigantic tuning-fork pitched at the correct mind-blowing frequency.

The last Barton episode was transmitted in March 1951, we were all led to believe he was taking a well deserved 2 weeks holiday, the slot was filled by an uninspiring story of simple country folk; THE ARCHERS, and after 22 yrs they are still with us. Also scripted by Mason THE ARCHERS was and still is the urban man's visualisation of rural life, they even had a Squire in the series for a few years until the scriptwriters were informed that such titles had been defunct for decades.

A few years back the BBC showed interest in reviving Barton as a high-camp send up with a forties setting but Mason wanted Barton up-dated along Bond lines, the result was a deadlock. Now Mason is dead David Frost's TV company has shown some interest in a revival, but nothing definite has so far been proposed. In 1972, as part of the BBC's half century celebrations the first ever Barton adventure was re-produced with the original trio of actors, the old magic was re-kindled, and I could once more go to sleep in the knowledge that the country's safety was in the capable hands of Dick Barton, Special Agent!

"This is your storyteller....."

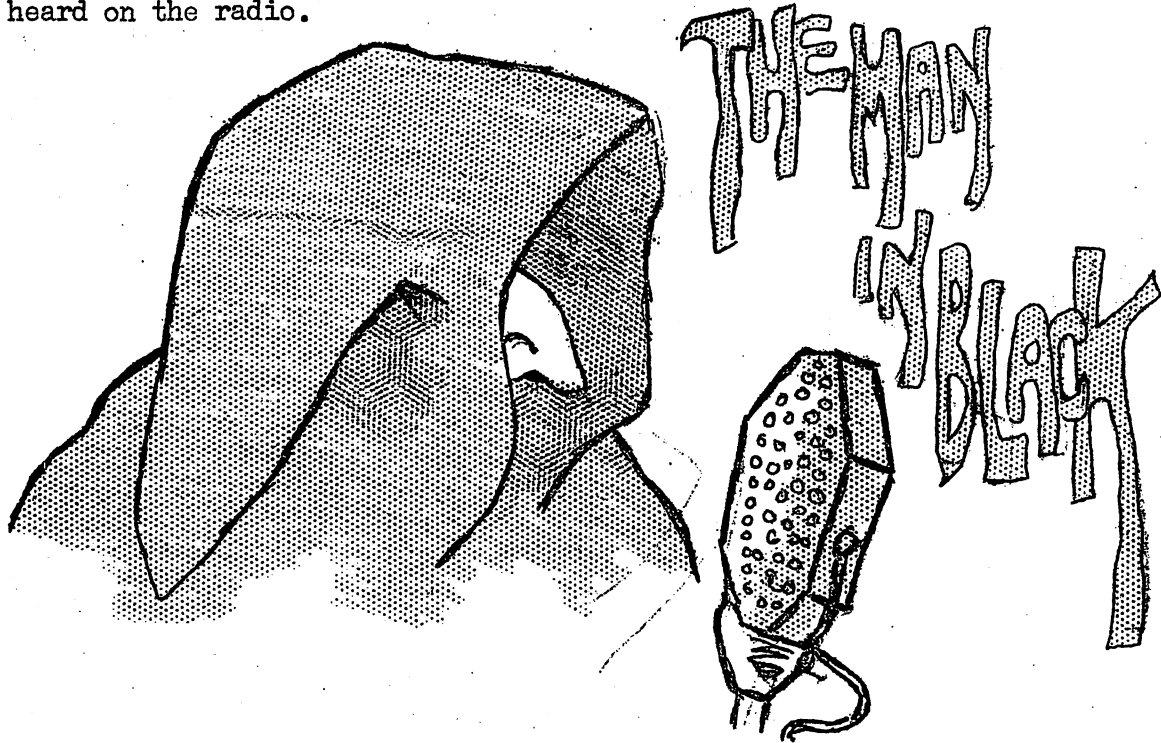
The voice of The Man in Black was on one hand the most instantly recognisable in forties' broadcasting and on the other the utterly blood curdling when uttering the simple greeting; "Good Evening, This is your storyteller". It belonged to the actor, Valentine Dyall, who introduced and provided interlocking narrative to the series APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR, which ran intermittently from 1943 to 1955.

I never thought of the series by its official name; it was always The Man In Black, and the stories he introduced although credited to writers with strange names like Bram Stoker were for me his personal recollections of his strange life, and a warning to those fools who scoffed at the power of the supernatural. The series featured dramatisations of such stories as Phillip MacDonald's OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS (Hitchcock's THE BIRDS had nothing on this),

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Bram Stoker's THE JUDGE'S HOUSE, Harvey's BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS, and M.R. James' O WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD. The latter instilled a fear of spare beds in me that still persists.

