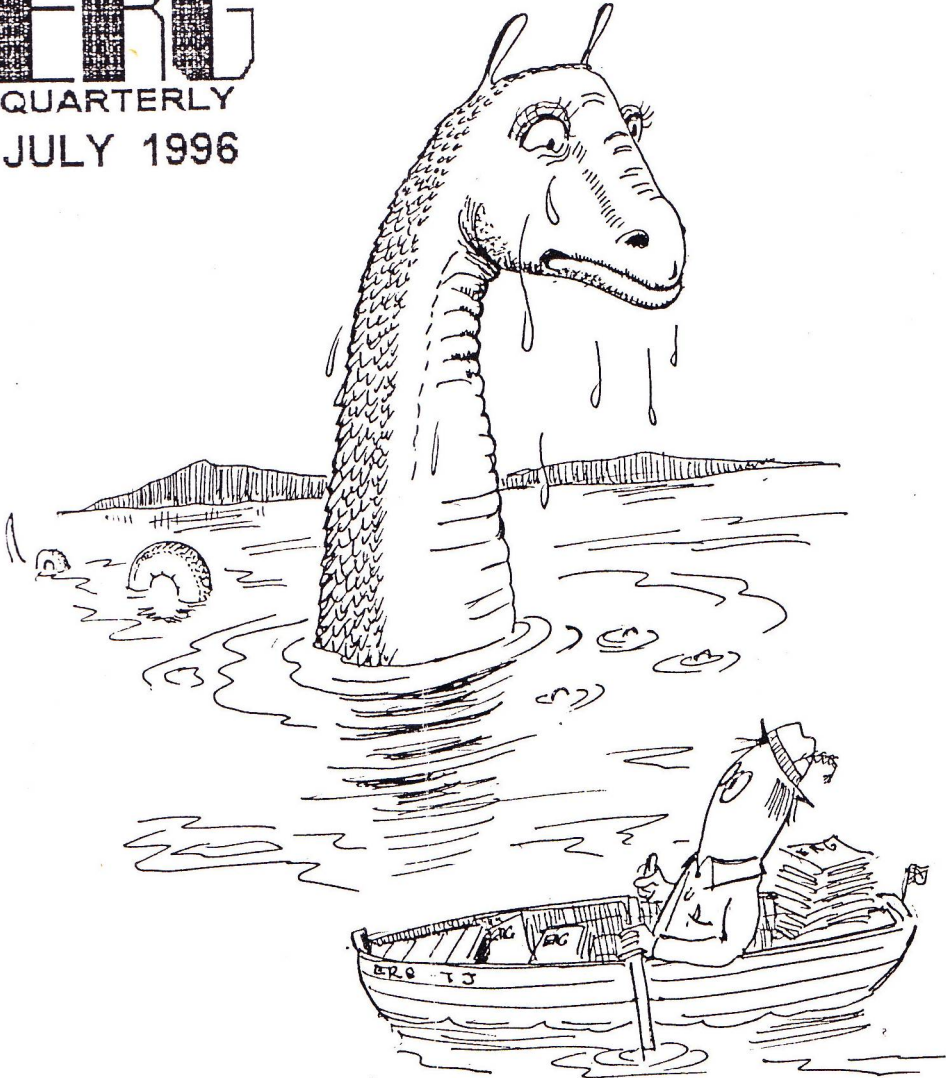


**ERG** 134  
QUARTERLY  
JULY 1996



"SORRY, NO ERG FOR YOU. YOU DIDN'T LOC  
THE LAST ISSUE."

# ERG 134

QUARTERLY  
JULY 1996

From  
Terry Jeeves,  
66 Red Scar Drive,  
Scarborough YO12 5RQ  
Ph. (01723) 376817

If you'd like to get the next issue, write a LOC on this one. A cross at the top of this page indicates that sadly, this will be your last issue unless you DO something. A question mark means "Are you interested? RESPONSE! is the key."

My apologies to you if I haven't LOCed your fanzine or replied to letters. Writing whilst flat on one's back is NOT easy. Here's the story:-

It never rains but what it comes down in buckets - or troubles never come singly (can they get married?). I reckon I'm the living proof. Barely had I recovered enough from my broken ankle to walk without crutches but using a stick - than on April 2nd. I walked down stairs, then collapsed on the floor in agony. Slipped disc? Acute Back pain? Whatever it was, I couldn't move; luckily I was beside the phone. It only took ten minutes to reach the receiver and dial Val to come home. She called out the doctor and after an injection, they got me into bed - where I stayed for three weeks. That in turn started my prostate acting up again. My back is gradually easing off - provided I don't sit long or walk far. I'm typing this issue in fifteen minute spurts. The prostate still has to be sorted. It was the end of May before I got to the PC to access sundry files -- and the mailpile is rather hefty. So, bear with me if communications, LOCs or whatever from this end are rather poor.

I recently had the misfortune to watch Ms. Janet Street-Porter (who talks like one), fulminating against the Internet in the 'WITHOUT WALLS: J'accuse programme. She spent half an hour rubbishing the Net as being 'For nerds, about nerds and by nerds'. Nowhere did she explain what the Net was, how it operated, why it was so popular or any other details. Apart from making umpteen totally unsubstantiated statements against the Net, her nerdish diatribe consisted of an endless string of vituperative generalities - interspersed with flashing lights, and a few incomprehensible 'talking heads' spouting gibberish. Truly, hers was a programme 'produced by nerds and presented by nerds'. JSP has all the appeal of a broken cuckoo clock - and doesn't sound unlike one.

Leaving Nerd-Porter, I am much happier to report on a couple of good men. After hearing my plea for aid with corrupted floppies and many which refused to format, that Good Man Greg Pickersgill sent me a bundle of replacements. Likewise Good Man John Rupik came visiting, brought more discs for me and also installed Ami-Pro in my PC. Much more user-friendly than Word Perfect, so when my back permits, I'm currently re-typing all my aircraft lists on the PC. Incidentally, Greg Pickersgill runs a fanzine foundation storage system, so don't throw away ANY of your old fanzines, mail them to him at 3 Bethany Row, Narberth Rd., Haverford West, PEMBES SA61 2XG, and do a good turn for posterity. He also loans out fanzines from his archives, so if you're interested, drop him a line (and an SAE).

