

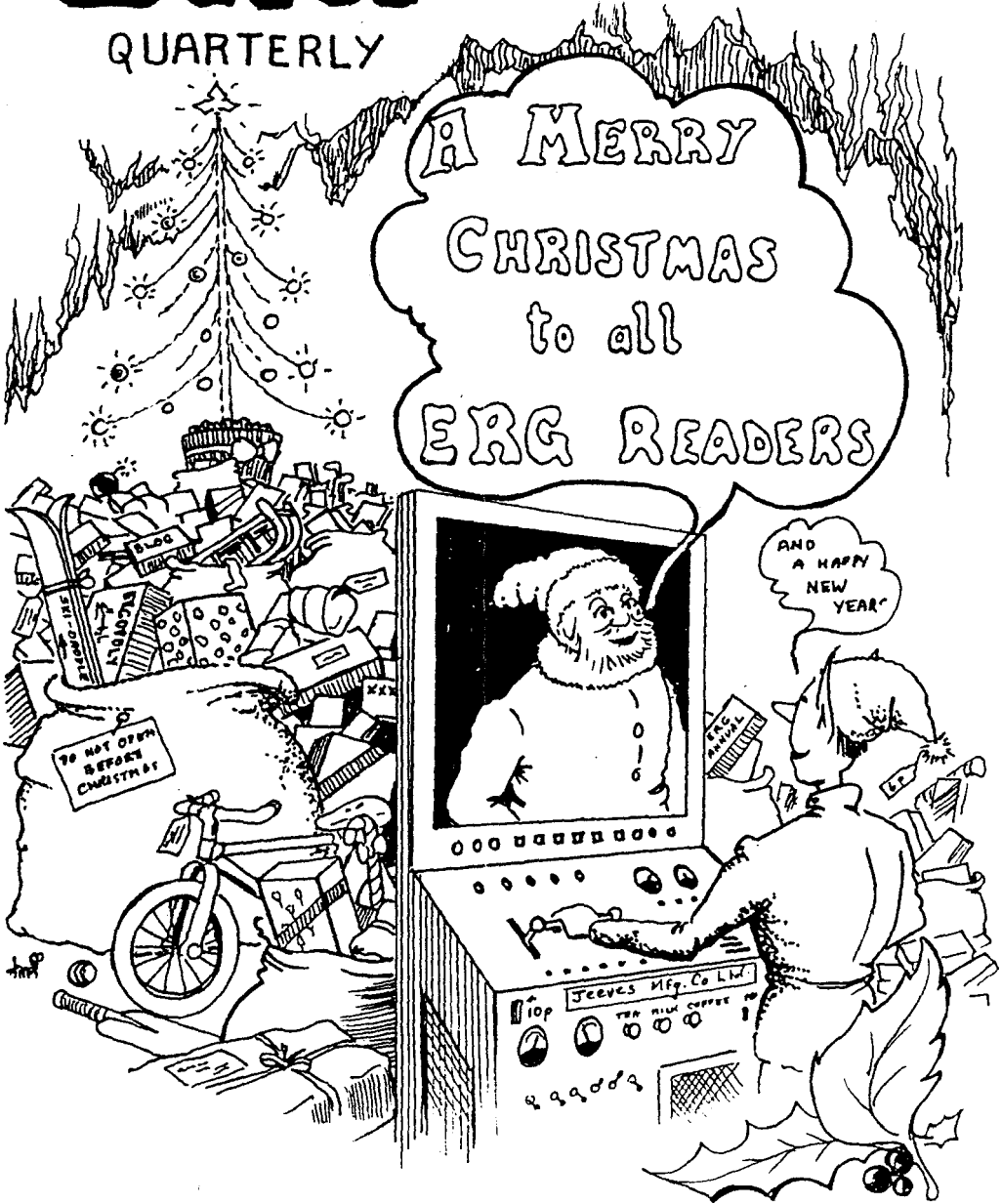
ERG

120

JANUARY 1993

QUARTERLY

A MERRY
CHRISTMAS
to all
ERG READERS



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QUARTERLY

No. 120 JANUARY 1993

 B. T. JEEVES
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ERG -- NOW IN ITS 34th. YEAR

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Greetings Ergbods,

If you enjoyed reading ERG, please pay for it by sending me either THREE, second class stamps, or a dollar bill. That pays for this issue. When I produce the next issue, then you'll be sent a copy on the same terms. If I don't hear from you, I'll assume you don't want any future issues. I'm afraid that ERG was getting costly with many copies being mailed into Liabo, so each issue, I drop a few more non-responders and add a few new names. A cross in the top left hand corner indicates this must be your last copy - unless you DO SOMETHING.

NATTERINGS

My short story in this issue brings up two points of FTL travel which I've never seen before. The first uses $E=MC^2$ to prove it possible, then uses the time contraction equation to show it is impossible. I tried it on Analog, but sadly, they bounced it - even so, I feel it's a new concept for SF. Do you agree?

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (via Igor Smirnov) came five copies of the newspaper, 'Zarya Molodezhi' ('Youth's Dawn'), to which he had sold my story, 'Another Time'. It appears on page 8. Pity I can't read Russian, but a friend helped out.

Igor has a friend who wants to correspond with anyone interested in the history of the RAF during WW2. If interested, drop a line to Igor Smirnov, P.O.Box 1525, Main Post Office, Saratov 410601, RUSSIA.

CONGRATULATIONS to Brian and Denise Brown on the birth of daughter, Sarah Bethany (71b 8oz). The happy event happened on Sunday, Oct 25th. Get her name down for membership in your local fan club, Brian.

WEALTH OF FABLE by Harry Warner, (See Book pages) is a king-sized slice of nostalgia complete with photos. Dick and Nicki Lynch sent me my copy, but Ken Slater can probably get you one - \$25.00

MEXICON V is at the St Nicholas Hotel here in Scarborough, May28/31. Send £18 to Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Sæthwick, Warley, W.Midlands B66 4SH, to register. The hotel is on the cliff top smack in the town centre and with two handy funicular railways to take you to and from the sea front and harbour. You will come, won't you?

TOMMY FERGUSON in the LOCcol suggests a complete edition of Weird & Wonderful. I did some costings and find I could do a full and revised W&W of some 50 pages for £3.00 and DMBL (2 parts of 50 pages each) for £6.00 - both in ERG-format. Anyone interested? No firm orders, just give me a show of interest at this stage.

FINALLY -- You will remember to LOC, won't you?

All the best, Terry

MEXICON V in SCARBOROUGH

A while back, I had idle thoughts of having a Convention here in Scarborough. They came to nothing, but as you can see from the ERGitorial Matteringings, someone else has got cracking and Mexican V is to be held here at the Hotel St Nicholas. Although I have nothing to do with the affair, it seemed a good idea to devote a bit of ERGspace to giving you a few details not mentioned in the first Progress Report. I hope they'll coax you into coming along.

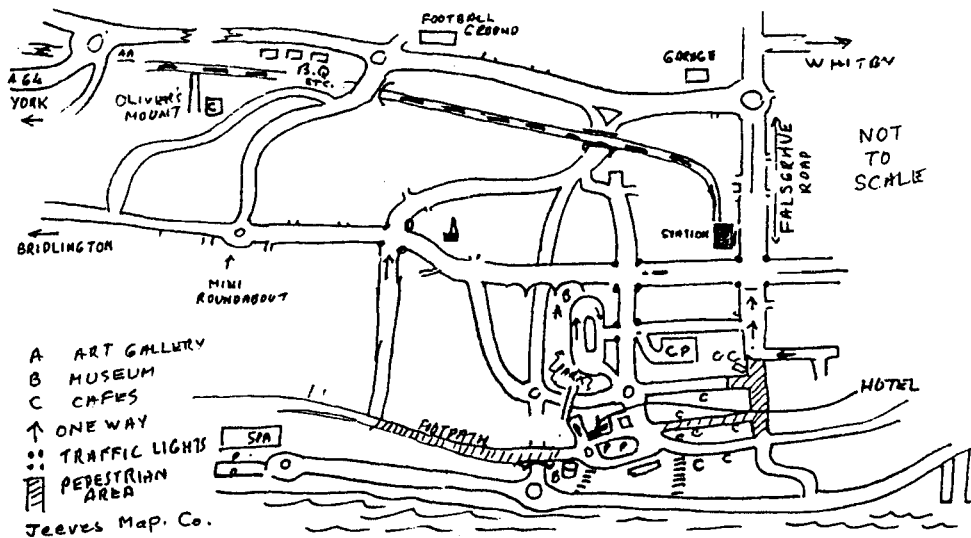
I've never been inside the Hotel St Nicholas, so I don't know what the place is like, but its location is superb. Smack in the centre of town, yet only a hundred yards from TWO funicular railways which will take you down the cliff to the sea front, only a short stroll to amusements, cafes, shops, harbour, marina and lighthouse. Being a seaside town, there are numerous cafes and restaurants very close to the hotel.

