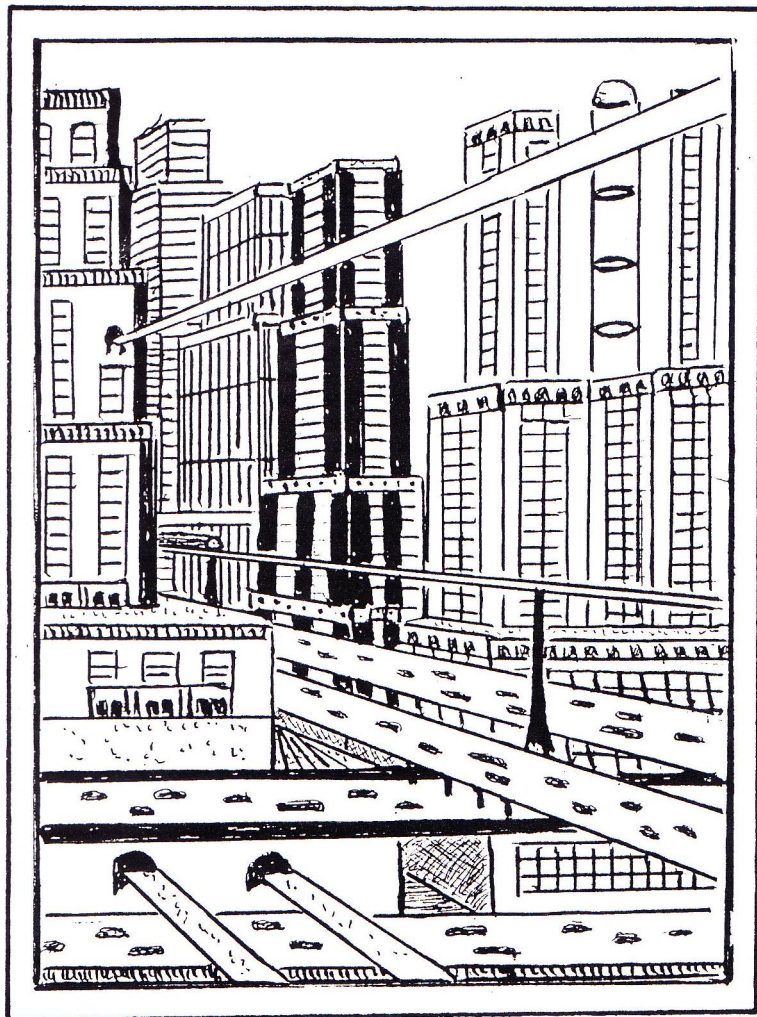


ERG 131

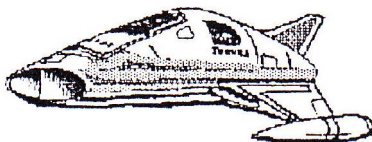
OCTOBER 1995

NOW IN ITS 37th, YEAR



'FUTURE CITY' by David Allen

ERG 131
October 1995



Terry Jeeves
56 Red Scar Drive
Scarborough YO12 5RQ
Ph. (01723) 376817

This copy of ERG comes to you because I sent it. If you'd like the next issue, just write and let me know. Response is the name of the game. One or two people have enjoyed the computer art but prefer hand-drawing because of the ziggy line one gets with a computer. 'Fraid I'll keep on using it though as it is such a easier to make corrections, change the composition, try out different textures or save the illos and have copies as and when I want.

Having said that, the cover this time is by David Allen, a venerable SF lover from Worthing. He is also a superlative creator of exotic chess sets - Star Trek, Ancient Egypt, SF Characters and so on. The sort that sell for £200 to £300 in the shops - and Dave does 'em for his correspondents - lucky them.

When our old VCR packed up (after 15 years) we decided to replace the 20 year old TV at the same time. Since both gadgets had been made by Hitachi, and had served us well, we plumped for a new Hitachi TV and VCR with Teletext, Fasttext and Video+. All the gadgetry of the controllers is taking some getting used to, but we're getting there. Another widget that a crossword fiend like as wot I am, couldn't resist, was a combined calculator, spell-checker, anagram solver and Thesaurus - all in one neat little package, slimmer than a deck of cards. It resides on the bedside table alongside books of Guardian and Telegraph Crosswords.

MEDICAL NOTE. Lower abdomen pains led to three visits to the Doc and three loads of non-effective tablets. Next came a 'specialist', a very painful Barium enema, an ultrasound check and a blood test. Then they forgot me until I went round and chased 'em up. Tests allproved negative so I was discharged. "See your GP again if it gets worse". PS, They have let me keep the original pains.

Here's a daft bit of logic. If light speed is constant, it cannot slow down. It may lose frequency or bend, when it encounters a gravity field, but it maintains speed. So why can't it escape a Black Hole? Well, obviously, since it travels at light speed, time for it slows to a halt and it just stands at the event horizon. The snag with that argument is that since ALL light travels at light speed, all light ought to suffer a time stop. Therefore light can't go anywhere. Maybe it's just a mental phenomenon which doesn't really exist.

SALE OF PAPERBACKS AND HARDCOVERS Send SAE for lists. (Say which, I don't want to have to print out the lot.)

LIST-1 Paperbacks @ £1.00

LIST-2 Paperbacks at £1.20

LIST-3 Paperbacks at £1.50 upwards

LIST-4 Hardcover...

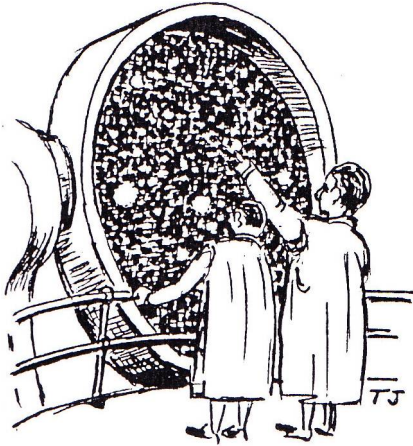
LIST-5 Magazines

LIST-6 Aerospace titles

All titles in 'as new' condition unless otherwise stated.

