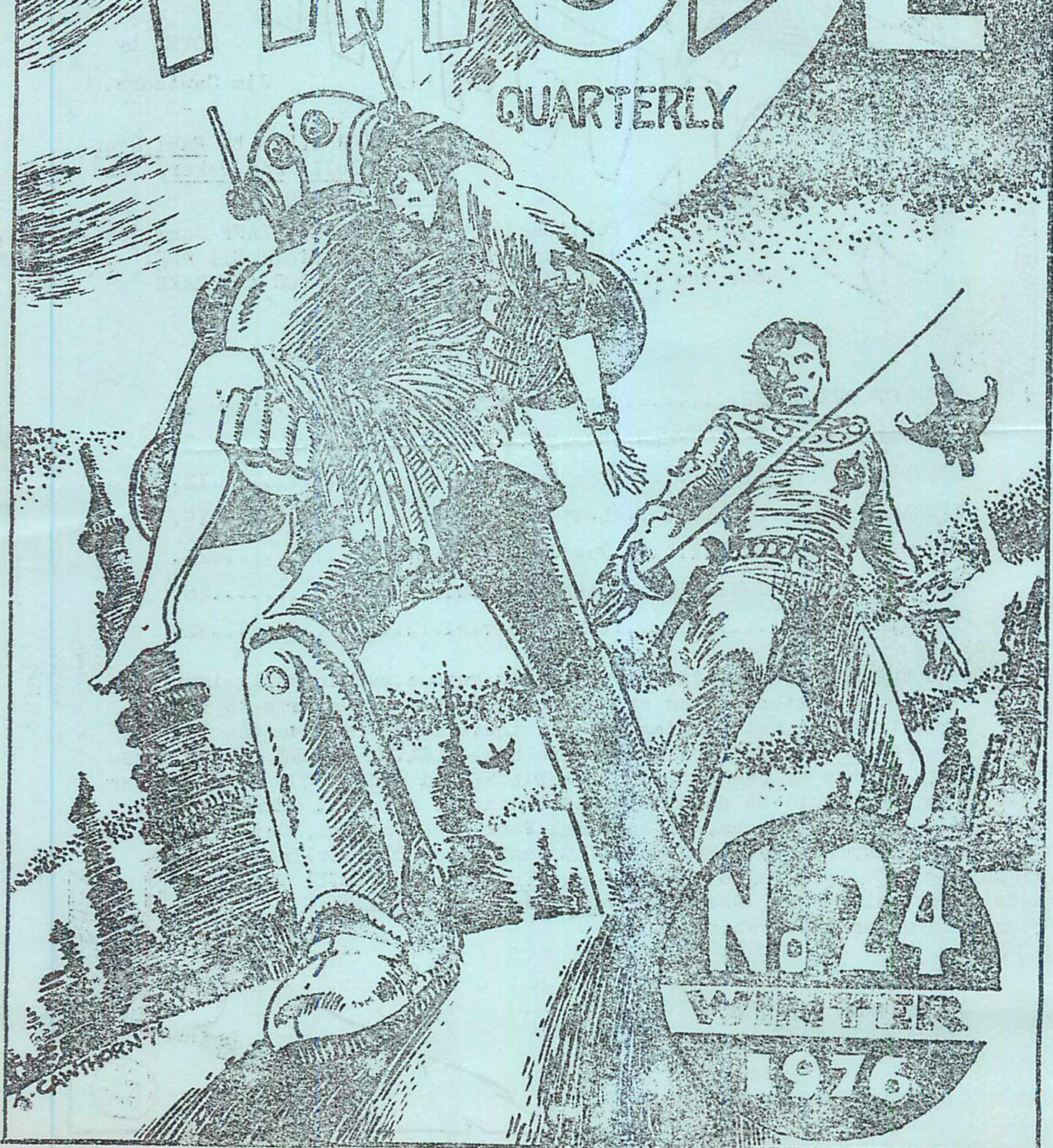


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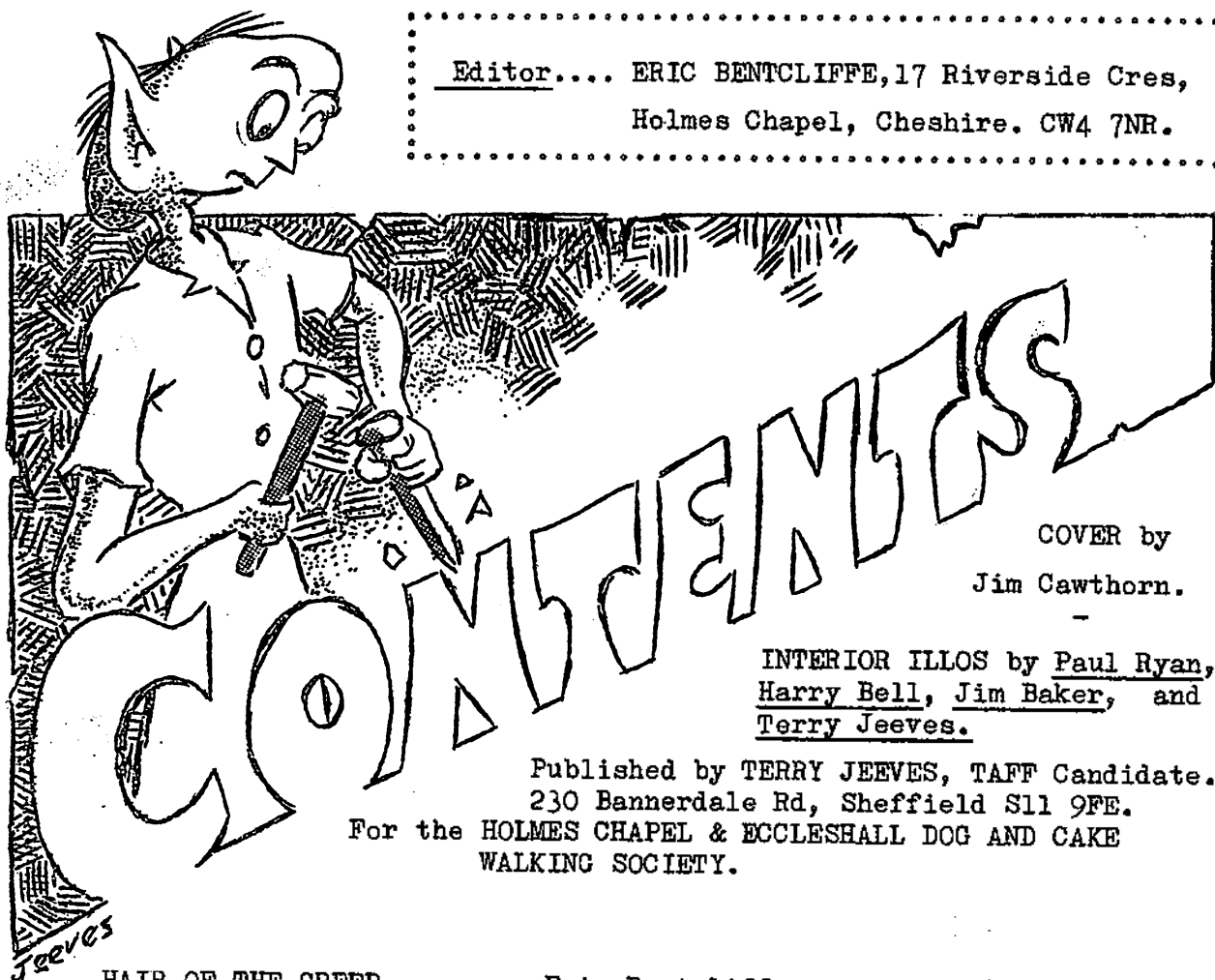
No 24

WINTER

1976

A. CANTHORN '76

.....
Editor.... ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 17 Riverside Cres,
Holmes Chapel, Cheshire. CW4 7NR.
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Jim Cawthorn.

INTERIOR ILLOS by Paul Ryan,
Harry Bell, Jim Baker, and
Terry Jeeves.

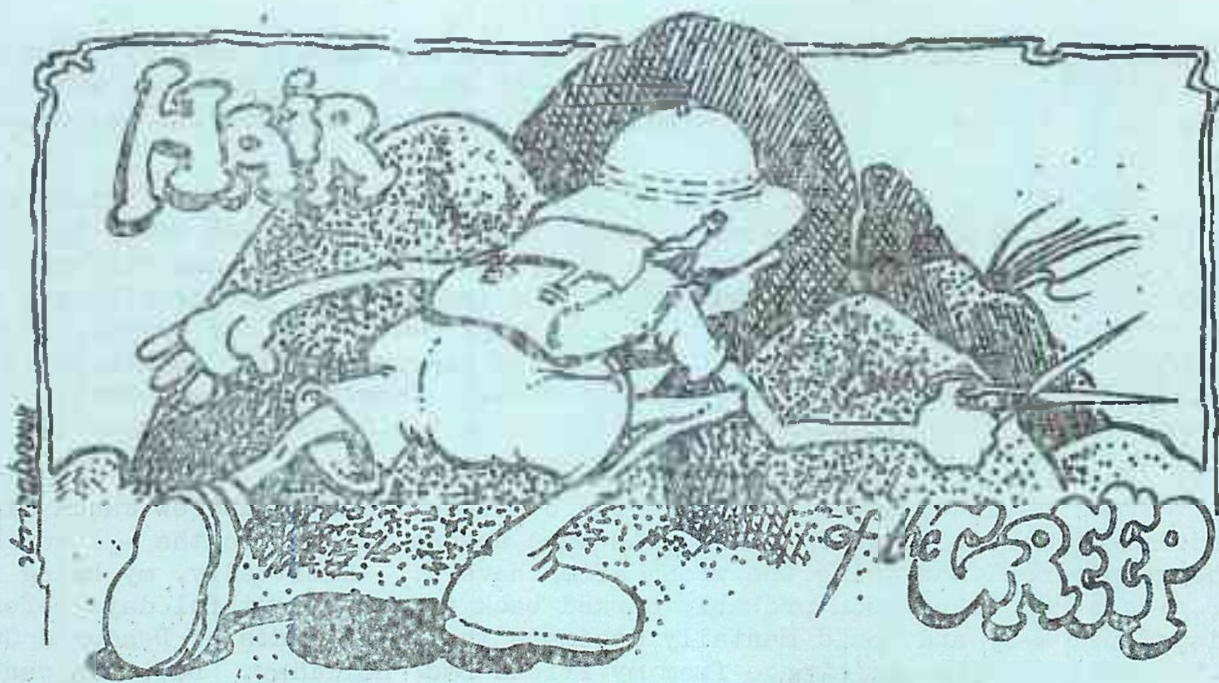
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JEEVES FOR TAFF
JEEVES FOR TAFF
JEEVES FOR TAFF.





MAY GHU HAVE MERCY ON ME.....

This is a trufannish fanzine and I'm about to mention science-fiction.
Science-Fiction, even.

And it isn't easy, I tell you. Not after reading the latest ANALOG serial; Bob Silverberg's SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE. Not easy at all; for that must be the most boring story I've read in years - I read on for page after page expecting the painstakingly dull background to suddenly erupt into a pyrotechnice display of literary expertise and revelation which would transp - ort the reader (me) to new dimensions of pleasure. It didn't happen; the painstakingly dull background persisted despite my fondest illusions that the next page would be better, and my only reaction at the end of the story was a sigh of relief that I didn't need to read any more.

However, reading SITF has reminded me that I promised a symposium this issue on the VERY WORST IN SCIENCE FICTION - no, SITF doesn't quite qualify for this category, it is well-written boredom! . Alas, the expected shoal of nominations and anecdotes which I hoped my comment-hook would inspire have not arrived. So far, anyway. I suspect that British Fandom is too enamoured of its Free Review Copies to really enter into the spirit of the thing. I did hear from Tom Perry, though....

" The VARGO AWARD is such a great idea that I hope it's something more than a joke. For the design, maybe you could capture in metal one of those early American space rockets crashing on the launching pad shortly after the first Sputnik went into orbit ? "

Well...why not ? If us science-fiction fans are going to honour those who please, with such awards as the HUGO; why shouldn't we also recognise those who also try - but fail notably. We don't have to limit it just to English-language s-f, either, let all crud be grist to our mill. I'll leave the naming of the awards to my world-wide readership, but I would like to make one further suggestion. For that which is purely worst in Eastern-bloc s-f; the Stanislav LEMON.

* * * * *

Having got your attention.....it is only fair to say that I still do enjoy a great deal of the science-fiction I read.

It only rarely transports me these days in the way that it once did, but just occasionally a story will arouse my sense-of-wonder and provide me with not only an hour or so of pleasant reading but, perhaps, a colourful day-dream or two.

For this is the great pleasure gained from good s-f (and fantasy), it can inspire, when at its evocative best, mind-musings on what would happen if you got into that scenario. Of your reactions to a strange and different world which an author, assisted by your own imagination, has created and which you can mentally visit and enjoy. I've always had a love for travel; I've managed to visit just a few of the real-time places I'd like to see, but I doubt that I'll ever get to see most of them. Meanwhile, I can travel to strange and exotic places which aren't even in the travel brochures, by courtesy of s-f.

For instance, I was on Pyrrus the other day, and I outdrew Jason dinAlt and killed more vicious Pyrran beasts than anyone had for months - I now have the suspicion I was using the wrong aftershave... Admittedly, my being faster with a gun than Jason probably harked back to those youthful days before I discovered s-f, and would mentally decimate the inhabitants of Deadwood Gulch with just a little assistance from my friend Doc' Holliday. But, you can't beat experience.

.....
 : I was having tea with Frodo and the other Hobbits at Bag :
 : End - (have you ever seen a Hobbit ? They look very :
 : much like a furry Harry Bell) - and ~~Harry~~ Merry had :
 : just passed me a large plate of scones, and I was tell- :
 : ing them just how they should go about this trip....and :
 : then the damned phone rang. :
 :

The night before I'd been helping Conan along on his quest for a certain High Priest of Set who'd done him wrong. Not a bad chap, Conan, not much of a conversationalist but you meet interesting people when he's around - interesting monsters, too, not that I was intending to stick around when he got too involved with them. My day-dreams have certain set rules, and one of them is that nothing nasty happens to me! Anyway, I'd just visited rather an intriguing joy-house in Pelverus with him (those Nemedian houri's are really something...) and we'd lapsed into the sort of companionable silence, which isn't difficult with Conan, as we loped towards our next encounter...when I suddenly realised what I didn't like about Conan - he needed a bath! I was trying to work out a diplomatic way of suggesting this to him (even in a day-dream he is considerably bigger than me), when I woke up to find that my socks were on fire!

Oh yes, I've dreamed around. I've philandered with Flandry, seen a Galaxy or two with Seaton, been the ruler of numerous PLANET STORIES wild and woolly worlds. I've even saved the "Enterprise" from extinction a couple of times - all right, I apologise!

But my favourite day-dreams have usually been inspired by Arthur Clarke's AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT, and the hero's discovery of how to call down a ship of space to his beck and call....a spaceship that knew how to navigate itself with only voice instruction; that's just the sort of spaceship I need. As I recall it, my day-dream would usually start with my digging up a strange not-metal, not-plastic box *** in the garden - come to think of it, I'd probably never have got my croquet-lawn laid if it hadn't been for this day-dream....I'd clean the box carefully and discover strange inscriptions thereon which would immediately become meaningful to me after only a couple of Bob Shaw's patent whisky-shandies. It would probably have three buttons or depressions on it -

***Wood ?

whether it would be buttons or depressions depended on what sort of day I'd had. After I'd had a couple more whisky-shandies I'd have puzzled out that one button would blow up the ship (so it wouldn't fall into the hands of the N3F), one would send it back to its port of origin in some far colourful galaxy with the unwritten message that the probe had bitten off more than it could chew - I've a feeling that this idea was something of a hangover from my days out-west, as well. The third button would call the ship down to me and make me its master....after I'd puzzled out the sequence in which I should depress the button, of course....which wouldn't be too difficult after a couple more drinks because I did know at least three letters in morse code.