So what else is there? Turn right out of the hotel, and from the foot of the funiculars, you can get an open-topped bus around the Marine Drive to the Corner Cafe and the adjacent Swimming pool (longest twin water slides in Europe). Next to it is the entrance to Kinderland a place where kids can spend all day. Then you can either catch the mini train or walk the half mile along to the Sea World site and walk through a tunnel surrounded by sharks or stroke manta rays in the open pools.

Walk in the opposite direction from the funiculars and five minutes will see you at the Spa Complex with its Concert Hall, Dance Hall, bar, shops and another funicular up the steep cliff to Italian Gardens and putting greens.

Turn left from the hotel and then right along the main road until you come to a roundabout. Turn right here, and straight forward to Scarborough Castle. If you like castles, there's another at Ayton, one at Pickering and another at Helmsley

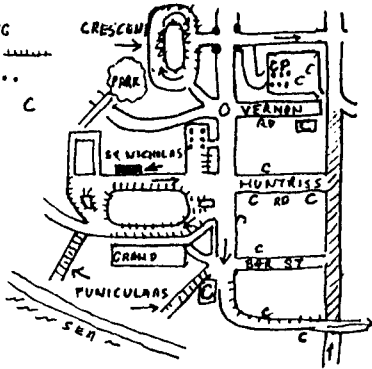
How do you get to the Hotel St Nicholas? Read on.



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BY TRAIN Leave station turn right, cross main road at lights and straight ahead down main, one-way street. Turn down Huntriss Rd, third road on the right and at its end, cross a road and enter the oval of St. Nicholas Cliff. The hotel is on the right at the bottom.

PARKING
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FROM WHITBY Enter Scarborough by main Falsgrave Rd. Carry on down to traffic lights just past station. Turn right, get in left hand lane and turn left at next lights. Straight forward through next lights, down hill straight forward at roundabout, up slope, past one small road on right and immediately afterwards come to one-way loop of St Nicholas Cliff.

Go round it clockwise and the Hotel is at the bottom facing the Grand Hotel.

BY ROAD

FROM YORK Come by A-64, after passing (on your right) a nursery, numerous big stores and BQ, cross roundabout, pass football ground

on your left, carry on until road curves gently left then right, pass Thompson's garage on left and turn right at roundabout. From here it's the same route as from WHITBY.

FROM PICKERING Join A-64 at roundabout and then it's as from YORK

FROM BRIDLINGTON After passing holiday camp on left and through traffic lights, another mile brings you to a mini-roundabout, straight forward, through traffic lights. Road bears left, then right. This brings you to Valley Bridge, turn right at bollards before getting on bridge, down hill, straight across roundabout, up curving hill and right at next roundabout. Past small side road on right, and immediately afterwards come to one-way loop of St Nicholas Cliff. Go round it clockwise and the Hotel is at the bottom facing the Grand Hotel. By the way, the Grand is unique in that it has four towers to mark four seasons, 12 floors for the 12 months, and 365 rooms for the days.

If you want to eat out, I can recommend Wackers fish & chip emporium on Vernon Rd, five minutes walk away. Pick a seat, order at the counter and your meal will be delivered to your table. Approx price for fish, chips and coffee, £3.00. Even nearer is a cafe by the funiculars and the Green Lizard at the top of the oval.

Parking is plentiful, but in demand. You can park all round the central oval, BUT take care - at the top by the shops, it's 40minutes only. In the centre above the oval, you get 2 hours free, around the oval itself time is unlimited - Likewise if you park around the Crescent, (see map). If you can't get in during the day, try again around 6pm. There are also larger, pay and display, multi-storey and underground car parks.

If you want a run out, Robin Hood's Bay, a wonderful little fishing port is twenty minutes up the coast. Whitby (Burnharbour of the film, 'Turn Of The Tide' is thirty minutes away.

For a scenic drive, return on the Pickering road, detour through Goathland (scene of 'Heartbeat'), pass the Fylingdale 'golf balls', tour Pickering (have a ride on a steam train and return via picturesque Thornton Le Dale to Scarborough, scene of Michael Winner's 'Chorus Of Disapproval' (with Val and Terry Jeeves).

It's a lovely area for a holiday and a wonderful place to live. ---- You will come, won't you?

Jim Verran, a professional opal cutter, specialises in freeform opal carving. In 1979, he began writing "A Concise Introduction To Opal Processing" with a corresponding series of 300 colour slides. Shelved indefinitely because of its 'small run' potential, it may eventually be revised into a series of 'How to' articles. He now writes mostly SF.

OPAL

The Underground Aurora

James Verran

As a precious gem, opal almost missed the boat. While possessing the attributes of beauty and rarity, its durability rates low. This handicap is far outweighed by the variety of its colour patterns.

Diamond, sapphire and most stones classified as precious, resist normal wear and tear but usually require complex faceting. From the moment it is removed from the earth, opal displays its beauty through any clean or broken surface. It is common for opal gougers (miners) to snip the edges of rough pieces to assess the colour within.

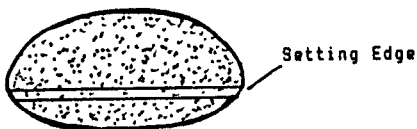
Although some clear types of semiprecious opal are faceted, oval is traditionally fashioned into oval or round stones with domed surfaces. The laminated, two piece doublet and three layered triplet, are usually cut into cabochons. Cabochon generally denotes styles other than faceted and figure carvings.

Most crystalline gems are sectioned by cleaving and/or trimming with a diamond disk saw. Opal, which is amorphous with properties similar to glass, is surface cleaned with water-cooled grinding wheels before sectioning by diamond saw. Although it share similar stages of processing with the other gems, its comparative fragility requires a gentler cutting action on specially modified equipment. Whereas crystalline gems are oriented according to strict rules of crystallography, opal must be assessed by a critical,

experienced eye to select the best play of colour. Even the finest grades display a distinct 'face' or plane of maximum colour which requires careful orientation.

Unless the material is thick and colourful enough for a solid, sliced or thin pieces are surfaced (lapped) on a flat diamond wheel. These are then laminated with blackened, epoxy cement onto a backing to form a doublet. If a triplet is desired to enhance and protect the stone, the opal layer is further thinned and surfaced before capping with clear quartz. After curing of the laminating resin, the stone is processed as a solid.

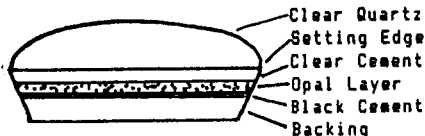
PROFILE OF TYPICAL OPAL SOLID



PROFILE OF TYPICAL OPAL DOUBLET



PROFILE OF TYPICAL OPAL TRIPLET



During processing, a 'dop stick' is temporarily cemented to the stone. Shaping is carried out on a well flushed silicon carbide grinder, or diamond impregnated metal wheel. The stone is then prepared for polishing by reducing its surface texture with diminishing grades of silicon carbide, sanding cloth or paper - also flushed with water. Diamond powders or pastes of various grades, applied to wood, felt or leather wheels have largely replaced the 'sanding' process for commercial cutting. Semi-finishing with sandpaper is slower, but is less costly than diamond and still preferred by many cutters. Final polishing is carried out with any of several synthetic powders, the favourite being cerium oxide.

The majority of laminated stones are made from lower value, less transparent opal. This must be reduced to thin sections and backed with dark, light absorbing material to reveal the true colour.

The colour in such opal is obscured by the dense base tone which is often milky white. Laminated stones are classed as semiprecious and used in mass-produced jewellery. Light reflected from the back surface of clear base opal also reduced the apparent intensity of the internal play of colour. Hence: clear stones are frequently laminated or left with unpolished backs.

Cut into solids, precious opal is sold by weight. The waste incurred by slicing can be considerable as the thinnest practical diamond saw produces a cut width of about 0.4mm. Material valued at many hundred pounds per carat (200mg) may be lost with each saw cut, so every cut must be carefully planned. A finished stone, one third its original rough weight is considered a good average yield.

Each opal field produces unique variations according to the strata where the run of opal formed. For instance: several types of 'matrix' result from opal infusing through sandstone, pipeclay or into cavities within boulders. These are frequently cut or polished entire. Many lighter 'matrixes' of opalised sandstone or clay, readily absorb water and are dyed black to enhance the colour of the opal content. This produces reasonable black opal facsimiles.

The rare black opal is the most highly prized. Whereas light based opal appears milky or cloudy, black opal has a naturally dark base and requires only minimal shaping before polishing to display its full glory. If one is familiar with fiery doublets or triplets it is easy to imagine the beauty of natural black opal.

