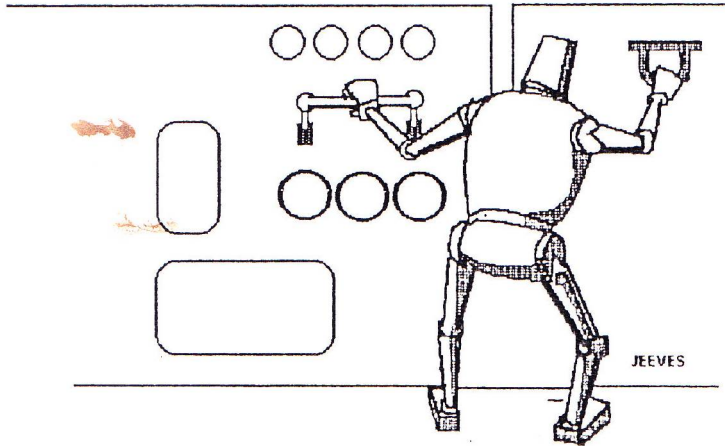


*Wishing You A
Merry
Christmas*

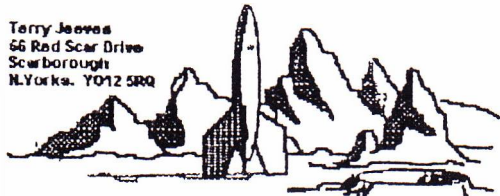


ERG

QUARTERLY 132

JANUARY 1996

Terry Jeess
66 Red Scar Drive
Scarborough
N.Yorks. YO12 5RQ



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. Now a News Bulletin.

On Thursday, September, September 28th., I fell downstairs and broke my ankle in three places. Admitted to hospital at 9-00 pm., I was operated on next day at 10.pm. They put two pins in my ankle and encased the lot in plaster.

That was OK, but then my water works dried up and I had to be catheterised for a couple of days. The catheter was removed and I was given an antibiotic - Caphredin. Half an hour later I went into a fearful allergic reaction, couldn't breathe, even with oxygen. Had the dose been given me to take at home, that would have been the end of the story, but when oxygen didn't work, they got me on an 'atomiser' in the nick of time and gradually, normal breathing returned - except for an intolerable itching all over my body. Happily this passed fairly quickly and all was well. I was able to celebrate my 73rd birthday in a horizontal position.

HOSPITAL VERDICT. Medical attention doctors and food, Good. Nurses, Very Good. HORRIBLE BLACK MARK to TV, this usually went on around 9-30am and stayed on the idiot's channel (ITV) until midnight. You can turn your back on the screen, but not on the sound. Why couldn't this have been turned off and fed by the bedside 'phones for those who wanted it. These had six or so channels, although only two worked, and were so inaudible I've no idea what they offered. Note to Hospital managers - TV is SHEER TORTURE if you have to endure EVERYTHING!

I was discharged the following Thursday and now hop around with the aid of crutches. The pot came off on Nov.10th, but the ankle is locked solid and I'm still on crutches.

Luckily, we live in a dormer bungalow with bed, lounge, kitchen and dining room all on same level. Not so good is the fact that both computers are upstairs and this is the first time I've been able to get up to them to access files, answer letters - and hopefully, work on ERG. Progress is by sitting on the stairs and hitching up one at a time, so computer access will be limited for a time until (I hope) the ankle gets back to normal.

SO, please bear with me if I have neglected LOCing your fanzine or responding to your letters. Please pass the word along and I hope to be back to normal as soon as possible.

All the best, Terry

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 'as new' condition unless otherwise stated.

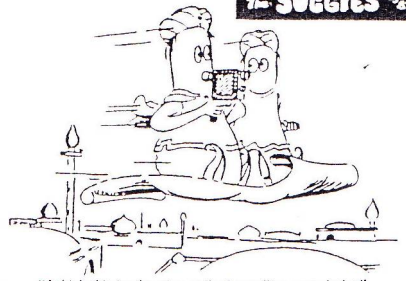
ASTOUNDING 1934 All issues on offer SAE for prices & condition.

Merry Christmas,

Terry

HOW MUCH IS THAT SOGGY IN THE INKWELL ?

7- SOGGIES by Alan Dodds



"I think this is what they call a 'travelling matte' shot".

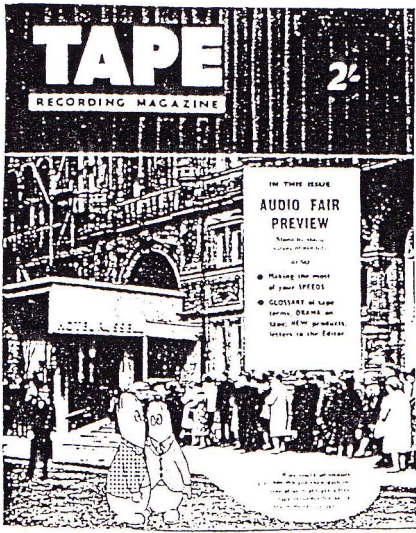
Soggies have been cavorting around the place for many a long year, so it seemed a good idea to devote some space to the little critters. The last time I did this was in ERG 6, way back in November 1960. Much has happened since then, but first the early history.

