

ERG 121
QUARTERLY
APRIL 1993



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ERG - 34th. ANNIVERSARY ISSUE 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 Limbo, 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

With 'First Issues' (of ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN) in this issue, I tried to get photocopies of some cover photographs. Sadly, even with Derek Pickles kindly making a magnificent effort, the results were just too black (Can anyone help with some other process?). In the end, I was forced to re-draw the cover artwork to the required size. I hope it's accurate enough to give you the idea of what the originals looked like. Comments, and should I continue the series ??

DOWN MEMORY BANK LANE - I propose to re-run the series (slightly revised and with additions), starting in ERG 121. If you have any objections or suggestions for something completely different, shoot 'em in now.

ONLY HAVING 32K of RAM on this Beeb, I contemplated up-grading to an Arc 3010. Twice, I wrote Acorn to ask:- 1. Were the BASICs compatible? 2. Could I have a 5.25" drive added? 3. Could I have Wordwise+ fitted. Both times, they sent price lists, but didn't answer my questions - but they did pass my address to a York firm - who sent further price lists. I wrote to the firm repeating my queries. Since then, no reply. HOWEVER, very Good Man, Derek Pickles visited his local Acorn dealer and found that the answer to each question was NO (Why couldn't Acorn's Head Office have told me that?) So now I want a PC with MSDOS.5 and Windows 3.1 - any suggestions? The Wearnes Boldline 386SX-25 at around £800 seems OK, but I'm not keen on Mail Order. We have no PC dealers here in Scarborough, only business systems places, so what can I do?

QUERY March 3 I received an empty, unsealed A5, buff envelope with a rubber stamp of a lizard or newt below the address, and a white sticker with '1st. Class Mail' in red. Postmark almost unreadable, but ends '...ford M.L.O.' If anyone can identify same. please contact me.

FINALLY -- You will remember to LOC, won't you? Many readers have not been responding so I'm afraid I'll have to drop them. Make sure of your next issue with a LOC. All the best, Terry

HOBBIES



Every time I read or hear of some young offender or would-be do-gooder blame the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency on the 'bored, nothing else to do' syndrome, I wonder whatever happened to hobbies. During my teaching days, when introducing graphs, I would often poll the class and build a blackboard graph of their out of school activities. In 1948 (when I started teaching), we had a fairly even crop of stamp collecting, modelling, reading, sewing, cycling, swimming, sports, drawing, Scouting, Guiding, dancing and so on. Then TV arrived. By the time I hung up my chalk and duster, the class activity graph had become a no-no simply because it was too lopsided. Out of 40 children, the hobby list went something like this:- Reading 1, stamps 2, Modelling 0, Swimming 4, Cycling 2, Disco 5, Watching TV 26.

I suspect that were I to do that class poll today, Computer games would loom large, probably replacing the non TV activities. I'll not go into what the kids watch or play, or how it affects their 'off TV actions', but please don't say TV doesn't influence people, the fact that advertising can support sundry TV channels says otherwise.

Whatever the reason, unless you count car stealing and pop videos, modern children seem to be drifting away from creative hobbies, and that's a trend I just can't understand -- but then I've been a confirmed hobbyist since as early as I can remember. So here goes to say a few words about my grasshopper mind's approach to them.

My earliest pastime was probably cigarette card collecting and I still have a dozen or so sets of Park Drive Champions, Players Footballers, trains and aircraft, plus earlier sets from pre-1914 days which were handed down to me.

Model aircraft gripped me at a very early age, starting with a F.R.O.G model costing 10/6d (about 52p). This flew beautifully, but my three loops stunt soon wrote it off so I turned to making my own. At first, I built models from kits, carefully carving up sheets and slabs of balsa to create various flying models - though often, the 'flying' part depended on how far I could throw 'em. I also built non-flying 'solids' by carving them from chunks of firewood. Nowadays, I build plastic models where all the hard work of pre-shaping has been done.

Drawing and painting are two other hobbies which I still pursue. They led to a profitable sideline in cartooning which brought in regular lolly for some thirty years. I have always been a compulsive list-maker, so that when I began collecting SF and aircraft magazines, and was given a typewriter as a 14th birthday present, it was inevitable that I should list and index their contents. Years later, when I bought a duplicator, I compiled and published three indexes to Astounding (1930-39, 1940-49 and 1950-59).

I was dallying with a fourth, when Mike Ashley asked me to help him with THE COMPLETE INDEX TO ASTOUNDING-ANALOG, 1930-1980. That was over twelve years ago, but my mania (and a computer) have kept me grinding away indexing every issue since then. Moreover, I have compiled indexes to a heck of a lot of other SF mags (Not Galaxy, that is on the back burner) - so if you have a query along those lines, maybe I can help.

Having a duplicator also allowed me to take on another hobby - fanzine publishing. Along with Eric Bentcliffe I produced around 20 issues of TRIODE, as well as duplicating the first four issues of Vector and several issues of Dave Cohen's 'BLUE MOON'. Then of course, I began publishing ERG in April 1959 and that's another hobby I still pursue. Writing and drawing for ERG and other fanzines led inevitably to dipping my toes in the professional market. In addition to cartoon sales, I began to sell short stories and articles based on my other hobbies - computing, modelling, cine filming and photography.

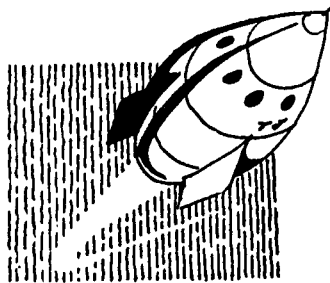
Photography joined my pastime list when I bought a Paxette 1m, one of the earliest 35mm cameras. I now have a Fujica STX-1, single-lens reflex, plus supplementary close-up lenses and a large zoom/telephoto lens. I use these for scenic photography and also for taking pictures of my models and artwork.

In the mid fifties, I became a tape recording enthusiast using Phillips and Ferrograph recorders. I was a founder member of the Sheffield Tape Society, made several tape epics, recorded many SF stories for school use and did three ERG tapes. I began taping, and still keep up a regular exchange (now using cassettes) with a couple of fen. In 1960, I took up cine photography with three cine cameras and a dual-gauge sound projector. Over the years, I have made umpteen travel films and several animated cartoons - two of the latter winning Delta Awards at SF cons.

When the computer was added to my hobby list, it allowed me to do more writing, manipulate my lists and produce copies as and when I required them. It also enables me to print inserts for my own (photographic) Christmas cards and to do heading, contents and index pages for another of my hobbies - bookbinding.

My first attempts at bookbinding involved stitching and glueing together, six copies of the American pulp magazine, 'Flying Aces'. I was sixteen at the time, so the result was a total disaster. I didn't try again until after the war when I read a library book which explained everything in detail. This time my efforts were successful, and now I make my own notebooks, account books, photo albums and have a file of hardcover ERG volumes.