I'd ~~stagger~~ sneak out of the house later that night, get a safe distance away from any of the neighbours who might complain about having a spaceship suddenly descend on their rose-beds, and call the ship too me. At this point I'd usually be disappointed, because instead of a huge gleaming ovoid half-a-mile-across obscuring half the sky and gently descending to rest at my feet, I'd see nothing at all until suddenly, the pen-torch I'd thoughtfully set down as a landing-beacon went out; and bending down to investigate why, I'd bang my nose on something immeasurably harder than steel. This was, of course, only the ship's Tender.

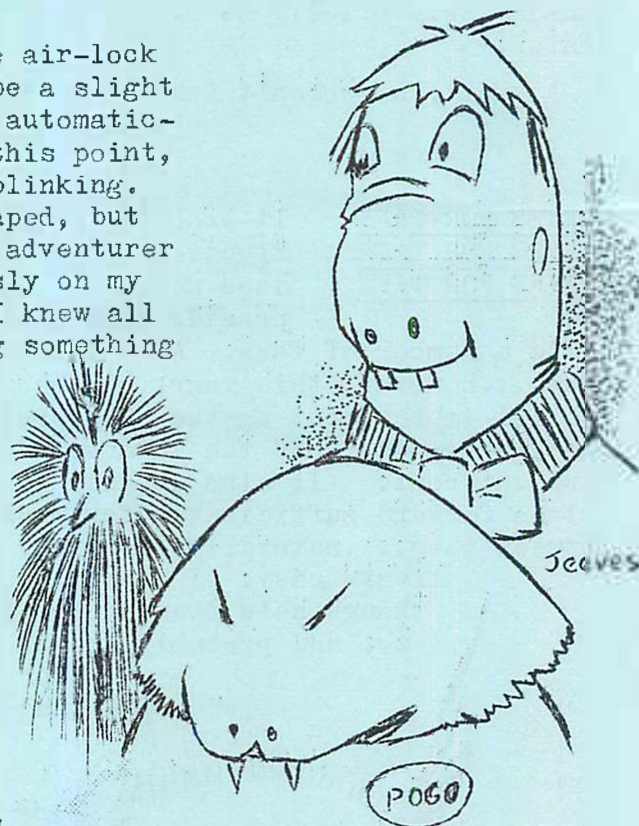
I hoped.

And since it was, after all, my day-dream, I'd be right. The air-lock would cycle open, a puce but pleasant lighting would illuminate a passageway at the end of which could be seen an empty control-chair. And, naturally, I'd enter and investigate.

As I entered the control-chamber, the air-lock would automatically close and there would be a slight sense of motion as the Tender took off; to automatically rendezvous with its mother-ship. At this point, a light on a subsidiary panel would start blinking. Above this panel were a pair of weirdly-shaped, but recognisable to me, headphones. Ever the adventurer (in my day-dreams) I'd place these cautiously on my ~~weirdly-shaped~~ head. Within mere moments I knew all the main languages of the Galaxy, including something like The Frug that passed for means of communication on Rigel IV...and how to operate the Tender and its mother-ship to their full capabilities. Sorry, awesome capabilities.

The information I now had about the Tender was a real mind-blast; not only could it function as spaceship and submarine, but at the touch of a simple lever could take on a configuration very like a Jaguar XJ-6. This was a really great discovery since my own car had never fully recovered from being driven to the Silicon. The only thing was, how was I going to get the old car off the drive and this...dream...onto it, without the wife thinking I'd spent the money she thought we'd been saving for a new washing-machine!

Sometimes, at moments of crisis like this, my best day-dreams would falter, and fade....of course, I could put on a spacesuit (that way she wouldn't recognise me) kidnap her, and drop her on her mother's back-lawnbut then, I hadn't got far enough along in my dream to decide whether the spaceships automat could cook like she could....



However, us inveterate science-fiction fans are never ones to let reality interfere too much with our dreamings....so I'd most probably discover that the spaceship could also warp time; and that way I could be away out in the galaxy whilst she was washing-up. Ah, yes, good dreaming, that. Now I could go ahead, pick a few congenial fannish types (the ship didn't need a crew, but there was no way I was going out into a possibly hostile universe alone.), after I'd properly introduced myself to the ship and made sure it wouldn't take orders from anyone else, of course....just to make shure y' understand...I mean, there are some fans you just wouldn't trust with a spaceship. They might be secret-readers of Dick or Ballard and try to turn the thing into a pumpkin, or something.

I'd pick up Terry; then zoom up to Newcastle and set the Tender down carefully on Rob Jackson's lawn (being careful not to damage the NOVA-Awards he's using as garden-gnomes) and invite the Gannets along. Rob would be useful in cases of medical emergency (like hangovers), and Harry Bell would be needed if we had to draw sketches for the ship-computer of where we wanted to go...I'd pick up Bob and Sadie as well; Bob's experiences with some of the weird creatures he's come across after too many whisky-shandies could well prove invaluable. And James White, in case we contracted any alien hangovers that Rob wouldn't know how to treat.

Oh, it wouldn't be difficult to assemble a crew. And after marvelling at the wonder of it all, and having a few drinks, and discussing what part of the Galaxy we should visit first, and having a few more drinks...we'd head swiftly, if somewhat erratically, for the next Stateside convention - pausing only briefly at the Moon to plant a propellor-beanie in a convenient crater.

Hell, we weren't fake-fans, were we ?

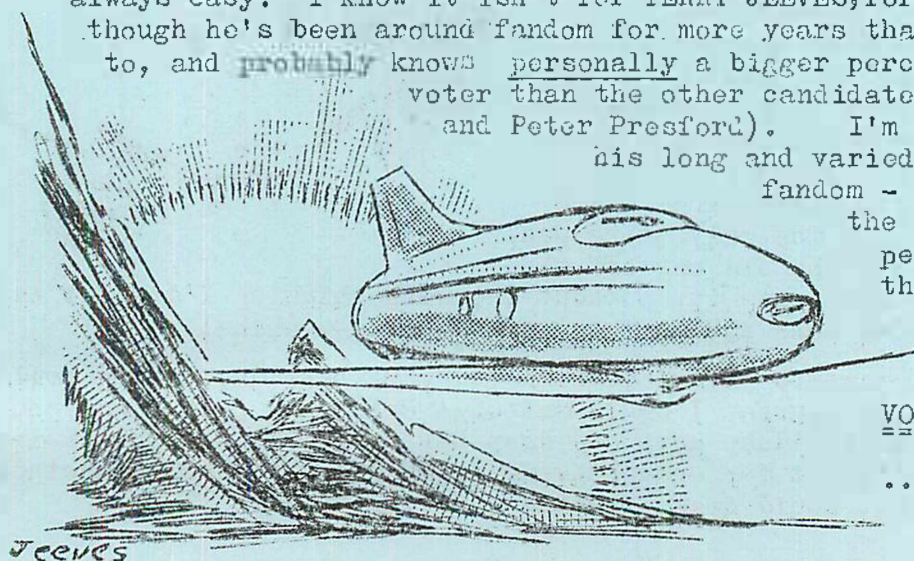
* * * * *

JEEVES FOR TAFF
JEEVES FOR TAFF
JEEVES FOR TAFF

It probably hasn't escaped your notice that there's a TAFF Election in progress....such an affair, it must be admitted, does not cause quite as much of a stir as the American presidential election and, indeed, seems to go unnoticed by quite a number of fans. As a former TAFF Delegate this, to me seems a great pity....however, this year, at least, we have three candidates which is a decided improvement on the one-horse/two-horse races of recent years. TAFF's success depends upon the interest fen take in it, and the more candidates the more interest. It also depends on the candidates themselves putting themselves forward sufficiently for those who don't know them well to choose between them....naturally, for your typical retiring s-f fan (!) this isn't always easy. I know it isn't for TERRY JEEVES, for that matter, even though he's been around fandom for more years than he will admit to, and probably knows personally a bigger percentage of the fan voter than the other candidates. (Peter Roberts, and Peter Presford). I'm not going into his long and varied career through fandom - time, space and the law of libel don't permit. But I do think that he is the TAFF DELEGATE you should elect.

VOTE JEEVES FOR TAFF.

...Eric Bentcliffe.



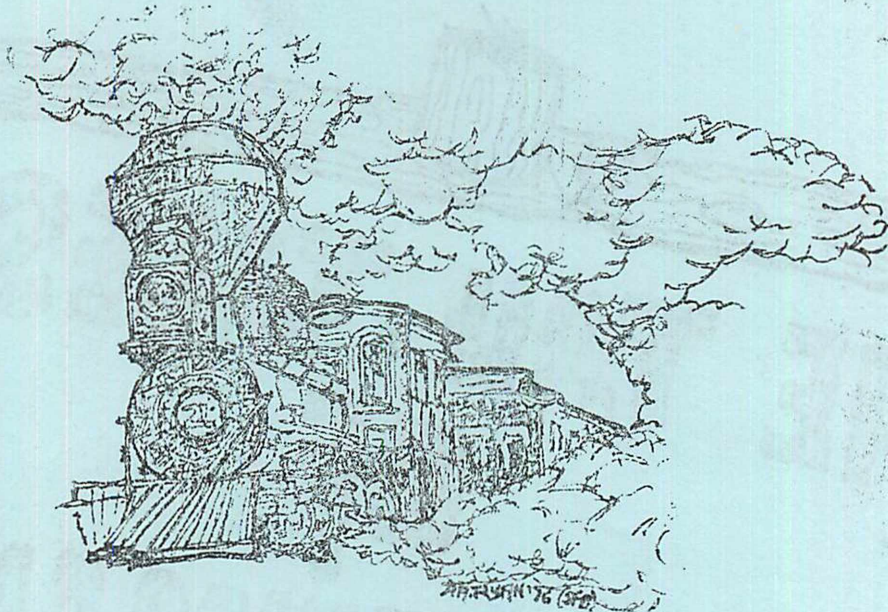


THE TALL TALES OF

WOLFMAN

by HARRY WARNER JR.

P.H. RYAN '76 (SFB)



Recent years have produced the dramatic resurrection of one famous fanzine of the past after another. You're reading one example. Ray Fisher, Dick Bergeron, Bob Tucker, and Richard Geis are among the celebrated fans who produced new issues of a famous fanzine, after many years of catalepsy. Other fans have made publishing comebacks with new titles, Donn Brazier, and Ed Connor, for instance.

But daily vigil at my mailbox and special attention in my nightly prayers have failed to produce a new issue of Quandry or even of the Chattahoochee, Okefenoke, and Ogeechee Occasional Gazette combined with the Wassaw and Ossabaw Backwater Journal and Tangent. Because new fanzines from Lee Hoffman are so rare these past couple of decades, I resorted recently to the next best thing, her professional equivalent of fanzines.

I'd known for a long time that Lee has been gaining considerable stature as a novelist, mainly for her Westerns. Perhaps a year ago, I read one of her books and promptly proceeded to mislay it so thoroughly that I can't say much about it here. Even the title escapes my memory. The most vivid memory of it is the parallel which it forms with one of Richard Wagner's first attempts at stage work. Practically everyone in this novel was badly shot up before the final climax had arrived, and Lee was forced to get some of them up and about when they really should have remained in bed a while longer, so the final pages could be written. Wagner absent-mindedly killed off all his major characters with one act to go, and could do nothing but bring them all back as ghosts so he could arrive at his final curtain.

Then I encountered one day that rarity in a small Pennsylvanian town, a second-hand book store whose proprietor had all the paperbacks arranged neatly in alphabetical order by author's name. I seized the opportunity to purchase a stack of Lee Hoffman novels, which for some reason rarely turn up at Goodwill Industries and garage sales. Maybe there's a Lee Hoffman fandom which gets to such sources of books earlier in the day than I do. One of these paperbacks had on its back-cover the inscription: "To Karen with Love. Lee."

It doesn't look like Lee's handwriting. Was it a counterfeit autograph, intended to raise the value of the book among fellow Lee Hoffman fans, or to invent prestige for the book's owner in this fandom?

Whatever the facts may be in such doubtful areas, I quickly discovered that the ghost of fandom past is still alive, and well, in Lee's Western fiction. It pops up in the most unexpected places in these books: here a reference to something which had also inspired material in a fanzine, there a celebrated fannish name used for a fictional character, and in many places the unanalysable but utterly distinctive style that Lee used when she wrote for fanzines back in the blessed 1950's.

For instance, I blinked with that *deja vu* sensation when I encountered a third of the way through "Wiley's Move" a reference to the "Code of Honour, or Rules for the Government of Principals and Seconds in Dueling, by John Lyde Wilson, Savannah, Morning News Steam Press, 1870." It sounded deucedly familiar, although I was sure I'd never read this novel before. A page or so later, I remembered: Lee had once written a fanzine article about the contents of this book or another book on duelling similar enough in nature to be its Ace Double. Besides, "Steam Press" has precious fannish connotations, connected with the near-simultaneous discovery of steam as a source of power by Lee and Ken Bulmer back in the glory days of fandom.

I even suspect that Lee may have written or inspired the writer of the back-cover blurb on my copy of the novel. It's a deadpan parody of the typical paperback blurb, whose full significance doesn't become apparent until you've read the novel. Its prototype may be found in many old Lee Hoffman fanzines, particularly those that parodied prozines like *Science Fiction Five-Yearly*. But I don't remember her having achieved a more gloriously mixed than the climax of this blurb: "...and a rousing adventure forged by true grit."

I don't know if I'm imagining some of these Tuckerisms in Lee's Westerns. In the second paragraph of the first page of "The Valdes Horses," for example, the stranger says: "I'm looking for the Wagner spread." The moment I read it, I remembered as clearly as if I'd just addressed a letter Lee's first fannish address in Savannah: 101 Wagner Street. Maybe she named the narrator in the book out of nostalgia for the address which became as celebrated in fandom as Upper Newtownards Road, or maybe she did it unconsciously. Or maybe Lee's home folks still live on Wagner Street; she dedicated this novel to no fewer than seven of her relatives.

There is much in the Hoffman fiction canon that I haven't read yet. But I gather that her Westerns fall into three categories: the quality novels, the humorous novels, and the formula novels. The second type are the closest to Quandry and other Hoffmannzines in general spirit, of course. The publishers rarely seem willing to alert the potential reader to the nature of the book he has just picked up and is considering purchasing. I have two different editions of "The Legend of Black Jack Sam," for instance, neither of which has a cover appropriate to the contents.

This novel is in the tradition of "Destry Rides Again" or that recent TV movie which was disrespectful to the memories of Buffalo Bill, Calamity Jane, and other giants of the Old West. The hero of Lee's book suffers in the first paragraph the loss of both buttons from the backflap of his long-johns and this handicap runs like a Wagnerian leitmotif through the entire novel, creating some adventures and complicating others. It's the literary equivalent of slapstick, utilising all the cliches of Westerns to illustrate the fate of the fellow who is mistaken for a mighty gunfighter while hastily departing the presence of a girl's shot-gun toting father.

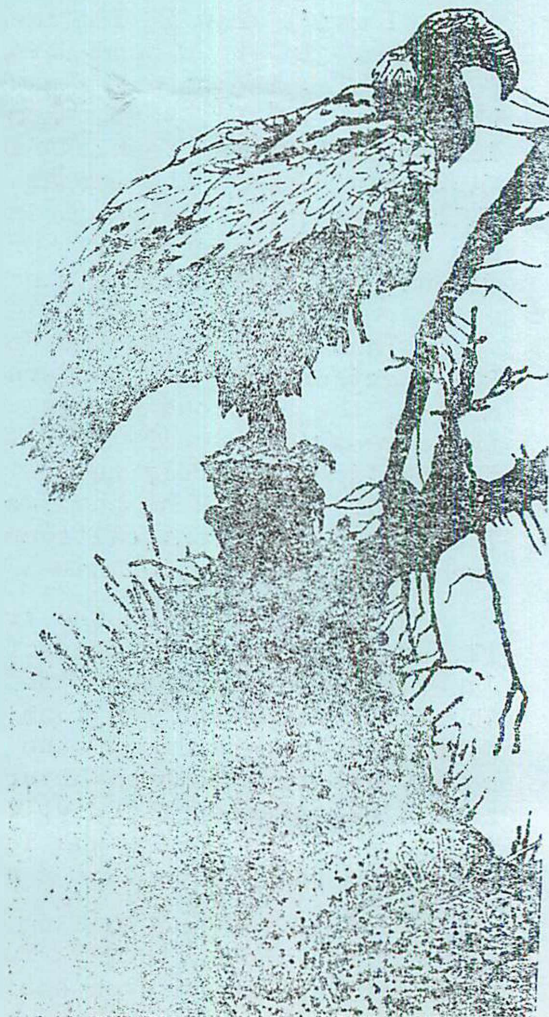
But if you are looking for something even funnier, I recommend "Wiley's Move." It's closer to Mark Twain than to Mack Stennett, less dependent on wild action, and it even has a real plot.