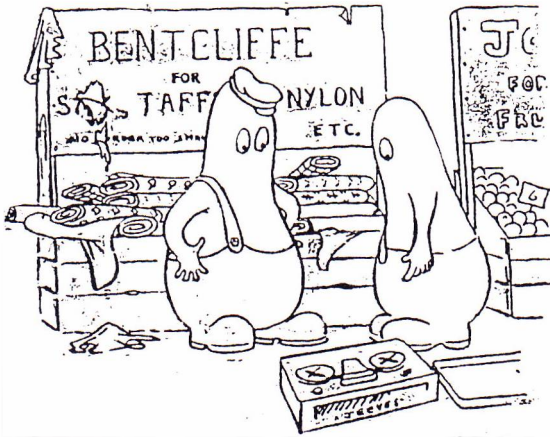
As far as I can recall, the first Soggy (The Mark.1) appeared in Alan Dodd's 'CAMBER' in 1953. It was the result of two forces, pressure of work and my rotten figure drawing. To solve the problem, I evolved a simple, easily-drawn shape. A few modifications and the basic Soggy was born; a pear-shaped body, boneless arms, thin hair and no mouth, nose or legs. The only clothes were shoes and a pair of trousers supported by a single strap. The latter quickly evolved into more suitable clothing. Eyes were simply two ovals holding black dots. It's amazing how much expression you can get into such a simple face. Very occasionally, for a special reason, a Soggy would acquire a nose or mouth - Soggies normally communicate by telepathy and gain sustenance by absorbing solar energy.

I'd always been a bit dubious about characters taking over from authors, but the Soggies seem to have done just that with me. Very early on it became apparent that they were the cartoon version of Mr. Average - the chap next door who is bumbling, good-hearted and a bit dim. Soggies have an appeal about them, their wide-eyed expression of brainless idiocy can be very touching. This would banish if they had normal features. The critters made this obvious, that was dictum number 1. It also followed that no Soggy could be cruel or malicious. Try as I might, I couldn't create a situation

where the fellow wasn't more to be pitied than censured. This means that finding a way to express variety of expression had to be found. Lacking mouth, nose, cheeks or eyebrows, they demand that this be done by the positioning of eyes, hair and body posture. It seems to work out pretty well

For many moons, the little creatures romped happily through the pages of many a fanzine. Then one day some horribly drawn cartoons appeared in THE TAPE RECORDING MAGAZINE. I took one look, said, "I can do better than that", and bunged off half a dozen. They were accepted, more demanded and I was away. They even made it to the cover for a special edition. For that, I had to do a montage of a Commissionaire, a queue and two Soggies standing outside the Hotel Russell.

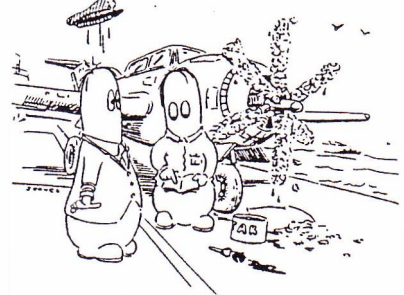




"I'd like a piece of felt, about a quarter of an Inch square—for a new pressure pad."

However the cartoon of which I'm the most proud was the year Eric Bentcliffe ran for TAFF and I sold the magazine a cartoon plugging the event. I wonder how many SF fans were amazed to see a BENTCLIFFE FOR TAFF slogan in a commercial magazine.

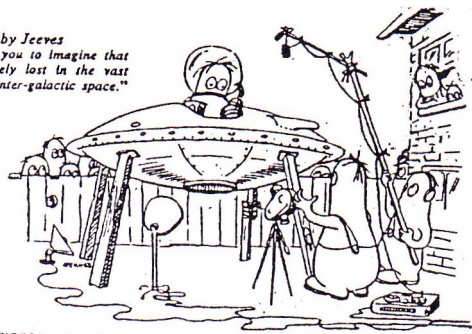
Emboldened by this success, I began to try other markets. Soggy cartoons appeared all over the place, SEA CADET, BANJO MANDOLINE & GUITAR, ANGLING, RAF REVIEW, QUIET PLEASE, TEACHER'S WORLD, HI-FI NEWS, AUDIO VISUAL MAGAZINE and even as a regular strip cartoon in the Sheffield CHILDREN'S TELEGRAPH.



"It says it here, 'all circuits are to be fully feathered during ground test'."

A Soggy cartoon featuring a crystal microphone was reprinted in the Cosmocord house magazine. During the drought of '76, the Yorkshire Water Board used one of my cartoons in several advertisements - only stopping when I wrote asking for payment - typically, they never replied to my letter. A city centre camera shop had Soggies in their advertising brochure, and they also featured in two series of Industrial Safety cartoons, one for Monsanto, the other for I.C.I. Soggies also appeared in a book, TAPE RECORDING AND THE LAW as well as a handbook of helpful advice for the disabled and one was even used in the Billy Graham Hymn Book! They also illustrated a story I sold to NURSERY WORLD.

THE SOGGIES by Jeeres
"Now I want you to imagine that you're absolutely lost in the vast immensity of Inter-galactic space."



AMATEUR CINE WORLD - 9th FEBRUARY 1961

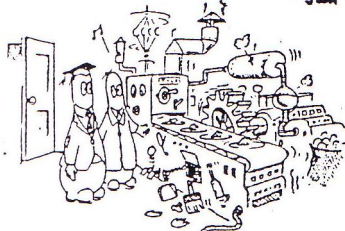
The longest running sales started in 1960 when I began a regular cartoon in AMATEUR CINE WORLD which was then a monthly. For a time it went weekly, which meant a lot of work, but also increased lolly. The mag changed its title to MOVIE MAKER, then to MAKING BETTER MOVIES and finally to VIDEO MAKER before they went bankrupt owing me £120.

That run alone lasted over thirty years and highlights included the use of Soggies (by Alan Cleave, with my permission) in a short animated film advertising the Ten Best Competition. One Year, they even appeared on the official Christmas Card from MOVIE



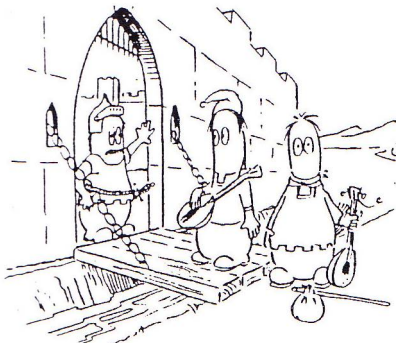
MAKER. Not bad going for something that started out to be a labour savour.