I'm a real grasshopper mind when it comes to hobbies. I began stamp collecting even before I started with model aircraft, but my collecting was sporadic and unspecialised. Nevertheless, I have gradually acquired two albums of British stamps, one 'World' album, one of the USA, and the only items I still work at -- two albums of



'Aerospace stamps'. So if any of you have any unwanted stamps depicting anything to do with aircraft or space activities, please send 'em to me.

As a boy, I was always interested in electrical gadgets. I had an 'electrical set', including two bells, and an induction ('shocking' coil). I enjoyed wiring all these into a wooden box and adding a light. I also experimented with fitting a (battery-powered) light and an electric bell on the stairs. I discovered that these worked OK as far as the first floor, but when extended to the attic, they wouldn't perform. I had unwittingly discovered the phenomenon of resistance. Naturally, when I volunteered to join the RAF, I opted for aircrew. Turned down because of a weak right eye, I snatched up the alternative offer to train as a wireless mechanic. Even better, after several months learning Morse, I was up-graded to training as Wireless Mechanic - and thus acquired yet another hobby.

In India, I managed to scrounge enough parts to build a radio which could pick up the BBC. On demob, I built numerous superhets and traded my unwanted Hornby train set for a small cathode ray tube. When I built this into a simple oscilloscope it gave such good results that I lashed out on a Government surplus 6" VCR97 and built myself a more ambitious 'scope with a Puckle, hard valve timebase. When valves gave way to transistors followed by solid state devices I didn't do much, but in recent years I've made myself several light dimmers, and a nice power unit to supply 0 to 30v for other projects - such as the Electric Speedway just completed for the grandchildren.

Occasionally the fit takes me and I dig out my candle making equipment and produce a mess of assorted candles. Once a week I play snooker in the Conservative Club. When weather permits I work in the garden or potter in the garage cum workshop. There I have a bench drill, power drill, power saw bench, jig saw, sander, a planer, three soldering irons, a glue gun and a host of other stuff.

As for lapsed hobbies, I've always been keen on mathematics and in the forties, went to evening classes for several years to gain Firsts in Higher National Maths 2nd, 3rd and 4th years. Sadly, I've since forgotten virtually all of it. Val and I used to do lots of dancing and we even worked up to Silver medal in Latin American, but since my operations, I find one dance at a time is quite enough to wear me out. Swimming was another hobby, I even went on an expedition to Spain diving for sunken treasure (we didn't find any), but nowadays, a ten minute flounder is quite enough to keep me happy. Cycling was another great love of mine. For many years I averaged eighty miles a week. Nowadays, Scrabble has replaced such forgotten joys.

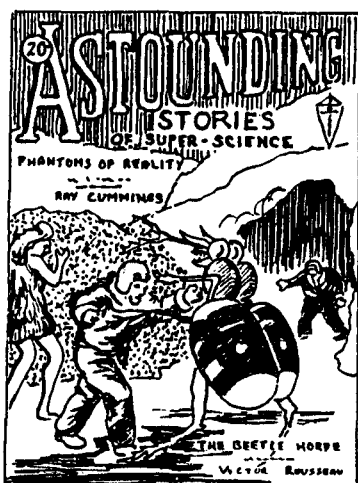
The thing is I have lots of interests, so when one pales, I shift to another - reading, work on the computer and editing ERG being the main ones. I don't have the time to become bored and I just can't understand why modern youngsters, with even MORE to occupy them, have 'nothing to do'. Boredom isn't a function of money or environment, it's an attitude of mind.

GENERAL CHUNTERING

This is by way of being an old and tired column. It appeared first sometime in the late 1940's, as a place in my fanzine where all the odd snippets of information, complaints, notices of marriage and law suites, odd comments about magazines, books, and so forth that didn't fit into any other part of "OPERATION FANTAST" could be dumped. Some years later it appeared in an issue or three of the BSFA publications as "Semi-Civil Chuntering". For some reason little understood by men or gods your editor has asked me to resurrect it. Currently I don't have much in the way of snippets but we shall work on it. For the nonce, a few larger fillers. I still get odd requests, even tho "O.F." became defunct aeons ago. One current one is a from a US fan who wants copies of London telephone directories, including "Yellow Pages", to aid him in some research. Old ones are okay. If you have such, and would care to dispose of them to a good home, let me know. Someone else asks me do I know the whereabouts of Bob Clothier, who used to illustrate for NEW WORLDS and NEBULA way back when. Regretfully, I don't....to be honest, I don't even know who to ask. Anyone out there care to help? So one gets out of touch with things. Another little item I have stored away in my "can you help/when I get time" file is a request from someone who seems to think I know something about writing. I don't. If I did Ted Carnell would have published the stuff I sent him, rather than returning it for rewriting. By the by I didn't get discouraged. I just got into a different stream of action - I had less time on my hands when I went to B.A.O.R. than I'd had as an accounts officer for a German P.O.W. Camp. Maybe that is not exactly true - I still had time on my hands, but it came in shorter stretches. I could write letters and stuff like that in odd moments. But real creative writing takes concentration in large lumps. So, no, I am not really able to advise my enquirer on how authors dream up aliens. From reading experience it seems to me that you need either imagination at something like genius level. Stanley G.Weinbaum, for example. Or considerable understanding of a possible environment, and how a life form could fit into it. Hal Clement and Robert L.Forward are authors I cite for this approach (and you still need the imagination at a high level). Or you take some known life form, Terran (s'all we know) and build on it. This will vary all the way from the elementary and naive of those early tales where the author had aliens who looked like - say -alligators - but who otherwise acted pretty much like humans with motivations just like Joe the Chippie down the way (stop here and ask yourself did you think of Joe as a carpenter or a potato frier?) There was a tale in one of the (I think) Clayton Astoundings of some alligator-headed aliens sending out a signal to entrap unwary humans. I forget why; I do recall that the heroes got away and left their alligator chums still hopefully signalling to the universe.A sort of siren crock song. Then you can take almost any creature and give it extra arms, legs, tails or brains, add some unlikely qualities, and make a quite respectable alien lifeform. Was it Frank Herbert did it with frogs? Some extra brain power and changes in life-style, and he constructed quite reasonable aliens. More recently C.J.Cherryh made excellent use of lions as a template for an alien people and a culture. You may have to look around a bit. Ants and termites have been overworked, as have the bees.But how about the charming little robin of Christmas card fame? You want some aggressive avian aliens you couldn't go far wrong if you used the robin for a base. Very rarely can he stand the sight of a neighbour - he'll even attack his own reflection in a puddle! And you could work in a new meaning to the term "feathering your nest"! Trophies from battles. And a copy of this can go to my correspondent....