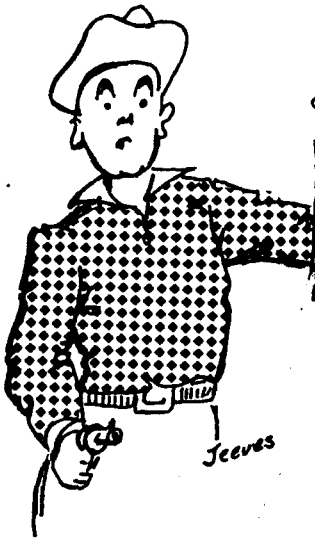
Seams of opal usually form within cavities from a solution of hydrous silicates. In time, this sets to a gel and cures to its familiar glassy state. Given the right conditions and a fortuitous arrangement of molecules, it will display colour. A small percentage may exhibit suitably bright patterns to qualify as precious.

Opal's residual water content has spawned the myth that it must be stored in water. This is entirely false; some unstable (immature) opal types actually absorb water. Too rapid dehydration will cause shrinkage and cracking. If water is reintroduced to a susceptible stone, it may reverse or destabilise its maturation. Opal mined in shallower, drier strata is usually stable and will not deteriorate with normal treatment. The wearing of opal jewellery will provide sufficient moisture to maintain a stable, cut stone.

Laminated opals must not be left in water or soaked in solvents that may harm the laminating cement. Extreme heat and cold are detrimental to all opal. If the stone's internal moisture boils or freezes, the result is usually disastrous.

You may well ask if opal is worth all this bother. While apparently identical stones are often cut from the same parcel of rough, no two are precisely alike; there are always subtle variations in the play of colour. So if you are interested in a gem that is truly unique, the answer is yes.

J.Verran, Australia.



WANDERING THE WEST

After flying the Grand Canyon, we settled into our cabin, less than half a mile from the Canyon's edge. and grabbed a quick snack in the cafeteria - where in England would they accept a Traveller's cheque for \$50 or its sterling equivalent (around £28) for three quid's worth of food? Hunger satisfied, we strolled along to watch the sunset over the Canyon's rim, a sight which proved just as emotive from ground level as had the view from the air. One or two hardy souls clambered down a pack-mule trail.

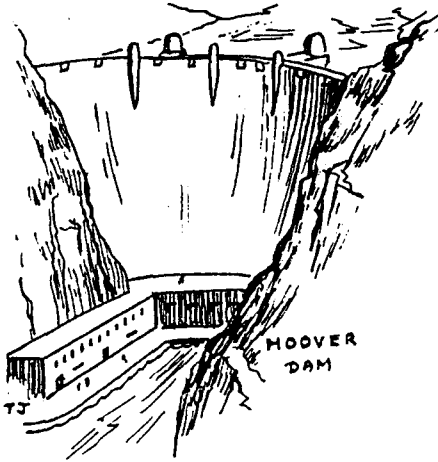
Knowing that what goes down must then climb all the way back up again, we stayed on the rim.

Back in the cabin, my misguided efforts to switch on the air-conditioning caused a chaos which we learned later, was also experienced by other travellers. This time, we were not faced with the usual 747 dashboard array of knobs, switches, levers and a total lack of any instructions. All we had was an unmarked switch and knob. The switch waggled gracefully up and down, but did nothing. The little knob turned, but still nothing happened except that the room seemed to get warmer. Then we noticed the radiant heater had started to glow. The knob was the timer and was now set for an unspecified period and couldn't be turned back. The cabin grew hotter and hotter as we waited - and waited - and waited for the timer to run down and switch off.



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The knob wound itself slowly backwards, then stuck just short of zero so that the heater kept blasting away. Mustering all my technical skill and experience, I belted it a fourpenny one with a hairbrush. Success, the thermostat clicked off and things began to cool down. My fears of becoming famous as the man who set fire to the Grand Canyon faded away. We settled down to sleep - and the 'phone rang! Mike Banks was calling from Ohio to welcome us back to the USA. It speaks well of the camp's organisation to be able to locate us among the dozens of cabins along the Canyon's edge.



Next morning, we travelled on to Hoover Dam (once known as 'Boulder Dam'). We stepped out of the air-conditioned coach into a temperature of 120 degrees. The dash to the Dam entrance was akin to Shadrach, Meshak and Abednego doing their bit in the fiery furnace. During my four years in India, I don't recall it being so hot. Concrete walls and abutments seemed to multiply the heat, but happily, we didn't have long to wait before the king-size elevator arrived and took forty of us down into the cool interior of the concrete monolith.

If you like numbers, the dam is 726 feet high, took nearly 4 million cubic yards of concrete and when its 17 generators get wound up, they churn out 1344 MEGAWatts of power. Taken down through the dam in giant lifts, we toured the lot before ascending once again to the fiery furnace and heading off for Las Vegas.

Our Las Vegas hotel was the Marina, amid a seemingly endless strip of casinos. This proved very handy when we ventured out for a stroll in the overpowering sun. We would amble for a hundred yards or so, before staggering into the nearest air-conditioned gambling joint to cool off. Not wishing to visit Vegas without having had a flutter, I daringly shoved a 25c piece into a one-armed bandit which recorded three lemons and failed to win me the 1.8 litre sports car, or the \$10,450 jackpot.

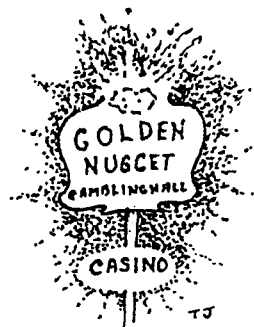
My failure didn't deter the other addicts who were frantically shovelling coins - including hefty silver dollars, out of plastic buckets and into the voracious devices before them. With one hand they were busily feeding the machine, with the other they were usually feeding themselves - with fast food from a handy tray. Not one of these punters dared leave their machine in case somebody else took over and scooped the pool they had worked for. Gamblers have been known to collapse in their places rather than move away to answer a call of nature.

Our hotel had supplied us with booklets of freebie tickets entitling us to such delights as 'One Free Drink at the Island Bar' or 'A Free Bonus Keno Ticket'. The latter being an incomprehensible gambling game bearing a vague resemblance to a build your own Bingo card. I calculated that you could be sure of winning five dollars on every game -- IF you first wagered fifteen dollars on the outcome. Avoiding such highly resistable delights, we drifted into a place called Sambo's where we dined on salad with 1000 Island Dressing, clams deep-fried in sauce, French fries, rolls and coffee for four bucks apiece. We finally toddled back to our hotel, where I invested 75c in a machine selling soft drinks. It emulated its gambling brethren by refusing to pay out with a can.

Next day, we visited Caesar's Palace, the top casino of the lot. After wandering around the palatial place admiring the statues, architecture and suchlike, we went to see an Omnimax film. I gather there are now one or two such places in the UK, so if you get the chance, don't miss a visit. You recline in chairs akin to astronaut's couches, tipped well back so that all you can see is the domed screen arching above you. When the film starts, you are IN IT! We saw a show about two characters racing for an inheritance by using all sorts of different transport - in which we also appeared to travel. a horse-drawn sulky, motorbike, donkey, vintage car, and a hovercraft (which had us all ducking to avoid low branches as it flew down a river between rows of trees). Most dizzy-making was the hang glider flight. We grasped our seat arms as we 'flew' out over the immense drop of a cliff edge and banked above a waterfall. So realistic was the performance that had any of us been holding a glass of lemonade, we would have poured it all over our knees as we banked in sympathy with the glider.

Staggering out of Caesar's Palace, we attended the 'Mickey Finn Show' in another casino, then drove past Liberace's house. His large station wagon was parked on the short drive and the darned thing was customised on both sides to resemble a piano keyboard!

In the evening, we took another stroll along Las Vegas Boulevard. It seems a friendly city as several lovely young ladies standing idly on the sidewalk, welcomed me to the place. I think they might have been waiting for a bus, but they seemed very lucky as passing motorists frequently stopped to give them lifts. People seem very friendly in Las Vegas, but strangely, Val didn't seem to want me to stop to talk with them. Reaching the Las Vegas Hilton, we dined on roast beef with all the trimmings, all amidst sumptuous surroundings. That's one of the advantages of Las Vegas, in order to attract punters into the place food and drink are very cheap - provided of course that you don't succumb to the lure of making a quick fortune on one of the games.