Schools, Daily Telegraph.
Jan 71



"And I think this machine will solve your school meals problem."

West Riding expecting
a drop in meals . . .



"BUZZ OFF, THE BARGIN DOESN'T WANT ANY MISSEKLES—HE'S JUST BOUGHT HIMSELF A NEW TELLER!"

In addition, the little critters have often appeared in the pages of ERG and in many another fanzine., but sadly, a collection of children's stories featuring Sam Soggy, still remain unsold — so if you know a friendly publisher?

Meanwhile, I hope you like the samples given here, but if you ever come visiting, I have two thick albums full of clippings.



Smile
with the
Soggies

I'm sorry, Snaggleworthy, but I'm afraid you'll have to think of some other way to make a little extra money!"

GENERAL CHUNTERING

Ken F Slater

The collapse (more or less) of the Net Book Agreement has not, so far as I can see, made any great difference in the overall cost of books. Of course it is early days yet, and some publishers are still refusing to give the extra discounts that some of the bigger chains (and some not so large wholesalers) are requesting. In some places a reduction of 50% is offered on selected books - most of these are not books I would buy for myself. Some I might buy as Christmas or birthday presents, but even that is doubtful. Speaking to one traveller who was saying how difficult it was to fill wholesale orders at present (they all want 62½% off, and full returns, on low quantities) he said that at least s-f people want a book and buy a book, and so far as he can tell cutting the price won't make much difference. SF people are less inclined to impulse buying of books....Just been over to COZICON in Schevingen (The Hague) and was pleasantly suprised to find the flavour was almost as international as had been INTERVENTION. I'm not certain but someone said they'd counted eight nationalities. Mostly I went for the break, and to renew a lot of old acquaintances; as there were some half-dozen (or more) people there who'd been at NOVACON one got that feeling that the whole thing was an extention. So maybe life is one long convention, with boring mundane interludes at irregular intervals. If you don't like the idea, maybe you ain't a "trufan" after all....Next year the BENELUXCON will be held in Schevingen. A true Beneluxcon, I was told. There will actually be a Luxemburger in the line up. Incidentally, while walking around in the busy mall by the sea front, near the pier, I saw only one busker playing an acoustic guitar; no-one was laying around drinking out of bottles; we were not accosted by anyone begging for anything (or trying to sell anything) and although a lot of folk were moving around fast among a throng of others moving slowly, there was no shoving, pushing, or general obnoxious behaviour. I think Tony would have been safe here, no matter which way he turned after leaving the hotel. You didn't know? Tony turned left out of the hotel in Birmingham, and got mugged about a hundred yards down the road, at Novacon....daylight, as well...of course, I suppose muggers have to get used to being open in their activity....do you remember those old yarns when the explorers/Terrans came upon a lost city/empty planet and find that as they travel down the tunnel/street/whatever the light follows them? Do you realise that as more and more people get outdoor lights fitted with sensors we have caught up with that situation? I was walking my dog this evening, and as I walked down the street each bungalow or house would switch on...except mine, as it happens...mind you, we've not come on this the way it was in the stories, where the illumination was usually a public service. We've come at it backwards, where we have it as part of a protection we feel we need from the alien next door, not the one out of the flying saucer. Do we really need it, or is it a mind-set we've gotten ourselves into? So far I am concerned the most threatening things that come to my door are little old ladies with collecting boxes. Although there were a couple of fairly large youngsters at Hallowe'en....but at night I let Freddie bark a bit, and then take him to the door with me, making a great show of holding him back. He takes some holding, and I don't dare let him go. He'd probably lick the caller to death ..but they don't know that. Please keep it quiet, won't you? Thanks. One of the other things that has crept up on us is the newspaper that is printed out in your home. Except it seems more like mags than newspapers that are favouring circulation this way...GALAXY is on the net! ERG soon? KFS



ARE THERE ALIENS OUT THERE ?

Is there intelligent life on other worlds? For that matter, is there life of any sort elsewhere in the universe?

Doubtless the cynic would point to TV programmes or assorted wars and say there isn't even intelligent life on this world. Nevertheless, answers to these questions have long been argued to and fro,

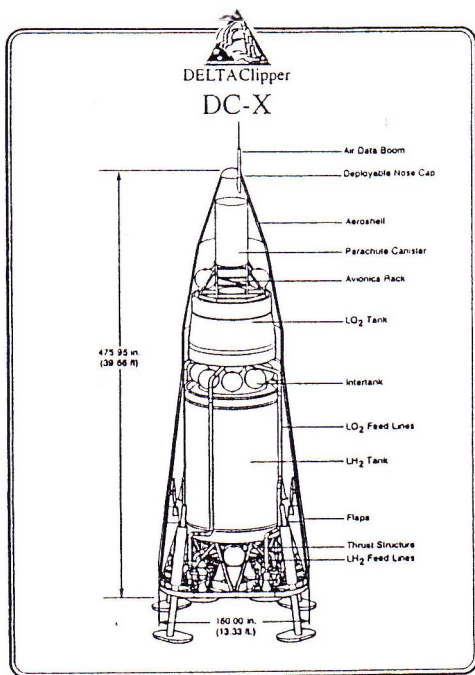
not only by SF fans, but by many learned scientists and churchmen. The latter often quote, "God made the heaven and the Earth, the moon and the stars". Take that line and there's no further argument. We (and all other earthly lifeforms) were *created*. Everything was made for humanity, there's no mention of life being plonked down anywhere else, so therefore there isn't any. End of story.