All the best Terry

WHICH SHALL IT BE?



Do you remember that final scene in 'Things To Come' where the reactionary Passworthy faces the visionary Cabal and asks if continued progress is needed? Cabal says mankind cannot stand still, but must either regress or forever strive to discover more about the universe. He ends his discourse with that ringing quote, "Which Shall it Be, Passworthy, which shall it be?"

For many years, I was firmly with Cabal. The universe was our oyster and discovery the tool to open it. To give up that endless striving 'to know', was to mark time, stagnate and eventually fall back into barbarism. Of late I've begun to wonder a bit if we aren't discovering ourselves into a dead end. I rather feel that we've crossed a sort of Rubicon of progress - and then burnt the bridge behind us.

No, I don't want to bring back horse-drawn carriages, buggy-whips and stove-pipe hats, but I feel we should maintain stronger links with the past. Consider this for openers. Let one generation miss its ten or so years of education and the result would be disaster. Could we sustain, or climb back to our present level of society? I doubt it. Who would have the knowledge and experience to make our steel, organise food distribution, build ships, aircraft, or vehicles? For that matter, could anyone repair whatever breaks down?

Offhand, one might think it was just a matter of dropping back a few years and catching up again from that point. I'm thinking of all the skills, processes and gadgetry no longer available to us thanks to progress. Nowadays a ship or aircraft can move around the world with pin-point accuracy and safety thanks to satellite navigation, radar equipment and awesome computer power. Lose these and how many navigators could return to compass, sextant, circular slide-rule, log tables, shipping charts and dead-reckoning?

That's a high-tech example, but how about nearer home. What have we lost in our headlong progress. Next time you buy several similar items at a checkout, watch the girl ring up four separate lots at £1.51 each, because she lacks the math to mentally multiply by four and charge £6.04. Even more likely, she'll simply pass the items over a bar-code scanner to do the job automatically. Oh, it will do the job faster and more accurately, but what happens in a power cut? How many modern shop assistants have the arithmetical skills to put pencil to paper and do the addition by hand?

4

Years ago when I was doing my Higher National Maths, before the transistor and pocket calculators came along, we relied entirely on tables of logarithms and/or slide rules to work out the involved calculations. Nowadays people snatch up their calculators to multiply 17 by 3. Without that modern wonder, the world of logs, roots, reciprocals, percentages and even simple arithmetical calculations is closed to them. Many kids leave school without even knowing their multiplication tables.

Take sound recording, brittle 78rpm discs were once the cat's whiskers. Now only specialist dealers handle second-hand ones and decks to play them are no longer made. 45s took over, only to suffer a similar fate with the advent of LPs. These were threatened by reel-to-reel tape recorders until they in turn fell before the tide of easily handled cassettes - which are now under threat from Compact discs. Unless you hang on to an ageing deck or tape recorder, all your once cherished older recordings are now unplayable. In 1960, I took up cine filming with a Standard 8mm camera - a film gauge which was gradually ousting the old 9.5mm format. Then along came 'Super 8' which pushed Standard 8 to the wall. Now we have cassette loading VCRs - and they will soon be facing stiff competition from solid state memory chips. Your standard, 35mm still camera is set to go the same way to produce 'photos' you can only inspect on your TV.

I now have a stack of reel to reel tapes and one 20 year old recorder on which to play 'em. You can't buy new ones nowadays other than expensive professional studio models. When mine goes kaput, bang goes much fascinating stuff (including the LiG tape operas from the fifties. My dual-gauge sound projector is also 20 years old and it gives me access to many happy holidays, sundry family weddings and other fond memories. Inevitably, nobody makes 8mm projectors nowadays. Kodak no longer market Standard 8mm film, so my three cine cameras lie idle. Bang have gone two of my cherished hobbies, making animated cine films and building up my own sound tracks for them.

These are personal losses, but visit your local library to look up a book, chances are the Index is now on computer or microfiche. Unless you're au fait with such gadgets you have to wait for the librarian to grudgingly hunt up facts for you. A power cut or break down means you've had it. Use the cash machine at your local bank and several days a week it is out of order as the accounts are up-dated. More and more editors and publishers are asking for material to be submitted on computer disc in a standard wp format, it is only a matter of time before they also refuse to accept anything not sent via a telephone modem. You can now buy sundry encyclopaedias, data bases and reference works on CD ROM. Wonderful gadgets, but in a few years, technology will have moved on they and the means to access them will have become obsolete.

You will probably be able to list umpteen more places where progress has improved or speeded up the pace of life, but in so doing, has cut us off from a slower, but eventually sure method of doing something. It rather seems that we have a choice between saving time, saving costs, and getting more technical wizardry and a slower pace which allows more room for personal achievement and creativity. The question is, "Which shall it be?" -- and I rather think market forces and whiz kids have decided for us. TJ

Mini-CHUNTERING by KEN SLATER

It is with great sorrow that I must announce the death of John Brunner who passed away on Friday, August 25th. following a massive stroke He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

Li Yi Tan, John's wife, was with him. Various fans stayed with her at the hospital, spelling each other. Li Yan speaks little English, but the Convention managed to get an interpreter from somewhere and made arrangements to get her, the dogs and the vehicle, home.