For that matter, you could consider it as borderline fantasy. The Wiley who is mentioned in the title hasn't returned from Mexico, where he was doing something which doesn't look too good if examined closely. His wife or widow gets the idea that a vulture which begins hanging around the Wiley spread is her late and reincarnated husband, and hangs onto that notion even after it becomes clear that the bird's immediate interest is a large sausage which had been ripening adangle from the porch. It never becomes quite clear whether her suspicion is justified, but the bird hangs around until in the final paragraph it substitutes for the still missing Wiley by moving off into the far distance, after the manner of the traditional Westerns conclusion. Every ingredient in this novel starts out like those found in a normal Western but turns out differently. A climax, for example, consists of the dramatic appearance of the first steam locomotive chugging into the town where these events occur. The unusual thing about this episode is the fact that no railroad has ever been built into this town. (At almost exactly the same point in "The Legend of Black Jack Sam," a contraption even more intimately associated with Lee's fannish interests appears. It is mistaken temporarily for a steam locomotive but turns out to be a steam calliope, a musical instrument which Lee wrote about almost incessantly during the Quandry years.)

I gather that "The Valdez Horses" has been one of the most prestigious serious, quality novels that Lee has written. It won her all sorts of awards and glowing reviews. The title should suggest its fannish connotations to anyone who was a fan in the 50's. Lee was diverted from fandom for years by a sudden enthusiasm for horses. The deep interest in horses that she described in fanzines and correspondence before her first gaffiation has been transmuted into fictional form, but it seems just as real and convincing in this book. I enjoyed reading it immensely, and I'm sure that it has stronger impact on a person who likes horses even half as much as Lee does. I miss that crowning impression, since I've always felt when in the vicinity of a horse as I do when I'm in the New York subway system at rush hour.

Lee's formula Westerns seem to have been written with less attention to putting herself and her interests into her fiction. I'm sure Lee won't be outraged if I admit that I don't find anything exceptional in most of the pages of books like "West of Cheyenne," "Return to Broken Crossing," and "Wild Riders." They adhere pretty well to the orthodox Westerns plot gimmicks and characterisations. But in every formula novel by Lee that I've encountered up to now, there is at least one passage, a few pages or longer in length, where she seems suddenly to have taken a real interest in what she was creating in these isolated sections, episodes which stand out in the memory boldly.

I should emphasize the fact that I'm not fit by reading background to pronounce ex cathedra final judgement

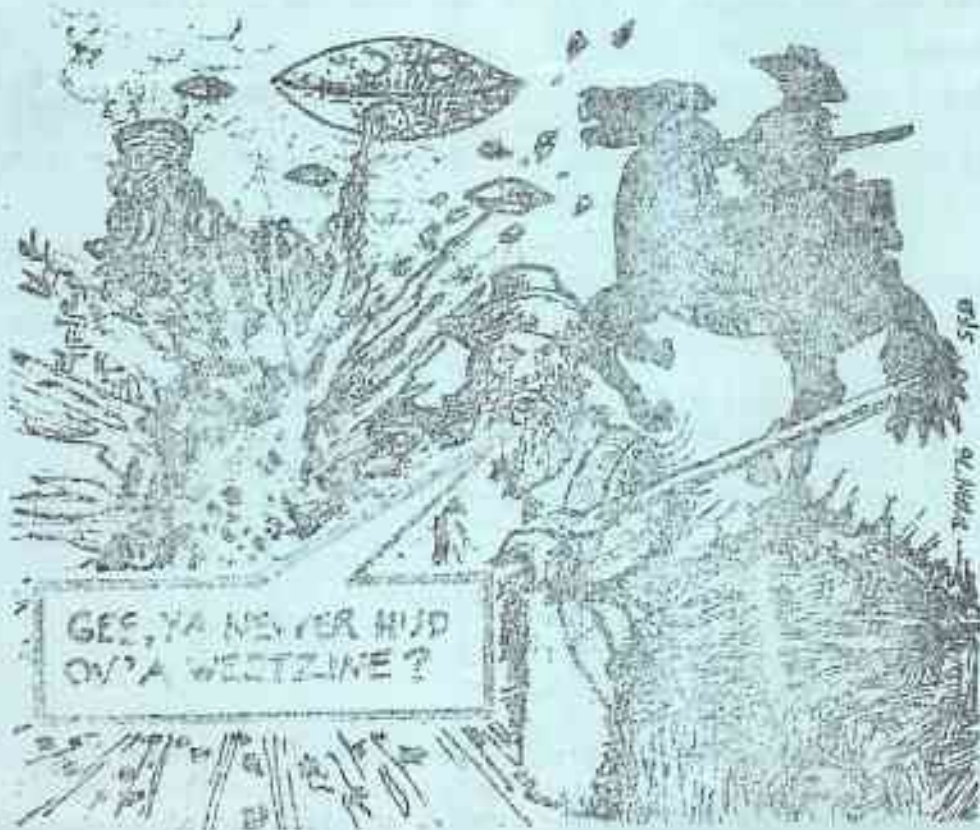


on the place Lee is creating for herself in the pantheon of writers of Westerns. While it's true confession time, I might as well indulge further in self-recrimination by admitting that my limited exposure to Westerns has been slanted to an inordinate degree by my fondness for the novels of an author who is in disgrace with many critics these days, Zane Grey. I am quite aware of his limitations as a story-teller and as a fabricator of prose, but I find in him a love for the West which compensates for his flaws. It's the lack of that veneration for the natural wonder of the West and for the qualities needed for its early settlers to survive that I miss in so many of today's Western authors, including Lee.

Most other fans might react differently to Lee's Western fiction. I can without difficulty imagine a person with a Grey-less adolescence considering those Hoffman novels which I've called formula as minor masterpieces for their laconic, vivid narration and stripped-to-the-essentials action passages. Then there is the other phase of Lee's novel-writing which I haven't even mentioned, her science-fiction books, where it's also fun to try to trace down influences from fandom, intentional and unintentional.

So obviously, I haven't attempted to write an adequate summary of Lee Hoffman as a professional novelist. All I want to do is suggest that others may find the same pleasure that has come to me by passing some time away with the professional creativity of Lee, while awaiting the happy day when all of us will again be overjoyed to find her back in production as a fan writer.

.....Harry Warner, Jr.



Stamp Duty

By
TOM PERRY

Stamps

I had to mail a letter and a fanzine to Denmark recently, but found the ten-pence stamps were all gone. "I used the last one to send a letter to Sweden," Alix explained. "Who do you know in Sweden?" I asked suspiciously. "Oh," she said casually, "just someone named Volvo."

In the end there was nothing for it - I had to use two of the eleven-pence stamps that we keep for letters to America. Fans and post offices have the same ambivalent attitude toward each other as writers and editors, or husbands and wives - familiarity breeds contempt but that's not all it breeds - and I thought sourly of the 400-million pound profit the British post office had run up last year as I made my reluctant contribution of tuppence towards this year's surplus. I could kiss that 2p goodbye, I thought, and suddenly realised why the excess on letters are supposed to stand for kisses.

That reminded me that long before modern rock groups started singing wistful lyrics about staying the night (as if anyone could), Sinatra was crooning frankly about what really came off and went on in bed. For instance:

"Those kisses on the bottom -
I'll be glad I got 'em."

It was Walt Willis who pointed this out to me, and this fact in turn put me in mind of something written by another great Irish Writer, James Joyce:

"Who is the man who says he'll go the whole and perfect hog
Before he pays the income tax or license for a dog
And when he licks a postage stamp regards with smiling scorn
The face of King or Emperor or snout of unicorn?
It's Mr Dooley
Mr Dooley
The wildest wag our country ever knew
'O my poor tummy
His backside gummy!
Moans Mr Dooley-ooley-ooley-oo."

This not-so-free association led me to see just why I found the whole process so distasteful. Faced, if that's the right word, with an envelope and a stamp, you have to lick them to join them, and the fact that the gum is at the rear of both objects gives rise to one of those puns of the sub-conscious that Freud found in dreams and which are (again according to Willis) the true basis for the statement that the pun is the lowest form of humour. A government selling stamps is in effect hurling two fundamental epithets: "Kiss my ass!" and "Eat shit!" - and then forcing you to act them out symbolically. And even the symbolism is revolting.

So revolting in fact that it played a part in the origins of the American Revolution, as indicated by the resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765. The Americans were already sore at being called colonists (after Crostobal Colon, who had a bug up his ass about a land across the sea where Preperation H was marked down as a loss leader - that's the real meaning behind his constant reiterated phrase "Sale on! Sale on!"), and before long there was a bumper crop of bumper stickers reading STAMP OUT MONARCHY. Not much could be done with these since the automobile bumper was over a century in the future, along with the automobile, so after lying around through the war they were pressed into service as the first postage stamps of the fledgling country, and soon the United States was stuck with the same mess they'd tried to leave behind. The George on the front might be different, but the backside was as gummy as ever.

I suppose I'm beginning to sound just a little like Hamlet, soliloquising at length about something written to the state of Denmark. After all, you'll be pointing out, it only cost a couple of pence more than it should have to mail both the fanzine and the letter. But the question isn't just 2p or not 2p. It all adds up. Three one-penny stamps stuck alongside an 8¹/₂ pence stamp to satisfy the eleven-pence postage to America - an 11p stamp instead of a 10p one to get a letter to Europe - and before you know it the G.P.O. is 400million quid to the good. Yessir, it all adds up. And why should it?

It must have been my negative attitude, because suddenly the solution came to me. It's obvious, isn't it? I mean, I'm sure you'll think so once I tell you but it's one of those ideas, like calculus, that have been sitting there waiting to be discovered all this time and it only looks simple when some rare genius, like Newton or me, comes along and points it out.

Negative postage stamps!

If this ingenious concept were implemented, I could have adjusted the postage on my mail to Denmark just by adding a minus-one-penny stamp to the letter and another to the fanzine. 11p - 1p = 10p. Simple, eh?

But it would be silly to expect the post office to send someone all the way to my house just to give me back a penny for each piece. Hardly practical. Not economical.

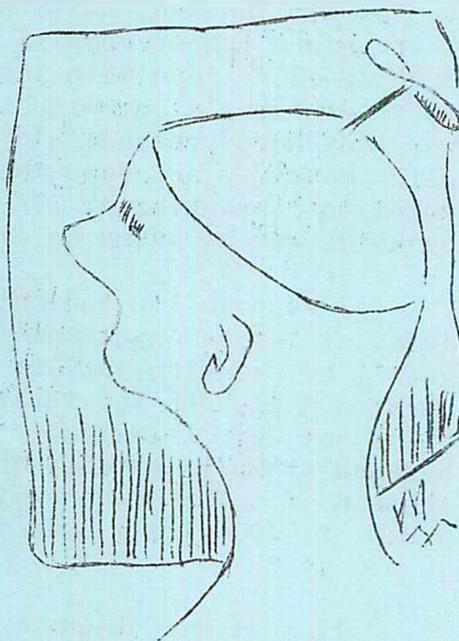
So these negative-postage stamps should be available at post office windows just like regular stamps. With the difference of course that instead of you paying the post office, as with ordinary old-fashioned stamps, in this case the postal clerk would give you the money equal to the absolute value of the stamps. Say you ordered a hundred -1p stamps, for instance. The clerk would hand you the stamps and along with them a one-pound note.

Now that settles the practical aspects of the matter. The scheme is absolutely foolproof and only waits an enlightened minister of posts to implement it - some hard-headed fellow who recognises that a paltry matter of £400,000,000 is as nothing compared to the ill will engendered by postal overcharges.

But we mustn't neglect the psychological aspect. That's important, too. Just as the licking of an ordinary stamp puts the lick through an agnising and degrading mental ordeal, so the application of the negative-value stamp should entail a positive emotion - a boost to the ego, an affirmation of mailness (or fee-mailness), a glow of pride in one's individuality, expressed in a ritual of triumph over the faceless bureaucracy of government.

To that end, I'd suggest that the negative stamp be small enough that it could be applied directly over the features of the monarch or president or grand high poo-bah on the stamp whose positive value it modifies. And rather than the unpleasant stickum typically used for the regular stamps, the new stamp could be flavoured according to the taste of the buyer. Neophans would probably prefer candy-coated stamps; mature tipplers like Norm Clarke or Mike Glicksohn might prefer ones that tasted like Cutty Sark; Peter Roberts would be heard to tell the clerk at the stamp window, "Mine's a Guinness," while the heads of fandom could order anything from THC to LSD.

And what would be depicted on such a stamp? In other words, what would sit on the face of the ordinary stamp? Well, it's only a suggestion, and perhaps you'll think I'm asking for the moon, but I'd like to see used the photo of Pat Charnock's delightful posterior that appeared on the cover of a recent Peter Roberts fanzine. In addition to all the other aspects of such a choice - such as for one showing what a cheeky lot we fans are - it would put the authorities in the position of having ECG on their faces.



.....Tom Perry

((I don't often add a rider to a contribution - it ain't good editorial manners; but I can't leave this page without underlining Terry Hughes comment in FANSARD that a Tom Perry piece demands a careful read. It wasn't until I stencilled this piece, thus re-reading it for the third or fourth time, that I truly realised the diabolical cunning and ingenuity Tom had put into it.....eb))

" Went out to Pinewood Studios recently to see what's happening about the new ERB film, PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT (no, not the editorial staff of Triode). I'm not concerned with the film, I add hastily - I just went along as a passenger. Pine-wood is well concealed, at least from the direction we approached it. A long and winding country lane so narrow the hub-caps were practically brushing the grass verges led eventually to a field stiff with wire fences and warning signs about dog-patrols. And in the field a huge construction of steel sheets like an airship hangar. We discovered later that this was a new studio built specially for the next James Bond film. Things are obviously looking up in the ERB trade, because PEOPLE is being filmed partly on location in the Canary Islands, instead of the wilder reaches of Richmond Park. We learned a few tricks about how to build a dinosaur (always useful in a tight corner) and got invited back to watch when filming actually begins, though not in the Canaries. If Warner Bros. really do get moving on their long-delayed TARZAN epic, 1977 should be a big Burroughs year. "

Jim Cawthorn.
((Our Film Correspondent,
and Dinosaur Expert.))



Chuck Harris, 32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants.

TRIODE was fine and ~~WANS~~ INK was bloody marvellous....best piece of fan fiction I've seen for a long time and hurrah for Tom Perry, a Good Man from way back.

And hurray for Bentcliffe and his Con report - a veritable book of revelations. Lo! I return from a decade in the wilderness ((Wiltshire?)) and there in letters of fire over Gomorrah, ((Trowbridge?)) it says: "BRIAN BURGESS LIVES". Thank goodness I only have a day trip ticket: back to the wilderness tomorrow! How come nobody mentioned Abnorm Wansborough? ((Alas, he said sodom...and left fandom sometime back.))

It was nice to see the names I recognised though, and wonder about those I didn't. But, one of the advantages of coming back to the fold, apart from the abundance of fatted calves, ((Let us have no scurrilous references to the dieting habits of certain femme-fen, Chuck, please.)) - is that you stand a very good chance of becoming a Fannish Legend. And, especially so if, like me, you have little talent but fine friends. ((Bob Bloch himself couldn't have said it better!))