Accept that attitude and there's no point in trying to convince you otherwise. Stop reading right now and go twiddle your rosaries, crucifixes, tarot cards or chant your mantras.

It must be admitted that there are good arguments on both sides. The strongest of those against the possibilities of other life seems to be based on statistics. So many almost impossible conditions must be met if life is to arise - and develop. A solar system with at least one planet in an orbit providing bearable temperatures throughout its year. On the planet we need the right chemical conditions, the proper amount of the correct solar rays and some initial spark to get things going in the first place. This of course, is for *our* kind of life. Some other form may develop under different conditions. I remember seeing an awfully complicated equation for calculating the chances of life arising. It looked impressive, but at least half the parameters involved were obtained by guesswork. There were so many critical factors which had to be satisfied that for life to have arisen at all is something like a miracle - which of course is where we came in.

However, to my mind, the statistical argument against life arising is also the strongest proof that life on Earth is NOT unique.

Here's how I see it. Indubitably, various life forms, intelligent and otherwise have arisen here on Earth. If it is possible for an event to happen once, then given sufficient time, sufficient variety of conditions and sufficient attempts, it must be possible for it to happen again. I submit that in a universe which is several billion years old, is likely to survive for a few billion more and has numberless stars of every conceivable variety, then what HAS happened once, CAN happen again. Other forms of life must have arisen, are arising and will arise. We may never meet or contact them, but they MUST exist at some point in the space-time continuum. I could be wrong, but it seems logical what do you think?



MCDONNELL DOUGLAS

THE DC-X CLIPPER

After seeing various news clips about the testing of the revolutionary new VTOL rocket, the DC-X Clipper, I wrote to McDonnell Douglas and asked for any information they cared to send. They very kindly responded with a hefty press handout giving details and a couple of striking photographs. I can't include everything here, but the following summary should be of interest to many readers.

The Single Stage Rocket Technology Program is to demonstrate the practicality, reliability and cost-effectivity of a fully re-usable, rapid turnaround, single stage rocket; able to fly into space, return, be serviced and ready for another mission with the same rapid turnaround as aircraft.

The Single Stage To Orbit (SSTO) program was in three three phases.

Phase 1, August 1990, consisted of a \$12million, design and risk competition focussed on multiple, single stage to orbit concepts.

Phase 2, August 1991 A \$60million contract was awarded to design and build the DC-X (Delta Clipper-Experimental, to take off and land, vertically using a hydrogen and oxygen rocket operated with the simplicity of a normal aircraft.

Phase 3, will be a 13 month program for upgrading to DC-XA leading to the X-33. Design and construction is to start in 1996, a government/industry decision is expected in 1999 on whether to proceed with a reusable launch vehicle (RLV).

McDonnell Douglas developed the DC-X, a single stage, fully re-usable rocket which takes off and lands vertically, but is maintained and flown in the same manner as an aeroplane. The DC-X team can fly the rocket, service it and fly again in 2-3 days. Flight tests are being conducted in the New Mexico desert. Under a series of co-operative research agreements awarded by NASA, McDonnell Douglas will integrate key advanced technology components into the DC-X. The team will strip much of the original equipment from the vehicle, leaving the aeroshell, avionics, landing gear and reaction control systems. They will also integrate the new parts. The up-graded vehicle will be called the DC-XA.

The DC-X uses liquid hydrogen and oxygen, stands 40feet tall, is 13.5 feet across the base and weighs 41,360lbs at takeoff.

SUMMARY OF DC-X FLIGHT TESTS TO JULY 1995

AUG.18 1993 Took off, hovered at 150ft, moved laterally 350ft. and descended to landing pad. Flight time 60secs.

SEP.11 1993 Took off, hovered at 300ft., moved laterally 350ft. and descended to landing pad. Flight time 66secs.

SEP.30 1993 Took off, reached 1,200ft, moved laterally 350ft. and descended to landing pad. Flight time 72.2secs.

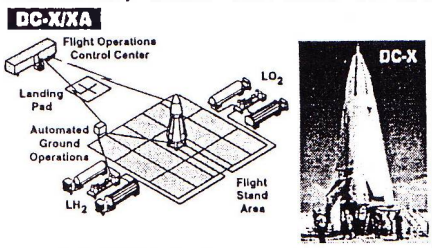
JUN.20 1994 Took off, reached 1,500ft., made a further curved ascent to 2,850ft., descended to landing pad. Flight time 136secs.

JUN.7 1994 A small explosion due to a fuel leak, occurred at take off. The DC-x then landed safely using its autoland facility. Elapsed time 78secs.

MAY.16 1995 Took off, reached 7,500ft., with angle of attack sweeping from zero to 70° during ascent. The DC-x travelled 1950ft down range, flew sideways at 110 ft/sec back to landing site and descended at 200ft/sec to landing pad. Total time, 2min 12secs.

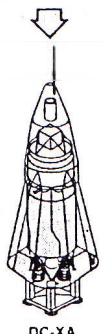
JUL.7 1995 Took off, climbed to 8,200ft, pointed its nose 10° below the horizon, rotated 138° to base-down attitude, then descended to pad. Total time, 2min,4secs.