The series went out on Tuesday evenings and this resulted in what our teachers called Wednesday morning trauma among their more foolhardy pupils who had dared to listen to the previous night's story. Although we all shrugged off each story as "not very scary" there are many people in their thirties who break out into a cold sweat when Dyall's voice is occasionally heard on the radio.



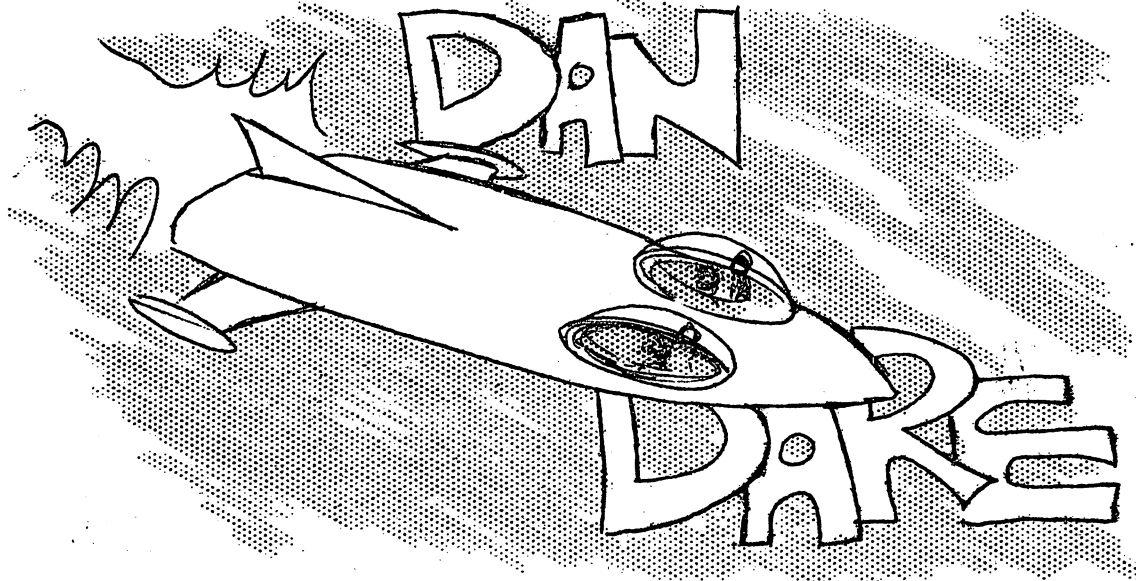
Dyall's instant recognisability as The Man In Black cut short what might have developed into a moderately successful career in films as a character actor. Born in 1908, he made several impressive appearances in films such as HENRY V and BRIEF ENCOUNTER. But his reputation, voice, and gaunt cadaverous appearance type-casted him - his last two films, CITY OF THE DEAD and THE HAUNTING reflect this. There is the apocryphal tale of Dyall being approached by a man in a pub who wanted to beat him up for telling a story which frightened his wife.....Being highly adaptable Dyall has laterly been associated with Spike Milligan's surrealistic plays and TV shows, he played the title role in the West End production of Milligan's THE BED SITTING ROOM. He has written two books, one of famous sea tragedies and the other (based on a TV series he compered) on Fortean type unsolved mysteries to which he applied logical explanations; in an attempt to solve the mystery of the shattered windscreens that befell many cars driving along a certain stretch of road in Southern England, he had his children firing ice bullets from air guns!

In a recent TV interview Dyall destroyed one of my great childhood fantasies...he, The Man In Black, stated that he did not believe in the supernatural!

THE GREAT BRITISH RADIO HEROES 5

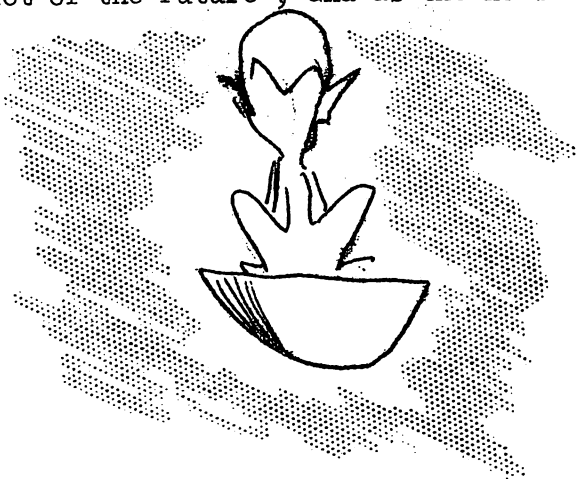
"E' by gum this Venus is a rum place"

One answer to the question "Whatever happened to Dick Barton?" (or rather Noel Johnson after he was replaced by Duncan Carse) is that he moved over to the lucrative field of commercial radio and changed his name to Dan Dare.