Another SOS, somehow I seem to have mailed out my file copies of ERG 132, so if any kind person out there has copies they don't want to save, I'd appreciate their being sent this way.

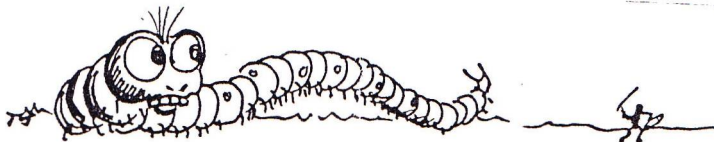
More media moan. Are we becoming a nation of TV hypochondriacs? More and more media time seems to be splurged on medical matters - dramas, 'comedies', documentaries, news items and slots in other programmes. I can remember the days when Tomorrow's World was virtually free of the stuff - now they devote at least ten to fifteen minutes per programme to it. Moreover, they try and dramatise the rest of their items. If showing a new burglar alarm, they must first dress up a presenter as a burglar and do a mock break-in. Media 'splurge' is used to make up for a lack of new ideas.

Even the children's News Round' on BBC now features a 'medical item'. Horizon, Arena, Equinox, Panorama and so on invariably take 'in-depth' looks at the latest disease, operation technique or medical panic. I get sick of leafing through the Radio Times and seeing the amount of time devoted to telling us how sick everyone is, might be or inevitably will be.

Still on the media, isn't there some clause in the contracts which says the programmes should (in some part) be of an educational nature? Have you ever switched on Saturday morning (Children's) TV? If so, you'll get a misbegotten melange of half-baked cartoons (many of a ghastly fantasy slant), pop music, inane soaps, and other mindless 'entertainment' all presented at a frenetic pace in psychedelic flashes at a volume designed to permanently deafen the viewer. No wonder we're breeding a generation of layabout nutters. Why can't they devote time to describing various hobbies, activities and constructive pastimes together with how to go about them instead of always pandering to the ratings - which are assessed by polling the couch potatoes who don't want to make a personal effort? I'll refrain from commenting at length on the idiotic 'quiz' questions such as "A dog has how many legs? (a) 2, (b) 3 or (c) 4. Ring 0891 etc." They're simply lotteries designed to grab lolly from the feeble minded. I'd love to see how much is raked in that way.

COLLECTION SALE. If you're interested in buying SF, send an SAE for one or more of my lists. LIST.1 Paperbacks at £1.00 List.2 Paperbacks at £1.20 List.3 Paperbacks, graphics and non-fiction at £1.50 and upwards List.4 Hardbacks List.5 Magazines.

Which is enough natter, now read on and compose your LOC.  
All the best, Terry

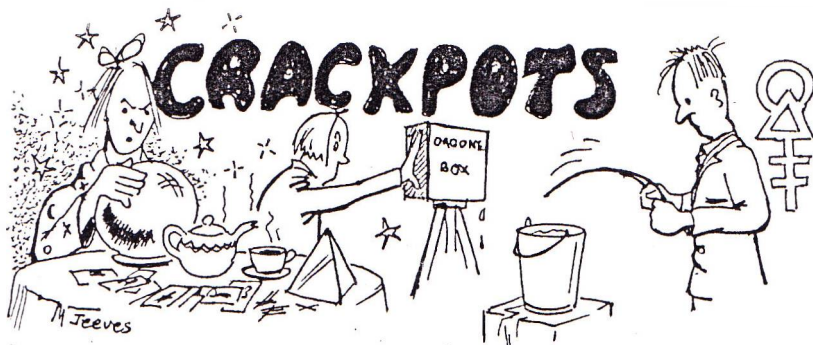


## GENERAL CHUNTERING

Ken F Slater

A quick reference to the ex-NBA. I do not suppose we'll ever have it back, but I was reasonably pleased to learn that one of the leaders in its destruction was, this Spring, bitterly complaining that although their turnover is up, the gross and net profits are down. I guess, after all, that having put themselves in the hands of the big chain outlets - and not only those in the booktrade - they are just suprised to find those hands squeezing them so tight that their pips squeak. Personally, I've been cutting back on orders for anything that is likely to be a popular title with the general public. Like new novels by T.Pratchett and A.McCaffrey, which I've noted being used as "bargain" (loss-leader) in chain stores. In one I found a first printing of a title, which I purchased. The publisher was supplying 2nd prints, and also it was about £3 less than getting it from the publisher. Unfortunately, there was only one "1st" in the stack....From his bed of pain our esteemed ERGian publisher/editor just wrote he'd like the column. Usually he sends me correspondence or quotes from letters arising from the previous column. This time just the request (command mode) written either by Terry or his tame spider.No hooks. So I'm on my own...I don't know if you were going to ALBACON in Glasgow this year, but you'll probably have heard that Harlan Ellison has been ill (heart) and so has had to cancel. Cuddles 'phoned me a few days ago and advised that they had secured David Gerrold as G.O.H. David, of course, fills the Glasgow con requirement of a foot in both the media and science fiction writing camps. Glasgow always has a strong element of Trekkies/Trekkers at Cons. David Gerrold I recall as the author of that delightful time-twisting tale, *The Man Who Folded Himself*. Whilst my ignorance of Star Trek is almost total, I do know he wrote *The Trouble with Tribbles*. The self-perpetuating furry balls you'll still see around at TrekCons, I believe.... this year I'll miss out on Glasgow (albeit I might pass thru on my holiday early July) but Susie (my daughter) will probably represent me there....I'll be out at the SFCD Annual Con, in Saarbrücken, which is datewise co-incident or something....I'm trying to convince the ConComs that a 'phone or telelink between the cons could be arranged....last time I recall this being done was way back at a Ketteringcon when the George Hotel was linked to California and 4sj for a short space of time...talking of cons, at Eastercon I was supposed to be on a panel, along with David G.Hartwell, Molly Brown, John Whitbourne, and Carolyn Caughey. In the event it didn't happen. About five minutes before we were due to assemble in the Green Room I was told it was cancelled, because the only panelists present were Molly and I. Not knowing the "plan" of the panel (I did discover later) the implication was that we two wouldn't be able to interest the punters for the required halfhour... Well, I have always been a bit of a bore when I get a bit between my teeth, but Molly is charming young lady with a bubbly personality, and given a little warning I'm sure we could have rounded up some others to fill the gaps, and still kept fairly well to the pattern of the "panel". But if you get on a ConCom, bear in mind that if you cancel a panel because a member or members haven't shown up, the implication is that you think no-one wants to hear the others.Which is somewhat insulting. Let the audience do the voting;when the occupied chairs on the rostrum exceeds those filled in the auditorium you know its a flop - but you then form a smaller group and have a general discussion on the subject.No-one attending is disappointed before it starts. How they may be afterwards is another subject. Well, that should cause a little controversial incoming mail.Mind if I duck out? See you at Novacon? Con-Fetti? G'bye KFS