In June 1995, McDonnell Douglas/Boeing announced the selection of a VTOL configuration as the optimum research test bed for the X-33 competition. Having a crew of two and standing about 90ft tall, the X-33 will be a rugged, light weight vehicle extending the flight envelope into near-orbital regimes. It will demonstrate hypersonic and transonic fly-back, thermal protection and engine re-start. It will also demonstrate the full complement of aircraft-like operations needed to achieve low-cost, full scale operational systems. The experience gained from the X-33 program can dramatically lower the cost of transportation to and from space

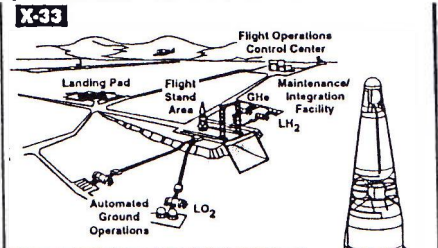


- DC-X (about 40 ft tall)
- 18-month rapid prototyping
 - Subsonic flight control
 - Vertical landing
 - Aircraft type operations
 - 3-person flight crew
 - 8-person maintenance crew
 - Autonomous flight operations
 - Emergency safe return

- DC-XA
- Flight testing of candidate X-33 light weight components and structures
 - Enhanced flight operations
 - Engine out safe return



DC-XA



FLY SOON - FLY OFTEN - FLY SAFE

- X-33 (about 90 ft tall)
- Rapid prototyping
 - Near orbital flight
 - Validate SSTO mass fraction
 - Lightweight, rugged structures and tanks
 - Operable thermal protection systems
 - Operable propulsion systems
 - Engine restart
 - Advanced manufacturing

X-33 Demonstrates Low Cost, Safe Operations:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| □ Turnaround time | □ Multibase operations |
| □ Reliability | □ Flight crew of 2 |
| □ Automation | □ Small maintenance crew |
| □ Health monitoring | □ Spares/ training/support |
| □ Facilities | □ Certification |
| □ Mission planning | □ Safe abort - safe return |




 ERGMAIL

ROY LAVENDER, 2507 E.17th. St.,
LONG BEACH, CA 90804-1508, USA

Comment about 'The Rifleman'.
Parliament is as free to ban
firearms as it is to authorise
arbitrary searches and seizures in
the homes of honest citizens.

Result, you have less than one million guns in the hands of the law abiding, most of them shotguns in the hands of the landed aristocracy - versus perhaps, two million in the hands of the law-abiding. A criminal is virtually certain of having a non armed victim. England, Wales and Switzerland (1988) had exactly the same homicide rate, 1.1 per 100,000, yet every Swiss male is required to keep a fully automatic rifle in his house and is free to own all kinds of firearms.

Robbery rate in England, 45/100,100 in Switzerland, 24/100,1000

Burglaries in England, 1640. in Switzerland, 277.

Figures for the USA are lower than for England, but I don't have them at the moment. It appears a burglar fears a gun more than a telephone call. Local riddle. Call for police, call for a pizza, which will arrive first?

You probably read the headlines of a tourist murdered in Florida. Florida has a Concealed Carry law. Any adult citizen without a record can get a permit to carry a gun. Tourists coming off planes have been thoroughly searched and proved to be unarmed - Gotta control those terrorists: you know.

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KING'S RD. Sth., WALLSEND, NORTH TYNESIDE NE28 7RE

OK Ariston Theotocopulous Jeeves. He was the bloke in the film who asked where it was all going to end and then led everyone out in a mad rush to destroy the space gun. *Wonder if they had a gun licence $\{ \}$ and just as they got there it fired, thereby spreading the occupants to a thin paste on the floor of the shell. I was surprised that Nigel Tangye who designed the machines for the film, the flying wings, helicopter etc., should have made such a boo-boo, particularly as rockets were pretty well understood when the film was made and only lacked the fuels and a few billion in research. *Well, firstly, Tangye probably followed a script by Wells (and others?) Whoever put in the gun probably had Verne in mind as being more familiar to the public. Way back in 1930/35, rocket experiments were either secret or spectacular flops. $\{ \}$**

TED HUGHES, 10 KENMORE RD.M WHITEFIELD, MANCHESTER M45 6ER

Page 3 of ERG, I've seen the original of that cut at the top of the page somewhere else, haven't I? *No, I re-drew it from a such-publicised photo. $\{ \}$ Quite agree with your thesis though. Who wouldn't? Obsolete three-inch floppies are my current bind, not to mention a real-to-real tape recorder, a library of classical LPs, an obsolete Pentax ME Super .. I could go on but I won't. It works the other way, too. Our telephone was the old-fashioned dil kind, my daughters wanted me to throw it out. Eventually, my youngest offspring reported a noisy line. An engineer called, took one look at our museum piece, threw it out - and that's how we got a new press-button 'phone.*

ERGMAIL, Sometimes it's difficult to sort your correspondent's opinions from your comments. Instead of interpolating your views, could you put them at the end of each letter? It would make the lettercol easier to read and you'd have your say just the same. *True, I've considered this before, but putting the response slapbang after a comment, makes it more apt (as with the above space gun interjection). If I lapsed by comments at the end I'd also have to identify each bit to which I was referring. Notice, I bracket my bits and put _____'em in italics. $\{ \}$*

11

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

If film-making had been anything more than a small boy's dream, I might have been lumbered to this day with 9.5mm equipment. There may be some consolation about as far as your holiday and family films go, there are firms about who can transfer them to video so you can still run them when your projector goes kaput. But that doesn't do anything for your present film-making, does it? Then again, how long will the video cassette format last? Lurking at the back of my mind is the theory that the March Of Progress isn't always due to the questing mind of Man, but that it's fuelled by the profit motive - and with the replacement comes the bill. \Rightarrow I think you're dead right. I suspect solid state RAM recordings are lurking just round the corner to replace clumsy tape-moving systems, then what price VHS etc.? \leftarrow