Fantastically, Ken F Slater

ASTOUNDING



The first issue of **ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER-SCIENCE** appeared in January 1930. Measuring 6.75" by 9.75" and running to 144 pages, it was edited by Harry Bates who later gave us 'Farewell To The Master' which reached the big screen as 'The Day The Earth Stood Still'. Published by Clayton Magazines at 20c, ASF as it was affectionately known, bore a cover by Nesso illustrating a scene from 'The Beetle Horde', a 2-part serial by Vicor Rousseau. Other tales in the issue were:-

THE CAVE OF HORROR, Captain S.P. Meek
 PHANTOMS OF REALITY, Ray Cummings
 THE STOLEN MIND, M.L. Staley
 COMPENSATION, C.V. Tench
 TANKS, 'Murray Leinster' (Will Jenkins)
 INVISIBLE DEATH, Anthony Pelcher

'The Beetle Horde' saw mad scientist Bram release a horde of giant beetles. 'Cave Of Horror' introduced Dr. Bird who went about solving scientific mysteries. 'Phantoms of Reality' involved an alternate Earth in the fourth dimension. 'Tanks' concerned a mighty battle with the 'Yellow Empire'. The stories were all of the action-adventure type in which the hero(es) battled against fantastic perils before saving a girl friend, the world, or the universe before emerging triumphant.

Being a typical 'pulp' magazine, the edges were untrimmed, a point which provoked such argument in future letter columns - as did the use of wire staples to bind each issue. Wilson Tucker formed the mythical 'SFTSOWSISFM' - The Society For The Suppression Of Wire Staples In SF Magazines - The opposition 'formed' 'SFTPOWSIBFM' for their preservation. All interior illustrations were by Gould (see ERG 118) and the editorial introduced 'Astounding Stories'. According to Harry Bates, quoted in Alva Rogers superb, 'A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING (Advent. 1964), ASF only saw the light of day simply because publisher William Clayton issued thirteen magazines. Each month, the thirteen covers for these were printed on a sheet with room for sixteen. The sheet was then displayed on the wall of Clayton's office. The three blank spaces annoyed him, so he decided that it wouldn't greatly increase his cover printing and paper costs to add three more covers. As a start, he decided on a magazine devoted to historical adventures. This was to be titled 'Torchlights of History'. Fortunately, Bates, not wanting to edit such a periodical, talked Clayton into making it a science fiction magazine with the title of **ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER-SCIENCE**. This was slimmed down to **ASTOUNDING STORIES** with the February 1931 issue. 'Torchlights Of History' and 'Strange Tales' did eventually appear to fill the remaining two gaps in the cover sheet, so Clayton got his full sheet of sixteen cover paintings.

First issues ..

UNKNOWN



The first 162 page, trimmed edges, issue of UNKNOWN appeared in March 1939. It was edited by John W. Campbell Jr., who is reported to have said he launched the magazine because he wanted to run 'Sinister Barrier' which wasn't suitable for Astounding - A highly unlikely way to start a new magazine, but right from the start, 'UNK' was a cut above other fantasy magazines. Its cover (by Scott) illustrating Eric Frank Russell's epic novel, misleadingly depicted an evil figure clasping the world globe whilst beneath it, a city blazed. The Vitons of the story were actually invisible energy globes which caused, and feasted on human emotions of pain and sorrow. When a means to make them visible was discovered, all-out conflict ensued.

Six short stories filled the rest of the issue. 'Who Wants Power' by Mona Farnsworth told of an Egyptologist discovering an artifact which made wishes (and idle thoughts) come true. 'Dark Vision' by Frank

Belknap Long had an electrician who became a mind reader after an accident. Strangely, the yarn mentions 'a television recorder' which predates audio recording on plastic tape. Could video be recorded on the wire or steel tapes of the era? 'Trouble With Water' by H.L. Gold was a whimsical tale about a fisherman who caught - and annoyed, one of the Little Folk. Manly Wade Wellman contributed 'Where Angels Fear -', a macabre story of a haunted house. 'Closed Doors' by A.B.L. Macfadyen Jr. was about a time-traveller suffering from amnesia after an accident. Finally, 'Death Sentence' by Robert Moore Williams had an interesting idea for convicting criminals by their own thoughts and dealing with them by personality erasure.

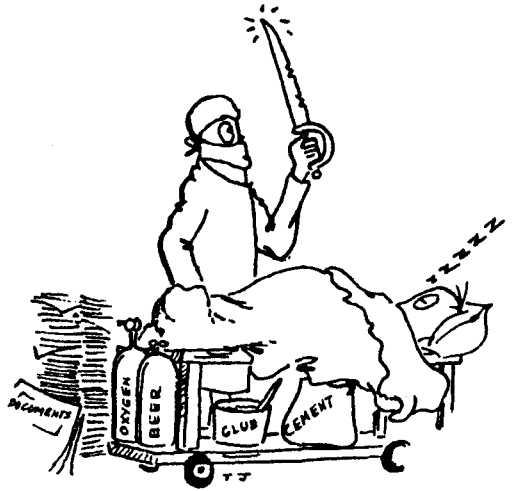
Artwork and Contents page fail to agree, as the listing gives Cartier, Hewitt, Fisk, Mayan, Orban, Gilmore and Isip but in actual fact, Mayan and Gilmore don't appear in the magazine. Cartier illustrated Sinister Barrier and Dark Vision. Orban did 'Who Wants Power', Hewitt did 'Trouble With Water' and Fisk illustrated 'Where Angels Fear -'. I think the heading for 'Closed Doors' was by Isip and Orban drew the one for 'Death Sentence'.

During its brief lifetime, Unknown lengthened its title to 'UNKNOWN WORLDS'. Cover art was replaced by a dull contents listing which made all issues look the same, and like ASF, the magazine assumed the clumsy, 'bedsheet size'. Sadly, wartime paper restrictions caused it to fold with the October 1943 issue.

OPERATION FANTAST

After touring Western America, things went along fairly quietly until the January of 1985 when things began to undergo planned obsolescence in my insides. For openers, I began to get stomach pains after meals. As if that were not enough, my water works section had second thoughts about carrying out its assigned duties.

I was forced to embark on a road which led eventually to that strange world of white-garbed figures, bleeping monitors, drip-feed bottles, and other less glamorous activities.



There are two ways of ending up in hospital. The first, less painful way is to become a nurse, doctor or one of those visitors who brings bunches of grapes to eat whilst talking to you. The second, less pleasant way is by becoming a 'patient' - so called because of the patience you need to enable you to put up with all the sitting, waiting and procrastination you meet at every step along the way. To become a patient, one must have qualifications, they are very careful about that. They don't just let anyone in. It helps if you are dying, that's almost certain to get you a pass mark. Broken limbs, serious injuries or total paralysis are also fairly safe bets. Anything else, and you have to meet cunning with cunning.