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THE HUGO AWARDS

- NOVEL *Mirror Dance* by Lois McMaster Bujold
- NOVELLA *Seven Views Of Olduvai Gorge* by Mike Resnick
- NOVELETTE *The Martian Child* By David Gerrold
- SHORT STORY *None So Blind* by Joe Haldeman
- NON-FICTION BOOK *I, Asimov: A Memoir* Isaac Asimov
- DRAMATIC PRESENTATION *All Good Things - Star Trek*
- PROFESSIONAL EDITOR Gardner Dozois
- Professional Artist Jim Burns
- ORIGINAL ARTWORK *Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book* Brian Froude
- SEMI-PROZINE *Interzone* Edited by David Pringle
- FANZINE *Ansible* Edited by Dave Langford
- FAN WRITER Dave Langford
- FAN ARTIST Teddy Harvia
- JOHN W.CAMPBELL AWARD Jeff Noon

OTHER AWARDS

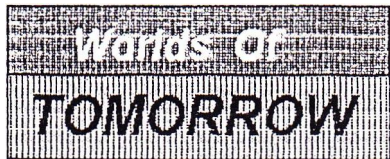
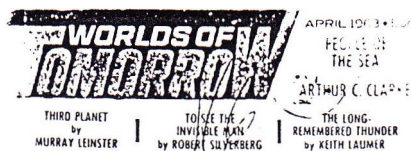
- Seiun:
- NOVEL *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons
- SHORT STORY *A Planet Named Shayol* by Cordwainer Smith
- FIRST FANDOM HALL OF FAME Jack Speer & Harry Warner Jr.
- BIG HEART AWARD Kenneth F.Slater

I didn't know about my award, it was with considerable difficulty that they kept me in the hall. I'd had nothing to eat since breakfast, I wanted back to the hotel, a shave, a bath, and FOOD! Forry Ackerman made the presentation and it didn't click until I heard my name ...! Bob Silverberg opened the affair with a few words about John Brunner, but instead of a silence he asked for a standing ovation in appreciation of John's contributions to the field. Unusual, but effective. We all stood and clapped for several minutes and I felt it was a tribute John would have appreciated.

KFS

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

STOP-PRESS ITEM. October 5th., saw the publishing of a title which will gladden the hearts of all fans of the TV series, THE AVENGERS. Bostree have published 'THE ULTIMATE AVENGERS', by Dave Rogers. 234x153mm, 364 pages, 120 b & w pictures and 8 colour plates. I quote.. "... a look at origins and production history as recounted by actors, directors and production staff .. From first episodes to recent attempts to revive the series -- a complete production history. Price ? Well the colour handout says £12.99, the accompanying letter says £16.99. I reckon it will be snapped up by Avengers fans. TJ



The first issue appeared in April 1963. Priced at 50c, edited by Frederik Pohl, the cover by Pedersen depicted a scene from the story 'Heavenly Gifts'. Interior illos were by Wood and Gaughan, some using an additional red overlay. The issue contained Part.1 of a serial, three novelettes and four short stories.

An 'Editorial' by Clarke describes the setting of his two-part serial, PEOPLE OF THE SEA, in which a young lad stows away on a sea-going hovercraft, is 'shipwrecked', rescued by dolphins and goes on to help establish communications with them.

X MARKS THE PEDWALK by Fritz Leiber is a satirical look at a society where drivers are allowed to prey on pedestrians - who in turn may use .45 Magnums in retaliation.

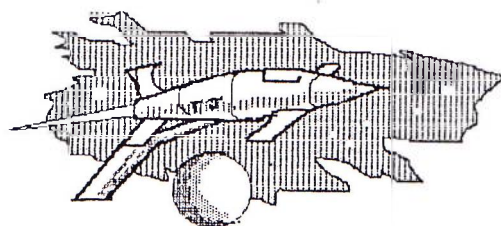
THE LONG REMEMBERED THUNDER BY Keith Laumer has a Federal agent seeking the source of hyperwave interference and finding an old man guarding a dimensional portal to fight off an alien invasion. He defeats the aliens, uses time travel to reunite two lovers and ends up in 1901. WHERE THE PHPH PEBBLES GO by Miriam Allen de Ford. Reminiscent of 'The Gentlest Unpeople', this is about an alien pebble-throwing game on a small planet. The Thinkers are scared that stones escaping into space might attract unwanted attention, so they make them lethal.

THIRD PLANET by Murray Leinster concerns a future where the West faces creeping Communist aggression. Happily, a Western exploration ship discovers an alien weapon, explodes all the Commie bombs and the West reigns supreme. HEAVENLY GIFTS Aaron L.Kolam has a little old lady craftily using a giant ET contact rig to make requests to 'God'. Alien entrepreneurs supply her wants, but take Earth's nuclear weapons in trade. THE GIRL IN HIS MIND by Robert F.Young is a long dragging account of a 'psychaye' hunting a girl who has taken refuge in his mind. To find her, he wanders through an every-changing dream landscape before discovering the truth.

TO SEE THE INVISIBLE MAN Robert Silverberg is another version of the tale in which a man is declared 'invisible' by society. Ostracised and ignored by all he can do as he pleases, but the fun soon pales and he becomes desperate - until his sentence ends and he has an unlikely change of heart

Worlds Of TOMORROW lasted four years, then merged with IF in November 1967. It broke away again in 1970 for a brief three issue run, but never made much of an impact on the market. T.J.

Fanzines



7

FANZINES Most of these fanzines are available by simply requesting a copy. Further issues usually depend on your responding to that first one by means of LOC, or a contribution of writing or artwork.

STEFANTASY 116 From Bill Danner, R.D.1., Kennerdell, PA 16374, USA. If you think ERG was old, this is Stef's 50th. Annish! ERG-sized and real typeset, the mind boggles at the work involved using such small type. Interesting natter on old steam engines, loads of LOCs, a bit on an unusual number and a page of mangled English culled from all over. A cringeing letter may get you a copy.

THE FROZEN FROG, Girard Benoit, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap Rouge, Quebec, CANADA G1Y 1Y9. 28pages, folded-foolscap. Pieces on a job changing interview, general natter, lots of interesting LOCs and a nice sprinkling of illos. A warm, friendly zine rather like a meeting of a gang of old friends. Read and enjoy.