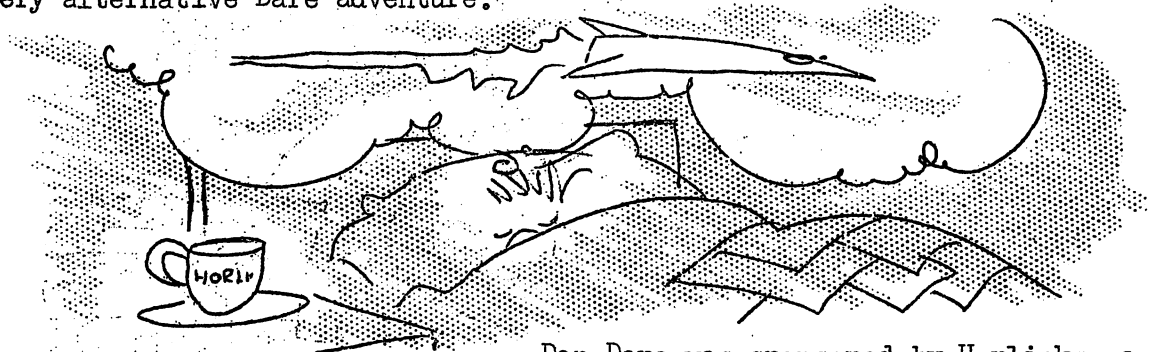
Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future, made his initial appearance in the first issue of the EAGLE comic in April 1950, and soon afterwards was appearing on the commercial radio station, RADIO LUXEMBURG. At that time (and still is) commercial radio was illegal in Great Britain, but perfectly legal if a British based company beamed its transmissions from a foreign country, in this case the small principality of Luxemburg. Dan filled the same time slot as Dick Barton (6.45-7pm), and Barton fans unable to adjust to the bucolic unreality of THE ARCHERS opted to tune into the ever fading and interference ridden 208 metres to hear the announcer's voice say over the roar of rocket engines "Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future", and as the noise reached a crescendo, "Spaceship Away!"

Dare held the rank of colonel in the Interplanet Space Fleet "some years in the future", an outfit with many similarities to the RAF. His Chief side-kick was, like Barton's Snowy, a batman (US readers please note a batman is not a caped crusader or the guy who flags down aircraft on carriers but merely the servant of a British military officer) called Digby from Wigan, the stereotyped Lancashire man as popularised by George Formby and Frankie Randall.



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Other major persona were Sir Hubert, Dare's boss, Jocelyn Peabody; girl scientist, and occasional appearances of an American with the original name of Hank. Dan's arch enemy, The Mekon, was a green Venusian with a gigantic cranium, resembling a 3 month embryo, and given to permanently sitting on a small triangular-shaped anti-grav chair (the Mekon Delta?). He was the leader of a race of 8-foot hairless green giants called Treens, the original inhabitants of Venus - the master race served by the blue skinned Atlantians, mutated descendants of a Treen press-gangraid on Earth eons ago. Within months of Dare's arrival on Venus, the Atlantians rebel, the Treens become goodies and the Mekon escapes with a few henchmen to re-plan the conquest of the solar system, which were hatched out and squashed every alternative Dare adventure.



Dan Dare was sponsored by Horlicks, a bedtime drink, the spiel for which made you think it was laced with barbiturates. Having a commercial sponsor meant premiums, by sending the requisite number of wrappers off Horlicks, jars Dan Dare fans could receive such goodies as the official Spacefleet badge as worn by Dan himself, a cardboard press-out spaceship kit, or a soft wax record of MARCH OF THE SPACEMEN. On sale all over the country were such spin-offs from the EAGLE strip as Dan Dare belts (or braces for the more square), space-guns, and Dan's dress uniform tie; the space ship emblem on it wore off after a few days leaving a rather cheap blue tie.

Now Dan, Digby, Jocelyn, and even the EAGLE have gone into the realm of collector's items, but we Dare fans of old still have a sneaking feeling that up there, somewhere, plotting on some out-of-the-way asteroid is "our old green friend"; The Mekon!

"When it's nighttime in Italy it's Wednesday over here"

The name of Jet Morgan ranks with Dan Dare as the British answer to Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers.

He made his first appearance on the BBC in September, 1953 in a series entitled JOURNEY INTO SPACE, which was originally intended as a simple Earth to Moon and back serial in six episodes, but its immediate success forced its author, Western and folk-song buff Charles Cilton, to do a complete re-write extending the series first run to 13 episodes.