According to an old Yorkshire saying, "There's now't so queer as folk". Looking at the activities, interests and beliefs of some people, that seems a pretty accurate statement. Take Astrology; this has been around probably as long as many religions - and with as little relationship to reality. Both promise much and seemingly deliver little. Somewhere in the Bible it says the stars were put in the Heavens to guide men. I fancy that has been the justification for many an astrologer. However, it applies far more accurately to the science of Celestial Navigation than to forecasting the future. I suspect that few navigators would claim their calling was God-ordained from the day of Creation.

Navigation is an exact science, Astrology most certainly is NOT. For centuries it fumbled along using the stars and planets to make its predictions. In all that time, if totally failed to predict the discoveries of many of those very planets. Newspapers and magazines waste time and paper in printing phoney horoscopes which are as reliable as the words of a gypsy fortune-teller. "It is a good time to think of change", "A new opportunity may arise", "Do not be too trusting", and so on. All as vague and useful as a rubber crutch. It would be equally valid to say, "Avoid drowning, do not fall off cliffs," and so on.

I once knew a lady SF fan who wrote and sold horoscopes commercially. I challenged her to write one for an unspecified but well-known person if I supplied the birth-date. I would then reveal the name and we'd see how accurate was her reading. She chickened out by saying that she only wrote horoscopes for a fee.

Have you ever seen a *specific* forecast done by astrology, palm-reading, tea-leaves, Tarot cards, I-Ching or whatever? Those last three in particular imply some all-knowing Overmind which (a) knows the future, and (b) can move material objects, sticks, cards, tea-leaves, into patterns which reveal that future. Believe that and maybe I can interest you in buying the Tower of London.

Then there are the characters who credit pyramids with esoteric powers. Put blunt razor blades in one, and overnight they will become sharp. Make one large enough to live in and you'll never be ill again - unless you go out to cut the grass or empty the garbage. A similar brand of nuttery is displayed by members of the Aetherius (spelling?) Society. These wights shove their hands again queer-shaped boxes whilst chanting pseudo-religious mantras. This charges the boxes up with 'orgone energy'. When released, the orgone energy will stop wars. It must work as Korea, the Falklands and Gulf conflicts have all ended. How can anyone believe such codswallop? I know, those who seek the mystic power of 'ley lines' or the kind of nits who flock to clasp chunks of Stonehenge to their bosoms at Solstice time in order to feel psychic emanations.

Then there are corn circles and other strange patterns which despoiled farmers' fields. When these shapes first appeared, 'learned experts' who should have known better, began to prattle about 'circular rotating wind vortices. Well, I might just stretch my imagination to accept a spiralling wind levelling a circular patch of crops, but to have it create concentric circles and straight parallel lines, triangles etc., is way over the top. Obviously hoaxers were at work, but did the 'experts' accept this? Did they heck, they fell back on visits by Little Green Men in UFOs with nothing better to do than land in a cornfield, create pretty patterns, then buzz off before they were seen. I think I'll throw in Buckingham Palace to that Tower Bridge offer.

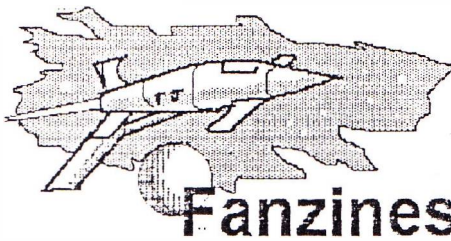
Having mentioned UFOs, I'd better add that I believe there are such things - but on closer inspection they usually change to become IFOs - (Identified Flying Objects). Val and I were driving home one night when we spotted a dome-shaped object not unlike an inverted saucer. It glowed a gentle yellow and was moving along just above a cloud bank on the horizon. We stopped and got out of the car for a better look, whereupon it became obvious that the seeming motion had been a combination of car movement and drifting clouds. As the latter cleared the UFO slowly rose higher to reveal itself as the top of the rising full moon. Our UFO had become an IFO. I wonder how many other citings have similar causes?

On a different theme, take dowsing, take it and keep it as I don't want it. I've seen numerous accounts on how good some people are at locating dead bodies, ore deposits or underground streams, simply by wandering around wagging a hazel twig or length of coat hanger. Others twiddle pendulums over maps or photographs to make their discoveries. I haven't seen their success rates published, but I'd love to see some proper tests - say blindfold the dowser and lead him around a grid of buckets, some empty, others full of water. If 'it must be running water', have a series of hosepipes with or without water running through them. Results of such experiments would be interesting. Similarly, one could blindfold the pendulum swingers before shoving random collections of maps, photos and blank paper under their device to see how good they are at finding lost objects, oilfields or corpses.