One sorepoint though; when that lovely old Harry Warner Jnr starts burbling about emigrating, don't tell him that he'll love it in Yugoslavia, buster. Tell him he'll love it over here. Tell him you'll fix him up with your sister; tell him he can come to lunch with you every Sunday and feed at my place the rest of the week; ask for his measurements so that we can order a statue, and ask the estate agent to start sending him lists of desireable properties.

I think Harry is just a little bit serious about emigrating, and I think England would be ideal for him. And his collection. And his mimeo. So I wrote and told him so. I told him you were just a vulgar Bulgar working for Intourist. I told him about delightful Daventry and the super house that just happens to be empty next door.

I offered to help him with the shelving. I asked if it would be OK if I helped with the slip-sheeting and collating, and if he'd consider taking on my boy Sean as an apprentice.

And when unpacking day arrives don't think you're going to come down here and help undo the crates. No no. ((Hope to hear from you again soon, Chuck...but of course, now that Harry has decided to publish part two of ALL OUR YESTERDAYS himself, by mimeo....I'll understand if I don't!!))***

Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana St, South Gate, California, 90280.

Nice cover..

Dillon is new to me...is that a seeing-eye three-headed wingless vulture? If so, it looks a little odd for a pet. I wonder if the artist, whose imagination it came out of, could explain how you could feed such a beast. (And don't say, "carefully"...) That is a nice "T" in the background, but I hate to say it, it looks like the clouds are circling the moon in the background, rather than drifting over the planet foreground. Is that a spring-wound spear thrower the female is carrying? And why the little horned knobs on it? ((To wind the spring up, of course...)) How's that for comment on art? Do artists really want that kind?

The story by Tom Perry has enough chillingly real points to be frightening...though, I've an objection to stories depicting fandom with great secret powers enabling them to force Government or Business to do anything. The frightening part is that there are people in Fandom just like he describes; they have been around for years, but luckily not in any great number. I've always thought of them as sewing-circle fans. They tend to be little-old-lady types (even the men) who write a lot about their families, home, religion and other mundane subjects, and rarely about fandom or sf. Mostly harmless NFFF members...their main weakness is being easily aroused by criticism, and carrying a grudge a long time. But, what is more of a real threat is the real influx of young fans who really aren't fans. What we used to call fake-fans. In Fandom for the fun and games, and showing off... Few of them would last very long if they were all alone in some town and had to do all their fanac by mail, seeing live fans only a couple of times a year.

I would actively oppose a voluntary plan where in persons could ask to have their names removed from HUGO nominations - as it is unfair to others who, by the same standards should also withdraw their names, but do not wish to. One rule for all. ((Yair, good point, Rick. But, some kind of a solution to the HUGO dilemma needs to be achieved. Some of the categories work (BEST NOVEL, etc), other's don't because only a few of the actual voters are familiar enough with the whole s-f and fandom field. This applies particularly to the fanzine area of the awards where the vote is decided more by the circulation of the fnz than its individual excellence.)) TAFF is a different thing, as the nominee's are standing on the record of their past activity. Actually, I've never looked at TAFF as really being an award. I've always nominated and voted on the basis of who I would like to meet, or who I think your side would find most interesting. I think of it as an exchange, and that the host fans are as much the winners as those that make the trip. As one who has hosted so many American TAFFers, I hope that it was as much fun for you as them... ((It was.)) But I don't think they should repeat...and I don't think it should be for fans who have made the trip on their own - such as Frank Dietz a few years back. ((I don't think any TAFF delegate would allow second nomination - much as they'd like to repeat the experience - but its no more 'wrong' to do so than to seek HUGO's for financial-gain.... which, in effect is what is happening.)) You have, undoubtedly, met young fans who think TAFF is a closed corporation, with only a few old fen allowed to go...little knowing how difficult it is to get anyone

((*** UNTRUE....but let's not spoil Chuck's fun!))

with half a chance into standing. You would think there would be a lot, with fandom 10 times the size it was when TAFF started, but it seems just as hard to get candidates.

I was surprised by Bloch's statement that his papers were going to Wyoming, as it is nearly the last place I would expect to find Mr. Bloch...

Not much to comment on about the Jeeves article, other than it being well to remind fans that artists are human, too. Certainly fan artists are treated with less regard by most, than fan writers...fan art will drift around for years without being used, then used without the artists permission, and maybe he won't even be sent a copy of the 'zine it appears in. Something that wouldn't normally happen to an article writer. Something the Fannish Arts Union should look into - only, all they ever get involved in is Awards and money-making. Nothing about ethics. Ethics in fandom have always been a debateable subject...Ron Ellik once talked of writing a book of Fan Ethics but, as I understand it, gave up the idea believing it would create more controversy than it would help.

Jim Cawthorn, 106 Oxford Gardens, London W.10 6NG.

Liked the Dillon artwork in T23. Don't be surprised if the E.R.B. Society try to lure him away.

I met Karel Thole in Newcastle a year or two ago, and could hardly believe the rate at which he works. No Capitalist Exploiter would dare try to impose such a schedule upon an employee! If the heavies of the Graphic Trades Union could extend their influence to Milan, they'd probably ban him for being a bad example. Don't suppose you've heard of the activities of the G.T.U., but their ambition appears to be the creation of a closed-shop in commercial illustrating. No card, no work. When I joined the Association of Illustrators, it was to help present a stronger front to the kind of publisher who still tries to exploit artists. I never expected to need the Association to help beat off the attentions of a Trade Union! They must be run by a sort of printers version of Vanessa Redgrave.

Re THE ARTIST WRITES, I did once, inspired by a book called FIFTY FAMOUS AMERICAN ARTISTS, attempt to put illustrations together by the methods which worked for them. Eventually, I gave up. The technique was so repetitive and exacting that my finished artwork looked as spontaneous as a Peking protest march. Obviously, many artists stick at it until they have mastered it, and it is highly profitable, too. But I can't sustain my interest in an illustration beyond a certain point. I often make dozens, or scores, of small preliminary sketches, usually with a ball-point pen, before getting the composition that seems to work best. But that's very different to doing several almost-finished versions of the subject before proceeding to the actual illustration. ((HMMmmmm. Mayhap this is why there is a certain sameness about pro' s-f artwork these days; some artists are selling the several versions they've done on route to the final picture!))

D. West, 48, Norman St, Bingley, W. Yorks. BD16 4JT.

The best part of the issue was your report on the misadventures of Mancon. The consensus does seem to be that the whole affair was something of a disaster. Personally, while recognising the justice of some of the criticisms of the site and the organization, I have no serious complaint to make. The air of seedy shabbiness made me feel at home - there was a dart-board - plenty of beer - a bed - what more could be asked for. Well, plenty, I suppose, if you like five star hotels rather than Salvation Army hostels. But some of the criticisms that have since been made have been expressed in such a spiteful way that I am now more inclined to sympathise with Presford than to condemn him. As somebody or other has pointed out, Mancon was never given a chance. Too many people went expecting - and even hoping for - a failure for there to be

any real success. So it came as a relief to read a conreport that manages to be both entertaining and honest without any selfrighteous sniffing.

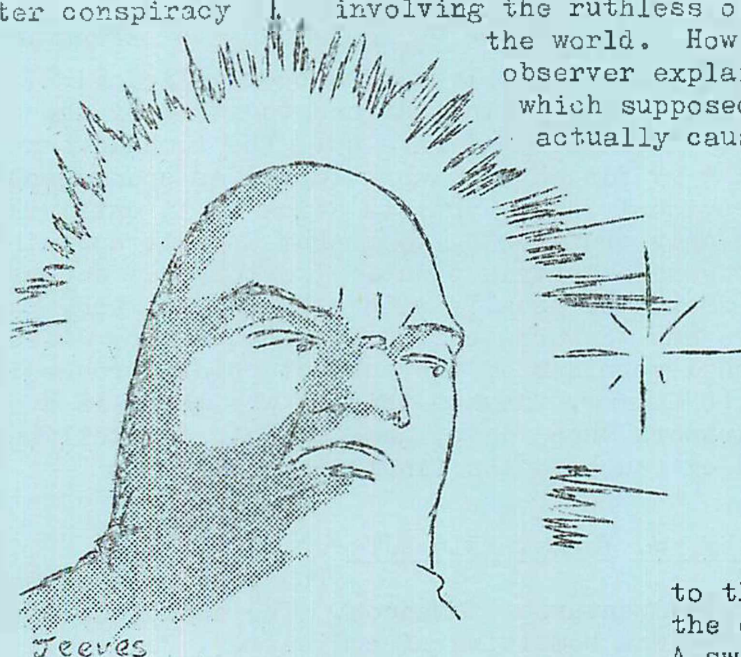
The contributions by Eric Mayer and Tom Perry did seem strangely old-fashioned. Or perhaps timeless. Certainly few people seem to produce that kind of fan-fiction (or fannish-fiction, to make a distinction) these days except as very short shorts. Certainly the English writers seem to have dropped this form. Anyway, makes a change. Though the connection between the main body of Tom Perry's piece and the quotation from Pickersgill that heads it is lost in the murk of subtlety. Working example of the fannish generation gap, I suppose. Try reading it again. ((Yet it is, Don, only one style of putting over the esoteric....the 'in-group' stuff...just like your 'Astral League'; which is meaningful only to those sufficiently au fait (hep to the spaginy!) in fandom. As the hard-core of present U.K. fandom get to know one another better; it could be a style that will return.))

Arnie Katz, 59 Livingston St, Apt.6B, Brooklyn, N.Y.11201.

I've been terribly remiss in not writing you a letter of comment before this, especially since your TRIODE has always had a special place in my trufannish heart. Though I wasn't a fan when you published the first series, most of those issues have since found their way into my collection, and the recent TRIODE's did much to build up my enthusiasm when I resumed activity last spring.

What I enjoy most about TRIODE is the way you've retained much of the fanzines original flavour while integrating such contemporary fanwriters as Eric Mayer into the editorial mix. Eric and his Lady Kathy have recently moved into pictures ue Brooklyn Heights, just five short blocks from our place. Nothing earthshaking has yet come forth as a result of the proximity of so many fine fannish minds, but keep watching the skies.

You know, I once made a similar shocking discovery about corflu, which I think I reported in some fanzine a half dozen years ago: There is a quite sinister conspiracy involving the ruthless obliterate manufacturers of the world. How else can any objective observer explain the fact that corflu, which supposedly eliminates errors, actually causes them?



Before you rush to disagree, I urge you to recall your last evening of stencilling. Most likely you zipped through the first half page or so with nary a miscue. Then, perhaps blinded by the brilliance of your own prose, you finally comit your first typo of the night.

"Drat!" you cry, or words to that effect, as you twist off the cap on your bottle of corflu. A swipe of the brush, a little blowing on the affected spot to

dry it, and you proceed with the stencilling. Your second mistake comes a paragraph later, and you quickly repeat the corflu ritual. All right, you've now had two good whiffs of this acetate-based stuff, and those insidious vapors are working their way up the nasal passages to the brain. As the fumes do their stealthy work on your central nervous system, whether you make any more typos somehow begins to recede in importance. This is fortunate, because you are now making about two fluffs per line.

The more mistakes you make, the more corflu you use; the more corflu you use, the more mistakes you make. It's a vicious cycle! If you're as type-bedevilled as I am, you eventually collapse in a stupor half-way through the second stencil. ((Sometimes I only make it half-way through the first stencil, but must admit this is probably partly due to using the Glicksohn Method of encouraging corflu to dry quickly....ie, breathing whisky fumes onto it!))

Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington, Va.22205.

It would seem that my waistline isn't the only thing that has been growing: TRIODE which had previously been a diminutive British-quarto size has grown to nearly a foot in length. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches to be precise, he said measuredly. Any particular reason for the growth, besides getting more words to the page? ((The size change was due mainly to a promise of a continuing supply of free A4 envelopes (which didn't materialise!); but the thought that I'd like to fool (!) around with a slightly different format did have a bearing.)) Of course, those readers who had been planning to have their copies of TRIODE bound now face rather a sizeable problem. ((Yes...no....but at least it will stop people saying Triode is bound by tradition!))

In my opinion (good for one free drink at any convention), this is the best issue of TRIODE yet. Really packed with good solid items - the sort of stuff that makes any fan editor envy you and any reader have a good time. - John Berry's "Portugese Men Of War" - damn fine title that - made for very interesting reading. I get the very distinct impression that a travel story will become a regular feature of TRIODE, which is a-ok by me. Last issue you wrote humorously about your vacation trip. This time John Berry wrote about Portugal and his experiences there while you wrote about exotic Owens Park. ((Ah yes, the Alcatraz of the Northern hemisphere...)) Then John ends his piece with that teasing line in Northern Italy. All right, I will bite: what did happen in Northern Italy, John? ((Due to the falling value of the pound, travel tales may be less likely to appear in future...although, I do hope to have an account of what Harry & Irene Bell were doing on the Isle de Levant this summer. Just the bare facts, y' understand...))

I enjoyed your chronicle of the Mancos Misadventures. I am rather surprised that some of you enraged panel members did not treat the convention committee to a heart game of smash-the-head. From the contact I've had with Pete Presford, he seems to be an amiable, pleasant person. It's a shame he and his committee were not able to have a program with some temporal rigidity. ((Well, if they hadn't evolved this theory of flacid-time just before the con...everything might have gone alright.))

Eric Mayer's "World of the Mundanes" was a strong piece of faan writing. Eric wrote the story in a pseudo-Worlds of IF style. You know what I mean, during the 50's IF always seemed to have a story with the same sort of feel this one had. Eric really captured that style perfectly. "World of the Mundanes" is a kindred spirit to the IF stories of days gone past. Of course, in this day and age, even the young fans are familiar with female anatomy to a certain extent simply from attendance of convention masquerade shows. You see, Eric, over here in the United States they really do feature naked women rather than Brian Burgess. ((Yes, so I've heard, and its only one of the reasons why I'd like to visit the U.S.A. again...but the falling pound, you know. Have you heard our latest Worldcon-bid slogan? "The Pounds Worth A Dime In 79!"))

"Fandom Ink" by Tom Perry was a treat. Tom infuses his writing with so much wit and humour that the reader has to be careful or else what may look like an ordinary sentence will turn into a pun before his very eyes. Any piece Tom writes is well worth a re-read simply to search for other jokes which did not leap out at the eyeballs the first time through. He's done quite a nice job on people's names in "Fandom Ink":

Greg Pickersgill becomes Pickledill, Pete Vorzimer becomes Remizrov, and Vorzimer's fanzine ABSTRACT becomes, appropriately enough, OBSTRUCT. It is not necessary to know these things to enjoy Tom's story, but that knowledge makes the piece all that more endearing. And Tom's puns. Oh my. Ranging from the one about the "big bang which had resulted in the conception of Hugo Gernsback" to the fact that the key to the fable centered around "Fandom Ink. ink", Tom's puns are enough to make any reader approach each sentence with a fair degree of caution. ((Tom Perry's Puns are also reason enough for any cautious con-goer to approach Tom Perry with caution!))

Why is it that at that point in your conreport when you begin talking about me a wrinkle suddenly occurs in the stencil resulting in two lines that are all but illegible. Since I was the topic of discussion, I of course strained my eyes until I figured out what was said. That's a mean prank to pull, Eric. ((But a great attention getter!))

Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave, Teaneck, N.J. 07666.