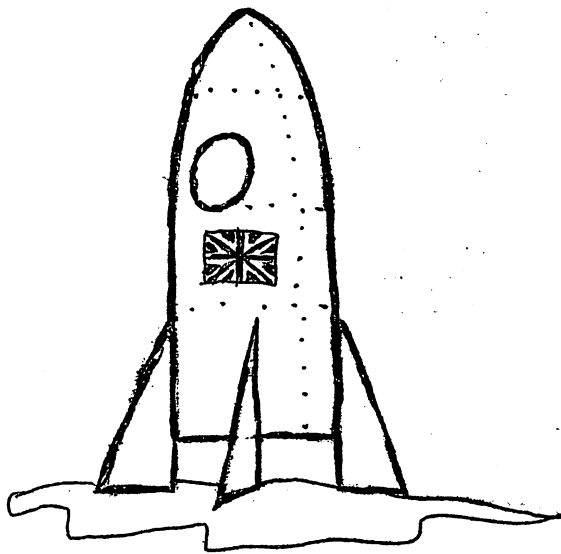
Our first four men into space were Jet Morgan ex-test pilot; Doc (profession obvious); Mitch Australian engineer, and the last minute replacement radio operator Lemmie Barnet, which was ablatant cribbing from the plot of DESTINATION MOON. Lemmie was the crew's comic cockney and resident idiot to whom technical

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matters were explained for his (and ours) enlightenment. After landing on the Moon the adventurers were caught up in a spacetime warp, travelling to Earth's distant past, and encountering a set of benevolent time-travelling aliens who resemble mandrills.

The second series, *THE RED PLANET*, concerned a large expedition to Mars led by our four heroes, and among several other crew members was the enigmatic Whitticker (played by David Jacobs, later to become famous as a DJ) whose constant monotone repetition of "Orders must be obeyed at all times without question" became a nationwide catch-phrase overnight. Whitticker was also given to singing a song bearing the strange title of "When it's nighttime in Italy it's Wednesday over here", which Lemmie identified as a popular song of the twenties. Within a few more episodes all was revealed; Whitticker was one of the many Earthmen snatched by evil Martians at the time of a close Mars approach to Earth in the twenties, his aging process has been arrested, been brainwashed, and sent as a spy on the expedition (a fact which even the dimmest boy in the class guessed when Whitticker first appeared). Jet and Co soon foil the Martian invasion plans for Earth, at least until the third and final *JOURNEY INTO SPACE* series, *THE WORLD IN PERIL*, when the Martians try again.... they never learn, do they?

JOURNEY INTO SPACE was perhaps radio's most successful adventure series of the fifties, it was rumoured that all debates ended in the House of Commons at 7.30pm Tuesdays so that members could catch up with the latest episode. The series finally ended in June 1958. Jet was played throughout by Andrew Faulds now the very hirsute and highly voluble Member of Parliament for Smethwick, who now looks like some barbarian out of a Conan book. He still puts in a few radio, TV, and film appearances; he was one of the Argonauts who survived to fight the dragons-teeth in *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS*. Lemmie was played in the first series by David Kossoff and replaced by Alfie Bas; both fine actors specialising in comic Jewish roles, the latter made an excellent replacement for Topol in the West End production of *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*. Doc was played throughout by Guy Kingsley Pointer, and Mitch - first by Bruce Beeby (are all Australians called Bruce?), then Don Sharp, and later by David Williams.



I found it difficult to fit mental images to the voices in the series, none had the suave cockiness of Barton or the sinister bass of Dyall, the publicity shots of the foursome in spacesuits made them each resemble the cartoon that appears in Michelin tyre adverts. Chilton hacked out three fairly un-readable novels from the series, which appeared in hardcover and Pan editions. He has more recently been associated with folk song programmes, and with the BBC more

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willing to adapt SF novels like the FOUNDATION series, I doubt that Chilton and other script mechanics will ever be required to produce original material.

Gentlemen Sleuths, Gumshoes, Funny Fuzz and Lovable Rogues.

This section features the also rans; heroes who held my attention briefly, those who only featured in one series; and the ones I didn't care a damn for. Perhaps radio's most enduring hero is Paul Temple, he made his first appearance during the war, and still survives as a TV character. Temple was a writer of books on Criminology, who was occasionally called in by the Yard to solve their most baffling cases. How a writer of a specialist subject could live in a plush Mayfair apartment as Temple did, support a wife, and afford to run a chauffeur driven car was never explained - the more resourceful Sherlock Holmes could only manage two furnished rooms in Baker Street and rely on Hackney cab.

The plots seem to have been written by a faulty computer, which is surprising as their author was Francis Durbridge, who has turned in some rather neat TV thrillers. The villain, whose true identity was not known until episode eight, was always known by a code name usually uttered on the lips of his first victim at the end of episode one. By the end of the serial when most of the likely suspects have been eliminated by the villain, Temple calls a meeting of all remaining persons in his flat, and it's unmasking time. After hearing three Temple adventures I knew the method of unmasking the villain; he was always the least likely suspect, and he was usually introduced in episode three.