Astrology, Tarot, Pyramids, orgone boxes, dowsers, organised religions and Little Green Men, all rely heavily on one simple fact. It is very difficult, virtually impossible to prove a negative. We have no proof for the existence of the yeti, the Loch Ness monster or sundry UFOs, yet you can't PROVE their non-existence.

If I claim to see auras above the heads of certain people, you might say I'm a liar or just mentally deranged, but can you prove your contention? Bring up 50,000 people to say they can't see auras and it still doesn't prove I'm not the single exceptional case who can see the things. Similarly, despite having elephant-sized reservations, I can't prove that pyramids, tea-leaves, horoscopes, prayers or grappling with the slabs at Stonehenge don't work. Even if I could prove all these beliefs to be totally nutty, I'm sure many people would continue to cling to their weird ideas.

Truly, there's now't so queer as folk.



IT GOES ON THE SHELF.15 Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St., Newport News, VA 23605 USA 22pp Qto/mimeo, plenty of excellent artwork, book and foz reviews, LOCs and umpteen fascinating reproductions of those 'Why Don't They Invent...' illos from early Gernsback mags which Ned discovered reprinted in book form. Try faunching a copy.

THE SPACE CADET GAZETTE.5 R.G.Cameron, 1855 West 2nd. Ave., Apr.110, Vancouver B.C. CANADA V6J 1J1 32 A5pp Has one of the best Con reps I've read in ages, diary entries of a WWI vet, my 'First Issue' piece on UNKNOWNN, 'Ask Mr.Science' spoof, foz reviews, Mayan Pyramids, an odd-ball film quiz and LOCs. Enough variety for all. \$1.00 an issue or the 'usual'.

THE MENTOR.89 Ron Clarke, PO BOX K940, Haysmarket, NSW 2000, AUSTRALIA. 44 A4pp. Argument on differences between men and women, unpacking a PC, a history of science, life in Prague, haikus, 'poetry', the SF of Jack Arnold, sex in SF, a Strelkov column, fiction and LOCs. Terrific variety. Get it for LOC or Contrib.

OPUNTIA 20, 22, 22.1, 22.5, 2, 27 & 27.1 A5 in size. but printed sideways in 2 columns which makes reading tricky. I gather an Opuntia is a variety of cactus in case you wondered. It gives you Comment, LOCs, nostalgia, opinion, personal activities, a Con report and many other goodies. Something for everyone. Get it from Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P 2E7

THE KNARLEY KNEWS.56 From H. & L.Welch, 1525 16th. Ave., Gafton. MI 53024, USA 26pp/A4. Cover by me, entertaining natters on catching squirrels, women's surnames, fighting through snowfalls, book & foz reviews and plenty of LOCs. Nice friendly zine, get it for the usual or comment on some fannish aspect of the past decade. NO.57 just in:- 24pp, Book reviews, itea on Piers Anthony, LOCs & foz reviews.

ATTITUDE.7 Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge CB1 3QF

A massive 64pp/A4 with An Octocon report, travel in the USA, a piece on Paganism, a bit on boobs, the problems of brassieres and one on foundation garments. Bexism in collage, a Novacon report, Mary Bentler on writing SF and winding up with oddies of LOCs. Excellent stuff, well produced and plenty of variety.

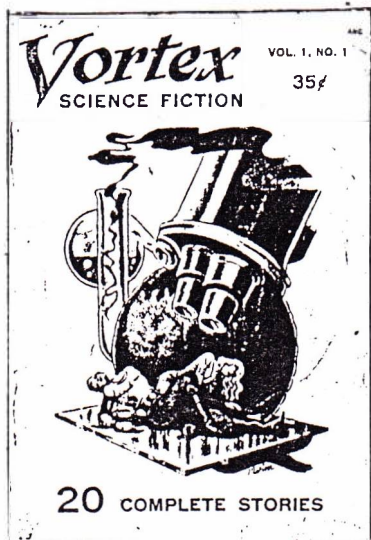
MIMOSA 18 \$3 or trade from Nicki & Richard Lynch, PO Box 1350. Germantown, MD 20875, USA Superbly produced, 52pp with a great, wrap-round card cover and excellent interior art. Articles by Steve Stiles, Dave Kyle, Kev. McVeigh, Vince Clarke, Walt Willis, 4SJ Ackerman, Roxanne Smith-Graham, Sharon Farmer, Les Cole, Richard Brandt, and a hefty Lettercol. Worth a Hugo of anybody's vote.

THE RELUCTANT FANULUS.44 46pp £1.50 or trade, from Tom Sadler, 422 W.Maple Ave., Adrian, Mich.49221-1627 USA Assorted articles (including my 'Film Career', Book, & TVSF reviews, Editorial, Foz, and LOCs. A nice friendly zine

HIDALGO 37 50pp, \$3.00 from Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, Mich. 48224 USA. Large coverage of 'The Pulp', extensive reviews of unusual books, Fanzines and Locs. This is an excellent read for anyone interested in the more off-trail older SF. Excellent pulp illo reprints.

BEGENSCHEIN 73 & 74 from Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Ave., NSW 2112, Australia. Worldcon Bid, and some book reviews than you'll find anywhere else, a US trip report and LOCs. SKUS 12 52pp. Glaring red card covers and for the usual from, Gary B.Mattingly, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin, CA 94568 USA. Editorial on work, music, computers, chile peppers, a 4 page Corflu photo section, Comments of 'Apollo 13' and a listing of 10 if its errors. Articles, LOCs and artwork. This is a really impressive zine, but needs a little more outside input.

MY APOLOGIES for brevity (or missing your zine) I'm trying to clear the post-slipped-disk backlog.



# VORTEX

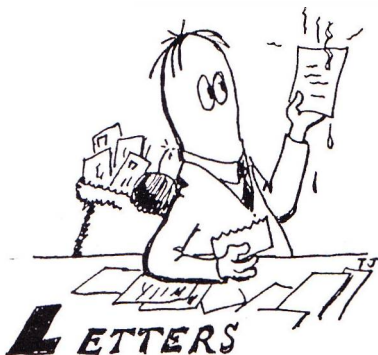
Edited by Chester Whitehorn and priced at 35c, the first digest-sized issue appeared in May 1953. Martin provided a simple but effective cover and shared interiors with Orban, Tink, Brucker, Mirachi and what looks very much like an Alan Hunter illo - can you confirm, Alan?