I feel like a fulcrum (I ate too much for tea, so I really am a Full Crumb, but that's something else.) ((Something else! It's too much...)) You see I'm ready to do some loocing and I have zines from Eric Lindsay in Australia, and from you. Since you're closer, I'll loc your Super Fannish Triode first. ((You're sure that's the reason, Ben, you sure my coming first has nothing to do with my reputation for printing quite gruesome puns?)) I had an all too brief visit last week from a favorite Britisher of mine, Herr Dave Rowe (and he is strictly herrish!) ((Sure you don't mean herring...herring in his ways?)) and am in a fannish mood...very nice with a fine mist of bheer over everything. ((Yes, that sounds like Dave...)) Since you must abbreviate Bob Shaw as BoSh, isn't it lucky his first name is not Buck! John Berry's article is really excellent, it has the virtue of topicality, humour, and, for us, grotesquerie. I don't think it was all that much fun for John when it happened - but it reads well now! Has Berry written of his own situation in Ulster? That pitiable situation seems irresolvable. ((John, and family, have been back in England for sometime now, Ben. I doubt that he would want to write about Ulster's problems for a fanzine and, frankly, I doubt very much that I would want to print anything about the current state of affairs there. The mundane press are making such a 'good' job of making things there worse, that they don't need my help!))

I don't believe that Harry Warner about running away from an increasing crime-wave. Harry may be a semi-recluse over here but think how lonely and lost he'd be in, say, Dubrovnik. When fanzines and letters could take MONTHS to reach him. And censored at that. ((The language would be the main thing against Harry retiring to the Balkans, I think...unless he has other than English/American. Although, some great fan-articles could come out of his experiences there...))

The locs were interesting. Artwork was quite nice, Dillon's material fannish and promising. Jeeves is, of course, inimitable. Talk about a signature! ((You mean you have one of the two cheque's he's made out, too!)) Unlike Bob Bloch I do not save the bulk of my fanzines for college collections; I intend bringing boxloads of them to a Fanoclast Club meeting where I shall sell them! No, it is not greed. The money goes to a worthy if weird cause. Lovecraft fanaticist Prof. Tirk Mazik is raising funds to erect a fitting stone over the grave of Grandpa Theobaldus and I am selling off part of my book and fanzine collection to help. ((That's even worse than sending them to Wyoming, Ben!)) Next we shall raise funds to put a body under Shakespeare's stone at The Abbey! ((May I run a poll on who's body it should be?))

George Flynn, 27 Sowamsett Ave, Warren, R.I. 02885.

The only thing that inspires specific comment is Harry Warner's (and, I gather, Rick Sneary's) discussion of the perennial issue of making HUGO winners ineligible to win again.

I've always had strong feelings on this: if an award is given for the best work of the year, then it would be dishonest (and demeaning) to choose among "the best except X and Y"; if, say, somebody writes the best novel five years in a row, then by ghod he deserves to get five HUGO's. But, you know, that argument really applies to specific achievements. Much of the trouble with the HUGO's is that people tend to vote on a whole-career basis even when the awards only for the year. Maybe we should make this explicit: leave the fiction awards alone, but replace the fan HUGO's with "Grand-Master"-type awards that could only be one once. Over a period of time, this might well give more satisfactory results than the present system. ((Not a bad idea, but this type of award also has snags - future snags - for you could get a similar reaction against those 'Grand-Masters' as against members of FIRST FANDOM, or the Knight's of St. Fantony; in that they are considered (a few years hence) to be part of a fannish establishment, preservers-of-the-status-quo, and as such, to be rebelled against. Treated not as fannish individuals, but as a conglomerate of has-beens!!))

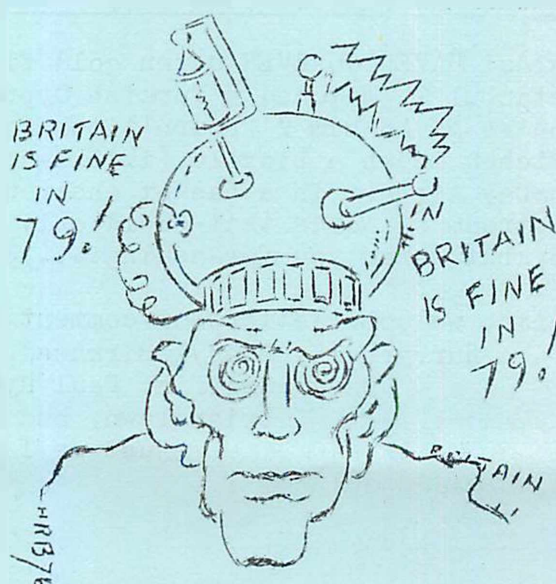
Tom Perry, 25 Locks Rd, Locks Heath, Hants. SO3 6NS.

I suppose the three-headed creature on the front cover represents the trinitarian aspects of your fanzine? I keep staring at that cover, thinking there is some deep and secret message in it. I did manage to find the tiny "TRIODE" hidden in the corner, like the NINA which is hidden in every Harry Hershfield drawing - do I get a prize? ((NO! My daughter found it first, and she got the prize. Keep trying, though...)) I think I prefer the Bacover, with what must be space rover Eric Bentcliffe in his space age jet plane with the Blue Meanie face on the nose, looking for all the world like a mustached Steve Canyon. This Dillon drawing I think I can understand. That's our Eric, alright, staring out at the planes wing with it's big ramjet and wondering what the hell good it's supposed to do in a vacuum. After all, there's nothing out there for it to push against. ((Ah, that's what fandom's all about, reaction!))

But that's reacting to art in a literary way, isn't it? I believe instead we're supposed to appreciate pitchers in terms of composition, stress, plasticity, and like that. In that case I want to know why the perspective of the craters on that dead planet behind the jet plane is wrong. It looks as if those craters belong further over to the left, in that white space where there are no craters for some mysterious reason. It looks as if that big black part of the pitcher in the upper right-hand corner has pulled all the craters east.

Say, I bet that's it! That's a Black Hole up there and its distorted space so that the craters have been pulled across the pitcher and had their perspective distorted into the bargain and also warped time so that the nonplussed space ranger finds himself at the controls of a miniature Phantom Jet (apt name, that) and it probably accounts for the weird way the stars have sort of clumped together and even for the uneven distribution of the ink in this quarter of space. Ten four, Space Cowboy. ((Did I ever mention, Tom, that Paul Dillon has a big brother called Matt ?))

What? Alright, alright, I'll just comment on the words from now on.



I liked your theory about corflu. I don't know if it causes deafness, though if it does I suspect it does so not by clogging up the ear via the nose but by destroying that part of the brain that responds to sound; certainly it smells like airplane glue, the sniffing of which is supposed to make your brain resemble a sponge. But in any case I think it has addictive properties. And these could well explain the disdain that trufans hold for fnz produced by means that don't require corflu - not only hekto's and spirit duplicaters (the plausible sounding excuse is that their repro isn't as good), but even litho, about which we can only mumble lamely that "it just doesn't seem like a real fanzine." The mimeo is the message; the reason is that fandom is a drug culture - we are all addicted to corflu, and the entire structure of fandom and all our fancy fanzines are just ways of getting in touch with others who turn on.

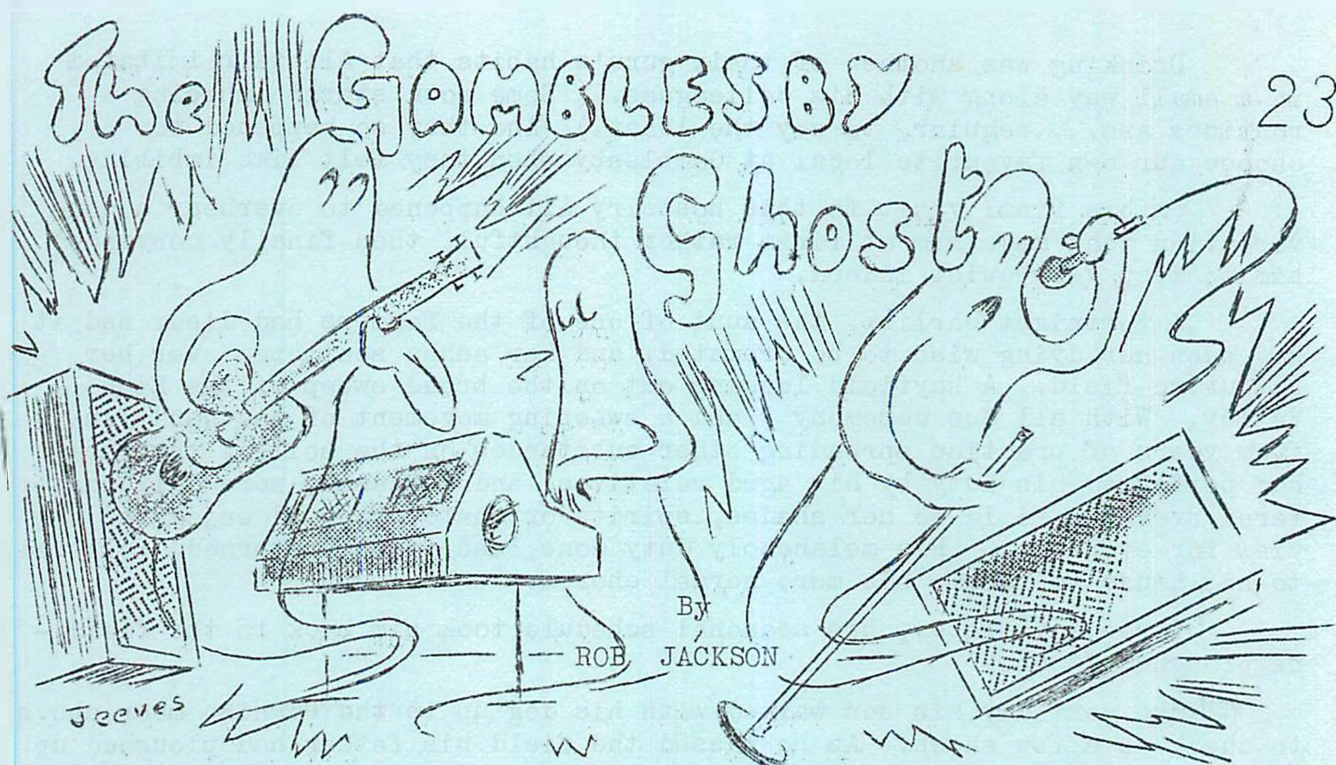
I think I'd better drop that line of thought before someone overhears, correction fluid is outlawed and we are all hunted down like rats. (No offence, Leroy.)

I enjoyed your view of the Mancon. I'm beginning to think Presford et al. have done fandom a great service in providing a convention that we can all talk and write endlessly about. I haven't seen so much prose on cons since the old days when the program was hopelessly fouled up, the P.A. system didn't work, the hotel was refusing service to fans and complaining over little things like broken doors, and the con committee were strutting about telling people they couldn't sit there. The following era of smooth-running cons almost killed the con report. I suppose that when the con starts on time and all the items are interesting and the bar is comfortable and so on, there is no time to take notes and nothing much to write about. It's true that the Mancon didn't provide all the features of a good old-fashioned con - I don't recall anyone dropping water balloons out of the windows, ((That was because none of the rooms had water, Tom...be fair!)) though the report of a .22 someone was firing from the Tower down at the square below (no, Eric, I don't know who the square was) indicates that they attempted to find a suitable substitute. Back, back I say - to those bygone days of yesteryear when the staff hated us and the manager couldn't wait till we left and we couldn't afford a room to ourselves so we smuggled eight other guys in and took turns sleeping on the floor. Sigh. ((Yeah, NOVACON was bland wasn't it. Greg Pickersgill was benevolent, Peter Roberts wouldn't do his Attacking Budgie Dance; and the only hope of controversy is to get hold of Dave Kyle's speech....or some photo's of Tom Perry dancing with Pat Charnock!))

Pamela Boal, 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon.

True travel tales! HAVE YOU EVER eaten gold fish at one o'clock in the morning in Istanbul? Watched a Turkish Cypriot milk his cow into a lemonade bottle you've given him? Learn't to cook a Chinese dish from an Indian whose kitchen is on a bicycle (in Singapore)? Been pushed up the runway of Bombay Airport in a basket chair with a wobbly wheel, the pusher issuing a stream of words that could only have been profanities, in Urdu? ((Well, no, but thank you for asking....))

Thrice welcome letters-of-comment were also received from: Bill Harry, Harry Bell, Sheryl Birkhead, Kev Easthope, Jan Howard Pinder, David Griffin, Paul Ryan, Howie Rosenblum, Arthur Thomson, Brian Tawn, and Bob Pavlat (who's lengthy letter came just as I had to draw the line on the loc length).



"We're gonna get it all together in a little cottage in the country, man!"

Such was the phrase commonly heard six or seven years ago as a favourite preliminary to the formation of a new constellation of rock stars in that age of The Supergroup, when established rock music giants formed and re-formed fragile alliances to boost their equally fragile ego's, and hopefully (but rarely) recharge faltering creativity.

Because there are those who emulate rock musicians in all their doings, country cottages all over the land were flooded with aspiring rock groups duly Getting It All Together. My cousin Alistair was drummer, organiser, and general factotum for one such semi-pro band called the King Calculators, or some other equally uninspiring name. (Now he is articulated to a firm of solicitors. Sic transit...) From his parents home in Oxford he found that country cottages, bands Getting It Together for the use of, were in short supply; the nearest one he decided he could easily borrow was my parents' cottage on the western slopes of the northern Pennines, overlooking the Eden Valley between Carlisle and Penrith, a few miles north of the village of Gamblesby.

So one June weekend they squeezed all the pop-group's gear, plus themselves, into their Ford Transit van and hauled it 250 miles up the motorway to my parents cottage. (Let me remind any Americans reading this, that in England 250 miles is a long way...their van was pretty old then: it's no longer running now. Sick Transit...)

They borrowed the cottage for a week. On the first morning they tried to set up the amplifiers, speakers, drums and other gear in the cottages' tiny sitting room. It was absurdly optimistic of them to expect to get it all in. The room is hardly large enough even when empty to swing a mouse in; and there are also a couch, three armchairs, a large coffee table, a black-leaded cast-iron fireplace and a porch inset into the room; all reducing the amount of room available for mouse-swinging to the point where any attempt to revolve the poor creature is likely to cause a major head injury. To the mouse, that is.

Outside, beautiful hot sunny weather with hardly a cloud visible was beckoning, and so was the (relatively) vast expanse of the front garden. They found an extension-lead and carted their axes (guitars, to the uninitiated), stacks and other gear out into the garden, and happily practised in the sun. This arrangement worked pretty well - except when it threatened to rain and electrocute them...

Drinking was another of their guru's habits that Alistair imitated in a small way along with his colleagues. (Some rock stars' imbibing routines are....regular, to say the least.) And they so happened to choose our own favourite local at Gamblesby when they felt like imbibing.

On his final visit to this hostelry Ali happened to overhear a conversation that made him at first rather thoughtful, then finally convinced him to keep very quiet indeed.

A fortnight earlier, the aunt of one of the farmers had died, and it had been her dying wish to be cremated, and her ashes scattered over her favourite field. A hayfield looking out on the broad sweep of the Eden Valley. With all due ceremony (and a sweeping movement of the hand fluent from years of practice spreading other substances on the soil), the farmer had performed his duty by his aged relatives, and her ashes were duly scattered over the field so her shades, spirits or whatever could enjoy the view for evermore. His melancholy duty done, the farmer returned, relieved, to his house to resume his more normal chores.

Three days later, his seasonal schedule took him back to the field - he ploughed it up.

The next day his son walked with his dog up to the Pennine moor above to check on a few sheep. As he passed the field his father had ploughed up he heard something that made him stop, listen, and blench visibly.

From the field were coming strange noises.

Thump.

Bong.

Eeeeeaaa screeeeeeEEEECH. KathUMP.

He listened further, heart racing, wondering if his ears were deceiving him and he was simply hearing the blood thudding through his cochlea. But, the noises went on. There were bumps and screeches and eldritch wailings - and they were all coming from the field his aunt had been ploughed into.

Surely, this was her doing....her spirit, or something, was telling his father he had committed a dreadful wrong in ploughing her into the damp dark humus and depriving her of her favourite view over the valley. She had been denied her sight of the skies of heaven, and was furious.

The farmer's son wasn't all that young; at least fifteen. Not too credulous an age. With a dreadful knowledge he abandoned his mission to the sheep and called his dog back to the farm, and related the sorry tale. The farmer and his wife, suspicious at first, but gradually convinced of their wrongdoing set to brooding and wondering if there was any way they could rectify their sin.