Marjorie Westbury played Temple's wife, Steve, throughout the entire run of the series (for which some sort of honour should be bestowed upon her), few actors stuck with Temple for more than one adventure, the last one being Peter Coke. Looking back I think the only thing I enjoyed about Paul Temple was the part at the end of the final episode of each adventure where over the strains of the theme tune, CORONATION SCOT, all the leading characters were re-introduced uttering some key piece of dialogue. The villain (whether dead or seriously maimed by now) always had the last say:

ANNOUNCER Chief Inspector MacMurdoch, alias The Vole....

MACMURDOCH Did ye no ken, Temple, I had Scot's ancestry?

ANNOUNCER....was played by.....

Although not quite British but certainly a radio hero was Phillip Odell, an Irish private detective, created by Lester Powell, and originally introduced in the serial LADY IN A FOG. I rather liked this cynical, downbeat, gumshoe until years later after discovering the master, Raymond Chandler, just how derivative the series was. Odell was portrayed by Robert Beatty, a rugged Canadian actor of several screen appearances, including the Moon base commander in 2001.A SPACE ODYSSEY.

PC 49, a character in several series of self-contained half hour plays was the public image of the fuzz in the pre-Barlow or even pre-Dixon days, a lovable twit on the beat, who thought a plant was something that grew in a pot, and always solved the Yard's most baffling cases with the help of his girl-friend, Joy. After several years his fans became concerned over his non-promotion; somehow Sergeant 49 didn't sound right, and the series was dropped. PC 49, who has some silly name that began with Archibald, was played by Brian Reece, now dead.

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"Bang!...That was the shot that killed Harry Lime. He died in a sewer beneath Vienna, but there were other stories..." So began the intro to a short-lived series based on Graham Greene's Harry Lime, first introduced in the movie THE THIRD MAN followed by the novel. How could anyone turn a mass murderer into a radio hero?...Orson Wells could. As usual he wrote, produced, acted, and directed the whole thing (wasn't Lime really Welles' creation not Greene's?), the only thing he didn't do was play Anton Karas's engaging theme music, although I don't doubt he could have spared a few minutes to learn how to play the zither. In the series Lime emerged as a lovable wheeler-dealer pitted against a different villain each week, usually after a rare diamond or a stock market killing. One of Lime's schemes was to un-freeze a find of frozen Mastodons in Siberia and exhibit them in side-shows, the villains beat him to it, but upon de-icing, the creatures continued their last mad stampede trampling Lime's rivals to death.

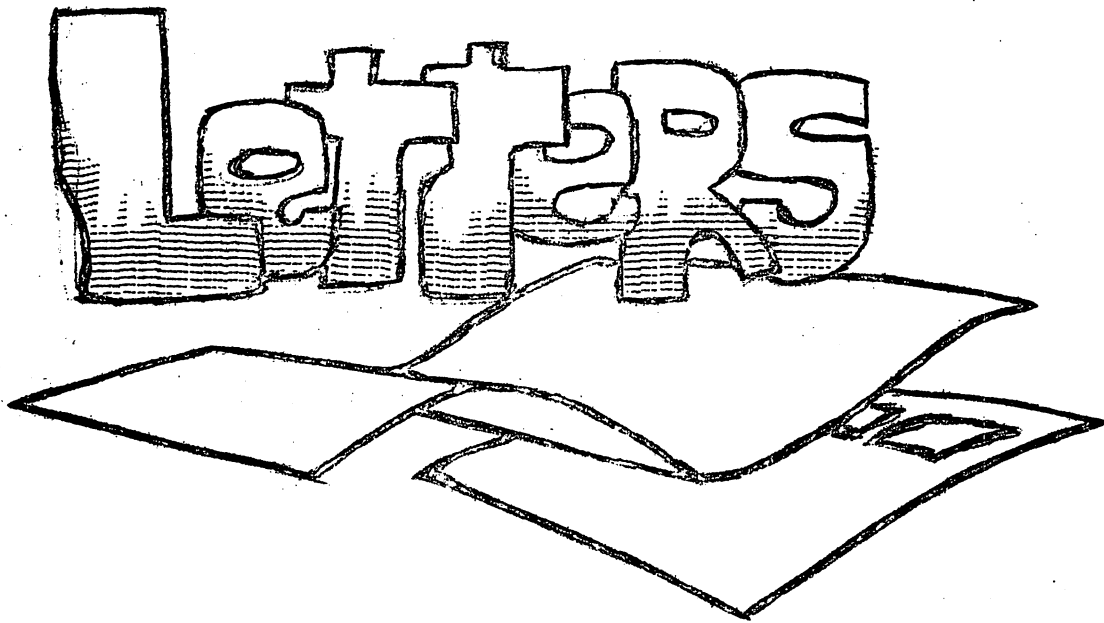
Fade out

The great days of radio are over. The Light Programme has become "Wonderful" Radio One with its appalling non-stop pop slush (for decent rock, jazz, or folk try your local radio station), and the children's heroes of today do their stuff on television. Of all the TV heroes only one has the appeal and charisma of the old radio favourites: Doctor Who. Often shot on a shoe-string budget with far from original scripts it does have a certain charm and magic (and having featured characters with the names Boak and Linwood, just who is writing the scripts?).