MAVERICK Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 0ND. 32 A4 pages, an editorial on suicides, Walt Willis on discovering SF/Fandom, Jenny on an unwelcome pregnancy, A long piece of fan fiction, Jenny on fanzines, Me on discovering SF/Fandom, and a bundle of LOCs. The fiction seemed overlong, but I enjoyed all the other bits and pieces. Interesting cover, but sadly, no interior artwork

KIPPLE Roger Sheppard, The London Office, 117 Kent House Rd., Beckenham, KENT BR3 1JJ This is quite a ixed bag, 10 A4 pages, a packet of seeds and an 8A5 page insert listing recent books. Natter on Powerbooks, draft dodging and the evils of stencils. Limited print run, but you may be lucky.

TRAPDOOR.15 Bob Lichtman, PO Box.30, Glen Ellen, CA 85442, USA. A hefty, well produced, 48pp folded f'cap holding articles on Fandom's Future (and past), Medical notes, eating out, the life of a baby model, memories of Terry Carr, Burbee's memoirs, natterings by Red Boggs' and Calvin Demmon, loads of long LOCs and some excellent artwork by Steve Stiles and Dan Steffan. Top marks for this one.

CHALLENGER.2 Guy H.Lillian, PO Box 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153-3092. 66 impeccaly produced A4 pages, excellent cover and generally good interior art, though not much of it. Pieces on drugs, defending a murder rap, fanzines, LOCs, the dangers of elephants, a speech by James P.Hogan, and other goodies. Recommended.

THE RELUCTANT FAMULUS 44 well-produced pages, from Tom Sadler, 422 W.Maple Ave., Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627, USA. Lovely story-intro, assorted articles on teaching, language, A Tucker 'speech', Part 2 of my 'Wartime Daze', A 'Feghoot' by Kench, reviews of books, & fanzines, lotsa LOCs and some good art. An excellent mix with something for everyone.

THE OLAF ALTERNATIVE/OUTHOUSE.12 from Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, w.Midlands, DY8 1LA. Boasting around 70 pages, artwork by Hunter, Turner, Atom and Kench. Variably duplicated but crammed with fiction, (including two 'Soames/Flotsam' pieces), articles, poems, fmz reviews, reprints from Now & Then, and other goodies. All this plus 37 pages of LOCs in Outhouse. Postage alone was 60p!

OPUNTIA 6 CLARITAS Dale R.Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2p 2E7 Neatly printed, but strange format and numbering system, sideways printed A5, in double columns - Opuntia issue numbers are 23.5 and 24, Claritas 6.152. Interesting piece on hektographs and origins of duplicators. Comments on travel, politics, fossils, reviews and plenty of LOCs. Slimzine but interesting.

SPACE CADET.2 R.Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Ave, Apt.110, Vancouver, CANADA 6J1 1J1 32, ERG-size pages, well laid out, neatly printed but few illos. Excellent item on first SF, 'RED PLANET'; film article, 'Wizard Of Mars', Mayan travel piece, part of a WW1 record and other goodies as well as lots of LOCs. Very good perzine for the 'usual' or \$1.00. Keeps a neat balance twixt fan and sercon.

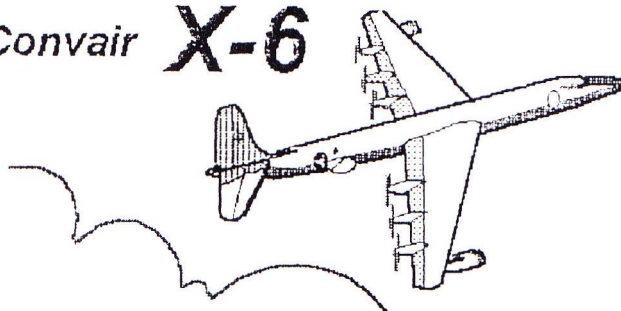
ATTITUDE.5 Pam Wells, (and co-editors, John Dallman and Michael Abbott), 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge CB1 3QF. No less than 60 well-produced A4 pages. Interesting natter on e-mail, two Con reports, Good Fanzine reviews, Pieces on Cricket, Farming, Comics (sorry, 'Graphic novels'), story outlines and a very good LOCCol. Not a lot of artwork, but front/back 'joke' covers. A well-written, outgoing zine, available for the usual or 3 trade copies of your zine. Nice, middle of the road and one of the better zines around.

LATE LOC ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 COMMERCIAL ST., NORTON, MALTON YO17 9ES

Must admit, I tend to look with a little envy at the Bible-bashing Fundamentalists, who can be so certain that everything in the sacred Book is true; even at Archbishop Usher of blessed memory , who calculated the Creation to be exactly 4004 BC. ☞ Don't forget that sect which regularly sets - and revises, a day for Armageddon ☞ Oh, I can call myself a Christian; but when according to our teachers and leaders, it isn't necessary to believe in the Virgin Birth and that the Resurrection is just another old myth, what's the point? Of course, having too much faith leads from American teachers being ordered to teach the Creation myth as the absolute truth, to such as Jim Jones and David Koresh. ☞ Personally, I'm an atheist and can see NO grounds or justification for believing in a mythical God. Religion has lasted for two main reasons - 1. You can't disprove something non-existent, and 2. People just can't face the fact that their existence ends when they die. Belief in some future Nirvana makes a nice comfortable cushion. ☞ I haven't yet seen the Fylingdale's Pyramid in all its glory, but I loved the earlier domes. Did have thoughts of basing a von Daniken-style book on them, called 'Golfballs Of The Gods'; though really, they're too recently demolished with too much evidence to be entirely convincing. ☞ Well Val and I saw a whole slew of smaller ones at a base near Ripon, so maybe you'd better title that book, 'Do Gods Play Golf In Yorkshire?' ☞



The Convair X-6

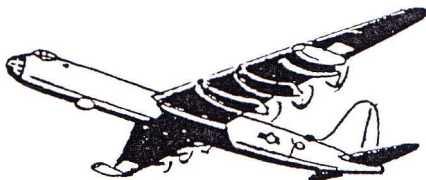


SF fans have long talked of nuclear-powered aircraft. That dream nearly became reality in the fifties when it was proposed to convert two giant, 230ft. span, Convair B-36 bombers into reactor-powered X-6s. The six wing-mounted, pusher turboprops were to be replaced by turbojets and a further four, atomic powered jets were to be mounted beneath the fuselage.