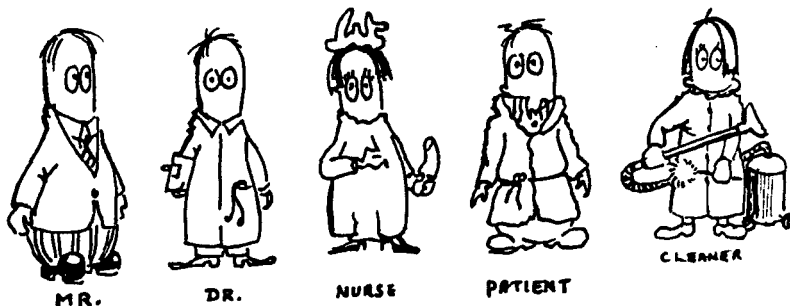
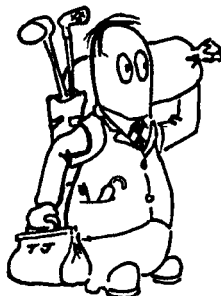
I began by visiting my GP. He was on holiday, but his locum suspected a Hiatus Hernia. Time passed, pains continued and three months later my own Doctor diagnosed the stomach pains as indigestion, he gave me some milk-like gunk to drink. For the water works I got pills. Time passed but the symptoms didn't, so in July, I was actually sent to hospital where I was asked for my name, rank, serial number, address, age, blood group, next of kin, religion, and a dozen other highly important details - a procedure which was to be repeated so often that in future I'll just call it Procedure X.

Then followed blood tests, X-rays and some very personal probing by Mr. Fox's deputy sheriff. Eventually, tablets were given. These closed down my waterworks almost completely. In dire stress, I hurried back to the Hallamshire Hospital. My plight was swiftly dealt with - "Sorry, Dr. Fox is away, go and see your GP and come back tomorrow". In considerable pain, I went round to my GP, who also stonewalled, "I can't prescribe, I don't want to interfere with the Hallamshire treatment."

Note the crafty way both places staved off any chance of my actually getting dealt with by shoving the onus of decision on someone else. As instructed I returned to the hospital the following day, when the receptionist cheerfully told me, "Sorry, Mr Fox is away today" (I think she had the phrase ready on a cassette.). After 2 hours, another doctor unbent enough to give me another helping of tablets which as per normal, did nothing for my problem.

Weeks crawled by to my next appointment. More Procedure X, a dozen X-rays, an ultrasound scan, blood tests and a few other indignities later it was decided my waterworks needed an operation, but I might have to wait over a year - obviously, I would have to be a 'very patient'. Happily, someone slipped up as I got a letter in less than a month. It said, "Please ring first to make sure we have a bed." I couldn't imagine a hospital that size NOT having a bed, but I dutifully rang and was told they didn't have a bed, but would ring back if they found one. My offer to help them look, was declined.

Ten minutes later, the plumber arrived to repair our broken shower (another bit of water works on the blink). No sooner had he got the thing in bits than the hospital rang to say they had found a bed. I was to come round straightaway bringing pajamas, small kit, dressing gown, sports gear and hiking boots. At the hospital, I went through Procedure X once again. Eventually, it was decided I had been sufficiently patient, so a nice lady escorted me up to the 'Day Room'. In less than 45 minutes, a nurse bearing a clipboard arrived. She checked Procedure X to make sure I wasn't a gatecrasher after a free operation, then escorted me to the ward where I was told to change into pajamas. Changing into night attire is to ensure that patients can be spotted at 100 paces as not being one of the several varieties of officials to be found in hospitals.



Head man among these is the 'Specialist' who is nominally in charge of your welfare. He is referred to as 'Mr.' and wears a posh suit. Next in the pecking order are the doctors. They can be identified by their white jackets and the stethoscope which hangs gracefully out of one pocket. Orderlies also have white jackets, but no stethoscopes, and don't seem to have a place in the system. Then follows a bewildering hierarchy of Matrons, sisters, and nurses. These all wear different outfits and colours, but can be identified

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by the strange pieces of origami worn on top of their heads. The more involved its construction, the higher the wearer is up the totem pole. Last of all come the cleaning ladies, easily identified as they have no funny headgear, but are firmly attached to a vacuum cleaner and only appear when you're trying to get to sleep.

Duly reduced to the anonymity of pajamas and dressing gown, I was introduced to the other inhabitants of Ward 11. Tom, who walked around with a delicate part of his anatomy tethered to a plastic collector bag. I felt really sorry for him - until I eventually wound up hitched to THREE of the things. Mike was fastened by a needle in his wrist to an enigmatic machine which clicked, twinkled and metered some strange substance into his blood stream. 'Elephant-Man' Sid was so-called because of the length of tubing which descended from his nose to terminate in another of those ubiquitous plastic bags.

For a while, it was peaceful in the ward - until late one night, an elderly women next door went bonkers. She began throwing things around and screaming, "Help, they're killing me!" at the top of her voice. Other gems from her repertoire included, "Get the police, the bomb is in the grocer's, it's under the carrots". Despite the fact that she kept breaking out without warning between 11pm and early morning, the nurses never lost their cool. They maintained it even when a drunk was brought in to sleep it off. He kept stripping off his clothes and rampaging up and down the ward in search of more booze. No doubt about it, the nurses at the Hallamshire were a marvellous lot.

Once I had been introduced around, it was time for a meal. This was followed by a lady checking Procedure X once again. Once sure a ringer hadn't usurped my place, she told me my operation would be next day at 1-45pm. Because of this, I could only have a slice of bread and a cup of tea at the 6-45am Reveille. After the early call, we had to lay awake until around 8am breakfast arrived. I suspect that early call and long gap was to give the night shift something to do before going off duty. After my toast and tea, the anaesthetist came round to tell me gleefully, what was going to happen. He was followed by a vampire who went through Procedure X before drawing off a sample of my blood. Finally, the barber arrived to use a blunt safety razor to zip round a highly restricted area.

Time passed slowly, but eventually it was 1-45pm, then 1-46pm and pretty soon after that, 1-47pm. The mathematical progression held me enthralled until 2-30pm when in rushed a posse of nurses, and porters. They pushed my bed out on that first small step for a man. I couldn't resist giving royal-type waves and nods to the patients and visitors we passed on our way to a room labelled 'Pre-Op'. Here I waited for three hours whilst surgeons had a brew-up and re-sharpened their Swiss-Army pocket knives. Eventually, I was trundled through a door marked 'Theatre'. I don't know what was showing as the Anaesthetist chap bunged a rubber mask over my face and I fell asleep.

I awoke an hour or so later, very woozy and aching like mad in an area sometimes referred to as 'Down Under' - not Australia, I hasten to add. I won't go into the gory details, let it suffice to say that I would no longer be odd man out in a Jewish nudist camp. I was discharged next day and told to return in six weeks for a check up.

To shorten a long story, (I'll avoid saying 'cut'), the operation failed to do the trick, so it was decided to have a bash at my prostate gland. Before this could be done, my tummy pains returned in full force. My GP referred me back to the Hallamshire, where after a cancelled appointment ("Mr. Thingy is away on holiday") and further waiting, they booked me with the wrong doctor.