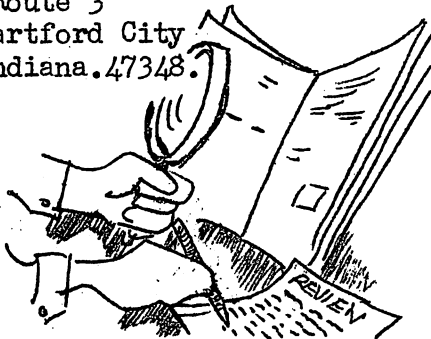
James Bond, the snob's Dick Barton, fathered whole legions of telly spies from the boring MEN FROM UNCLE (bar the ones Ellison scripted) to our own SPY TRAP, a genre that is thankfully dying. Private Eyes on TV are seedy, cynical, sub-Marlowes, handling cases that Odell wouldn't give to his office boy, but I must admit to a sneaking admiration for Daniel Pike and Frank Marker.

TV is at a disadvantage when portraying the supernatural, the producers idea of horror invariably turns out to be nothing more than a rotting corpse.. TV newsreels can beat them hands down at this. Only the rare TV play by Nigel Kneale manages to raise a few of the hairs that Dyal did...his recent THE CHOPPER and THE STONE TAPE were minor classics of horror seemingly ignored by the telly-critics, who were perhaps too busy hacking out praise to some new playwright who had found the latest variation on boy-meets-girl.

Jim Linwood.1973



Robert Coulson
Route 3
Hartford City
Indiana.47348.



"Maybe the lack of fanzine reviewers is caused by the current syndrome -in the US anyway - of putting out a "prestige" fanzine. A prestige fanzine demands prestige reviews, and a really good "review-in depth", while not particularly hard to do, takes an incredible amount of time which the newer fans want to spend on something more "important" than fanzine reviewing. So they review books instead. And a lot of the ex-Trekkies and ex-comic fans have come up with the attitude of "boost, don't knock", for all the world like fannish Rotarians. I don't know how

prevalent the attitude is, but it's been expressed to me often enough. So, they don't like to say anything bad about fanzines, and they can't say anything good about most of them, and they end up saying nothing at all. Also, we're going into a new Sercon phase here, and fanzine reviews are more prevalent in Faanish phases, when fanzines are deemed Important. Being neither sercon nor faanish, I don't think much of either phase!" ****Plenty fans start in to review zines; I guess it's a chore they tire of rapidly. Still: it was nice in the days when every zine at least did some..though there was often this tendency for everyone to review the same zines!****

Letters 2

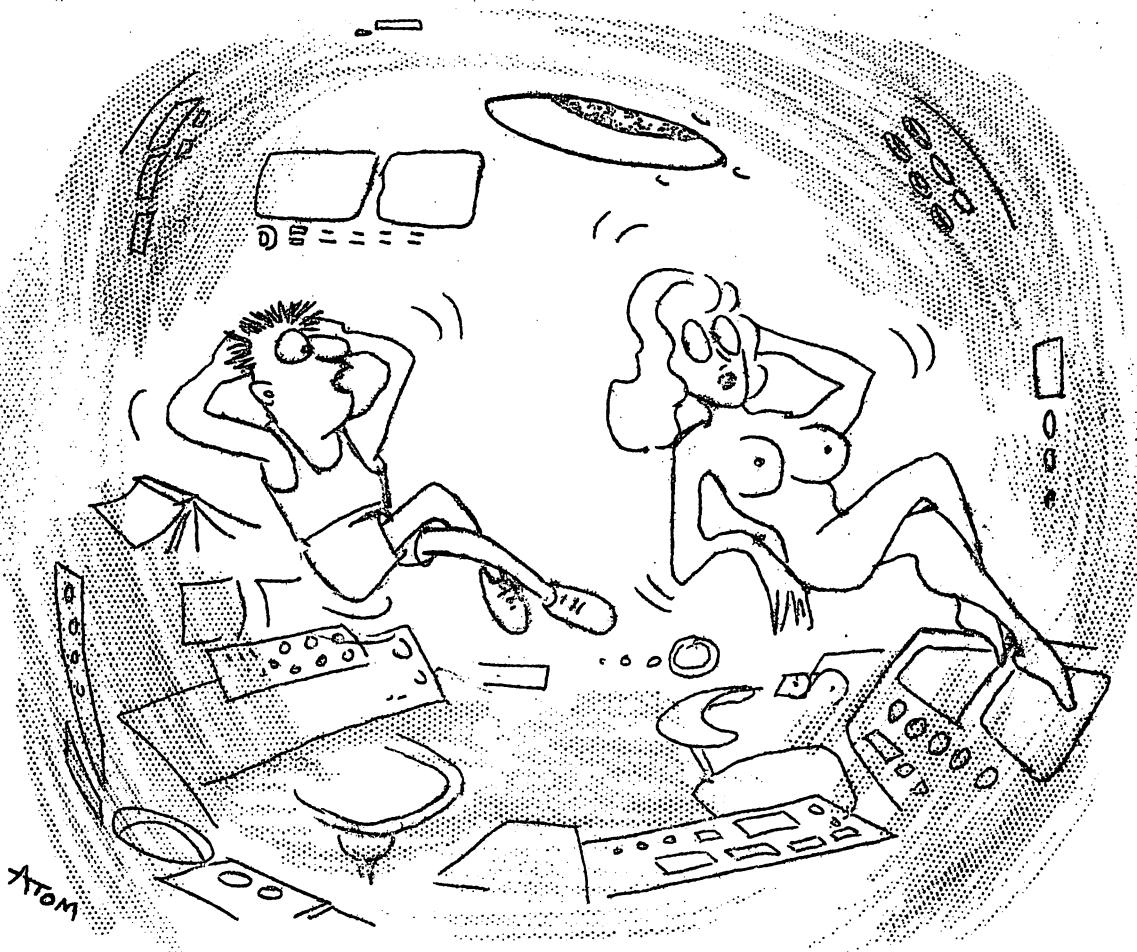
Harry Warner
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown.
Maryland, 21740