A third B-36 kept its turboprops and jet engines but was modified into the NB-36H to carry a test reactor in its rear bomb bay. A hundred foot shielding section including a 12" thick water barrier was planned to protect the crew from radiation.

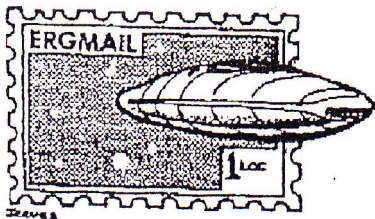
In the event, the two X-6s didn't get past the design stage and were never built, but the NB-36H made no less than 47 test missions, including the first in-flight operation of an air-borne reactor in September 1955. The aircraft never flew under nuclear power, as although in 1951, GEC were given a contract to develop a propulsion system, it never made the grade. The X-6 was to have large air scoops on either side of the fuselage, these would have channeled air into and through the reactor's core where it would have been heated to 1000°F before emerging from the turbojet nozzles. Climb to altitude was to have been on the standard jet engines followed by a gradual shift over to flying on the reactor powered jets.

Between missions, the X-6 was to be positioned over a deep pit. For storage and testing, the reactor would then have been winched down and covered by heavy lead doors. Several special radiation-shielded ground support vehicles were constructed, including a ground tug, a fire tender and a mobile crane.



The specifications estimated the aircraft length as 162ft., span 230ft. max. altitude 40,000ft. and a speed of 390mph.

T.J.



MARK COULTER, 41A GLANTON HOUSE, EDENDALE AVE.
BLYTH, NORTHUMBERLAND NE24 5QF

This Sense Of Wonder. Could it be that everyone's standards have got higher? With the way special effects are so good on films and TV so everybody wants more. I have been watching Buck Rogers made only in the late 70s and the special effects are rubbish compared with DS9 and Babylon 5.0 → I agree

that standards have got higher, but wouldn't cite DS9 or visual SF as the reason. I was thinking of printed SF. ← Crime Deterrent. What about bringing back the old stocks for minor offenders? I'm sure some scientist could come up with some obnoxious stuff to be used as missiles. Also the birch could be brought back. → I tend to agree with birching, but the stocks would be an open invitation to the sadistic yobbo to chuck anything with total impunity. ←

BRIDGET HARDCASTLE, 13 LINDFIELD GARDENS, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON NW3 6PX.

It was nice to find what those golf-ball things were that I was driven past on holiday one year (on the way to a steam railway in Yorkshire). It's a pity they're gone now, but a seven storey pyramid sounds almost as good. → Nowhere near as pretty though. That railway was the amateur-run, North Yorkshire Moors Railway which runs from Pickering to Grosmont. ← Oh, Doc Savage's left hand is upside down (or is that another of his cunning disguises? → Bugrit! Dare I say 'deliberate mistake'? No, can't get away with that oldie. To be honest, I goofed. ← I want to try hektography. → Masochist ← I have tin, gelatine and a recipe, but don't know what to use for ink. → Any reader help? ← Are Gestetner stencils the same as spirit duplicator carbons which the recipe recommend.. → Afraid not, a totally different system. You 'cut' stencils, but with spirit dupers you use the carbons to put reversed words on a master which then prints right way round on paper. With hekto, you write normally on a master, transfer this to your gelatine. Print (now reversed) and then get normal way round prints from the goo. ←

ETHEL LINDSAY, 69 BARRIE RD., CARNOUSTIE ANGUS, SCOTLAND DD7 7QQ

Once again, thank you for ERG 130. I suppose we do still need an Early Warning Signal? Seems a shame if we do, apart from anything else, what an expense! → Snag is, more and more countries are investing in ICBMs. Who knows, Irak or Iran may soon play that game. ← Peter's taking the Bible literally was amusing alright, but it reminded me of a minister I once met. He was talking to a man whose wife had died. The man said he didn't believe in Heaven and the minister replied, "Well I think we go to a different dimension." → Sounds like an SF fan. I once had a long argument with two Jehovah's Witnessed and they both believed in the accuracy of the Bible and the Noah legend in particular. ← Your not being able to handle the Firdt Fandom Award at Glasgow has landed it on me. Have a feeling you'll not be there, but if you are, look me up at the SF Chronicle table. → Sorry, but apart from ill health, the sheer cost of that Con is far too high. £200; registration for Val and I, at least another £100 travel, £200 or so hotel, throw in meals, drinks, books -- heck we'd could have a week in Spain for that money. Sadly, Cons are getting TOO costly for the teenager, the unemployed and the pensioner. ←

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KINGS RD STH., WALLSEND NE28 7RE

The gyroscope. Don't forget there's a lot of difference between the performances of a toy gyroscope spinning at a few hundred revs and a professionally built one spinning at a few million. \Rightarrow Quantitatively yes, but qualitatively I doubt whether faster spinning would produce different results. \leftarrow The moral of your Scottish Idyll is of course, you should not write any more such. 'Fell into the brae and were drowned' - please note a brae is a hillside covered with deep heather. \Rightarrow Well my brae was deep under water \leftarrow I regard haggis as a most delectable dish when served with neeps and champit taties (turnips and mashed spuds).