The issue holds no less than 20 stories from a variety of authors (and their pseudonyms). LOVE AFFAIR, 'Leppoc Derfla (Alfred Coppel), concerns the unrequited love of a robot for a human. In TOURIST ON MINOTAUR MOONS, by Milton Lesser, a greenhorn tourist achieves fame by reading the official rule book.

BEST MAN, H.E. Verret is of a murdering physicist caught in his own trap. SUNSET FOR PAWNS, F. Anton Reeds, sees aliens using humans as game pieces. FAIR EXCHANGE, L.M. Reynolds is about aliens trading 'jewels' which turn out to be their waste products. HOMECOMING, Alfred Coppel, is a typical post A-war disaster tale. THE GIFT, K.R. Veenstra, describes how an alien buys a human as a pet. STABILITY, Lester del Rey, A Venusian plant duplicates humans - too well for its own good. OMEGA, Fred Sorrell, has Androids seeking to ease the death of the last man. VISITOR FROM KOS, Harry L. Gardener, an injured alien transfers his mentality into that of a child. In OLD PURPLY-PUSS, by Sylvia Jacobs, makers of fake aliens, end up catching a real one. THE LAST ANSWER, Bryce Walton, is where the ultimate machine gives up its rule. RED CHROME, Brian Aherne, has all machines in violent revolt. THE MITR, Jack Vance, concerns a woman raised by alien beetle. When found by spacemen, they rape her. JHN'AH OHR, E. Everett Evans, sees how a telepathic mute is cured. THE HONEYMOON, Charles E. Fritch, when a crook marries a spider woman he meets a nasty end. THE GOOD PILOT, Albert Herrnhuter, tells of a logical spaceman facing an improbable creature. MURMUR OF DAWN, Anna Sinclair, where a tail-less animal is hunted by the tailed. THE TIME CONTRAPTION, Anthony Riker, when aliens attack a space station they are foiled by a time gadget. DEALER'S CHOICE, S.A. Lombino, Three slavers meet their fate on Venus.

The tales are mainly lightweight but passably entertaining potboilers. The del Rey uses the old 'shape-changing alien', to good, and different effect. All in all, a reasonable first issue. The second issue held no less than 25 stories, but then the mag folded.





KEN LAKE, 1A STEPHEN COURT, ECCLESBOURNE RD.,  
THORNTON HEATH, CR7 7BP

Your Page 14 lacks an ending @> Sorry, the line should read, "...Dynamic SF managed only a dozen or so." @> That damfool expression 'Graphic novel' slipped into use from the U.S. while nobody educated was looking; graphic is from the Greek graphein "to write" (originally "to scratch" i.e. characters written on stone), so the

misnomer really says "written novel" which is just what it AIN'T. A photograph is written by light, a telegraph written over a distance; adjective "graphic" pertains to writing - ALL novels are graphic... except those in pictures. @> How about "pictographs? What would you use to replace 'graphic novels'? 'Comics' they certainly are NOT. Maybe 'Nitbooks'? @> Perplexed by your niggles that you are 'assaulted by obscene gutter language'. Are your senses not assaulted by violence on TV, by political arguments, by inanities of pop music? @> Definitely, but I'm usually pre-warned about violence so don't switch on, I avoid politics and I think pop music is for the brain damaged. @>

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KING'S RD. 5TH. WALLSEND ON TYNE, NE28 7RE

Your cover reminds me of that film, A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH where David Niven crashed the first thing he saw was a barbed wire fence and a kid playing a pipe. @> Now HOW did my cover remind you of that? @> I read with interest your article on your days as a teacher. The only comment I can make is of my own experience as a chemist. Our regular supplier of gear and chemicals was having a clear out. We offered 'ewm sixty quid for what they cared to send. There was lovely stuff, a magnetic heater-stirrer outfit, a twelve volt variable output transformer, etc., The gear would have set us back at least a thousand quid had we bought it as listed. @> Next time you pass a bank being re-fitted, look in the skip outside and weep. Last week I saw a lovely set of pamphlet display shelves in Perspex, just junked. @>

VINCE CLARKE, 16 WENDOVER WAY, WELLING. KENT BA16 2BN

Your forgot to add Computers to you list of Men's Magazines, but your conclusion is so right. Where's a magazine with at least a tip of the hat towards literary interests? I even have trouble locating Book & Magazine Collector locally. @> I omitted Computer mags as not being relevant to 'reading'. Just GIGO @> I wonder how many of your readers will remember Lilliput? There was the obligatory nude in each issue of course, but some good articles and stories. @> A happy days. Do you remember GALAXY (Lilliput-size, NOT SF, and ARMCHAIR SCIENCE? @> I think it was an error to turn Ken's stuff into a solid block of type. @> That's how he used to do it in 1948, so I felt it right to keep it that way. He has carted blanche to change if he wishes. @> That was an intriguing query about Orion being known as the Hourglass. Set me checking pre-war anthologies without success. Unreachable Utopia. Who'd pay for these referendums? @> Well they manage it in the USA where the voting form can be fanzine sized. Enough lolly is wasted on plugging politics, divert some of that. @>

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

Where are the magazines of yesteryear? Well you can still find *Scientific American* in Malton's newsagents and *Focus* seems to be doing a good enough job at the popular end of the spectrum; but what I miss most of all are the general-interest titles, magazines that could be read by all the family. I was old enough for *John Bull* which we followed through all its changes, reincarnated as *Today* and then *Weekend*, and its eventual closure; as a family we were also faithful readers of *Reveille* (*Tit Bits* was always considered on the risqué side); and now the *Weekly News* is the only general title left, after the general fragmentation into men's, women's and children's interests. I can still remember a reader's letter from a decade back, where it was praised as having, "much to interest the family, and nothing to offend"; its standards have slipped a bit since, but it's a good guideline to consider today. ☞ True, but who is to consider it? ☞

ROY LAVENDER, 2507 E. 17th. St., Long Beach, CA90804 USA

Technology? Sometimes it just doesn't get connected. Back when Ur and Iridu were thriving, scribes wrote LOCs on clay tablets. After baking, they had very long lives. Much longer than Hekto or Ditto. In fact, thousands of them still exist after 7000 years. At the time, documents were signed by rolling a seal ring over the clay - so why didn't some future thinking fan make a seal ring the size of a mimeo cylinder and roll out an ish. The technology was there.