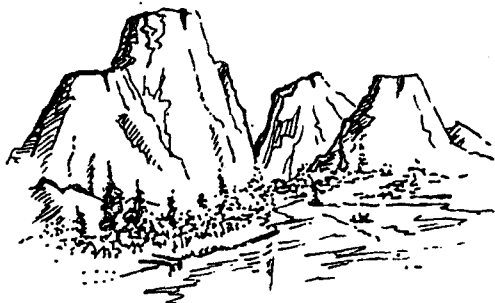
In the morning we hit the road bright and early in order to skirt Death Valley before the sun got too high. We lunched in a tiny place called Beatty, then headed for the Sierras and an overnight stay in a small town called Bishop, where we stayed in a Best Western Hotel. We had an excellent room which actually had humming birds nesting outside the window overlooking the swimming pool. Before leaving the UK, we had arranged to meet some car-touring friends there. They wanted to see the place simply because their name was also Bishop.

They didn't make it, but stayed on the coast in the hope of cooler temperatures. In the evening, Val decided to walk to a local Christian Science Church, the road it stood on was only a hundred yards away. Expecting a short walk, she set off, but what she hadn't counted on was the fact that it was situated a full three miles along that road, way out in the desert! She made it there, but happily, some kind people brought her home in their car .. AND they invited us to stay with them for a few days. An invite we had to decline, but once again, that was true American hospitality.

On we travelled, past Mono Lake to finally arrive at Chalet 270 in Yosemite Valley Nature Reserve. We set some of the reserved Nature very early, as a clutch of exceedingly tame chipmunks nested under the floorboards of our cabin. Signs warned us not to throw food into the litter receptacles as this attracted brown bears from the surrounding woods. It could be rather disconcerting if you encountered one in the wee small hours whilst making the hundred yard trip down the trail to the communal toilet blocks.

Dumping our bags, we made a quick dash for the Post Office.

A wasted journey, because of the late hour, almost 3pm, it had closed for the day. Similar laziness made mealtimes tricky at Yosemite. Everywhere else in the USA, we found eating places would open around 6am and stay open until 11pm. Not so in Yosemite where our site had only one cafeteria — and that opened only from 8 until 9-30am and 12 noon until 1-30 and from 4pm until six. This meant you couldn't have a late meal after a trip out, it also ensured that everyone on the site was trying to eat at the same time. Since you couldn't delay your meal until the queues dropped, long waits were inevitable.



Otherwise, Yosemite was a beautiful, unspoiled place of rivers, mountains and natural beauty. We hired a couple of cycles and toured the forest paths — keeping a sharp lookout for any stray bears along the way. A marvellous place for a holiday, but a bit too Spartan in the toilet blocks and restricted eating places, so we were quite ready to leave after a couple of days. Others must

have felt the same, as the Yosemite section of the tour has since been shortened to a three hour halt. No doubt most of that time will be spent queuing for a meal.

Leaving Yosemite, we paused for lunch at Fort Clemens, a place which claims to be famous for Mark Twain's jumping frogs. Then it was on to a favourite tourist and honeymoon spots, Lake Tahoe. We boarded the SS Dixie for an evening cruise around the lake and a sumptuous dinner — a hefty steak with all the trimmings. Back ashore, we headed off to Reno which we reached after midnight. You may not think this too late an end to a pleasant evening out, but with a 6-45am reveille the next day, we didn't waste any time in getting to sleep.

Rising before dawn, we breakfasted, headed off past Donner Lake to Sacramento. Where Joan and Victor Klima set our coach and whisked us out to their beautiful home for a lovely luncheon. I couldn't do it full justice as I had to rush back to the coach to shepherd our luggage to San Francisco. Val stayed overnight with the Klimas, and had breakfast at 'The Nut Tree' — a restaurant famous for its own airstrip. Patrons actually fly there just to have a meal.

11

The Yerba Buena Hotel in 'Frisco proved a dump. Corridors were narrow and dingy, with boarded off windows to keep out burglars. Our room had a delightful view of the alley where garbage cans were slung around throughout the night. Across the main road was a fire station which had a nightly turn out every couple of hours. Perhaps there was a City Ordinance against fires during daylight. Sweat-shirted Filipinos lurking along the stairwells, eyed me suspiciously as I dumped my bags and went in search of food.

I found it in a Chinese eatery where I was charged \$3.80 for a strangely-filled sandwich. I didn't ask what the meat was, but I noticed a shortage of cats and dogs in the area.

The hotel was near Powell Street where the cable cars turn before heading back over the hill to Fisherman's Wharf. They are a real relic of past ingenuity, their motive power being derived from an endless loop of cable in continuous motion in a duct beneath the roadway. To start, the driver pulls a lever which closes a clamp around the cable and the car is pulled along. At the terminus, it runs on to a small turntable and is manually pushed round. Designed to carry forty, it seems that if you can hang aboard any part of the vehicle, you are a legitimate passenger. Don't ask me how those crammed inside manage to get off at their stops.

Val arrived next morning in the Klipa's car and they took us across the Golden Gate Bridge to Sausalito where I was a red-painted British telephone box stood by the road side. We lunched at the Seven Seas Restaurant which had a retractable roof over the dining area. At the fall of a raindrop, it could be run out to keep you dry. After an excellent meal, we drove back over the Golden Gate into Chinatown where Victor handed his car over to a parking attendant obviously trained by Stirling Moss or Nigel Mansell and reared on a diet of American car-chase files. He revved the engine to shoot the car back and forth like a rocket, before nestling it firmly into a narrow space.

We wandered around Chinatown, admired the colourful architecture, and saw a forceful reminder that we were in the notorious San Andreas Fault, Earthquake area. A battered old van parked by the roadside, bore the legend, "EARTHQUAKE-PROOFING for Houses and Buildings". The vehicle looked as if it had experienced a few quakes itself.

Next stop was the towering Hyatt Regency Hotel. Outside, it looked like just another king-sized Lego block. Inside, the foyer was incredible. Imagine yourself in a hollow pyramid with ascending balconies rising up above you and decorated with hanging ferns, flower gardens, shops and a fountain or two. Cecil B deMille would have loved it. We rose heavenwards in an illuminated, glass-walled elevator to the rotating restaurant surmounting the skyscraper.

Ushered to window seats we sat and sipped iced Pina Coladas as we moved slowly round and admired the ever-changing view over San Francisco. If you ever get up there, don't leave handbags or valuables on the window ledge as that remains stationary while the restaurant slowly revolves. If you do, ten minutes later, your treasured fixed-focus Instamatic will have been left twenty feet away around the curve of the restaurant. Locating it again is made even harder by all the mirrored walls and partitions which make you feel as if you're sitting in a king-sized Kaleidoscope. Heck, even finding our way out again was tricky.

After a wonderful day's outing, the Klimes dropped us off at the Yerba Buena before setting off on their long drive back to Sacramento. They had given us a grand welcome even though it was some twenty years since we had last seen them in the UK. To cap it all, we had only been home a few days when a package arrived from Vic. It contained two huge air to air photographs of a B-24 and a B-17 -- as I said before, Americans are both friendly - and generous.

Next morning, we breakfasted in the hotel - along with numerous Japanese tourists. The Filipino cook was overwhelmed. Somehow one order got misplaced and from then on, everyone got part of what the next in line had ordered. We finally ate someone else's choice of breakfast before strolling off to the BART/MUNI terminal where we hazarded a few coins in a ticket machine and boarded the MUNI for a few stops. Our destination was the Civic Art Gallery -- which turned out to be closed. Back we went along the main street to admire everyday American life. We were puzzled to see hordes of people entering a strange building adjoining a supermarket. There were no signs to say what went on in there, but lines of people kept vanishing through turnstiles and unmarked steel doors. Maybe it was the H.Q. of the local FBI - we never did find out. We finished off the day with a hefty meal at the 'English Grill'. Good food, marvellous service and only \$27.49 for the two of us.

We left 'Frisco early next morning, passing the old airship sheds on the way out. We admired the seals basking on the rocks at Seal Point as we followed the beautiful coast road down to Monterey. Here we paused for a lunch stop in a boardwalk cafe. We asked for 'non-smoking' seats and were given a superb table overlooking the harbour with its hundreds of boats. The human fireplaces were all tucked away in the back of the place.

Next stop was the prestigious town of Carmel. To enter its hallowed acres you must first get past the security guards on the outskirts. After a brief bit of shopping and the inevitable gallon or so of coffee, we headed further down the coast. Much to Val's disappointment, we only paused very briefly in sight of the Hearst castle. Hearst was the chap who bought a newspaper and by fantastic hypes, created a powerful news empire and built himself a fantastic mansion. His story formed the basis of the Orson Welles film 'Citizen Kane'.

We paused at the Santa Barbara Mission, and spent the night in a nearby motel. Next day, we toured the unusual village of Solweig. Years ago, one inhabitant built his home in the Dutch style. The other residents were so delighted by this that they all emulated the style and so created a Dutch village in the USA. From Solweig, we travelled via Malibu Beach and Point Mugu missile range, through the outskirts of Los Angeles and finally reached the airport.