TED HUGHES, 16 KENMORE RD., WHITEFIELD, MANCHESTER M20 8ER

Your cover is redolent of Dold's work, full of duplicated apparatus. I prefer your unaided efforts. The monster was suitably gruesome, but the apparatus unconvincing. Those meters were definitely pre-war vintage. \Rightarrow Surveys have shown the old needle and dial meters are easier to assimilate at a glance than bar or digital types. \leftarrow Your piece on gyroscopes was informative, if inconclusive. I have a feeling you didn't take your experiments far enough. Not that I think gyroscopes will provide us with some kind of Dean drive to take us into space. I feel there is more to gyroscopes than meets the eye. Unlike your earlier criticism of Schrodinger's cat with which I heartily agree. That is an edifice of ambiguity which might just as easily be applied to tossing a coin.

CHUCK CONNOR, SILDON HOUSE, CHEDISTON RD., WISSETT, NR. HALESWORTH, SUFFOLK IP19 0NF

I was impressed by the detail of the cover - though you do yourself no favours using a 9-pin dotty. Are you sure the Smithsonian aren't placing bids for that old Epson of yours? \Rightarrow Actually, I used a Samsung. \leftarrow Shame on you for missing out Pat Savage ("A big, bounceful babe in the region of 38-24-36 - one hell of a region!") Doc's sister. OK, so she doesn't appear until late in the storylines, but... \Rightarrow I goofed in forgetting her, but she wasn't his sister, but his cousin. \leftarrow One thing Peter Langley misses is that most of the world's religions contain something along the lines of flood/destruction (including Amerind and MesoAmerican who were certainly isolated from European and Eastern influences), so a disaster is commonplace stuff. \Rightarrow I don't think Peter denied the 'disaster', just the idiotic concept of four men building a boat large enough to hold all species - assuming they could collect and feed 'em. \leftarrow

CHARLES BRODERMAN, 2815 SCHOOL ST., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22303, USA

Peter Langley's article was interesting. It's like shooting fish in a barrel. pointing out logical inconsistencies in Bible stories, yet people still insist in believing that every word in the Bible is literally true. \Rightarrow I wonder if 'believers' would give as much credence to a system of mathematics based on an error-riddled manual? \leftarrow These people have been on the march here in the U.S. for the last 15 years or so and though a small minority, they have an immense effect on our politics. \Rightarrow The Marching Morons? All the more reason to debunk their theories. \leftarrow I watched a programme on TV once that claimed there were huge reserves of water beneath the Earth's crust and that during the time of Noah, this juttet out in fountains, miles in height. The programme even had computer animation showing this process, all very logical and scientific seeming. Incidentally, my spell-checker just offered for 'Creationism', the alternative of Cretinism'. \Rightarrow Who says electronic gadgets can't think? \leftarrow

VINCE CLARKE, 16 WENDOVER WAY, WELLING, KENT DA16 2BN

Mike Ashley has a good point on the readability of SF over the last 20 years - it takes real effort. Alan Sullivan raises the suspicion of a hackle, "Pulp writers were hack entertainers..."? He surely forgets that most SF stories and many long ones were originally published in magazine form. An enormous percentage of SF writers started their careers writing for the magazines. Maybe it's that emotive word 'pulp' which bothers him. 'Pulp' was cheap paper - after the war, the general standard of living climbed so that publishers could use slicker stuff. \Rightarrow To generalise, a very large slice of pulp fiction was hackwork, but as paper quality improved, with experience (and a more discerning buying public), so did writing standards. Naturally, the poorer (hack) mags vanished. \leftarrow The review of Space Science Fiction was hardly worth the space. Reviewing one issue of an obscure prozine is hardly worth it. \Rightarrow The idea is to give an idea of what a variety there was, and how each 'zine began. Even ASF No.1 was pretty poor. \leftarrow Bridget Hardcastle's uneasy and unhappy enquiry concerning punishment of youth has you begging the question. A strict regime for, young thugs means there'll be fitter delinquents on the streets. There has to be education too. \Rightarrow I don't think the yobbos are unfit even now. I don't pretend to know the answer, but some way is needed to make thugs decide that 'crime doesn't pay'. An unpleasant regime may help. It's easy to say, "Educate 'em" -- but HOW? Politicians and 'experts' always waffle at this point. Can you suggest a practical method? \leftarrow

LLOYD PENNEY, 412-4 LISA ST., BRAMPTON, ON, CANADA L6T 4B6

An interesting re-examination of the Noah story. While I won't brand it as a fairy tale, I will say that I believe many Bible stories should be taken figuratively instead of literally, and that 'Noah' is one of those stories. I won't say it didn't happen; I will say that something like that happened. Those who take it literally, rely too much on faith. I have heard of various attempts to recreate the pulp era by trying to write in that style. However, in this cash-strapped age, it's tough enough making a science fiction mag go, without trying a specialty version. Many readers are past the point where pure action would hold their attention for very long. \Rightarrow It's rather like trying to return to the old fashioned cartoon with its long-minded and dialogue-style explanatory caption, or revive the buggy-whip and hansom cab. \leftarrow

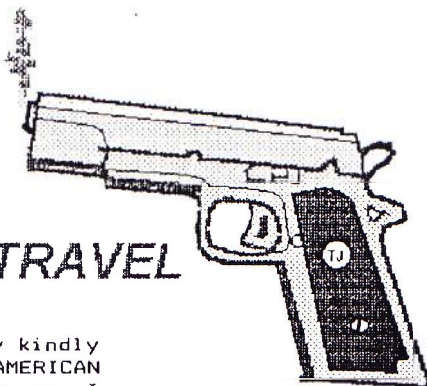
KEN CHESLIN, 10 CONEY GREEN, STOURBRIDGE, WES MIDLANDS DY8 1LA

The ERG I felt, was a particularly good one .. no long comment springs to mind .. enjoyed the Peter Langley NOAH, pretty typical of course, but JWs and such have closed minds. I read a PJ Farmer life of Doc Savage recently, I believe I've read one or two stories, but the 'life' is more interesting. I suppose the gyroscope article might have been inspired by the fairly recent (?) TV article. \Rightarrow No, I saw a gyroscope for sale and decided to buy it and experiment \leftarrow This was interesting, though I'm disappointed that there seems to be nothing to those claims of whoever-it-was.