☞ But not the mass readership I fancy. But still readable after 7000 years - and my 8mm films, and reel to reel tapes will be unplayable once my projector and recorder pack up. Progress, bah! ☞ I'll admit I have no idea what postage cost between the two cities.



"It's THE LATEST  
JET-PROPELLED MODEL"

HED BROOKS, 713 PAUL ST., NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23605 USA

For years I have depended for security on a device that would turn on a light for about 20 seconds when it heard a noise - both sensitivity to sound and duration of the light were adjustable. These gizmos were cheap and easy to find for years, but now have become hard to get. I finally found one that had to be wired in place of a light switch - and of the three I bought, only one worked.

☞ Some office buildings use a reverse system to save light bills - their controller puts lights off in a room if no sound is heard for x minutes.

DEREK PICKLES, 44 ROOLEY LANE, BARKFOOT, B05 9LX

Ah, the Good Old Days of teaching. I had a class of 60 on teaching practice. I was taken into an old-style classroom with tiered rows of desks - the kind I had in the 30s - and put in charge of rows and rows of kids. It was hopeless, I had to collect the books in a cardboard box as I couldn't hold 60 exercise books in one arm. I went on a further TP where I was put in charge of the entire school of 11/13 year olds, while the Head held a long staff meeting. I lived the PE lessons. At one school, the PE teacher was away for the day, so I was put in charge of a busload of boys. Being a typical PE teacher, he had of course locked away all the gear. All that was left was a morse for wear bat and a split-seamed ball. Your fifteen a side cricket was a doddle, try to play thirty a side cricket with a ball losing its cover.

DALE SPEIRS, BOX 6830, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA T2P 2E7

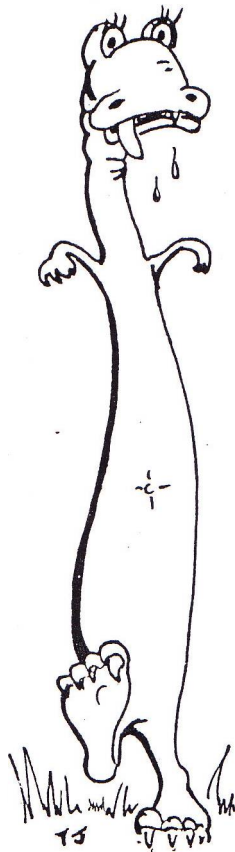
Your comments on Utopia I read the same day I read an article which mentioned that archaeologists and anthropologists have determined that the ideal community should not exceed more than 25 people in order to remain peaceful. The ideal tribe should not exceed 500 people, which is the limit of human memory to retain faces and names.

Above that, society must become impersonal and the only way to hold the people together is with a common vision. That vision used to be religion. Sometimes today it might be politics or money, but no real replacement has arrived to keep us coherent. For every L5er who says, "Let's go to the stars", there are more who say, "Why bother?" Truly, where there is no vision, people perish.

A. LANGLEY BEARLES, 48 HIGHLAND CIRCLE, BRONXVILLE, N.Y. 10708 USA

Since ERG has always devoted space to art and illustrating in SF, the following may interest you. I asked myself a while back how the quality of the magazine covers affected sales and reader interest. I couldn't quantify the connection, I suspect most fans bought the issue regularly whatever the quality of the illustrations - but I'm sure we all had opinions, and equally so that good art enhanced our reading pleasure. I examined all the covers on the 1934-42 ASTOUNDING a run coinciding with my most intensive pulp reading. My opinions of them then were much the same as they are now, 50 years later. In general, I preferred thoroughly sf-nal scenes, and most of them were just that. (The distressing trend to mundane scenes set in later.) I liked space-ship pics, and I see that of 23 covers in that period which I'd label outstanding (21%), no fewer than ten feature spaceships. Interplanetary scenes were my next favourites, there are eight of these. My remaining favourites are varied, - Feb.34 (Schachner's 'Ultimate Metal'), Apr.35 ('Einstein Express'), Oct.35 ('I Am Not God'), Feb.36 ('At The Mountains Of Madness'), also 'The Roads Must Roll', and 'Sixth Column'. Most were by Brown, but I feel Rogers was a more competent artist. Schneeman painted few covers, but his beautiful 'Saturn from Iapetus' (April 1939) makes me wish he had.

☛ I just did a hasty bit of research and scanned 120 covers - Jan.35 to Dec.44. I listed 39 'space' scenes, 16 'machinery', 10 'aliens/monsters', 3 'war', and only ONE robot! Oh yest, and only one cover which had a not been an asf fan, would have put me off buying (Dec.42). Of the 120, only 12 rated as 'good' - i.e. Stripped of title and lettering, I'd have hung them on the wall. A fascinating study, Langley; I'll try and expand on it when my various ills are cleared.☛





## MUSIC MAESTRO PLEASE

This is not for those who think music is the racket screamed out by Teeny Twitbonce or croaked by Bod Stewpot. Nor is it the din battered out by groups using names such as 'Earwigs', 'Rolling Garbage Cans', 'The Plonkers' or whatever as they serve up a tuneless 'thump, thump, thump' blasted out at ear-shattering volume. If you're a devotee of pop, slop, punk, gunk or junk, then read no further. To generalise, *Real* music is the stuff you occasionally meet on Radio Three, Classic FM, and the odd BBC 2 TV Concert. It has form, melody, does not grate, deafen or screech.