Our flight left L.A. at 10pm. Six hours later we refuelled in Bangor, then another six hours saw us land in a cold, wet Manchester at 5-40pm. The adventure was over.

LETTERS

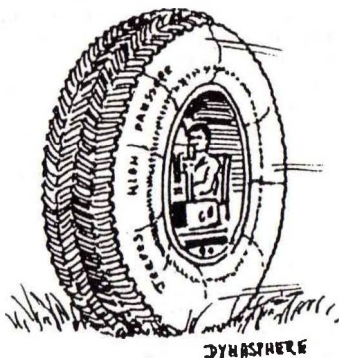
ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, WALLSEND, N. TYNESIDE NE20 7RE

You ought to have some controversy over your Lunar Wheelie on the cover. The first problem I can see is that you are going to need a gyroscope which must run all the time except when the vehicle is parked.

☞ Well I recall seeing pre-war photographs of such experimental vehicles ('Dynaspheres') and they made no mention of gyroscopes, but they balanced somehow. ☞

I don't know if there is a relation between the size of a gyroscope and the stability it gives, for example would a kid's gyroscope spinning at 100,000 rpm give the same stability as a bigger one running at 10,000? ☞ Well obviously, the bigger and faster, the more stability - but the real catch is when you

turn a vehicle using one - the gyroscope would try and twist it in an unexpected direction. ☞ It was a good drawing and I found your article a bit redundant. Some idiots think you just sit down and start to draw, and never think of the effort that goes in. ☞ So why 'redundant'? ☞



KEN CHESLIN, 10 CONEY GREEN, STOURBRIDGE, W. MIDLANDS DY8 1LA

Yr cover I that was great. and was intrigued at yr write-up of how you got there .. by a strange coincidence. 90% of the time I just go ahead and scribble as an idea comes. I had a similar experience with the cover of OH6. I had two ideas, one to incorporate GONE WITH THE WIND, the other, which I viewed as entirely separate, was to mention 'Grasshopper' as in the Kung Fu thingy. It was staring e in the face, but it took me a week or so to see that the ideas were not mutually exclusive, so I combined them. Oh it wasn't as neatly thought out as yours, but the process was somewhat similar. Planes, quite fascinating and all yr art blogs are interesting and I INVARIABLY read yr book reviews. I feel this was one of the best recent issues. ☞ Funny how sometimes art ideas seem to come from the subconscious and at other times they just don't come. ☞

ALAN SULLIVAN, 20 SHIRLEY RD., STRATFORD, LONDON E15 4HX

Thanks for ERG 119 and congratulations on reaching your 70th. year.

☞ Ta muchly, and many thanks for the card. ☞ The B-36 sounds an incredible machine in terms of size and armament. However, range, speed and ceiling tend to be the factors most sought after in aircraft. Heavily armed and armoured it may have been, but it sounds as if it would still have been an easy target for fast, manoeuvrable fighters. That said, it still sounds as if it could have done service as a transport or a tanker refuelling aircraft. ☞ I think it probably would have been an easy target, but what really killed it was the advent of big, fast jets such as the B-52. ☞ Sowell's artwork comes over as very "strong" - clear lines, solid blacks. Striking, but with enough fine detail to avoid being too stark. Very good figurework and background detail. All in all, fine examples of the artwork of the period.

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

'The Story Behind The Cover' was much appreciated; I don't know how long it's been since I've read about an artist explaining his/her work. One small cavil I have about your cover is that the hatch looks a little small to admit the spaceman. @> He's a contortionist <@

There does seem to be an air of barrel-scraping about this issue, inchoosing the Liberator for 'Weird & Wonderful'. I can't see it as being particularly weird @> I didn't, that's a B-36! It's the series that cover W&W, some planes are weird, some wonderful, and some were both. the B-36 was certainly wonderful. <@ Amos Sewell among the artists probably wouldn't have claimed himself to be among the great and food, either. @> Well he illustrated many of the pulps and he was a good artist <@ I can't think of anything save making it the end of an era of exclusively Jeeves and inviting guest contributors. @> But ERG hasn't been exclusively me. In the past ERG has featured such writers as James Verran, Ted Tubb, L. Sprague de Camp, and numerous fan writers and artists including Eddie Jones and Alan Hunter. <@ I'm not quite ready yet to forswear allegiance and put Interzone above Analog in my popularity stakes but I'm glad to see your words of approval - I took out a life subscription when the rate was set at £100. @> Now if only I could have done that with ASTOUNDING back in 1935! <@

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

I too, recently visted Hay-On-Wye but got no further than the ex-cinema. I thought their prices pretty steep - most well beyond my purse. That Sandy Kidd you mention is a local lad here, but I too am doubtful about his findings. I liked the result of your cover and especially appreciated the 'emergency sandwiches'. Your explanation of it does show how much work is involved. Sorry to hear you are coming to the end of 'Carry On Jeeves'. Some of your descriptions, such as that of Disneyland, bring back fond memories. @> America's is a wonderful place and full of wonderful people - pity it isn't nearer <@

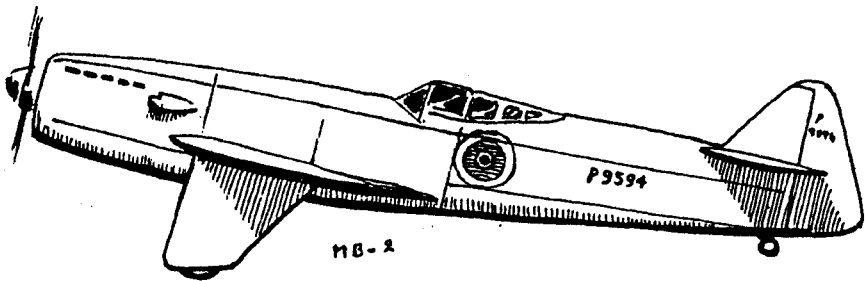
TOMMY FERGUSON, FLAT.1, 16 WELLESLEY AVE., BELFAST BT9 6DG, N. IRELAND

That wonderful 'wheelie' cover. I was very interested to read of the development stage of the artwork as it is always something I try to comment on in fanzines. Lots of lurvely letters and an informative article on the B-36. This is a series that deserves its own collection. @> I keep thinking of it, but who'd want to buy? <@ Lots of books, I think your reviews were accurate and fair. Carry On Jeeves, excellent as ever, but what to do next? I have a copy of DMBL in its full glory, so don't know about re-printing it in ERG. How about a fuller look at your employment during your fannish career and how it interspersed with fannish activities? @> Dunno that teaching and SF overlapped very much, but it's an idea. <@

KEN LAKE, KHAJURAHU, INDIA A pocsarcd from the wanderer.

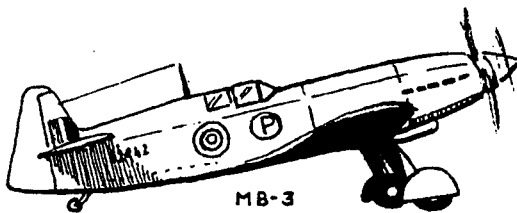
Of the picture on the card, Ken says, "The most publishable of a selection of religious carvings on the 11th century Hindu temples in most isolated village of Khajuraho. Terrible roads, upset tummy, lost company of charming Australian girl, woe is me. Off tomorrow to Benares, so little time! Ken." @> All I remember of Benares, is throwing coins from the train as it traversed the river bridge. Is the water still as filthy? <@

MARTIN-BAKER FIGHTERS



The Hurricane, Spitfire and Mustang are rightly regarded as three of the best piston-engined fighters of World War.2 Even so, one relatively unknown aircraft might have outperformed them if it had been ordered earlier. Hurricane and Spitfire prototypes each had eight .303 machine guns and flew at 308mph and 335mph respectively. The first Mustang had 6 guns and was slightly faster.

The tiny Martin-Baker Company, later to become famous for their ejector-seats, set out to build a fighter with equal performance, and heavier armament but much easier to build, service and repair, areas in which other fighters needed improvement. The result was the MB-2, a rather ugly, fixed undercarriage machine with 8 .303 guns. The fuselage was a tubular steel box with many removable panels for ease of maintenance or repair. However, its speed was not much greater than that of the Hurricane, so no contract was placed.