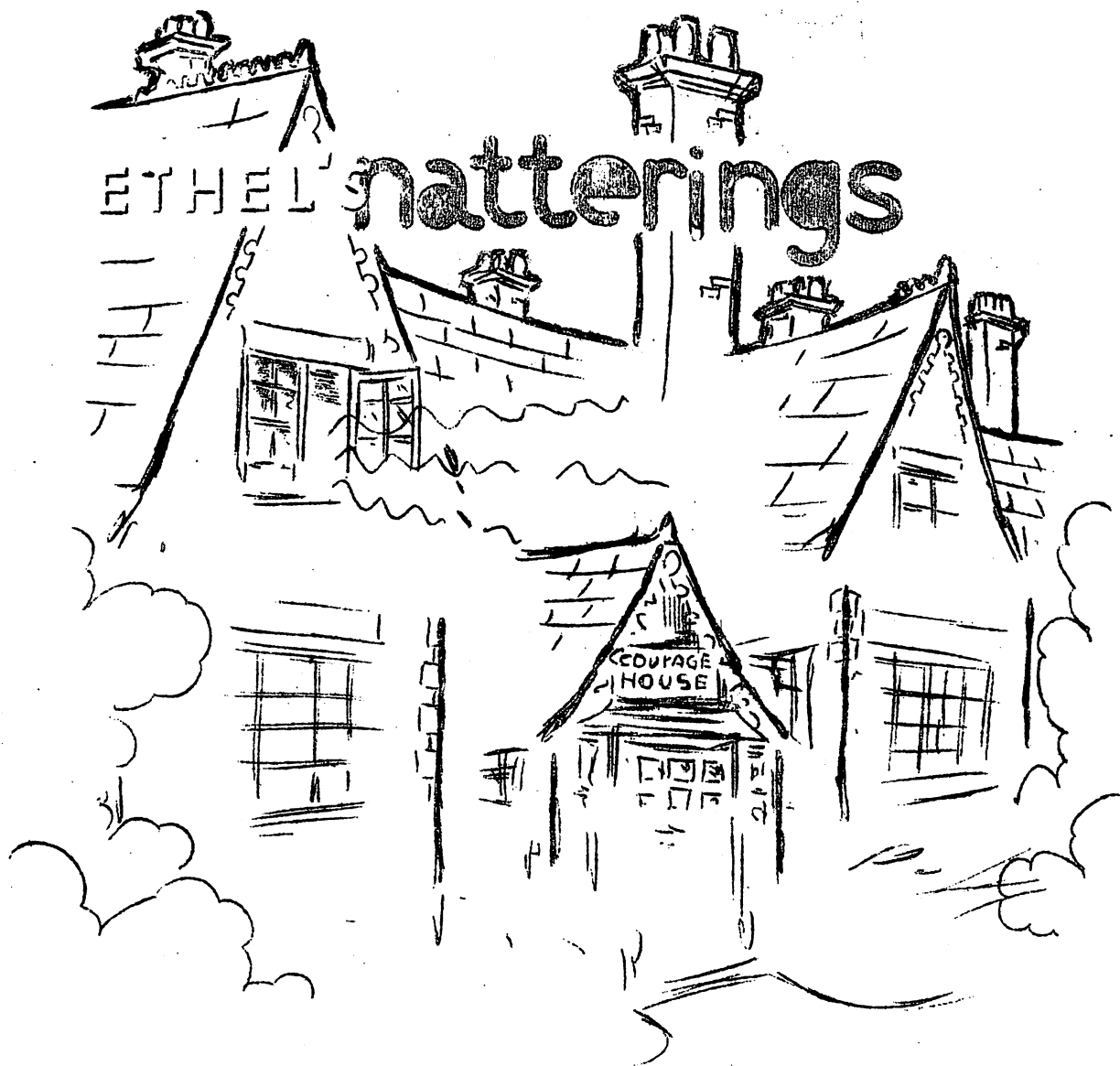
"SCOTTISHE, incidentally got me censored in RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY's latest issue. I treated British fanzines in this instalment of my review column, and Leland thought I was behaving ungallantly when I remarked how long you had been publishing it. He toned down my remarks so his reader's wouldn't be shocked, and I didn't have the heart to point out how you'd published that big annish right out in the open a couple of years ago....Your latest batch of reviews causes me to wonder if there's any hard-to-find science fiction left. Everything seems to have been reprinted in paperbacks within the last few years, even such previous hard-to-finds as the Bok stories. Well, I