The next day, the sheep still needed tending, so off the boy went again. And again, he paused by the field and heard vibrations, thumps and howls that seemed to him to be the torment of the dead rising from the very depths. Sweating, he went on this time, up the moor to the sheep; and the terrible distant noises finally receded. At lunchtime he returned the same way and paused yet again; this time the noises had disappeared. Relieved he went on home, and told of the days events.

This time his father had some doubts. " You sure you heard them, son? You weren't imagining them ?....You know what people say about lads who hear voices..."

His son was very hurt by this and demanded that he come and hear them for himself.; so they both went and listened, and it was with horror that the father heard the strange frightening noises, just as his son had.

That evening the family, again, contemplated their mischievous act.

The farmer brought this message of doubt and dread to two of his friends in the pub. Seeking their advice. My cousin Alistair was quietly listening, abstracted from his friends' desultory conversation about pickups, mike stands, money, and booking gigs. (The farmer's language was far plainer than my flowery description above.) As Ali listened, the farmer went on to ask his friends if they had any ideas about how best to correct the sin, and a long discussion followed.

All sorts of ideas were put forward. Plough again, in the hope that some of the old lady's ashes would rise to the surface? Have the field blessed, or exorcised? Simply confess their sin to the vicar? Or just wait and see if she stopped complaining?

They eventually decided to mention the affair to the vicar and see what advice he could give. At this point my cousin and his friends left the pub, and Ali was able to discuss freely the pain and problems suffered by the farmer and his family.

For it was his group's amplified open-air practice sessions the boy and his father had, obviously, heard. No-one who heard the noises had realised their true nature; the farmer's family and friends all believed - and believe yet, as far as we know - that the old lady's spirit caused the groanings from the earth.

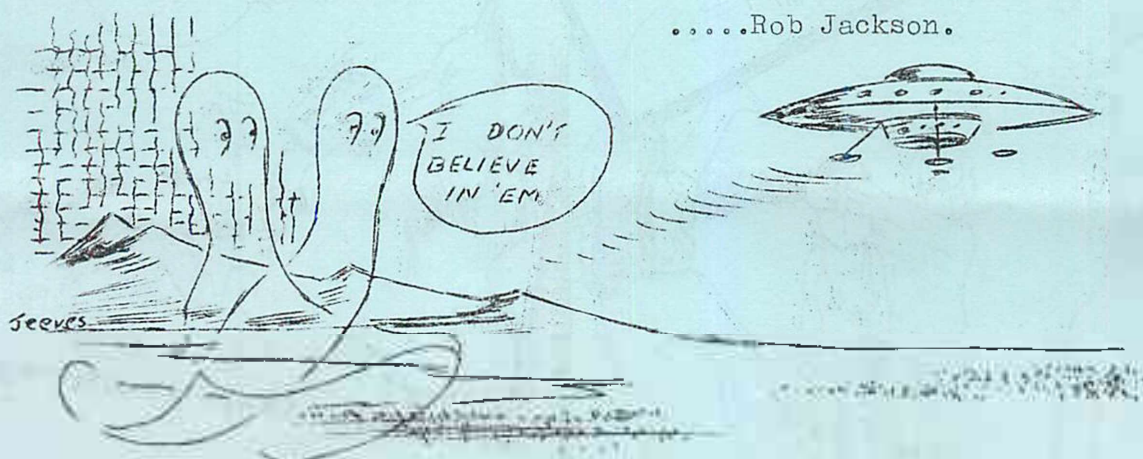
Of the many guests and visitors who have since been to our cottage, quite a few now know of the Gablesby Ghost, as there is a lot of fun in the idea of the family being deceived by music drifting across the fields. But no-one has ever mentioned the ghost in our local pub, and I hope no-one ever will. (In fact, even my writing this article has disturbed some of my family, lest some of you readers blurt out the truth next time you are in Gamblesby).

At first sight the tale seems to imply that the farmer and his family are thoroughly naive, and holds them up to ridicule. Anybody though, even the most intelligent, wary and experienced person, can be deceived by situations they have never encountered before. (Strange lights in the sky - flying saucers. Strange noises - spirits of the earth. Same difference.) When people are bemused, puzzled or deceived by a phenomenon, they clutch at the simplest explanation to hand. If the supernatural be invoked, so be it. Similarly, if people care to invoke facile combinations of science (the new religion) and the supernatural (the old) we have no right to deny them their belief (say in gods-and-spacemen), easy though it is for us to see the nature of their delusions. If we go around shattering fragile glass towers of soothing illusion (however painful the process of creation is to the believer, such as the fear our farmer felt) we must beware the consequences.

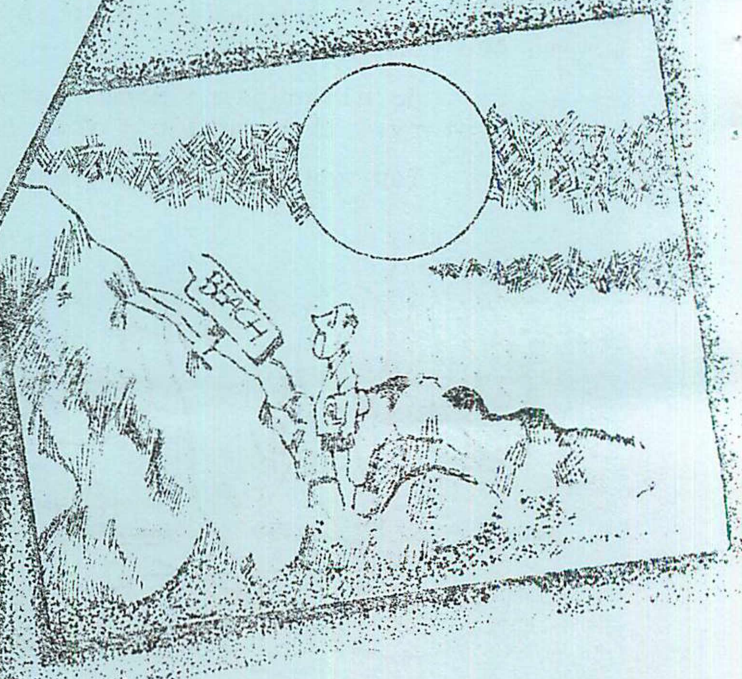
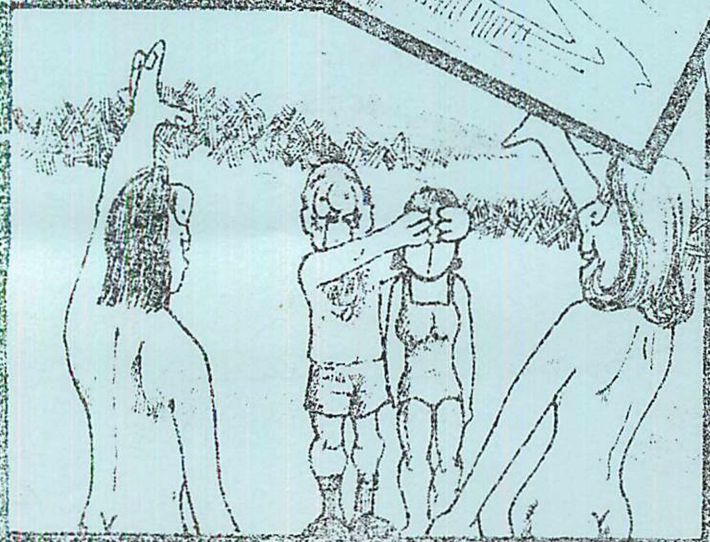
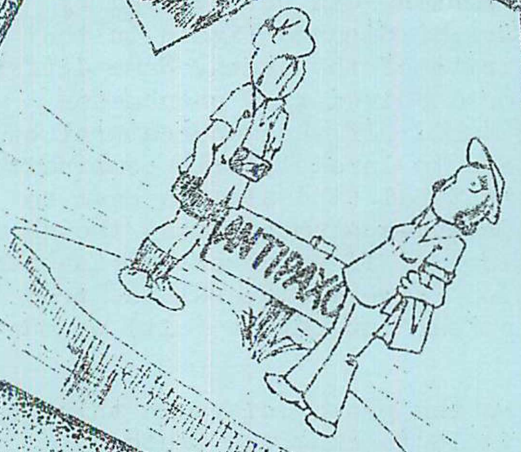
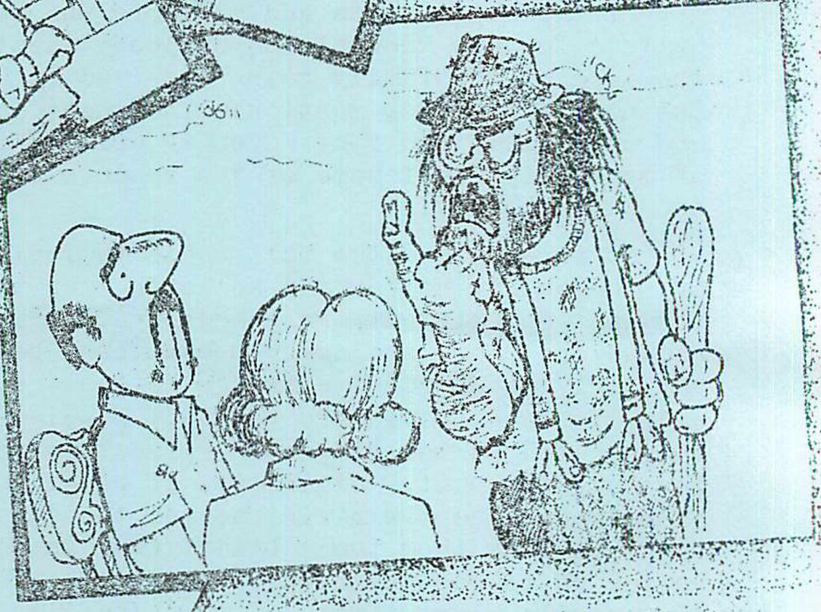
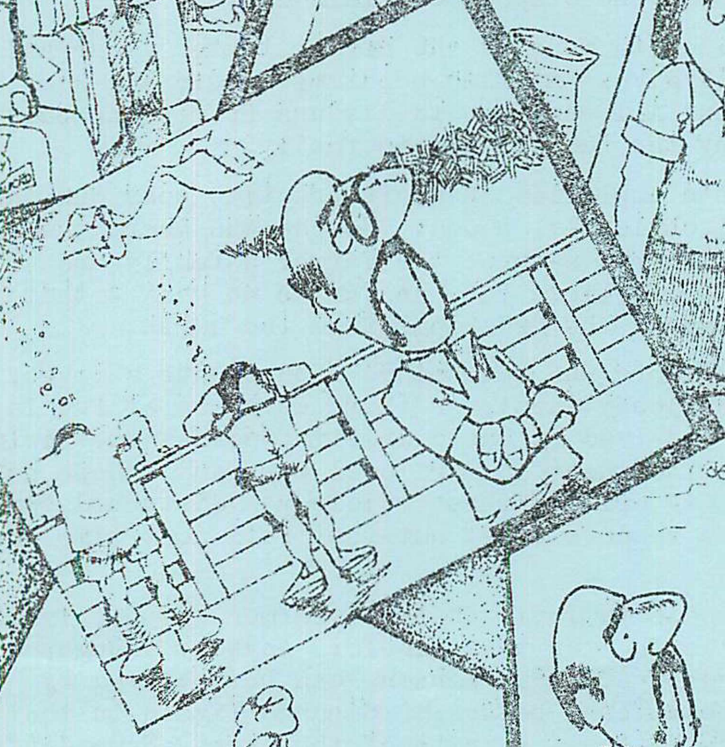
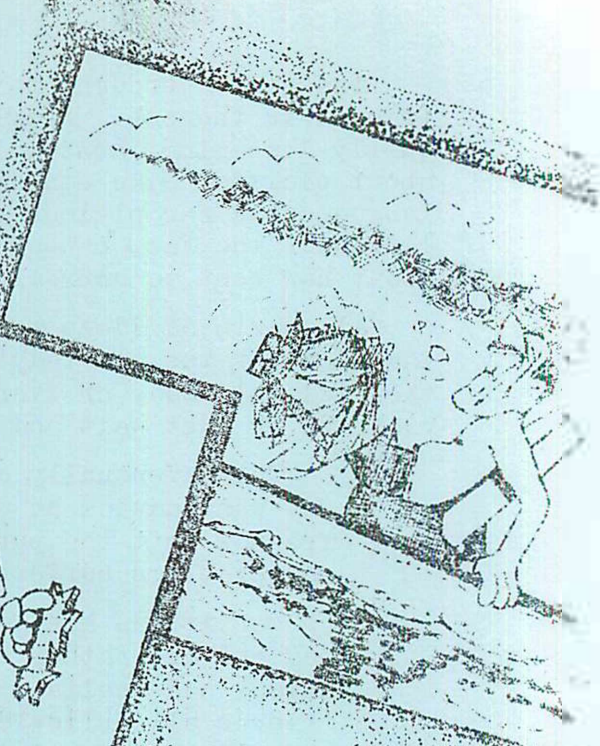
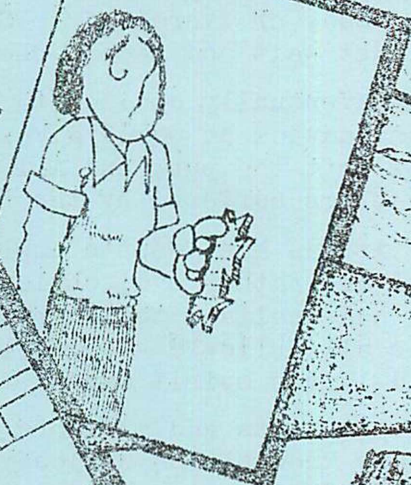
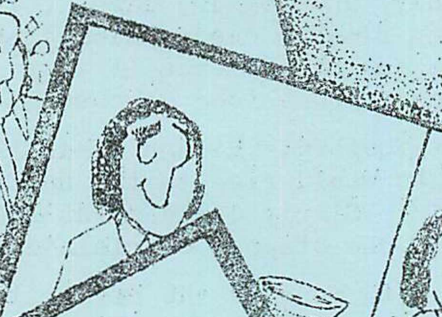
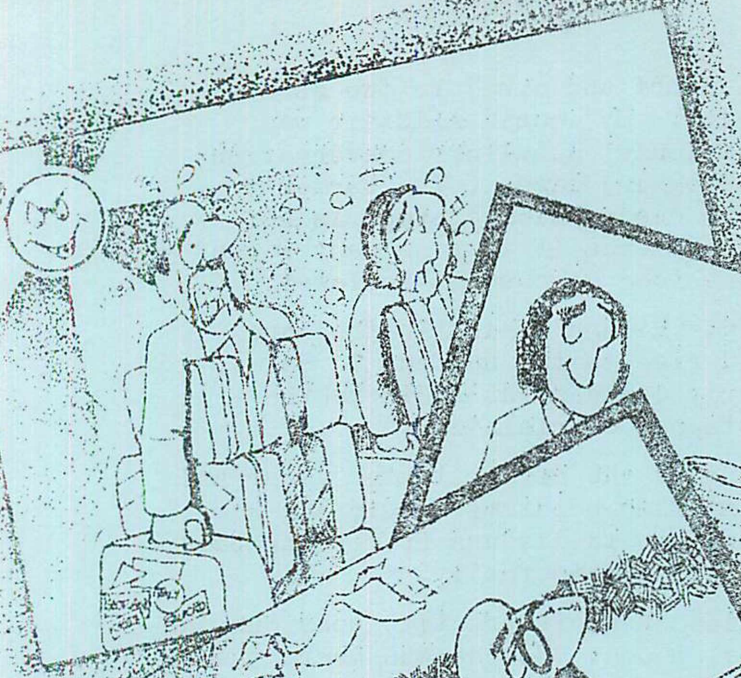
So although no shame devolves on the protagonists in this story. They wouldn't feel comfortable to know the truth.

You won't tell them, will you?