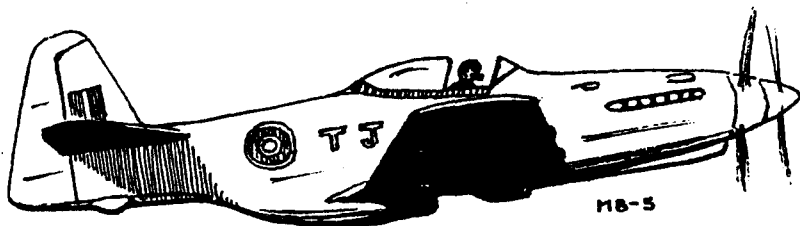


Undaunted, the Company returned to the drawing board and produced the MB-3 to meet Specification F18/39, a beautifully streamlined fighter, with a retractable undercarriage and capable of 415mph. Making its first flight in August 1942, it was still very easy to build and service

and had no less than six 20mm cannon in its wings! Unfortunately, it was powered by the unreliable Napier Sabre which had been giving considerable trouble with Hawker Typhoons. After an engine failure, the prototype MB-3 crashed and its pilot, Captain Baker, was killed. Despite the double blow of losing one of their founders and the aircraft, the Company carried on.

The second MB-3 was to have the more powerful Rolls Royce Griffon engine and to be known as the MB-4. Instead, for some reason, possibly seeking a more reliable and powerful engine, Martin-Baker decided on a complete re-design. As a result, they produced the

superlative MB-5, which first flew in May 1944. This had only four 20mm Hispano cannon, but a larger supply of ammunition. Its 2340hp Griffon engine powered a pair of three-bladed contra-rotating airscrews giving it a top speed of no less than 460mph at 20,000ft, and a service ceiling of 40,000ft. It proved an easy aircraft to fly and in addition, the MB-5 was far easier to build, maintain and repair, than any of the other fighters. Instrument panels could be hinged forward for easy maintenance and side panels were angled for improved pilot visibility.



Martin-Baker also designed a 'flat-feed' ammunition system which needed no wing 'blisters' to accommodate, thus further easing construction. The inwardly retracting undercarriage gave a wider track and this coupled with the reduced torque of its contra-props made the fighter far more stable at take-off than the tricky Spitfire.

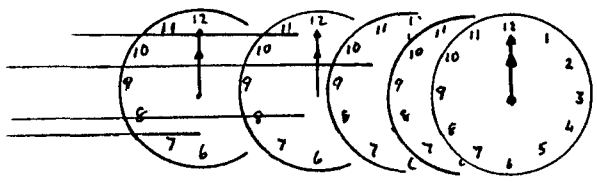
Unhappily, troubles with the Griffon engine delayed development until, even if ordered into production, by the time it reached the front line, it would only have had a slight speed advantage over the Spitfire XXI's 450mph and the 440mph of the Tempest II. In addition, the new jet fighters were in the offing, so the MB-5 vanished from the fighter scene. Had the aircraft been ordered earlier, its career would almost certainly have earned it a place in history.

FIGHTER FACTS - Speeds of some piston-engined fighter circa 1940-50			
Aircraft	mph	Aircraft	mph
Hawker Hurricane	308	Messerschmitt Bf109 K-4	452
Hawker Tempest	438	Fokke-Wulf 190	426
Hawker Typhoon	412	Fokke-Wulf Ta-152	472
Hawker Sea Fury	460	North American Mustang	487
Supermarine Spitfire	460	Republic XP-72**	490
Supermarine Seafire	452	Republic Thunderbolt	473
Kyushu Shinden**	400+	Ryan 'Dark Shark'**	500
Kawasaki Ki66	398	Dornier Do335 'Pfeil'	478
Nakajima Ki-84	392	Grumman F6F-5	380
Lavochkin La1	419	Yakovlev Yak 9P	414
Fisher 'Eagle' P-75	400	Curtiss P-40K	380
Martin-Baker V	460		

In August 1966, a Hawker Sea Fury set a new World Record of 520mph.
 **These aircraft never entered service

Probability Zilch

THE ETERNAL INSTANT



Terry Jeeves

The 21st Century was still new when breakeven point was passed, nuclear fusion became practical and acommercial power plants went on line. It wasn't long before fusion-powered spacecraft began to explore the Solar System. Serious talk began about Lagrange points and space colonies, even a near-bankrupt NASA got its budget upped. Ten years later, Marcus Elroyd completed his Grand Unified Field Theory, tying together electromagnetism, the weak and strong nuclear forces as well as the elusive power of gravity. A few years later, a researcher called Berger Nome, devised an inertia compensator which allowed spacecraft to boost at full thrust without squashing their crews.

The next giant leap for mankind came when a Government Research Station at Alamogordo lost much of its secrecy as its first Total Mass Conversion test produced a crater to make Arizona's pride and joy look like a gopher hole. It also put a decided kink in Highway 85 and knocked bits off the San Andreas Mountains. Apologies and damage claims were numerous. More circumspectly, the next test took place in orbit, well away from New Mexico. Secrecy might have been almost total, had not the resultant flash ruined the sky-gazing of scores of observatories. This time, the apologies were wider spread, but the payout considerably smaller.

That was the last the general public heard about Total Mass Conversion for quite a while. There were the usual panic articles saying that one Matter Conversion device could equal several arsenals of H bombs, but these soon settled down to share life with baseball scores, drug-busting, the ozone layer, dolphin spotting and all the other rich facets of everyday life.

Meanwhile, experiments continued, but with greater secrecy, better shielding and with much smaller amounts of mass having their constituent quarks converted into pure energy. It was only a matter of time before a fusion-power spacecraft equipped with an inertia nullifier (now termed a 'Bergernome'), had its naughty bits rewired into a Total Conversion Drive.

The results were striking. Flits around the Solar System became a matter of minutes rather than months. Talk began of trips to the stars, but since Einstein had decreed that a ship's mass would increase as it neared light speed, it was claimed that no craft could carry enough fuel to reach that velocity. Nevertheless, when a few tests were tried using unmanned drones, an astounding fact

emerged. As predicted by Einstein, the vehicle's mass increased steadily as it approached light velocity.

However, following Einstein's other dictum that $E=MC^2$

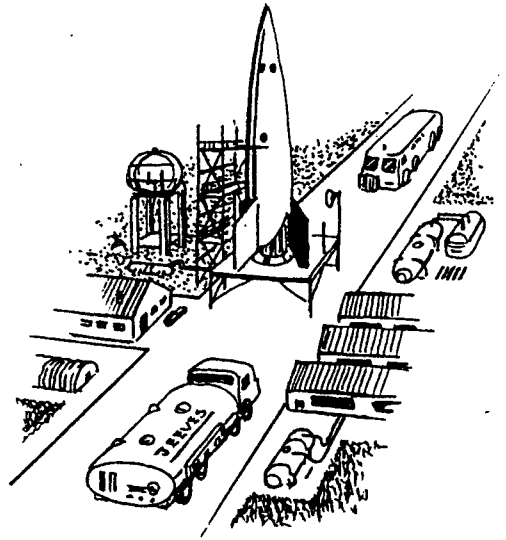
It became obvious that as the ship's mass M and the light velocity C both increased, so did the Energy which could be derived from their products and used to shove the craft along. Doubling the craft's velocity more than squared the available energy!

Light speed could be achieved!

The famous spacecraft constructor, Anson McDonnell was quick to take advantage of the discovery. Calling his design staff together, he outlined his proposal.

"I want you to design and build a series of test drones to head out at full 'g', hit light speed, maintain it for a minute or so, then reverse and come back again. One we've got that licked, we'll send a manned vessel to Alpha Centauri. Get at it!"

The design and construction crews got at it. FTL.1 was built, tested and was launched amidst a blaze of publicity. Its three computers were programmed to take it to light speed, then cut the drive, reverse the craft and bring it back. Its builders waited in vain. FTL.1 never returned.



FTL.2 was readied, five computers were installed with a consensus program to make sure that the instructions were followed. On tests within the Solar System, the craft performed perfectly at speeds up to $0.9C$. McDonnell gave the order, "Right, this time she'll work. Shoot for light speed." The button was pressed, off went FTL.2, boosted to light speed, and that too, failed to return.

Anson McDonnell mused over the command programs. They had no flaw, the Total Conversion drive hadn't failed, the Bergernome had been thoroughly checked out; where could the fault lie. He looked again at the Einstein equations.

$$\text{Mass} = \frac{M}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

No snags there, as ship's velocity v approached light velocity c , the smaller would grow $1 - v^2/c^2$. Its root would grow even smaller and therefore, the greater would be the resultant Mass. Moreover, as the mass increased, that other equation, $E=MC^2$ meant the Energy would also increase. The equations were simple, almost the same as the one for the time dilation.

The only difference being that

$$T_1 = \sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}} \times T_2$$

instead of increasing, the time multiplication factor would be shrinking. An hour on Earth would be only a second on the spacecraft. Something about that point nagged at McDonnell's mind.

He shrugged it off, the fault must lie in the relays controlling the Conversion Drive. Probably their increased mass made them inoperative. Well, there was an easy answer to that. Once again, he called in his work crew.