OK, now to put my money where my mouth is and give you a list of some of my favourite music. To paraphrase a famous saying, I may not know anything about music, but I know what I like. This means I may not be able to quote Symphony Number, Op., key or whatever, but I'll soldier on just the same. If you've never heard any of these pieces before, give them a try, you may be pleasantly surprised.

In no particular preference order so I'll start with Rachmaninov's Symphony No.2. We have a superb video recording of this being played by George Bolet, a wonderful piece. Dvorak's 'New World' Symphony may have been swiped to advertise bread, but it's another goody. More brassy in style is Chopin's 'Military Polonaise' of which I have fond memories as it was All India Radio's signature tune in the early forties. Another powerful piece is Grieg's Piano Concerto and to relax a bit after its resounding chords, you can't do any better than Debussy's 'Clair De Lune' or 'Après Midi d'un Faun'. Perhaps the most wonderfully evocative piece on my list is the second (andante) movement of the 'Concerto d'Aranjuez'. To me it epitomises a dry and dusty Spanish street with perhaps a sombrero clad sleeper in the heat of the mid-day sun.

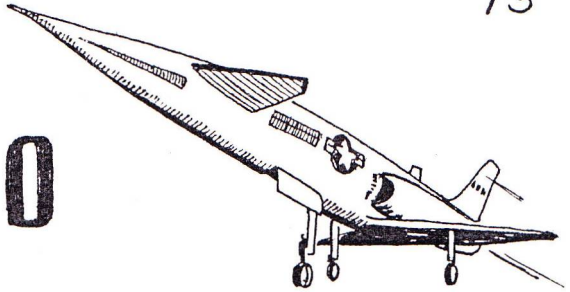
For a bit of humour, you can't beat Prokofiev's 'Lieutenant Kije' suite whilst for a marvellous monotonic rhythm carried by an incredible drum background, you just cannot equal Ravel's Bolero. Probably my favourite composer is Tchaikovsky. I love his 'Andante Cantabile', swiped in the pre-war years as 'The Isle of May'. Then there's his lyrical 'Serenade For Strings', 'Romeo and Juliet', the wonderfully varied 'Nutcracker Suite' and many others. Faure's 'Pavane' is slow, melodic and can bring a lump in your throat - as can Albinoni and Purcell.

So far, I haven't mentioned vocal pieces. This is because I generally dislike singers straining their voices for top notes or producing lyrics which get lost in the singing technique. One wonderful aria, 'One Fine Day' from Puccini's 'Madame Butterfly' escapes this fault as the melody is so beautiful. However some pieces use the voice as an instrument and then you get the full beauty without distortion. The 'Humming Chorus', another Madame Butterfly piece is one example. The duet from 'The Pearl Fishers' and the Bell Song from Lakhme are other lovely examples, but for me, one of the best is a fully wordless, piece by Villa-Lobos, no words, just a marvellous soaring voice.

With such beautiful and emotional music around it seems criminal that about 99% of broadcast stuff is ear-shattering trash.



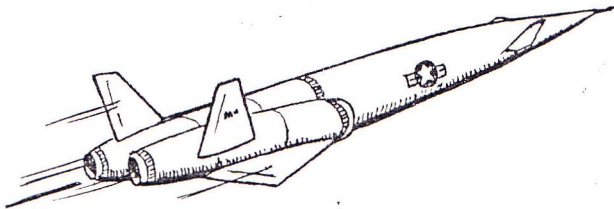
# X-10

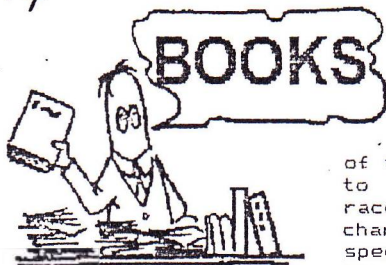


Designed as part of the Navaho missile program, the X-10 was a powered research vehicle. Despite its aircraft-like appearance, it carried no pilot but was radio-controlled, either from the ground or from an accompanying chase plane. Powered by two turbo-jets, the X-10 was 66ft. long, had a span of 28ft, a delta wing and a canard foreplane.

The first flight was made in October 1953, it lasted half an hour, during that time the machine reached a speed of over 400mph and an altitude of 20,000 feet. A good landing was made, but it almost ended in disaster when the drogue shoot delayed opening until the aircraft was almost in the crash barrier. The X-10 performed perfectly, but equipment snags plagued the program. During delivery of the first X-10, it was dropped and damaged by a malfunctioning crane. Another was blown up by when wrongly wired destruct system operated on take-off; two were lost after veering off the runway causing a landing gear collapse and fire; one flew into the ground when its autopilot went wrong failing to level out and another was lost when the drag 'chute failed to open.

Thirteen X-10s were built and in spite of the various setbacks, fifteen flights were made, the last three using the X-10s as targets for surface to air missiles. Heights of 45,00 feet, speeds of Mach 2.0+ and a range of 850 miles were achieved. The machines fulfilled their purpose in developing the upper stage of the Navaho missile.



CREATING BABYLON 5

David Bassom Boxtree £13.99

A 130pp, approx A4 size, spin-off inspired by the TV series. It tells of the idea behind Babylon 5, and its aim to bring peace to the Galaxy's five main races. These are detailed, as are the characters along with background history, special effects, costumes, aliens, music and interviews with cast members. You also get episode/cast/actor listings as plus numerous 'stills' in colour and black and white. A fascinating assembly of information and great for B-5 addicts. BOXTREE also announce two new titles priced at £4.99 each to tie in with a fantasy adventure series, on SKY TV. The central character is an immortal Scottish warrior born some 400 years ago. THE ELEMENT OF FIRE and SCIMITAR under the Highlander heading are what to look for.