.....Rob Jackson.



1



Refugee

Memoirs

John Berry

By

JOHN BERRY

The British Airtours Boeing 707 landed at Corfu on 22nd of July 1976 at 1.30pm GMT (Greek Mean Time), without warning passengers that reverse-thrust would be utilized in landing, resulting in many wide-eyed people looking at each other in horror, gripping the edges of their seats with white-knuckled fingers, wondering if this was what it was like when passing into the infinite. As we slowed down, everyone exhaled, and one or two of the more religious ones crossed themselves fervently; then the rush started to vacate the aircraft before the sun disappeared.

Waiting for the cases to emerge from a mysterious recess in the wall of the airport took a lot of patience. I had my jacket on because my hands would be full of luggage, and sweat flowed down my back, collecting at my waistband and seeping round to the front. It was almost as hot as it was at Hatfield prior to our departure the day before. Our cases were among the last to be ejected, and my wife and I struggled through a gap between two desks, laughingly comprising customs, hoping that our coach had not already departed.

The coach only took a few minutes to drive from the airport to Corfu harbour, from where our ship was to leave for Paxos. It was a scruffy looking craft; it needed painting badly, and the grinning crew who watched us staggering aboard with out luggage looked like rejects from an audition for the 'Pirates of Penzance'. A rusty plaque on the upper deck announced that the ship was called 'Caterpillar'.

I was worried about the sea journey to Paxos. All my life I had suffered from sea-sickness - indeed, I was so psychologically aware of this malaise that I made medical history -

- by being the first person to have to take 'Qwells' whilst watching 'THE CRUEL SEA'. This time I intended to fight it...I took up a shrewd position near the back part of the ship, prudently close to a lifeboat, and willed myself not to succumb to any of the various facets of mal de mer which normally afflicted me, such as headaches, stomach cramp, twitching lips and vomiting.

The ship headed southwards, hugging the eastern Corfu coast, with the mountainous Greek mainland to our left. It took about one and a half hours to travel to the southern tip of Corfu.... a relatively easy journey even to one with such delicate perception of marine movement as myself. It got rougher, though, as we crossed the open sea to Paxos, but the hour's journey passed without my publicly evincing any sign of the physical or mental stress I was struggling to overcome. The ship stopped briefly at Lakka, a small port on the northern tip of Paxos, and then sailed the short distance to Gaïos, port and metropolis of swinging Paxos.

Gaïos was a little gem of a seaport, with small boats in orderly array along the quayside, riding in clear water, with a back-drop of colourful houses and shops.

We humped our suitcases to a taxi, which, in convoy with a mini-bus, took the dozen or so seekers of "an idyllic get-away-from-it-all paradise" to the Paxos Beach Hotel, about a mile south of Gaïos, under the management of Demetrius, a man definitely not 'of infinite jest'. The hotel was facing east, and patrons were domiciled in stone chalets, in step like progression descending a steep hillside, amidst olive trees and probing cactii. One innovation was that the sliding-doors of the chalets were always left open, permitting cleaners and bed-makers to flit about with extraordinary ease, but also giving access to lizards, peculiar insects, and the managers' pet alsations, which, theoretically, knew you were a guest because they lined up and sniffed you at reception on arrival.

The bar and dining-room were at sea-level near the beach, and were reached by trekking southwards round and, occasionally, across the roofs of the chalets obstructing the direct route.

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Meals, especially dinner, were delightful affairs. The servers were Greek, both male and female, and waiting between courses was kept to a minimum. Normally, at most first-class hotels I have visited abroad and especially in hot climates, water has to be purchased in bottles, sometimes quite expensively. At Paxos, ice-cold water direct from a spring was served by a young English girl called Jeannie in earthenware jugs. The clever psychology here was that as you didn't have to buy water, you could afford to purchase wine instead.

Jeannie, was an engaging sixteen year-old, rather shy and wistful, but bearing her pitchers with great aplomb, hastening to salve the parched throats of her guests who were utterly reliant on her speed and dexterity. With her short, fair curly hair and tall graceful figure she looked exactly like 'Aphrodite with Water Jug' as depicted on so many ancient Greek vases. She was so fleet of foot in racing up and down the stone-steps with jugs rampant that one evening, in her ultra-keenness, she refrained from using the bottom three steps, vaulting to the fourth one with great abandonement, full of desire to speed water to a thirsty throat.

I didn't actually see the fall, but I shall never forget that scream.

For a day or two, she carefully hobbled up and down the steps with commendable decorum, but two evenings later, her cut knee forgotten, she burst upwards to the dining-room like a miniature super-nova. Once again I missed the cartwheel, although the thud of an earthenware jug full of water smashing onto a stone floor is rather a sickening sound.

I turned around just in time to see Jeannie with the handle of the jug in her hand, lips curled downwards in anguish as the rest of it shot shrapnel-like in various directions.

Paxos is about eight miles long and two and a half miles wide. It is very hilly, with Olive trees in stone terraces covering every spare foot of space. An enticing booklet is available masquerading as a tourist guide, but don't buy it. The roads or tracks shown on it are mere figments of a cartographers imagination. Because the island is so small, it is possible to explore it fully on foot. My wife and I decided to walk to Fanariotika, on the west coast. We followed the roads as depicted on the map, but gradually got more and more off the, literally, beaten-track. The local people were very friendly, and looked at us with amazement as we tracked through the olive trees. We eventually came to a little shop and purchased two lemonades. We sat down, exhausted, to luxuriate in the drink's ice-coldness when an old unshaven man in a trilby and baggy trousers entered the shop. He peered at us closely, recognised us as aliens in his environment, and then commenced a most bizarre recitation.

" U.S.A....Washington.D.C.....China....Peking.....Iceland...Reykjavik.....Portugal...Lisbon..", and so on, enumerating countries and their capitals in faultless English. My wife, rather embarrassed, asked him if he'd been to all these countries. His eyes suddenly crossed at this interruption, and his rapidly widening pupils indicated that he thought it was a damned stupid question. He tossed down a quick glass of Ouzo and returned to reciting his exciting dialogue. The other people in the shop began to look furtively in different directions, but I thought it polite to listen to him in case he got one wrong. Eventually, he sank back exhausted in a rickety chair, his eyelids dropped over bleary eyes, and he seemed to dehydrate with the effort. We reverently crept out of the shop, and had gone about a hundred yards on tiptoe when we heard a shout behind us. Horror-stricken we turned around, and our worst fears were realised. The old man raised his head high and shouted...." Venezuela...Caracas", and then collapsed in a heap like an empty sack.

We were lost, and tried to retrace our steps towards Gaios. I knew we'd reach the main road to the port eventually, however, so wasn't too worried. En route we came to a bar with tables under the trees. An old woman came out and took our order for two lemonades. She brought the drinks and sat down beside us and conversed with us - a difficult task since she couldn't speak English and her dialect was all Greek to me.

After an animated sequence of mime, she leaned forward and tapped my wife's stomach meaningly, her eyes wide with anticipation.

My wife said, "No, she didn't have indigestion," but I diagnosed that she was asking if we had any children. I nodded sagely, and held up two fingers. "Ah". She clapped her hands, staggered into the store and returned with a bottle of wine which she poured into our empty glasses. I was quite impressed with this kind gesture, but couldn't understand the significance; after all, we are grandparents. A few minutes later a lorry drew up and a thirsty driver got out. He listened to the woman's excited talk head on one side, mouth open.

" Is your wife expecting twins ?", he asked in good English.

" No," I said. A split second before my wife offered her vehement denial.

" The old lady thinks she is," he said, pointing to the cackling old crone, who took a quick swig out of the bottle.

Once more, we tiptoed away with as much dignity as we could muster.

Antipaxos is a small island about a mile long and a half mile wide situated due south of Paxos, and only a few miles away. Several of us at the hotel, supervised by Jeannie, booked a boat trip to it lured by the descriptive " azure sea gently lapping on the pure white sand ".

It only took about half an hour for the boat to get to the beach, and to discover that the brochure was accurate. Both the islands, Paxos and Antipaxos, were created by limestone strata rising up at a slight angle, and this special beach is a geological 'raised beach', so that the diminished tidal effect is considerable. The sand is extremely fine and being of limestone origin is completely white. Consequently, the sea, which is normally clear in this part of the Mediterranean is also weedless in the beach proximity, the sun's reflection making the water literally crystal-clear.

As with any paradise though, there had to be some snags...in this case the problem was actually getting to the beach. The boat tied up to a square of concrete in a rocky inlet and the passengers then had to wade to the nearby rocks and over them. The athletic ones amongst us were able to negotiate this miniature commando course with little difficulty, but quite a number of elderly people had joined the boat at Gaïos, anxious to prostrate themselves in the warm waters of Antipaxos beach. One cynic, regarding the slow progress of the senior-citizens remarked that the scene resembled a pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Boats were regularly plying back and forward to the beach from other resorts, and it soon became somewhat over-crowded. However, the water was really warm and it was pleasurable to lie on one's back on the surface, hands behind head, eyes closed, the water over the ears keeping away all mundane sounds, feeling as though one was in suspended animation.

Lunchtime came all too soon, and Jeannie marshalled her party together for the return journey, via the assault course. Unfortunately, our leaving coincided with the arrival of a large German contingent which caused some confusion, but their demands for 'lebensraum' were met with typical British stoicism as we bundled past them, supporting our geriatrics.

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My wife and I were told of an interesting small island called Mognonissi just a couple of miles to the south, which could be reached by a causeway. However, after our previous walking experience I decided that some other mode of transport should be adopted and now that I'd overcome my previous mal de mer, perhaps a suitable sea-worthy craft could be hired for our expedition.

I finally talked my wife into our hiring one of the Pedalo's owned by the hotel. These are a twin-hulled craft operated by the passengers who, by pedalling, cause a paddle-wheel to revolve. Ideal, I thought, for our journey.

We sat in the canvas seats and pedalled like mad, and the pedalo shot forward quite quickly on the sheltered waters of the hotel beach. It was a little more difficult, however, when we hit the wavelets of the open sea. However, the wind was going our way, and hugging the limestone coast (with magnificent examples of folded strata) we headed southwards. We passed a small private beach where several couples were sampling the delights of nude bathing. I tried to protect my wife from this awesome sight, but, alerted by the zig-zag course I had, inadvertently, initiated whilst trying to assess their swimming prowess, she spotted their uninhibited exhibitionism. Making only the enigmatic comment that " I didn't know Jews did that sort of thing!"

Before we reached the island, I saw the masts of ships silhouetted against the skyline. We pedalled like mad round the corner into Mognonissi Bay. Three large schooners were anchored there, bearing West German, Swiss,

and Canadian flags. We steered between them, rammed the pedalo up onto the sand, and walked in our bathing-costumes towards the beach-bar. It was time for afternoon tea.

The crews of the schooners were lounging at the bar tables drinking beer; the men were young, with beards and wore denims with the bottoms of the legs frayed....the bikini-clad girls sat with pouting lips, and in the odd power-packed moment one of them would run a long-nailed finger down the nearest male cheek. One couple couldn't stand the strain any more, and ran to the water's edge, dived in, and swam like torpedo's to the nearest of the schooners.

Meanwhile, my wife and I finished our tea, and more leisurely, went for a swim ourselves. The sun was beating down mercilessly though, and after half an hour of exposure we decided to return to our hotel.

We re-boarded our craft - which I had some initial difficulty launching - and pedalled across the bows of the waterside tables, beaming proudly at the schooner crews. Their return looks obviously indicated that they considered the pound had sunk to a really low level if the English had to visit such a high-class establishment in such a craft.

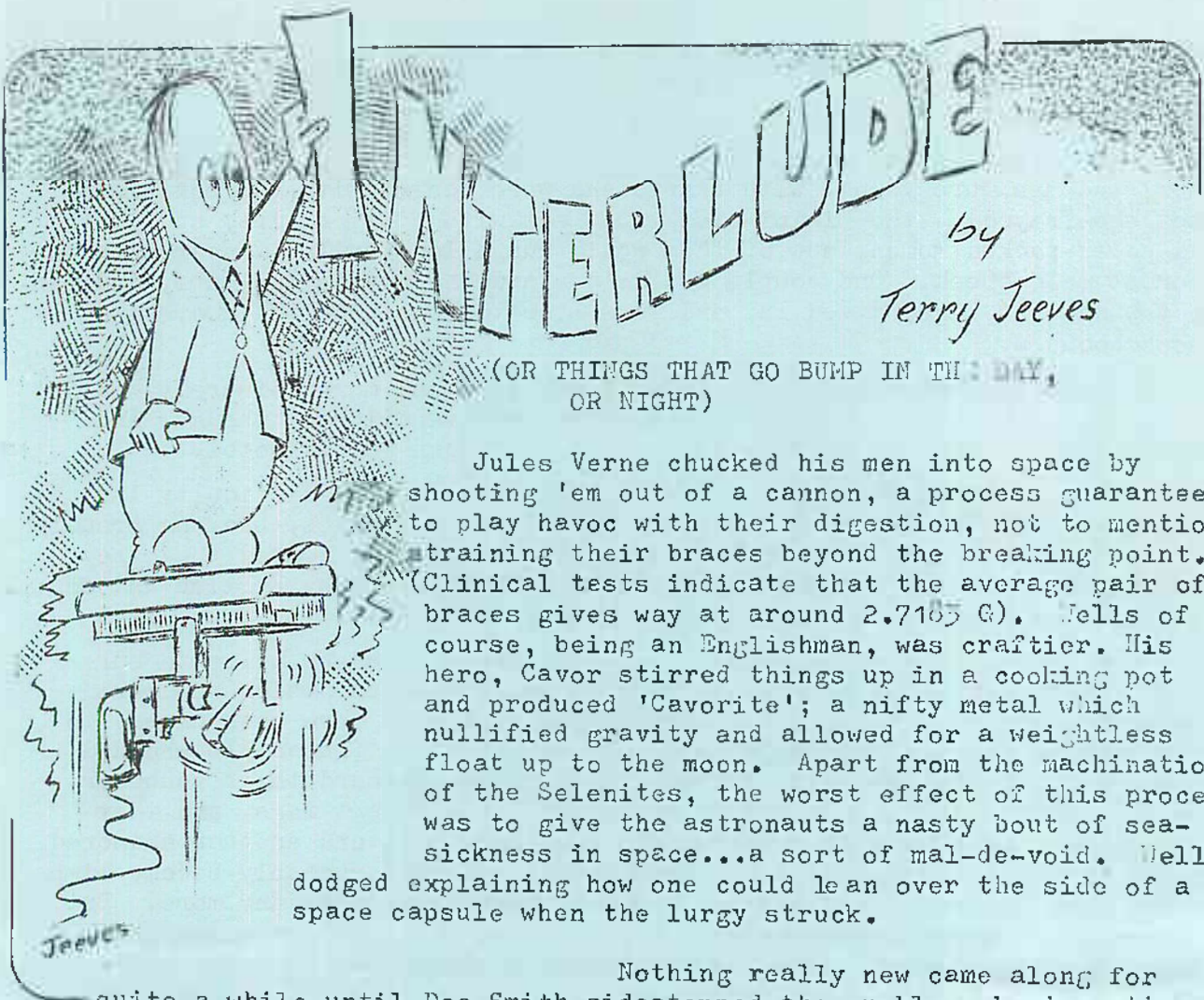
We curved in a wide arc to pedal northwards the few miles to our hotel beach, but I had forgotten the wind and the waves, which now were coming towards us. Also, and much more seriously, we were both unused to this extreme physical exertion, and were exhausted. The couple who had, only a short while ago, found a sudden need to be on-board their schooner, were now hung over the rail of their vessel like two wet rags, and they looked at us in awe as we pedalled between their ship and another anchored nearby. I was absolutely shattered, and my wife had suddenly become limp in her seat and whispered that she couldn't possibly pedal any more. But, I refused to suffer the embarrassment of allowing these rich schooner typos see an Englishman give in. I gritted my teeth and although my knee's had seized up, pedalled like crazy until we cleared the bay and were out of sight.