"Rip the remote gear out of FTL.3, put in manual controls and a pilot's seat. This time, I'm taking her out." Shrugging off protests, he shoosed the men out of the room.

Three months later, Anson struggled into a pressure suit and gazed from the control tower window as FTL.3 was rolled out. A thin trickle of smoke rose from the reaction tubes as his chief test pilot warmed up the Conversion Drive. Once again, a thought nagged McDonnell, but vanished as he reached for his helmet. Now it was his turn to prove that humans were better than machines at coping with the unexpected.

Before he could don the helmet, the unexpected happened again. Out on the pad, FTL.3's motors roared up the scale, the craft trembled on the pad, lifted on a tail of fire and to the accompaniment of a loud rumble and the dull thump of a supersonic bang, vanished through the cloud layer.

"FTL.3 to Ground Control", the loudspeaker in the control room burst into life. "Harriman here. I'm sorry Chief, but I couldn't let you risk flying this baby. It's a job for an expert, and anyway, you're too valuable down there. Over and out."

McDonnell snatched up the microphone and thumbed it to life.

"Come back you crazy jet jockey, she's my ship and I'm going to fly her."

"It's no good Skipper, I've always wanted to be the first man to go FTL and this is my chance. Put the champagne on ice, I'll be back in less time than light will take. Over and out." The steady hum of the carrier wave stopped, Harriman had switched off his radio.

McDonnell looked aghast at the clouds through which FTL.3 had vanished. Harriman's last words had brought that nagging thought into focus. Wearily, he turned to the others in the control tower.

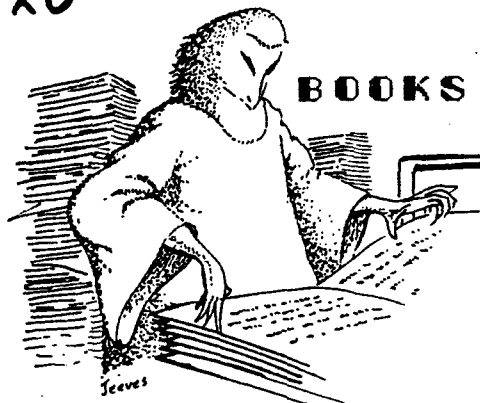
"He won't be back, not in our lifetimes, not for a thousand years, and maybe not then."

"Why ever not?", Chief Designer Riverside demanded.

"Because of that other Einstein equation, the one which shows that as speed increases, time slows down. That's why the first two craft never returned".

Seeing Riverside's bewilderment, he went on,

"Once at light speed, time virtually stood still for them. The computers effectively stopped as far as Earth clocks are concerned. Before they can send a command to the relays, several thousand of our years will have passed. The same applies to Harriman. Everything will seem normal to him, but relative to us, his time has slowed to a crawl. It will only seem seconds to him, but by the time he decides to commence the return sequence, eons will have passed. No, he'll never be back. We must face it, Faster than Light travel is forever impossible, it takes too long!"



PORTENT James Herbert Hodder & Stoughton £14.99

Underwater explosions, volcanic eruptions, fires, floods hurricanes and other disasters are increasing and mysterious lights accompany them. Meteorologist James Rivers is baffled when he first meets Hugo Poggs and hears his Gaia theory of a 'living Earth'. Poggs' daughter Diane has two adopted, psi-powered children who, with others, are the world's only hope through contact with a mysterious Dream Man. Seeking to destroy them is the evil, malevolent Mama Pitie. Crammed with incident and excitement, a

fantasy of escalating horror in which the pace never slackens.

JAMES HERBERT: BY HORROR HAUNTED Ed. Stephen Jones
Hodder & Stoughton £17.99

Not an autobiography, but a collection of interviews, verse, articles, reviews, essays, photographs and stories - plus some excellent artwork (Did you know Herbert was a superb artist?). There's a list of Herbert's ten favourite books and a bibliography of his works accompanied by small-scale jacket reproductions. Stephen Jones has assembled a wonderfully varied mix of material and innovative layout. In the process, he has endowed a gripping life to what could have been a pedestrian hodge podge. It's a MUST for Herbert fans and even if you're not among them, you'll find this volume hard to put down. Not cheap, but an excellent buy.

SHADOW MAZE Jonathan Wylie Corgi £3.99

After their manhood ritual, Varo and Brostek fin their village and inhabitants totally destroyed by the Bari 'Knifemen' who are led by five evil mages. Collecting a band of warriors, they seek revenge on the elusive five. They are joined by Slator and his idiot savant nephew Lisle, a superb magician and telepath who foresees mysterious eclipses before they occur and portend another Bari raid. A blend pf mystery, fantasy and magic leading to a surprising conclusion

DARK PRINCE David Gemmell Legend £5.99

A re-issue of the second part of the Lion Of Macedon saga. In 'Lion', Parmenion was taken under Xenophon's wing and achieved greatness. Now he is general to the Dark Prince - who is to become Alexander The Great. Possessed by the evil 'Chaos Spirit', lover of death and violence, Alexander and his general are forced across dimensions in a saga of sorcery, enchantment and epic battles in this second volume of the glorious era of Ancient Greece.

WAYLANDER II: In The Realm Of The Wolf David Gerrold Legend £9.99

Waylander, Dakeyris and his daughter Meriel live alone in the mountains but now someone has put a price on his head and Guild assassins led by the sadistic Morak come to earn the gold. The warrior, 'Angel' comes to warn Dakeyris and stays to train Meriel in battle skills. Tension escalates as the killers move in, but there are other mysteries behind the attack, as well as strange magic and deadly conflicts. A trade-size, action-packed sword and sorcery fantasy, second in the Waylander series.

THE BEAST WITHIN: A History of the Werewolf Adam Douglas
Chapmans £15.99



Not a fantasy, but a scholarly investigation into the history of 'man into animal'. First come a few 'real' cases of people who believed they were, and acted like, wild animals. The scene then outlines pre-history records and beliefs of early hunters, their rituals and legends. The trail moves on to primitive man, Greek mythology, folk tales, tribal beliefs and old-wives' tales. Norsemen, Vikings, Celts and Romans contribute their stories, as do films and novels. Also included are a 'werewolf chronology', copious references and a large index. This should be on the shopping list of every serious student of werewolves, or of writers needing source material for horror tales.

AESTIVAL TIDE Elizabeth Hand Bantam £4.9

The 9-levelled fortress city of Araboth is ruled by the Orsinas who in turn are answerable to the satellite-dwelling Ascendant Autocracy. In the depths of the ziggurat, data-base android, Neferty is stirring. The Aestival Tide is soon due, but so is the Prince of Storms which could devastate the decaying city. The only hope lies with four, ill-assorted dwellers. A richly beautiful and multi-layered fantasy and a sure Award winner.

THE EMPRESS OF THE SEVEN OCEANS Fiona Cooper Black Swan £5.99

England during the 17th Century and white witches, Rowan, Esther and three children flee a mob and head down river taking Sister Mercy with them. They meet with Jen who killed a would-be rapist and fled a circus taking the dancing bear with her. Reaching the sea, the motley band ship aboard 'The Empress', a boat stolen by booze sodden Queenie who is aiding other 'witches' to escape. A bawdy, action-filled fantasy where all the main characters seem 'gay'.

RED DWARF Grant Naylor Penguin £7.99

Lister sets out on a Monopoly pub crawl, and awakes on Mimas, moon of Saturn. To get home, he joins the Space Corps, is shipped in the opposite direction and eventually finds he is Last Man alive on the spacecraft 'Red Dwarf', millions of light years further away - as companions he has neurotic dead man Rimmer, a deranged android, the elegant Cat and a senile computer. The hefty volume contains 'RED DWARF' AND 'BETTER THAN LIFE'. If you enjoyed the TV series, you'll enjoy this crazy send up of SF.

TAILCHASER'S SONG Tad Williams Legend £4.99

The near poetic saga of cat Fritti Tailchaser who sets out to find his missing, beloved Hushpad. His journey is beset by various perils, squirrels, giant cats, enslavement and being hunted by Ma'n. He has some lovely companions such as the kitten Pouncequick and half mad Eatbugs. He finds Hushpad and a domesticity which sits ill on the now mature Fritti. Lovely descriptions and plenty of surprises make it an excellent read for young and old. NB, the jacket says 'First published in Britain in 1982 by Legend' - what about the 1986 Orbit issue?

SONGS OF POWER Greg Bear Legend £9.99

Not cheap, but this is a massive, trade-size paperback of nigh on 700 pages. It contains the two novels 'The Infinity Concerto' and 'The Serpent Mage'. 16-year old Michael Perrin passes through a portal into the fantasy world ruled by the Sidhe who come in various forms. Humans, lured there by music, are oppressed. Michael is trained by the weird Breed sisters as he struggles to make sense of it all and return home. My review copy had 40 misprinted pages at this point, so I jumped to 'Mage' where Michael, now 21 and living in L.A. finds he has been pursued by the Sidhe and must again tackle other dimensional horrors. An involved fantasy which is a welcome change from standard sword toting heroes.