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

Your article, WHICH SHALL IT BE? struck home. I have discovered my great nephews do no read books. They do not have time - what with TV, games computers etc. Also, they expect to sit and be entertained, otherwise they become bored. When I lent my father EARTH ABIDES, he was upset at the idea of reading ability being totally lost; yet the generation written about in the book did not have half the technology we now have, it certainly makes you think. \Rightarrow Yes, nowadays, the 'entertain me, I'm bored' generation are the ones who go looking for trouble because 'There's nothing to do'. As for reading, I fear that 'graphic novels' - lots of colour pics and little reading matter, show a nasty and disturbing trend. \leftarrow

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

Why can't light escape a black hole? Well, for any body to escape a gravitational pull it has to be launched with kinetic energy equal to or greater than the gravitational potential of the body it is escaping. The kinetic and potential energies can be equated to give an expression for 'escape velocity' - the minimum required to escape the pull of the other body. For a black hole, the escape velocity is greater than the speed of light and so light cannot escape a black hole. This came up in my Physics A level exam. \Rightarrow All this I fully accept - but, it still leaves the poser, IF light always travels at 186,000 mp/sec, it must then slow near a black hole (or it would escape). So light CAN travel slower. This happens in a dense medium, so maybe a black hole has a very dense vacuum around it??? The mind boggles. \leftarrow

DEREK PICKLES, 44 ROGLEY LANE, BANKFOOT, BRADFORD BD5 8LX

Your question, what would happen in power cut in a supermarkey? They stop more customers coming in and allow those inside to estimate how much they have in their trolleys, pay that, and walk out. \Rightarrow And what if the power cut continues - as during war damage? \leftarrow Shop assistants don't give change like they used to do. I ran market stall for years and taught my assistants to give change the Scottish 'addition' way. Today, you just get a handful of change shoved in your hand along with a yard of till roll. \Rightarrow My point exactly, without the power to run the till, modern assistants can't cope with the maths involved. \leftarrow Your thoughts about what would happen if ten years' education were missed. I sometimes watch those sword and sorcery films and marvel that they zoom around the universe in starships and then hack at each other with swords. There's definitely something wrong with that scenario.

C.W. BROOKS, 713 PAUL ST., NEWPORT NEWS, VA23605

Bridget Hardcastle's desire to try hektography is rather anachronistic. *Henley's Formulas* gives the following recipe for PURPLE ink:-

Methyl violet..2 parts, alcohol..2 parts, sugar..1 part, glycerine..4 parts, water..24 parts.

Dissolve the violet in the alcohol mixed with the glycerine. Dissolve the sugar in the water, then mix the two solutions:

For BLACK ink, methyl violet..10 parts, nigrosin..20 parts, glycerin..30 parts, gum arabic..5 parts, alcohol..60 parts.

The simplest formula for the gelatin, 1 part gelatin, 2 parts water, 4 parts glycerin (by weight). \Rightarrow Truly, all knowledge is to be found in fanzines. \Leftarrow

I don't know what Connor has against Epson's 9-pin dot matrix printers, they are cheap and I have never had mine serviced. \Rightarrow He neither, it's now 14 years old. \Leftarrow Ribbons cost \$6.00 as against \$100 or whatever for a cartridge. \Rightarrow I re-ink mine umpteen times, cost, peanuts. \Leftarrow

ALAN HUNTER, 1186 CHISTCHURCH RD., BOSCOMBE EAST, BOURNEMOUTH BH7 6DY

Personally, I have no objection whatever to your use of computer art. The 'jaggy' effect has quite a charm of its own. I particularly liked the headings for ERGmail and 'HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL'. It may well be however, when quality is essential, such as the aircraft designs, hand-drawing could be preferable. \Rightarrow The great advantages in using the PC for drawing are 1. Ease of correcting any line. 2. Availability of instant shading tints (Using Letratone is tedious) 3. Manipulation, changing, modification and saving of a drawing. I reckon I'll keep using the PC. BUT, I really drooled over that booklet of your artwork - SUPER! \Leftarrow

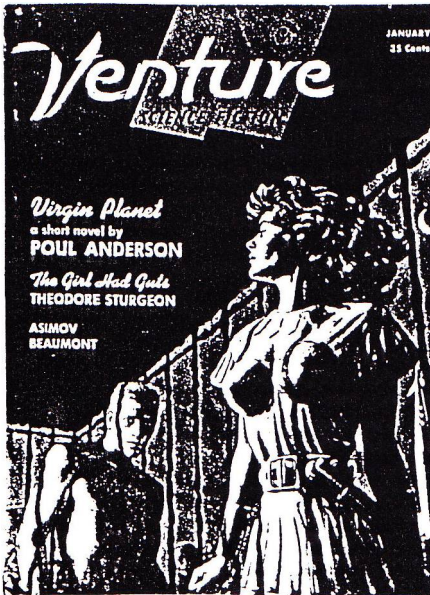
CHARLES BROERMAN, 2815 SCHOOL ST., ALEXANDRIA VA 22303, USA

Enjoyed 'Which Shall It Be?', I've had a computer for the last four years and it would be difficult for me now to go back to using a typewriter. I'm such a miserable typist it would be almost impossible to type a letter and hit all the right keys while at the same time, thinking what to say. On the other hand I'm glad to stick with so-called 'snail mail'. There's something pleasingly archaic about a piece of paper physically carried from one house to another, even across oceans. \Rightarrow It's even nicer to sit back in an easy, fireside chair to read it instead of bolt upright before a glowing screen. Cheaper too. \Leftarrow Also, it's nice to know it's more difficult for someone to intercept and open a piece of mail than it is to see what's being sent by e-mail. According to a show I saw on TV, corporations are now building up detailed consumer profiles based on what an individual says on Internet. \Rightarrow Boy, must THAT be a skewed consumer profile. Rather like watching our ITV and assuming normal people are like that. \Leftarrow



Season's Greetings

Happy Christmas one and all;
Let us hope the snow won't fall
If it does, please not on us
Or we will start to swear
and curse



Venture

SCIENCE FICTION

January 1957, saw the first issue of the digest-sized VENTURE Science Fiction. Edited by Robert P. Mills, it was priced at 35cents. The rather drab cover was by Emsh, who also had a pair of interior illos. John Giunta did the other two scratchy pieces.