Once outside the bay, though, we were in the open sea, although close in to the shore, and facing the full force of the wind that had helped us reach Mogonissi. I shall never know how we got back. Certainly, we were going even slower than previously when we passed the nude bathers. This was purely because we were both almost dead from fatigue, but I'm sure the nudists thought we had slowed down to see them. Admittedly it was a week before I could turn my neck without making a grating sound, but I was really interested in the looping strata behind them. Which was why the pedalo was so close to shore.

If it hadn't been for this excellent navigation on my part I'm quite convinced that even the ferocious burst of pedalling that my wife, eyes quite glazed, now put in wouldn't have got us back to base. And I swear that it was with my last kick, before falling inert into the sea, that we hit the sand of our hotel-beach.

It took us the rest of the holiday to recover from our expedition, but we had the satisfaction of going home believing that we had upheld all that was most noble in British naval tradition.

.....John Berry.



by
Terry Jeeves

(OR THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE DAY,
OR NIGHT)

Jules Verne chucked his men into space by shooting 'em out of a cannon, a process guaranteed to play havoc with their digestion, not to mention straining their braces beyond the breaking point. (Clinical tests indicate that the average pair of braces gives way at around 2.7185 G). Wells of course, being an Englishman, was craftier. His hero, Cavor stirred things up in a cooking pot and produced 'Cavorite'; a nifty metal which nullified gravity and allowed for a weightless float up to the moon. Apart from the machinations of the Selenites, the worst effect of this process was to give the astronauts a nasty bout of seasickness in space...a sort of mal-de-void. Wells dodged explaining how one could lean over the side of a space capsule when the lurgy struck.

Nothing really new came along for quite a while until Doc Smith sidestepped the problems by inventing the Bergenholm which not only nullified inertia, but also allowed for instant acceleration. It also did away with broken braces and the shaky tummy syndrome. Unhappily for Project Apollo, not one of these methods was available for a real Moon Landing, although there had been tentative plans for a tower of Bheer cans reaching to the moon. It was at this stage that rockets came in.

Unfortunately, rockets were (are) nasty noisy messy, dangerous and expensive things and used an awful lot of power in simply lifting themselves by their own lug-holes. What was needed was something new, maybe even a Cavorite-plated Bergenholm fired from a pair of extended braces.

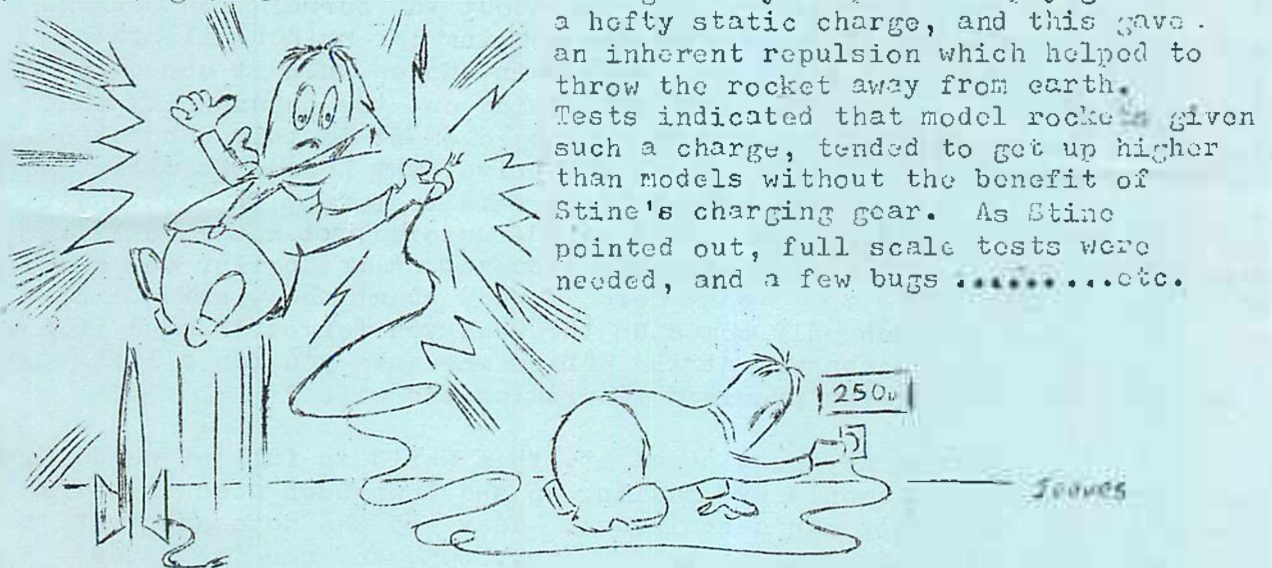
And this was where the Dean Drive came in. I first met this in the pages of Analog...although later, it turned up in the hallowed pages of 'Missiles and Rockets'. In the Campbell version, you got the whole works comprising several pages of incomprehensible wordage suitably clarified by the addition of a number of incomprehensible photographs. I gathered that one simply took an electric drill, a set of off-centre weights, and the scales from the bathroom. These were then lashed together in a framework of girders stolen from Junior's Meccano set (or Erector set if you lived in the USA). Plug in the drill, switch on, and Bingo! ...you had a space drive. Well, to be precise, you didn't actually have a space drive - but you did have a gadget which tried like merry hell to batter a hole in the floor (maybe it was just taking off in the wrong direction). Nevertheless, the scales got such a beating that they registered a reduction in weight, and as Campbell was quick to point out, all the thing needed was a bit of polishing, some

scholarly mathematics (not to mention a touch of the old Sense of Wonder) and the Moon would be ours. The Dean Drive would convert rotary into linear motion to give us the stars...though what bathroom scales can push against in a vacuum, heaven only knows.

Various magazines did crude articles on the device, letters flew in all directions - as did assorted pieces of the apparatus, and enough hot air was generated to put a man on the moon. Then the thing dropped out of sight. It cropped up again recently in an Analog piece by (I think) Harry Stine, but as usual, 'there are a few bugs to be worked out', and in all the credibility gap is about the same as that for the Loch Ness monster. Even so, whenever I have to do any drilling in the bathroom, I always keep well away from the scales in case I inadvertently propel myself into orbit.

This wasn't Campbell's only venture into solving (editorially) the problems of space flight. One issue described a model airship which had a magnificent new form of internal propulsion...very secret, but once the bugs were ironed out By this time, the reader may well be forgiven if he has formed the impression that all we need to conquer space is to make Penicillin cheaply available to all inventors.

Even more shocks were in store for Analog's readers. The indefatigable (which means quick to earn a fast buck) Harry Stine described a series of experiments designed to give an extra boost to a rocket taking off. The method was delightfully simple...simply give it



((Demonstration of electrically-assisted take-off))

Apart from news ways of getting into space, Campbell explored many other avenues, but perhaps the most scream-raising, was the 'discovery' of the Hieronymous machine. All you had to do was to build yourself a linear, Class A audion amplifier and hook its input to one coil and its output to another...the second being wound flat between two plastic sheets. You then stuffed a metal sample in the first coil and gently stroked the second while tuning a variable condenser - a process akin to patting one's stomach and simultaneously stroking one's head... the results were about as productive. Some people reported the plastic sheet felt 'tacky', others reported a rough surface, bumps, shocks or even hiccups. Eric Jones made one, and when I tried it, after two moments of stroking, John Campbell appeared...but to be fair, I was sitting in the foyer of the King's Court during the '57 Worldcon...and it made a nifty lead in for a tongue-tied (on my part) conversation...you might say that we got stuck on the same Hieronymous machine. JWC later went on to publish a symbolic version. I constructed one, and got results which were

consistently and 100% reproducible....nothing ever happened.

Despite such negative results, SF definitely widens one's mental horizons. Take the case of parapsychology and Dr. Rhine of Duke University. Having encountered this psi stuff in many a story, it was only natural that I dig out the books and read through...and of course it was only a matter of time before I made up my own set of ESP cards. I tried valiantly to develop my wild talents along the approved lines laid down by various authors. I bashed away at telepathy, telekinesis, Clairvoyance, 'down-through' and all the rest, but sadly, I never got that blinding headache (except after a binge) coupled with the sudden flash of discovery. I wonder how many other fen have concentrated like mad, gritted their teeth until the enamel powdered away, and their back collar stud shot out of the window as they attempted to move some inanimate object. Useless, no matter how you strained, it was utterly impossible to get the bathroom curtain to fall down as the girl across the road was performing her ablutions.

Even so, strange powers exist in this universe. The mathematicians tell us that if you toss a penny a hundred times, you can expect an almost 50-50 distribution of 'heads' and 'Tails'. Aha! but you try tossing a slice of buttered toast, and with sickening regularity it will land sticky side down 99 times out of a hundred. Clearly, further investigation is called for - a logical step would be to try tossing buttered pennies. Moving even further into psionic investigation, there are fine hunting-grounds waiting for some future PhD to plunder them for his thesis. How about the correlation between car-washing and rainfall? Any Sunday-morning car shiner will rate it as a far better winner than any Hopi rain-dancer when it comes to bringing down the wet stuff. I am not ruling out the possibility that car paint has Thiotimoline in it as a trace element in this connection. Nearer to home than the family car on the drive, any housewife will tell you the quickest way to make milk boil over is to turn your back on it. Its converse is framed in the old adage.. "A watched pot never boils". Now why the heck doesn't somebody bung a bucket on the boiler and check that one out for a PhD? Want more? How about the winning line on a pools coupon which only comes up the week you forgot to send it in, or the young blonde bombshell at the office who asks you for a lift home on the one night you promised to pick up the wife?

There's no doubt about it, this world is full of wonders. Many people catch pneumonia by paddling up and down Loch Ness in search of a Scottish publicity man's brainwave. They try the same one (with a different animal) every year at London Zoo... come and see the Panda/Chimp/wolf/man-eating-banana and so on. Now if only they started a few rumours about a phantom animal from another planet which makes fleeting appearances in different cages, the place would be packed all the time..AND the thing would be seen by 'reliable observers'. After all, if UFO's can be spotted so often..and by so many, why not an alien water-wiggler at Whipsnade?

Speaking of UFO's touches on another PhD topic. Why is the ratio of UFO's photographed, to the ratio of UFO's photographed badly, out-of-focus and upside down, so nearly a one-to-one ratio? Admittedly, one must accept the possibility that the Dean-Drive powered UFO's are steeped in antibiotics to de-bug them, and their operators are skilled in the telekinetic arts so that when they see some would-be Ceci Beaton lining up on them, they simply make a mystic motion and give the camera the screaming hab-dabs. Such a possibility doubtless has a probability of 0.0000000001, but some people are never daunted by the odds. Still, since there's no smoke without fire, I wonder if the Saucers are really piloted by Loch Ness Monster?

Bestest, Terry

1976/7 TAFF BALLOT

What is TAFF ? The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans across the Atlantic. Since that time, TAFF has regularly brought European fans to the U.S.A. and sent American fans to European conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted for by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of no less than \$1.00 (75p). These votes and the continued interest of fans are what makes TAFF possible.

Who may vote ? Voting is open to anyone who was active in fandom (i.e. fanzines, clubs, conventions, etc.) prior to September 1975, and who contributes no less than \$1.00 (75p) to the fund. Contributions in excess of the minimum will be gratefully accepted. Only one vote per person is allowed, no proxy votes, and you MUST sign your ballot. Details of voting will be kept secret, and write-ins are permitted. Money orders and cheques should be made payable to the relevant administrator, not to TAFF.

DEADLINE Votes must reach the administrators by noon, Easter Monday 1977

Voting details: TAFF uses the Australian system, which guarantees an automatic run-off and a majority win. You rank the candidates in the exact order you wish to vote. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority, the votes of the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped and the second-place votes on the ballots are counted. This process goes on until one candidate has a majority. It is therefore important to vote for 2nd, 3rd, etc. place on your ballot. It is also a waste of time to put one name in more than one place.

Hold Over Funds. This choice, similar to 'No Award' on Hugo balloting, gives the voter the chance to vote for no TAFF trip if the candidates do not appeal to him, or if he feels that TAFF should slow down its programme of trips. 'Hold Over Funds' can be voted for in any position, just as if it were a candidate.

Donations. TAFF needs continuous donations of money and material (to be auctioned) in order to exist. If you are ineligible to vote, or do not feel qualified to vote, why not donate anyway ? It's a good cause.

CANDIDATES. Each candidate has promised, barring acts of God, to travel to the 1977 Worldcon in Miami Beach, Florida. They have posted bond and provided signed nominations and platforms which are reproduced on the other side of this sheet along with the ballot. (For purposes of voting, couples are counted as a single candidate).

SEND COMPLETED BALLOTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO :-

EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATOR

Peter Weston
72 Beeches Drive
Erdington
Birmingham B24 ODT, U.K.

AMERICAN ADMINISTRATOR

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Rd., NW
Albuquerque
New Mexico 87107 U.S.A.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT Your Ballot and contribution entitles you to a free chance at a special lottery. European winner will receive an original Eddie Jones painting and a similar prize will be awarded to the American winner.

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THE PLATFORMS

TERRY JOEVES TAFF Candidate...Editor of British Fandom's longest-running fanzine ERG - now in its 17th year of publication! Founder-member of OHPA, and of the BSFA for which he edited VECTOR in the formative years. Creator and purveyor of Soggies and numerous other cartoon-critters to fanzines far and wide. A fan who has been active in fan-pubbing and who has been attending conventions for even longer than he cares to say. But not an old-fan-and-tired, Terry still brings a bright inventive mind to his fandom and has recently turned his cartooning skills to the making of several award-winning animated s.f. films. Humorous, of course. We - the humbly undersigned - can't think of a better delegate to send Stateside to meet the people he already knows through correspondence. ERGO - IT HAS TO BE JOEVES FOR TAFF!

Eric Bentcliffe, Lynn Hickman, Ed. Connor, Chris Fowler, Jan Howard Finner

PETER ROBERTS One of Britain's best-known and most active fans, Peter Roberts has since 1968 published more than 100 fanzines, including the Checkpoint newsletter, The Little Gen Guide to SF Fanzines, and the ever popular EKG. He contributes regularly to both British and American fanzines and looks forward to writing a full TAFF report, if elected. Just as active in conventions, in Britain and Europe, Peter was Fan GON at the 1974 Belgian SFancon and the 1975 British Eastercon. He helped organise the successful 1975 SEACON and is currently on the committee for the 1979 UK Worldcon bid. He has a pleasant, friendly personality, enjoys meeting people and is happiest when drinking a Guinness and discussing anything from ossifrages and science fiction to fanzines and Cornish nationalist vegetarianism. In short, Peter Roberts is the ideal TAFF candidate.

Harry Bell, Terry Hughes, Jerry Kaufman, Waldemar Kuning, Ian Maule.

PETER PRESFORD Although Peter can be termed a 'seventies fan', he is pleased to have so many friends from all walks of fandom. So far as pubbing his ish is concerned, he has produced two 'zines, MADCAP, which has been enjoying some success as a genzine, and of course, MALEFUNCTION, which as he puts it, "has been grubbing about in the roots of UK fandom for years". Having put in his stint as a convention chairman at this year's Eastercon Peter now feels he has gained enough insight to do justice to the awe-inspiring task of standing for TAFF. "If I come out of this alive," he was heard to say, "I certainly won't let down anyone good enough to vote for me."

Brian Robinson, Steve Sneyd, Peter Knifton, Paul Ritz, Bruce Townley

***** This is your ballot; use it now ! *****

I vote for: (List 1, 2, 3, 4)	Signature _____
Terry Jeeves _____	Name (print) _____
Peter Roberts _____	Address _____
Peter Presford _____	_____
Hold Over Funds _____	_____

Enclosed is my contribution to TAFF of: _____
(£1.00 or 75p minimum amount)

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, in order to make sure of qualifying for voting please give the name and address of a fan or fan group to whom you are known:

Name.....
Address

TAFB
A good cause

*****RETURN THIS BALLOT TO THE APPROPRIATE ADMINISTRATOR *****