CHILD OF AN ANCIENT CITY Legend £7.99

Tad Williams & Nina Kiriki Hoffman

After a sumptuous banquet, Masrur al-Adan is persuaded to tell the story of how he and others went on an ill-fated mission for the Caliph, were attacked by bandits and then hunted by a vampyr. They stave off its attacks by telling stories until it proposes a contest for the saddest tale.

In Arabian Nights fashion, each survivor does so, only to find their tales are capped by the vampyr's story. Fascinating and different, but where did the title come from?

NIGHTFALL Isaac Asimov & Robert Silverberg Pan £4.99

Asimov's 1941 yarn of a nightless world orbiting six suns. Every 2049 years, Darkness falls and chaos ensues. Silverberg has expanded that tale to novel length, Lagash has become Kalgash and Silverberg has done a gripping job of events leading up to the disaster. Had he stopped there, it would have been another classic. However, events after Nightfall, slow the pace and read like a post-A war holocaust yarn of the fifties. But it's still a cracking yarn.

CHILD OF TIME Isaac Asimov & Robert Silverberg Pan £8.99

This story first appeared in a 1958 Galaxy, titled 'Lastborn', later altered to 'The Ugly Little Boy'. Silverberg has interspersed the original tale with the story of the tribe from which 4-year-old Neanderthal boy, 'Timmie' was snatched by Stasis Technologies. Nursed by Edith Fellowes, all goes well until The Children's Advocacy Council causes trouble. Timmie can't leave his bubble because of the fantastic energy imbalance, so what is his future? A well-written, highly readable expansion of the original yarn.

A WEALTH OF FABLE Harry Warner Jr. SCIFI Press, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA \$25. The informal history of SF fandom during the sixties, lovingly written and with more than 200 photographs. Not a dry-as-dust, chronological listing, but flowing subjective memories of the era by fandom's greatest letterhack. No fan should be without a copy -- Ken Slater can probably get you one.

THE WITCLORD AND THE WEAPON MASTER Hugh Cook Corgi £5.99

Tenth and final volume of 'CHRONICLES OF AN AGE OF DARKNESS'. Guest Gulkan, power-hungry son of a barbarian emperor faces a changing world as the Age of Darkness ends. He meets a demon, "This time there was no mistaking the source of that voice. The jade-green monolith was speaking to him". It is the demon, Icaria Scaria Ina-Italis, Keeper Of The Inner Sanctum. 700+ pages of S&S Fantasy.

THE TALE OF THE ETERNAL CHAMPION

Mike Moorcock MILLENNIUM at £10.99 each, 4 volumes 9"x6", and of appx. 400pp. Moorcock is a writer you either love or can't abide. His writing flows smoothly, it is prolific, imaginative, daring in concept, but he has the annoying habit of painting a marvellous word picture only to abandon it abruptly. Here in this massive, 4-volume collection, you get his best work. Each has a superb cover design and a brief, background Introduction by the author.

No.1 VON BEK contains The Warhound and The World's Pain, The City In The Autumn Stars, and The Pleasure Gardens of Felipe Sagittarius

No.2 THE ETERNAL CHAMPION The Eternal Champion, Phoenix In Obsidian, and The Dragon In The Sword.

No.3 HAWKMOON The Jewel In The Skull, The Mad God's Amulet, The Sword of Dawn, and The Runestaff.

No.4 CORUM The Knight Of The Swords, The Queen Of The Swords, and The King Of The Swords.

Moorcock enthusiasts will be delighted to have all the tales together. If you're among them, re-inforce your bookshelves, get a second mortgage and buy the set. Unless you're a speed reader, there's enough fantasy to last you a year!

Currently available from MILLENNIUM (See ERG.119)

THE FOREVER KING Molly Cochran & Warren Murphy £14.99hbk, £8.99tpb. Insane killer Saladin escapes asylum to seek an artifact which makes him immortal.

THE WHITE MISTS OF POWER Kristine Kathryn Rusch, £14.99hbk, £7.99tpb. Magician Seymour helps bard Byron escape Lord Dakin's pursuing hounds and join with kidnapped Prince Alric.

A FIRE UPON THE DEEP Vernor Vinge £14.99hbk, £8.99tpb. In a Galaxy wide civilisation a new malignant AI is created. Two children escape, but fall into the clutches of intelligent dogs. Multilevel space-opera.

Coming from MILLENNIUM in 1993

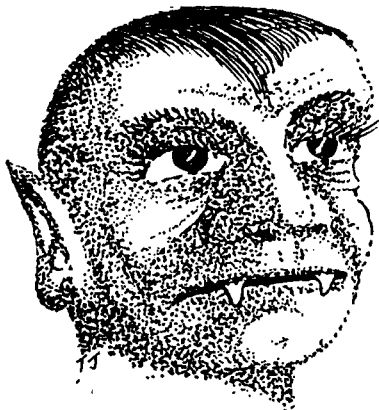
THE LAST OF THE RENSHAI Mickey Zucker Reichert. The world teeters on the brink of war, the sorcery of wizards can't stop it, a lone Renshai warrior is to become Champion. S&S Feb.1993 £14.99hbk, £8.99tpb

WARPATH Tony Daniel. The far future, a newspaperman and his friend, the planet's Wanderer search the worlds for a lost guardian spirit. Apr. £14.99hbk £8.99tpb

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EAST OF EALING Robert Rankin Corgi £3.99

Third in the hilarious Brentford saga. Norman has created a robot to run the shop, Soap Distant calls on Pooley and Omally to help release a mysterious subterranean sleeper who proves to be Sherlock Holmes - a key figure in a fight against the Latenois/Romiith Computer Combine seeking to bar-code everyone and bring Apocalypse. Rankin has a rapier of humour, not a bludgeon and he never misses.



BORDERS OF INFINITY Lois McMaster Bujold Pan £4.99

Three tales of the 'physically disadvantaged' Miles Vorkosigan, taken from magazines and loosely linked together. In 'Mountains Of Mourning', Miles is sent to track down a baby-killer. In 'Labyrinth' he sets out to collect a defecting scientist and also acquires a four-armed harpist and a gene-altered warrior. 'Borders of Infinity' sees him finagling an escape from an enemy prison camp. Improbable plots, but highly enjoyable stories. I enjoyed 'em.

AFTER THE KING: Stories In Honour of Tolkien

Ed. Martin H Greenberg Pan £6.99 Nineteen tales of fantasy from a galaxy of writers; Donaldson, Fratchett, Silverberg, Turtledove, Norton and on. The overthrow of a sadist, Cohen The Barbarian meets a troll, religion based on alien visitors, the menace of a helpful dragon, escape from goblins, perils of well-dressing, the fate of missionaries, a wandering house and many others. I'm not normally a lover of fantasy, but I enjoyed this superb, large size, 500+pp grab bag for only £6.99. How can you go wrong?



MIMOSA.12 runs to 72 well mimeod pages, card covers and comes from Dick & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1350, Germantown, MD 20875, USA. A really good mixed bag. Dave Kyle reminisces on Asimov, Sharon Farber on 'Medical Life', a Willis item, Clarke & Harris on stamps, Ted White's bet with Ellison, LOCs, excellent artwork and other goodies.

HIDALGO.23 68 Pages from Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, USA. As well as family addition, Sarah Bethany, Brian even manages to produce this superlative issue. Repro is a bit patchy, but contents are pure gold. A trip to Pulpcon (with lovely re-captioned illos), Fred Pohl's brilliant SOH speech, A piece on Amazon women in 'Blue Book', excellent in-depth book reviews, and LOCs. All this, plus Part.1 of an Index to Munsey Group magazines. This is THE most interesting fanzine I've read in ages. If you love the old pulps, tempt Brian with two bucks.

YHOS.12 32 pages, folded foolscap from Art Widner, PO Box 677, Guatula, CA 95445 USA. A terrific Hunter cover in the style of (and equalling) Finlay. Whale spotting, A memorial piece for Art's son, personal medical events, an article on Bataan, LOCs and a column on SF's past, present and future. A nice friendly zine available for 'The usual'.

THE MENTOR 84 Pages, card covers and impeccable repro., from Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. Several short stories, SYNCon report, LOCs, various reviews, Argentine SF, amusing anecdotes from Buck Coulson, an Article on C.S.Lewis. The Mentor is on the sercon side making it an excellent counterweight to the more light-hearted fanzines. Get it for a LOC on previous issue (Catch 22), contribution, trade or \$5.00.