I eventually saw Dr. Mackulin who, examining me and said he didn't want to upset anything - the medical way of saying "I don't want to DO anything." When I pointed out my stomach was already upset and needed putting straight again, he said I might have a hernia and I had better come back in six months. Six months later, got the same treatment and was told to return in a year. Fast workers these specialists.

Two weeks later I was rushed into Emergency at 3am with what was diagnosed as an inflamed gall bladder. I was put on a fat free diet for a month, then on May 18 1986, I was operated on to remove two marble-sized stones. Something went wrong, and on June.13 1986, I underwent further surgery and was sent home a week later with a District nurse laid on to visit. She didn't like what was happening, so organised an ultrasonic scan with the result that I was whipped straight up to the ward there and then for an emergency operation. At this point I was attached to a saline drip via a needle into my wrist, and a drain bag was fastened to my tummy. Elsewhere, a catheter performed another drainage function for the water department. Moving around or turning over in bed was quite a complicated process.



At first, I was in considerable pain and often need a pain killer to get to sleep. On one occasion, I asked for it at 9pm - "Yes, it's coming". I asked again at 10pm - "Yes as soon as sister comes". At eleven pm, I managed to drop off to sleep. At 11-15, the nurse woke me to ask if I still wanted a pain killer. Hospitals operate under queer rules.

I was finally discharged from that sequence of operations, but it took over a year for the pains to finally subside. In the meantime, I re-entered for Operation Number 5 this time on my prostate. Another experience which is better forgotten - save to say that this one seems to have worked, at least I've had no further troubles in that department. I was finally disqualified from patienthood in March 1987. I still have occasional twinges and aches, but otherwise everything seems to be working properly. When I hear of long hospital waiting lists I suspect this is not due to a shortage of cash, but to using it inefficiently, with delays partly due to procrastination - and partly to the inefficient clerical system.



FANZINES

Mae Strelkov writes nostalgically on hekto reproduction, there's the query 'Should Cons subsidise pros?', a journey to Rome and oodles of LOCs. All nice and friendly. If you only get one fanzine, I'd recommend this one. Get it for the usual, or \$3.00 a copy.

THE FROZEN FROG.5, Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap Rouge, Quebec, CANADA G1Y 1Y9 20 page, folded f/cap, photolith using clear, but small print. Editorial natter on frog art, Book reviews, an article on 'Sex In SF' and some long (and short) interesting LOCs. Get it for whim, LOC, contribution or trade.

LAST RESORT.1 Steve George, 642 Ingersoll St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA R3G 2J4 Slim, 8 page, A5 in which the editor takes brief LOC extracts and then natters about them. This could develop if he gets enough LOCs. Get it for the 'usual' or \$1.00.

TWO ITEMS (NOT FANZINES) WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST...

PAPERBACK, PULP AND COMIC COLLECTOR.7 £2.95 from Iaroz Books, 20 Whitecroft, Ditton Marsh, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 4DJ. A colour cover and 100 pages of letters, news, adverts and articles - Dr. Who, Mike Moorcock, Norman Lazenby, 'The Phantom Magazines', 'Weird Tales' etc. Well printed, excellent art and reproduction of paperback cover art. A feast of reading with plenty for everyone. Back issues available (Doc Savage, The Prisoner, Pulp Heroes etc).

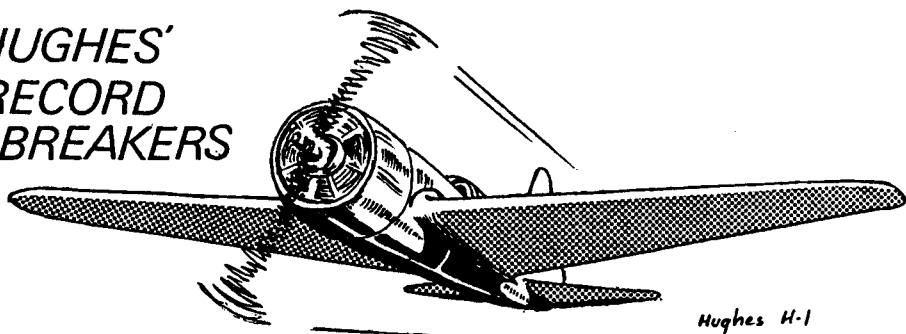
SCOTTISH BOOK ADVERTISER.3 C.Harman, Unit E, Maryhill Workspace, 45 Garrioch Rd., Glasgow G20 8RG. 28, A5 pages of books wanted and for sale, plus letters, news and Pt.3 of an article on Argyll. If you want to buy or sell, this could be what you want. Free from a few bookdealers or by post for an 18p stamp (adding an A5 envelope would be appreciated).

OUTWORLD 65, Bill Bowers, PO Box 58174, Cincinnati, OH 45258-0174 56 superbly produced pages, (although the print is a tad small). This issue is mainly devoted to a long and fascinatingly nostalgic piece by Dave Rowe telling us about fan Frank Arnold and Britfandom, complete with plenty of time-binding photographs. The rest of the issue is full of LOCs. Get it for editorial whim, or \$5.00 a copy.

STET 7, Leah Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, IL 60090-6415, USA

A massive 92 page mimeo, the off-black ink on grey paper is a bit eye-straining, but it's worth it as the zine is crammed with good artwork, a Con report, pieces on Fantasy v SF and Romance Conventions.

HUGHES' RECORD BREAKERS



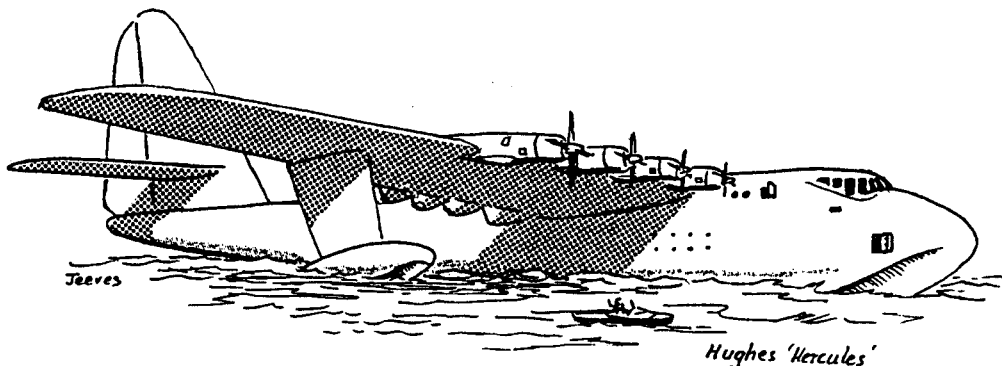
Howard Hughes is often remembered as a recluse who hid away in hotel rooms, was never seen in public and who was a fanatic about avoiding germs. Even his death was shrouded in mystery. Not so well remembered are his two great contributions to aircraft record books. In 1934, Hughes, a keen pilot set out to build a racer designed to break the world air speed record for land planes. To further this ambition, he formed the Hughes Aircraft Company in 1935.