The story line up began with the overlong, VIRGIN PLANET by Poul Anderson. David Bertram lands on a planet populated - solely by women, for many generations. Don't ask me how they propagated. Never having seen a man before, they cage Bertram as a monster - before their hormones direct otherwise and all is well.

Two short stories describe the same event from different viewpoint. A MAN OF THE WORLD by Les Cole tells of a post-Armageddon man encountering a young couple, so he kills the man for hid shaving mirror before turning to the girl for a different reason. A WOMAN OF THE WORLD, Rose Sharon, tells it from the girl's angle. She could have helped her young man, but waited for the outcome so she got the 'best' man.

THE DUST OF EARTH was a rather contrived Asimov story in which a scientist kills his credit-stealing boss, but is trapped by his own scientific background.

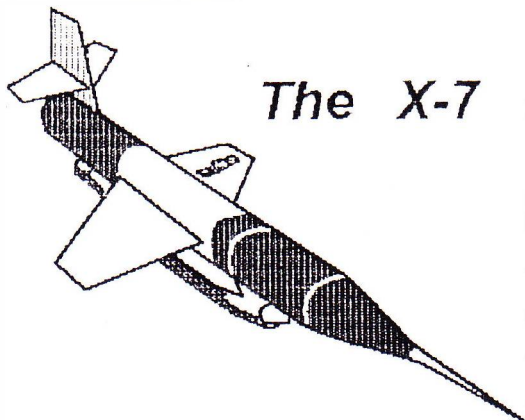
In HERO AT WORK by John Jakes, a trader on Mars sells his wife into slavery via a matter transmitter, kills numerous others, then leaps into the device himself. All this a few hours after being shot in the chest at point blank range by both barrels of a shotgun!

OH FATHER OF MINE by Charles Beaumont tells of a monomaniac who spends 37 years building a time machine so he can go back, kill his father and see if he then vanishes. A predictable 'snigger' ending.

THE GIRL HAD GUTS by Theodore Sturgeon describes an alien parasite which assimilates its host's entrails - which, if danger threatens, can then leap out and attack someone else.

Finally VENTURINGS by the editor, was a single page natter about the stories. Overall, not a striking first issue. The stories were not badly written but were rather contrived pot-boilers. With time, the magazine improved, but only saw 10 issues in 1957/58. It was revived for a further 6 in 1969/70 with Edward L. Foreman as editor.

Anybody wanting to buy a full set of 16 issues for £40, post paid, contact me.



The X-7

THE X-7A, X-7A-3, X-7B, & XQ-5

In 1946, the Air Force placed a contract with Lockheed for an unmanned, vehicle to conduct ramjet tests at supersonic and hypersonic velocities. Late in the test programme, the XQ-5 was also used as a target for testing the TALOS anti-aircraft missile, a task at which it proved faster than its pursuer!

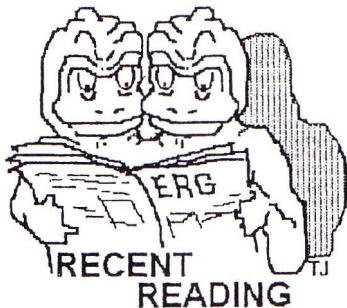
By 1959 when the contract terminated, 61 vehicles had been completed.

During the design stage, small scale models were launched, first, from the ground, by *slingshot* and later by air drop from a P-38 or B-29. Final tests employed a B-50. (The up-rated B-29). Originally, the full-size ramjet powered craft was to intended to fit inside the B-29s bomb bay, but this proved impossible due to its high tailfin. Instead, it was mounted on a special framework fixed between the port engines.

A ramjet depends on air ramming in at the front. Fuel is added and ignited causing the air to expand and increase the pressure even further. This high pressure jet ejects from the rear to provide propulsion. The faster the ramjet goes, the higher the ramming pressure and the more power is available for acceleration. To begin operating, a ramjet must first reach sufficient speed for the incoming air to reach ram pressure. This is about 300mph, so initial acceleration of the X-7s was by booster rocket. One might expect that once started, a ramjet would keep accelerating forever, but the limiting factor is the strength of the airframe.

The first test in 1951 nearly ended in disaster when booster separation bolts fired prematurely and the tailfin collapsed causing the X-7 to disintegrate - in front of its parent B-29. Snags were eventually ironed out and some 80 successful flights made using Marquadt ramjets of various sizes. When fuel ran out, the vehicle parachuted down in a vertical position which allowed the nose probe to drive into the ground and hold the X-7 upright. A few were landed in a horizontal position, using inflated airbags to cushion the landing shock.

Four basic types of X-7 were built to test various ramjet sizes. The X-7A-1 was used for those with a diameter of 20" to 28", the X-7A-3 for other engines. The similar X-7B was used for testing communications equipment and the XQ-5 as a high altitude, high speed target drone. During the tests, ranges of around 100 miles were achieved as well as altitudes of over 100,000 feet and a record speed of 2,881mph. All in all, a successful programme which proved the ramjet system for use in Bomarc and Nike missiles.



QUEST FOR THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH

\$5.00 Purple Mouth Press

Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St/. Newport News, VA23605, USA.