HAVE GUN,

WILL TRAVEL



Roy Lavender very kindly sent me a copy of the AMERICAN RIFLEMAN. I don't know why, as I haven't handled any firearms since the war years. Not to worry, I enjoyed reading the magazine and came across some interesting facts, figure and anecdotes.

Various letters explain how honest, upright, gun-toting citizens were able to use their weapons to halt or foil crime or to assist embattled police officers by shooting sundry villains. This showed how important it was to be allowed to carry a gun. I couldn't help wondering if such weapons might frequently go on to be used to commit criminal acts - and whether such crimes would outnumber the times when the firearms foiled evil-doers.

Then I came across some fascinating adverts, including some which seemed out of place in a gun magazine. Bolt-on laser sights for hand-guns, model aircraft, ammunition and ammunition loading machines seem logical. 'Deep-freezing' gun barrels to improve their accuracy is relevant if a trifle exotic as are the offers to buy the Colt Gold Cup Limited Edition Automatic for only \$2,195 a throw. However one wonders how some of the ads crept in. A wolf's-head wall plaque is described as "the face projects an amazing 2.5" from the surface". You can buy a powered wheelbarrow capable of shifting a ton or so. There's a full page advertisement for a book on Vinegar! or would you prefer an adjustable bed mattress (the model sleeping on it is garbed in a delicate, lace trimmed nightie - and high heeled shoes). A subscription offer for the Blue Press magazine/catalogue shows several recent covers, all featuring women, so obviously they too may play recent cowboys and Indians. However, one wonders at the picture showing two women firing on a range, one of them has both eyes tightly closed.

Most mind-boggling are the jargon-filled offers for actual guns and ammunition. A Hornady reloading die (whatever that is) says. "The elliptical expander, which is now polished even brighter, reduces case neck stretch during sizing and the titanium-coated pistol die sizing ring eliminates the need for lubing cases." Not many people know that sort of thing. Likewise, an advertisement for bullets tells me, "a small metplat yields a high BC and has a secant ogive design". Makes one feel kinda humble - and stupid.

If you like unusual phrasing, one letter speaks of a recent cartoon, "it showed two U.S. soldiers sitting in the snow with their M1 Garands reading letters". Ye gods, educated guns no less.

Certainly, I never read a gun magazine before, but I certainly got a lot of fun out of reading this one. I wonder what to try next, The Tarmac and Asphalt Shifter's Gazette? Only time, and kind magazine senders, can tell.



RECENT READING

CHAOS CHILD Ian Watson, Boxtree £15.99
Fourth in the Warhammer 40,000 series, following 'Space Marine', 'Inquisitor' and 'Harlequin'. Science has vanished

and the heroes are Terminator Librarians in orbital battle monasteries. A brief Introduction sets the scene from the earlier tales. Inquisitor Draco is hunted by Imperial and alien enemies and devastated by the death of his assassin-courtesan, Meh'lindi. Will he manage to read the Eldar Book of Fate and learn the secret of the final Apocalypse? Time is of the essence

as the Chaos raiders approach, along with alien invaders bent on destruction of the planet. A richly-tapestried adventure for all lovers of high fantasy.

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE: Hearts & Minds Boxtree £8.99

A full-colour graphic novel set aboard Space Station DS-9. When a Klingon ship is destroyed, seemingly by Cardassians, Commander Sisko struggles valiantly to stave off interstellar war. The true culprits seek to incite an all-out battle for their own nefarious ends, but are discovered in the nick of time thanks to shape-changing Odo who disguises himself as a bottle of wine! You also get extra pages of cover reproductions from other Boxtree titles.

SHADOWRUN: WHO HUNTS THE HUNTER Nyx Smith Roc£4.99

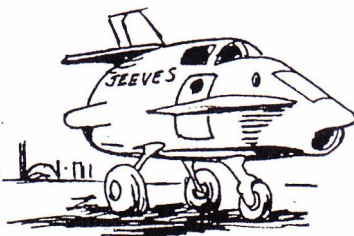
In an America where orcs, trolls and magic abound, were-tiger Tikki's cub is taken by elves as bait to catch her. She follows the trail to the big city. There, Amy Bermen, executive in a Japanese-owned company, is hunting an embezzler and water employee Brian Gurney is recruited into a secret militia. Gradually all the threads are pulled together in a fast-moving, violence-packed fantasy which grabs you right away and won't let go.

THE HALLOWS Michael Scott Creed Signet £4.99

Judith Walker is one of thirteen, 'Keepers of The Hallows', ancient British artifacts (improbably) given out by a tramp when the Keepers were children. Now in order to acquire the objects, someone is killing off the Keepers after hideous mutilation and torture. Judith is helped by Greg Matthews, who in turn is attacked and finds himself drawn into a ghastly web of total, sadistic violence. You'll need a strong stomach and a great improbability tolerance.

BATTLETECH: I AM JADE FALCON Robert Thurston Roc£4.99

Another in the action-packed Battletech series of future clashes between Clan using giant, humanoid fighting machines. This time, the ageing Joanna, still suffering from defeat in an earlier battle, must face and overcome a greater challenge from the legendary Black Widow. You also get three pages of illustrations depicting various battlecraft. If you're a fan of the series, what more do you need?