As well as aiming for the speed record, Hughes also planned on breaking the long-distance Trans-America flight. To this end, his racing machine was designed with two sets of wings - one purely for speed, the other of wider span with built-in fuel tanks, was for speed and endurance. The result was a beautifully sleek, machine powered by an air-cooled radial engine, a 700hp Pratt & Whitney boosted to give nearly 1000hp. The plywood wing was sanded, sealed, covered with balloon fabric and waxed. An unusual feature for that time was the inward retracting undercarriage.

On September 14th, 1935, Hughes flew his H-1 to a new world record for land planes of 352.383mph. On one of the qualifying flights, a fuel shortage led to a crash landing which Hughes achieved with so little damage, the record was allowed to stand (a full crash would have invalidated the result). Work began on the long job of switching wings to the long-span, fuel laden design. In the interim, Hughes flew his Northrop Gamma from Burbank to New York to set a west to east transcontinental record of 9hrs, 26mins. He then set a Miami to New York record and another for Chicago to Glendale. By this time, the H-1 was ready and Hughes broke his own Burbank to New York record with a time of 7hrs 28mins. The machine now rests in the National Air & Space Museum, Washington.

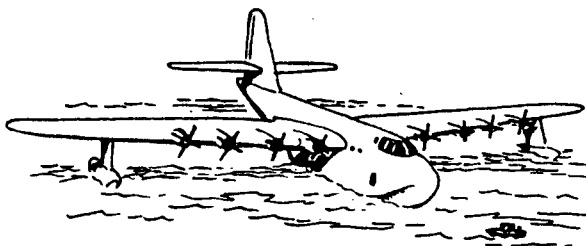
In 1942, Howard Hughes joined forces with shipbuilder Henry Kaiser, to build three giant flying boats for the U.S. Government. In the event, only one was completed. Because of expected wartime metal shortages, it was built largely of wood. Designed with a 320ft wingspan, a length of 219ft and powered by no less than eight, 3000hp Pratt & Whitney engines, the aircraft weighed some 400,000lb and was meant to carry 700 troops. To give some idea of its immense size, its length was greater than that of two B-29 Superfortresses placed nose to tail, and it could have sheltered a B-29 beneath each of its massive wings!

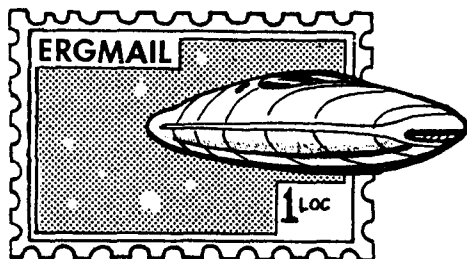
The original contract called for the first machine to be ready in fifteen months, a ridiculously short time for such a mammoth undertaking. As might be imagined, delays and problems beset the schedule. Moreover, the expected shortage of strategic materials failed to arise thus reducing the need for a wooden aircraft. As a result, the Government Purchasing Agency cancelled the contract early in 1944. However, it was agreed that one aircraft should be completed in 'mock up' form. This caused Kaiser to back out of the project, but Hughes decided to carry on alone -- a course which is reputed to have cost him some \$22 million.



Ignoring the mock-up suggestion, Hughes pressed on with a fully flying version and despite having no contract, insisted on superb workmanship and careful finishing of both interior and exterior. Steel pins were used to hold sections together until adhesives set, then removed to save some eight tons of weight. The one and only Hercules was launched on November 1st, 1947. The next day, Hughes himself began taxi-ing trials. Wearing his battered fedora, he drove his giant machine up and down Los Angeles harbour like a king-size motor boat. On the third such outing, without a co-pilot, but with some thirty technicians on board, Hughes opened the throttles for another run, found the aircraft rising 'on the step' and carried on to take it into the air. He flew for a distance of about a mile at less than a hundred feet above the water before settling down once again.

Affectionately known as 'The Spruce Goose' because of its wooden construction, the huge aeroplane never flew again. 'Mothballed' for many years, it is now a tourist attraction and nearly fifty years after its only flight, is STILL the world's largest flying machine.





Jeeves

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

Thanks for ERG 120, I find it absolutely amazing that you still have the energy to put it out. What's the secret? Three Weetabix? Pure Heart? Fanaticism? @> I hate Weetabix @> Thanks for the details of Mexican V. I don't go far with your assumption that con-goers will want to take in 'amusements, cafes, shops etc.' but it was helpful

on fish and chip shops and other cafes. Would have been helpful to have some idea of distances involved, can I carry a packed suitcase from the station without having a fit of the vapours? @> Well some people (and wives) like to nip out for a spot of fresh air - and I forgot to mention the two excellent secondhand books shops plus a real, live Tardis (old-style police box) for Dr. Who fans. Station is less than a mile from the hotel, how far can you walk and how heavy is your suitcase? @> Rest of the zine well up to standard, tho' it's depressing to see so many fantasy books in the review pages. @> It's even more depressing to read 'em. @>

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

I'm considering Mexican as I can't make it to Jersey. The location sounds pretty good, lots of sights to see and facilities within easy reach. @> Tell Vince, see above letter) @> The area sounds to have much to offer - er, what are the pubs like? @> Dunno, I usually drink in the Conservative Club - but there are several pubs close by. @> ETERNAL INSTANT - Using the two sets of equations to balance each other out is an interesting idea. Surely, this makes FTL travel impractical rather than impossible. As such, it would demand a sequel detailing how the problem was solved. Since the ship is 'suspended' and effectively travelling into the future, use could be made of time travel into the past to cancel the effect. Chandler used something like that in his Mannschen Drive. Nevertheless, a light-hearted and readable tale, addressing issues usually ignored. @> That's what I set out to do - point up a huge snag in FTL and the resultant time stop. @>

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KINGS RD. STN. WALLSEND, NORTH-TYNSIDE

NE28 7RE "Your article on aircraft was as ever interesting and if you do bring out Weird & Wonderful, put my name down for a copy, though sadly, only old men like us recall what aircraft were like before the jets. Opals are not popular because they are supposed to be unlucky. In a couple of books I once had called 'Wonders Of The World', it mentioned a 'cataract of opals in Australia', but of course, since Mr. Verran is Aussie, he'll know of it. Well worth a can or two of Fosters at the local rubidy in his honour".