This private venture runs to 26 pages, has card covers and is well illustrated by Alan Hunter. Opening with 'Quest Of The Starstone', by C.L. Moore and Henry Kuttner, it features Jirel Of Joiry and Northwest Smith, presented in 'Weird Tales' style. It is followed by the verses of 'Green Hills Of Earth', a

section giving their background and also two sets of music, one by George Heap, the other by Joseph Kaye. If you're a Heinlein fan, don't miss this, it's a limited edition of only 500 copies.

ANIMAL LOVERS Tom Johnston Boxtree £5.95

Around 120 crudely drawn, smutty, sex-slanted cartoons almost entirely devoted to animals and their sexual deviancies and frolics, together, or with humans. No rapier-like gently hinted ideas, no suggestive, nudge-nudge sniggers, but if your mind is broad enough to drive a truck through, then you may enjoy these. Not my cup of tea.

QUANTUM LEAP: ODYSSEY Barbara E. Walton Boxtree £4.99

Time-jumping Dr. Sam Beckett lands in the body of 12 year old, gifted student, Sean O'Connor, as he participates in a competition called 'Olympics of The Mind'. A worthy project, but under threat of cancellation. Sean's mother is an alcoholic and his peers all come from unstable homes. How can Sam use his youthful body to reverse the State's decision?

BABYLON 5: BK.3 'BLOOD OATH' John Vornholt Boxtree £4.99

Third in the series from the TV show, set in a space station situated near a 'wormhole'. Ambassador G'Kar has a blood feud called against him by Mi'Ra, daughter of the dead, Du'Rog. When his spacecraft explodes, Commander Ivanova and Security head Garibaldi travel to G'Kar's home world, Narn to find the killer. Instead they too face a Blood Oath. Plenty of action, thin characters and messy names, but great if you're a B-5 fan.

BLOOD AND CHRYSANTHEMUMS Nancy Baker Creed £4.99

Mark Fry develops an interest in Ardeth Alexander who was forced into becoming a vampire by the tortured Dimitri Rozokhov (see 'The Night Inside', ERG 130). The two vampires are hunted by Fujiwara, a Japanese vampire and his ambitious henchman Yamagota, one for altruistic reasons, the other for gain. An unusual slant on vampirism and a real cliff-hanger.

A HISTORY MAKER Alasdair Gray Penguin £5.99

Set in 23rd Century Scotland where Clans fight mass battles under media coverage. Outnumbered 10 to 1, about to be hacked to ribbons, the Ettirck Clan preserves its undefeated record by a rule-bending trick. Survivor Wat Dryhope is promoted to C.I.C. but hates the conflicts and seeks to end them. Then he is seduced by Delilah Puddock who plans to use Wat as he tool. From this point, the remaining 160pp become a glossary giving meaning to obscure words and summarising what has gone before. Totally enjoyable until the lapse into, 'This is what it was all about'.

From **BOXTREE** come two 'MAGIC THE GATHERING' titles based on the fantasy trading-card game. The books are priced at £4.99 each and I gather sets of cards are to follow - (you don't need 'em to read the stories of mediaeval magic and fantasy).

WHISPERING WORDS by Clayton Emery tells of Woddcutter Gull and his half-wit sister. When his village is destroyed by a mighty battle, Gull takes service with wizard Towser and encounters brawls, battles and a strange artifact - and then his sister starts to regain her wits!



ARENA by William R. Forschen sees four mighty wizards about to wage their annual battle. Complications arrive in the form of spell-casting, Garth One-Eye who seems to bring a revival of a long gone House of magic and who is feared by the wizards' Grand Master.

BOXTREE have also come up with two tempters for Dr. Who fans.

THE DR. WHO POSTER BOOK £9.99 A brief Introduction gives a potted history of the series plus a listing of 'major' events. Then you're into no less than 30 stunning, large-size (24x34cm) full-colour enlargements of various stills of Doctors, monsters, characters, etc. Sensibly, details of the scenes are printed on the backs, thus leaving the pictures print free for framing or whatever.

THE DR. WHO POSTCARD COLLECTION £5.99 Is standard, paperback size, but bound by the short edge and holds some 21, full-colour and pin-sharp postcards depicting more scenes from various episodes - along with a variety of Doctors. Backs are standard postcard format and the price per card is relatively cheap - but how many Who fans would dream of dissecting such a display simply to send a note? Both titles will become collector's items, so get yours now.

SNOW WHITE, BLOOD RED Ed. E. Datlow & T. Windling Creed £4.99

21 'fairy tales' in a darker vein where all seldom ends well. Themes include the daughter of a witch, dreams of reality, a frog prince, Jack's beanstalk, obsession, Rapunzel's hair, a seed-girl, midgets and many others. The stories span the ages from past to future and are varied enough for all tastes - and none are 'expectable'. A hefty 400+pp and a steal at the price.

Another Creed title which arrived just before print date, so I'll simply quote bits from the press release:-

STALKING TENDER PREY Storm Constantine £5.99

Running to 548pp, "For thousands of years, side by side with man, a race of fallen angels has existed on this planet. They are the Grigori, a group descended from the Eloim who formed a group of watchers to come down from the high place and interact with humanity, the primitive men who worshipped them as gods - not entirely human, they need human blood to sustain their fleshly shape." "First in a new trilogy .. its hero is a reincarnation of the leader of the fallen angels .. his only choice is to use humanity for his own ends.

LAST MINUTE ARRIVAL

ALIENS V, PREDATOR - THE DEADLIEST OF THE SPECIES BK.2 BOXTREE £9.99

A large-sized, graphic novel in which Carolyn Delacroix is the 'trophy wife' of a business tycoon. Suddenly the scene changes and various, scantily-clad females (with costume changes between panels) fight endless on-going battles with robots and the alien Queen Mother. Other problems comes from the A.I. 'Toy' and a mysterious puppet master. Confused? So was I, but if you want pages of violent struggle, give it a whirl.