BRIDESTONE Sheila Murphy Creed Signet £5.99

When her love affair goes awry, Cat Denby flees to her friend Fen on a Yorkshire stud farm, (Cat's boyfriend vanishes without a trace). The farm is run by Michael who is possessed by a shaman and has three local women at his command researching the phallic 'Bridestone'. Together they work to a horrible ceremony involving Cat, Fen, Michael, the three women, a half-wit helper and the stallion, Bel. Plenty of sex, straight, homo, lesbian and horsey.

THE GREEN MILE.1. Stephen King Penguin £1.99

This is the first part of a six part serial, it tells of how John Coffey is on Death Row for brutally killing two little girls; although he doesn't know why. To find out more, you'll have to buy succeeding parts. (Mar.28, Apr.25, May.30, Jun.27, Jul.25 & Aug.29). Each part is slim (92pp) and uses largish print, so the whole serial comes out a bit pricier than a single paperback, but if you like King's horror stories, here's your chance at a unique experiment.

THE WORLD OF DARKNESS series, Boxtree £5.99 uses a common theme. SINS OF THE FATHERS Sam Chupp, Street punk Kirk is dead and has a ghostly existence on the 'other side'. Tormented by a Demon, endangered by a hostile band and hunted by his father, he is befriended by spirit girl Sylvie in a horrific saga of violence. NETHERWORLD, Richard Lee Byers concerns Rose who is one of the city's free people. She encounters Zane and then is found dead. A pair of down-beat, under society yarns.

STAR WARS: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO VEHICLE AND VESSELS

Boxtree £14.99 A massive 200 pages crammed with text and drawings of the multifarious craft seen in the Star Wars films. A brief Introduction and a 'Timeline' Chronology of Star Wars history, a list of 'Layman's Guide To Technical Terms and craft manufacturers. Turn the page and you're into the real meat. Each left hand page describes a vehicle, its use and performance plus a perspective drawing. Facing this you get three-view drawings. Not only an excellent reference book, but model makers will find it a superb reference work.

UNCONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT P.P.Bowers Tab Books 1984 ISBN 0-8306-2384-1

I ordered this through my local library, no USA price, but it's available for £16.95 from AirLife Publishing Ltd. 7 St John's Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1JE. Running to 280 large pages, it covers virtually all the aircraft I've covered in Weird & Wonderful, plus many others.

Grouped into sections - deltas, canards, pick-a-backs, etc., are brief details of each aeroplane along with a photograph. An ideal volume for anyone interested in off-trail flying machines.

BOXTREE NEWS

Recent and forthcoming titles include:-

STAR WARS: Lando Clarissan Apr.31st £4.99 EACH Three tales of Luke Skywalker's ally

- 1.Lando and the Mindharp of Sharo
- 2.Lando Clarissan and the Flamewind of Seon
- 3.Lando Clarissan and the Starcave of Thonboka

MARVEL NOVELS...May 1st. £4.99 each

- 1. SPIDER MAN: THE VENOM FACTOR
- 2. SPIDER MAN: THE LIZARD SANCTION
- 3. SPIDER MAN: CARNAGE IN NEW YORK
- 4. IRON MAN: THE ARMOUR TRAP

STAR WARS TECHNICAL JOURNAL: THE HISTORY AND HARDWARE OF THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE Covers all aspects of SW - films, news, movies, previews, as well as the technology, Stormtroopers, transport etc. Hardback Collector's Edition 27th.May £25.00

ALIENS: TRIBES S.Bissette Graphic Novel £7.99 May.31st. An orbiting medical facility has become infested with an alien scourge which must be destroyed.

BABYLON 5: BETRAYALS June 24th. £4.99 Book 6 in the series. Diplomats to a peace conference, but a con man has plans of his own. Rebels arise and hostile spacecraft approach.

INDEPENDENCE DAY July 29th. £4.99 Novelisation of the big-screen SF film in which inexplicable interference tampers with computer, Tv, satellite and radio communications as a prelude to an alien invasion.

CLASSIC WHO: THE HARPER CLASSICS Adrian Rigelsford Sep.5th £14.95 Second volume in the Dr.Who Classic series. It covers the making of the episodes, cast, crew, and events on both sides of the cameras.

HODDER HEADLINE AUDIO BOOKS

STAR WARS On tape dramatisation of STAR WARS. Each pack features four stories from the movies, plus extra material. Featuring the original Star Wars score and sound effects.

Publication date June 6th. £8.99 each

- STAR WARS.1 Point of Origin (Mark Hamil & cast)
- STAR WARS.2 The Millennium Falcon (Hamil & cast)
- STAR WARS.3 The Luke Skywalker Initiative (Hamil & cast)

## — OBITUARY —

It is with deepest regret that I pass on the gist of a telephone call from Ken Slater. He rang me this morning with the sad news that Ethel Lindsay passed away on the morning of June 16th, at 7.05 am.

Ethel had been suffering from cancer for quite a while but in typical fashion had not made the face generally known to fandom. In her last letter, only a few weeks ago, she said the prognosis was a further six months before she went. In the event, she had less time than that. Perhaps this was a merciful release as she had embarked on a course of chemotherapy which was both ineffective and painful.

I first made contact with Ethel, way back in the late forties when as a neofan she wrote to me just before the first Mancon. That was her first Convention and Ethel liked it so much, she was hooked from then on. She seldom (ever?) missed a convention and was soon publishing her own fanzine, 'Scottishe' which had a long run until her retirement from a nursing career and subsequent reduction in income caused her to close it down.

A leading light in most fannish activities, a con goer, fanzine publisher, letter-writer, a member of the 'Knights of St. Fanthony', a TAFF visitor to the USA, all these and more. Ethel was a friend to everyone in fandom whether they were old, tired BNFs or brand new fans just dipping a toe in the waters. Ethel never joined in fannish feuds or arguments but was the same cheerful person to everyone she met.

Her name is known not just in Britain and the USA, but on the Continent, in Australia and indeed, wherever fans gather. Ethel will be missed.