TED HUGHES, 10 KENWORE RD, WHITEFIELD, MANCHESTER M23 6ER

'The Eternal Instant' read like a JWC epic from the old days. James Veran's article on opals was unusual and informative. Pieces like that are always welcome. The cover was very festive, but where do you get tea and coffee dispensers fitted with a TV screen? That'll take more explaining than the Dynasphere in your last issue. @> They're standard equipment in Santa's Grotto. Put one on your Christmas list for next year. @>

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ERIC LINDSAY, 7 NICOLL AVE, RYDE, NSW 2112, AUSTRALIA

Thanks for ERG 119 which has languished here un-locked for some time. I did like your description of how you came up with the cover design, as I would never know where to start with a drawing. Like you, I didn't like the early Interzone, but I saw an "Interzone" issue of 'Aboriginal Science Fiction' and it was great. I don't know whether Interzone changed, or I did. Having only once been to Disneyland, I'm not totally sure I'd like to repeat the experience. The thing was enjoyable (Although what most impressed me was the cleanliness of the place) but I had the best of conditions, a cheap ticket covering all the rides, and it wasn't a weekend ☺ Same for us ☹ so the crowds were small and we didn't have to queue. I've been to Epcot twice (thanks to the Haldemans) and that was totally fun both times.

MARK MANNING, 1709 S. Holgate, Seattle, WA 98144, USA

The cover looked a knock-out. I recall a few issues ago you explained how a typical ERG cover takes shape. It's a lot of work, even for a labour of love. Well it's time and effort well spent. The current one with Father Christmas and his future-tech televiwer was the perfect thing to send down the chimneys of all the little fens and fennes. James Verran writes better fiction, to judge by what I've read in ERG, than factual articles. But even if 'OPAL' is less polished than his fiction, it nonetheless held my interest. My father in law is a prospector, mining gold at one time in Blewitt Pass in the Cascade Mountains and now hunting for gem-quality Ellensburg Blue Chalcedony. Getz and I have agreed to sell blues at the upcoming gem fairs. Maybe I should memorise Verran's piece so it won't be so obvious I don't know a thing about gemstones.

☺ Be our guest, ERG tries to be all things to all people. ☹

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

At first glance, from the illustrations, Jim Verran's article brought to mind nothing less than the stages of development of the hamburger - plain, open, with cheese - but reading on he makes it sound so fascinating doesn't he? Makes me wish I'd been able to find a more profitable hobby than SF. Glad to see that with the Martin-Baker you're back to the Wonderful. If only it had been earlier, we might have been toasting it as the Machine That Won The War, instead of the Spitfire - My loyalty was always to the Hurricane. ☺ The Blackburn 'Firebrand' was another great loser. ☹ Put me on the list for the complete edition of WEIRD & WONDERFUL and the complete DMBL. ☺ Sorry but only three or four people seem interested, so I'll not be producing 'em ☹

E.C. TUBB, 67 HOUSTON RD., FOREST HILL, LONDON SE23 2RL

Thanks for ERG 120, it enlightened the season with memories of earlier days when it was the custom to send out fan mags at that time., 'Bumper Xmas Issues' - a custom which has seemingly fallen into abeyance. I like the seasonal cover and, while I find the small type hard to read, most of it is worth the effort. Why not a Con in Scarborough? You make the place sound appealing. James Verran makes the cutting and assembling of opals easy. Following your journey through the West filled me with envy, as does your knowledge ☺ Not so much as knowledge as a love of 'em. ☹ One last thing, I don't got for your new typeface ERG. Sorry, too hard to read. It's a personal opinion, others may go crazy about it. ☺ No, you're right, it is too hard in lower case, so I usually save it for headings. Still I had fun designing it. ☹ Keep up the good work, stamps enclosed, I think it a fine idea.

TOM J. FULLOP, SROBOROVA 33, POPRAD 05801, SLOVAKIA

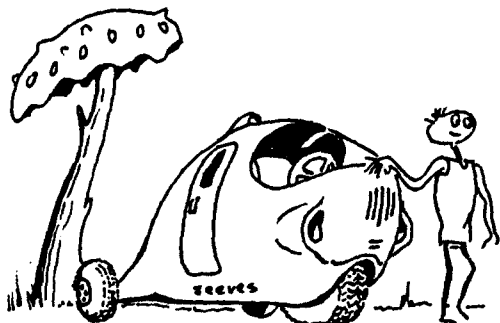
Sorry to answer so terribly late, but I am not master of my free time. I got your ERB in the end of October, when I was leaving for hitch-hiking round Europe. The most attractive on your zine I found your illos. I like especially the cover, which had been so long time only in my sight. When I got to reading I finally enjoyed your detail description of the monowheel. I see you were very uncertain on where to place the scene, firstly it was Moon, then it was one of Saturn's moons. The final picture makes an impression it happens on some stormy planet - maybe Venus. It was kind of surprise when I read that those 49,537 dots mean the curtain of stars, not stormy weather. (By the way, the number of dots is exact, I have counted them twice). @>I bet you forgot those behind the monowheel. <@ I suppose the spaceman is thinking how to open EMERGENCY SANDWICHES box since it hasn't got any Visible handle. (He doesn't know that the new *Jeeves Gunflop 97.43 Monowheel* obeys only telepathic orders. I like very much your West Coast Trip Report since travelling is my hobby. It is very nice written and I decided to see the Grand Canyon from above, once. You wrote me you always accept space stamps, therefore I extracted some from my collection. @> Many thanks, I'm now on the second album and still they come.) <@

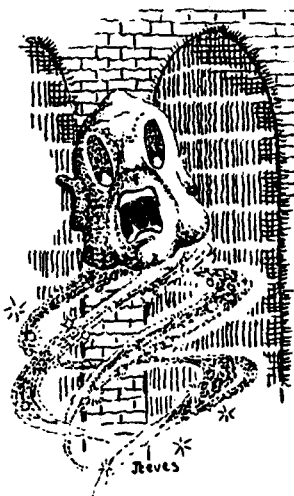
HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, PO BOX 5309, TORRANCE, CA 90510-5309, USA

Thanks for sending ERB 120, I enclose a dollar for payment @> Sorry, but you forgot to put it in) <@ I enjoyed your trip report since I have been to many of the places you mention, especially the Grand Canyon. The 'Mule Trail' you mention is actually 'The Bright Angel Trail' which was actually in use by the Indians for several hundred years before the coming of the white man. The trails are strenuous. Every hour down will you take two to get back up. Your comments on the 'service' at Yosemite have been echoed by many other visitors to the park and something of a shake-up is under way. On 'Eternal Instant', your equations overlook that as any object approaches light speed, its mass increases. So to get any kind of extra speed you must input a huge amount of outside energy. @> Sorry Harry, but it's you who overlooked two things about the story:-
1. It was a send-up and clearly subtitled 'Probability Zilch' after Analog's Probability Zero.