BEGGARS IN SPAIN Nancy Kress ROC £5.99

Gene manipulation allows children to be born with special qualities. The Sleepless not only have extra time, but also enhanced learning ability, and quickly rise to the tops of their chosen professions. Hostility builds against them and erupts into violence when it is discovered that the Sleepless are extremely long-lived. Characters, including the central Leisha are a bit thin, but the escalating menace is very well handled in a gripping tale of mass-hysteria versus a minority. Reminiscent of those other classics, Slan, Odd John and 'The Baldies'. Recommended.

BABYLON 5, BOOK.2 'ACCUSATIONS' Lois Tilton Boxtree £4.99

Set aboard the deep space station of the TV series. An old friend, wanted y Security, calls on Commander Ivanov for help - but then is found murdered. Security Chief Garibaldi's investigation is cut off and handed to an inimical Earth Security team which frames Ivanov for the killing - just when she has a lead to space pirates and a bigger mystery. Spin-off stories are often pot-oilers, but this one's an excellent taut, can'-put-it-down 'who dun it'. Recommended.

THE A-Z OF QUANTUM LEAP Julie Barrett Boxtree £6.99

We've had Trekkies (of various generations), Blake's 7 and Dr. Who fans, to name but a few. Now here's a Reference Book for devotees of the BBC's 'Quantum Leap' series. After a brief Introduction, there's an alphabetical list of Episodes. Following this comes an A-Z Glossary of terms, characters, devices, etc. Finally, there's a capsule precis of each episode, plus eight pages of colour photos (stills and stars). The book runs to nearly 300, trade-size pages. Good value for £6.99, so if you're a fan, rush out and get a copy.

From **BOXTREE** come three hefty, full-colour graphic novels:-

STREET FIGHTER.2 £8.99 is based on the computer game. Shad is a man-made island where combat is the only entertainment and corruption is rife. Undercover agents fight with baddies, but I found it hard to decide who was fighting whom. The well-drawn pages involves vicious fights punctuated by WHOOM, KA-BASH, VUG-OOBSH, etc. but if you're a fan of this style there's violence and action a-plenty.

STAR WARS: DROIDS £8.99 relates the early adventures of R2D2 and C3PO, along with young Nak Pitareeze before the Luke Skywalker era. The well-illustrated script is old-style action SF, blasters, space pirates, evil villains and simple plots. Plenty of blasters but few bodies to worry young readers.

STAR WARS: TALES OF THE JEDI: THE FREEDOM NADD UPRISING £10.99 is in a more serious vein as it tells the adventures of young Jedi, Ulic Qel Droma and Nomi Sunrider in high adventure set in the old days when Jedi Knights were the Galaxy's Peace Guardians. More sophisticated artwork and story line. Ideal for buffs of graphics or Star Wars.

RHINEGOLD Stephan Grundy Penguin £6.99

Massive is the only way to describe this 870 page work, set in the time of the Norse Mythology. To ransom his companion Gods Wodan and Hoenir, Loki steals by trickery a hoard of gold from the Rhine. It bears a curse, drives two brothers to murder their father, and one becomes a dragon guarding the gold whilst the other helps make a sword of power. Warriors come and go until finally Siegfried slays the dragon. Based on ancient myths, this is an epic blockbuster, but complicated by all the names; happily, a glossary is included.

THE LOST CONTINENT Bill Bryson Abacus £6.99

A hilarious account by an ex-patriate American on a grand tour of his native USA. Tongue firmly in cheek, Bryson puts the dog in for customs, people and places. There are laughs galore, but he'll never dare to return. Nevertheless, in my limited experience, it seems accurate. On the other hand, it's easy to criticise the ubiquitous "Have a nice day", but would one prefer to be told to "Bugger off"? Required reading for every visitor - and native American.

THE MAKING OF BLAKE'S SEVEN Adrian Rigelsford Bantam £9.99

Large size, card covers and running to 98 pages, this is crammed with stills in both colour and Black and white. After a foreword by Terry Nation, the ten chapters fall into four parts, one for each TV season. For each, you get casting and production details, locations, shooting sequences and problems as well as episode indexes, each giving a story precis and cast list. Finally, a summation with details of spin-offs and the fan club. A must for B7 fans. I thoroughly enjoyed it apart from the number of pages with print over photos - a process which ruins backgrounds and leaves text illegible.

GAMBIT A Graphic Novel from Bantam £7.99

Based on the BBC2 children's animated series. The seven-yearly visit of the terrifying Tithe Collector is due. He collects tributes and bestows the gifts of Power and Eternal Life on the Guilds of Thieves and Assassins. This time, someone is breaking the peace truce and when his brother is killed, X-man Gambit with allegiance to both Guilds, sets off, aided by X-woman Rogue to seek revenge, find his 'dead' wife and sort out the mystery. Full-colour, numerous slam-bang clashes. but the story line gets awfully complicated.

QUANTUM LEAP: DOUBLE OR NOTHING C.J.Henderson Bantam £4.99

Quantum Leaper, Sam Beckett suffers a painful 'jump' and finds he cannot contact Al Calavvi or A.I. Ziggy. Worse, his personality has split and now inhabits the bodies of twins; the brilliant Professor Mark Ralston and his brother, the crooked, brutal Wade. Mark is tracking down dumpers of toxic waste, but unbeknown to him, Wade is one of the gang. The complications make for a gripping interplay of the two lives before the problems are resolved and Sam is released.

STAR WARS: DARK EMPIRE II Bantam £9.99

Another hefty graphic novel. After a brief synopsis, you're into high adventure in space when, led by Governor Beltona, the weapon makers of Balmorra revolt against the Empire and Executor Sedriss is sent to quell them. The Alliance plan a cunning attack on the Empire's main base; a new clone of Emperor Palpatine sends his men to kidnap Leia before the birth of her third child whilst Luke Skywalker and Han Solo encounter other Jedi and lost races. Excellent artwork and use of colour although at times it's difficult to identify characters. Otherwise it's action all the way - and as usual Skywalker and Co. never seem to get hit.