suppose there are some exceptions. Weinbaum's fiction doesn't seem to have been published in its entirety in paperback form, as most other important writer's stories have been. I don't think anyone has ever resurrected the stories Frank Kelly used to write for the large-size early prozines; distinctive for their unhappy endings. I don't believe any publisher has risked transforming much of Seabury Quinn's weird fiction to paper format. But it must be harder and harder for collectors to feel superior at the thought that they have stories nobody else has much chance of reading.*****Now I think that was very nice of Leland. After all, for all he knew, I might be the type who is coy about age instead of being miffed instead if someone doesn't acknowledge that SCOT is now Britain's oldest zine.****

****Yes, only two letters..and at first I meant to skip the letter column this issue. Then I thought..but those two are just the job for ATOM's wit. So I ran 'em after all; and I do think what ATOM came up with was worth the trouble...Ethel.



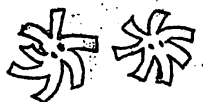
IT'S JUST THAT I HAVE THIS FEELING WE'VE BEEN
UP HERE LONG ENOUGH, JIM.



Only when I come to run this off will I know if I can use it successfully. ATOM gave it to me indicating that he did not think it was of much use. Yet it is such a good drawing of Courage House, I was loathe to waste it. It is not Courage House in an exact detail, but captures very well the outline of it as you come to the white front gate. My room is the open window upstairs and I guess that is the sound of the duplicator rolling that ATOM has come stream out the window! The amount of belongings that I have gathered in my 16 years here...ought to have the walls bulging! I'll tell you all something in confidence - there are too many books in that room!

hatterings

2



It is more years ago now than I care to calculate that I went as the TAFF delegate to Chicago. Fans, however, have long memories, and I still get letters from American fans who want something from this country and think of me as the person to contact. Over the years some odd requests have come my way, and some ordinary ones like..how can I meet British fans, is it safe for a young femmefan to go hitch-hiking over here, explain the youth hostels, and..many times over...when do fans meet in London and where. It has been a quiet source of amazement to me how long this has kept up. The other day, though, I had a letter to top all letters!

The writer began...."I have been trying to break into the field of Science Fiction writing, leaning heavily upon fantasy. Knowing of no British address to send my work to for publication, I sent a short story to America some months ago to the MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. Although this magazine couldn't help in publishing the story, they sent back your address from which I take it, you are the main Association for Science Fiction in Britain. I am therefore writing for information on just how a new author should tackle Science Fiction. If you could give me an insight on the present standards and requirements - together with a list of possible publications - of today's Science Fiction Market, it would help me considerably."

The envelope was addressed to The British Science Fiction Association
c/o Ethel Lindsay.

Now ---sit up at the back there, stop falling off your chairs laughing at the thought of my being the main SF Association in Britain, and bring your minds to bear on some problems!

Who at the Mag.of F&SF gave my name to this guy?

Who at the Mag.of S&SF thinks I'm the main SF Association in Britain?

Alternatively - who at the Mag.of F&SF is a fine little hoaxer?

Whilst you are at it(bringing your minds to bear, I mean)please figure out how I could be an Association...with diagrams.

As SF pb for the best answers!

Now that I've got you all sniggering, I hope, let me tell you about another letter. This time it was from Jhim Linwood and it accompanied his fine article on THE GREAT BRITISH RADIO HEROES. Jhim confesses..."You might be interested to know that every time I had to type "British" in the article I had to stop myself writing "English"

That's one fan brain-washed! I wonder if I have hidden powers?

Ethel Lindsay