2. You missed the main 'joke' that people always raise your argument about how mass increases and so demands a huge amount of energy - the story points out that as mass increases, SO DOES THE ENERGY THAT INCREASED MASS CAN CREATE. $E=MC^2$ means that if you double the mass, you double the conversion energy ..

make the mass infinite and you have infinite energy. Isn't that a good enough Probability Zilch? <@ I hope to attend the 1975 Worldcon in Glasgow, will you attend? @> I doubt it, such affairs are too expensive for a retired teacher. Travel and attendance alone for Val and I would probably be well over £100.<@





Books

THE SUNDERED WORLDS Michael Moorcock ROC £4.99

First book in the Multiverse Cycle and originally a 2-partner in *New Worlds*. The multiverse is an infinite regression of universes where anything can - and does, happen. Sought by Galactic Police, Renark and companions Asquiol and Talfryn jump to 'The Shifter', a dimension-wandering star system. They seek a way to halt their own universe's collapse. The saga is a Campbellian type space-opera with a rather fragmentary plot as they encounter assorted aliens.

NATURAL SELECTION : *Battletech*.5 Michael A.Stackpole ROC £4.99

Fifth in the 'Battletech' series of epic conflicts between the giant fighting mechnoids of bandit raiders, the Fighting Clans and the Federated Commonwealth Forces. The machines resemble scaled up 'transformer toys'. The text is illustrated by numerous line-drawingshas and has an involved plot line which depends on political intrigue and slam-bang action.

DECISION AT THUNDER RIFT: *Battletech* 6. William H.Keith ROC £4.99

Subtitled 'The Saga Of The Gray Death Legion', this is another in the series recounting epic battles and duels of honour between giant fighting machines. Since the age of ten, Grayson Death Carlyle has been reared as a MechWarrior. Now stranded and with his family killed, he must capture a killing machine. Accompanied by some excellent line drawings, it's action all the way.

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE WORKBOOK Richard Brennan Element £9.99

A series of techniques designed to help relieve nervous and physical tensions by adopting correct attitudes and postures. After a brief historical background, these are examined in detail along with aims, habits, breathing patterns and even relaxation. The basis of the system is how to understand and change these. Then come some common physical problems and curative exercises; these make up the bulk of a well-illustrated text closing with case histories, a bibliography and useful index. If you have unexplained problems, this could be just what you need.

DAMIA'S CHILDREN Anne McCaffrey Bantam £14.99

For 15 years, Damia and Alfra have lived on Iota Aurigae, raising and 'pairing' their children (all having great esp powers and eidetic memories) with those of the Mrdini. Now three Hive spacecraft have been observed and son Thian helps locate a derelict but is attacked by a telepath-hater. A Hive Queen is captured and helped to survive by daughter Zara, whilst son Rojer helps locate and survey a Hive planet. A slow opening and a feast of names slow the start of a rather episodic story. Just as things get interesting, it ends like part of a serial with threads unresolved - 'For The Time Being'. It isn't brought out, but I gather this is a follow-up tale to earlier works, 'The Rowan' and 'Damia'. However, if you read and enjoy those yarns, you'll certainly go for this one.

LABYRINTH OF NIGHT Allen Steele Legend £4.99

Remember the NASA photos seeming to show a face and pyramids on Mars? Steele takes that, postulates a combined nations team exploring the deadly, booby-trapped maze they contain. Once inside they find themselves faced with a horde of mechanical 'Cooties'. Further troubles arise from Russo-American rivalry and an xenophobic co-ordinator with sadistic henchmen. Against them is Nash (agent of a highly improbable Security Association). Steele has woven the whole into one of the best, un-put-downable hardcore SF tales around. Recommended.

RUDE ASTRONAUTS Allen Steele Legend £9.99

A collection of short stories and half a dozen non-fiction articles. Thoughts on the Challenger disaster, old astronauts with a second chance, two space-bar tales, pop music on Mars, a couple of fictional 'documentaries', a straight SETI piece, a murder problem with dinosaurs and others. Trade size, 260pp, but the items seem padded and lacking in 'bite'. Many have the modern vogue of vague endings. I much preferred Steele's longer 'Labyrinth of Night'.

FRUITING BODIES Brian Lumley ROC £4.99

Thirteen tales of horror, each with a brief and interesting introductory note. There's dry rot in a deserted village, a photographer of the unspeakable, pain via telepathy, boys and a bridge, a haunted mansion, a road to another dimension, young love, Lovecraftian horror, a female predator, their people and others. So much modern yarns are wandering, pointless vignettes, but these are a 1 top-drawer, well-crafted tales which will hold you enthralled. An excellent collection - recommended.

THE SHORES OF DEATH Michael Moorcock ROC £4.50

In the sunlit half of a world some 350 years after an alien attack has stopped rotating, child-of-incest Clovis rises to become Supreme Chairman among survivors who have a 300 year lifespan - but no children (so where do the people come from?) Society is crumbling, vigilante forces appear, and Clovis seeks a solution. Developed from a New Worlds' serial, Moorcock's style is a matter of taste.

NEVER TRUST AN ELF Robert N. Charrette ROC £4.99

By 2063 orks, magic-wielding elves, chipheads, trolls and other strange beings roam the city. Gang-leader Kham and his orks are hired to protect elves on a crystal stealing foray which results in the orks being hunted. Kham suspects the top elf knows a dangerous secret and sets out to find it - and save his band. This is number six in the 'Shadowrun' series and uses much future jive jargon. I could do without the comic book illustrations, but this yarn will certainly appeal to lovers of up-to-date sword and sorcery, .

THE MISTS OF AVALON Marion Zimmer Bradley Penguin £5.99

Sword and Sorcery in the original manner as Ms Bradley re-tells the ancient legend of King Arthur, his Knights, ladies, Merlin and the Court of Camelot. New religions are sweeping the land and threatening the old ways forever. Told from the viewpoint of Morgaine (Morgan le Fay), this is basically a woman's romance longer on emotions and ideas than on frantic action. Well researched and wide-ranging in scope. For those who balance cost against page count, this one runs to over a thousand pages.

DOLORES CLAIBORNE Stephen King Hodder & Stoughton £14.99

Dolores, the down-trodden housekeeper of dictatorial Vera Donovan, has three children and a drunkard, cruel husband. First she faces up to Vera and then when her husband starts abusing their oldest daughter, Dolores is driven to desperate measures. The story is told in a rambling, gutter language, first person monologue by Dolores as she tells everything to the local Sheriff when she is falsely suspected of another crime. The form is surprisingly effective and totally different from the standard mad killer, crunching bones and splattering gore of the average horror tale. I found it enthralling and read it right through at one sitting. I'd rate it as one of King's best - and it could make a good movie.

DREAM PARK Niven & Barnes

PAN £4.99

M.I.M.I.C. is a giant Virtual Reality, role-playing game complex in which five combat teams begin the ultimate 'Voodoo Game'. Contestants are physically endowed, 'magic'-wielding warriors, but there are extra complications in the form of a suspected betting 'fix' and the murder of security chief Griffin's girl. A superb blend of technological 'magic' with hard core SF. Pace and tension never flag. Highly recommended.

ACHILLES CHOICE Niven & Barnes PAN £8.99

Dedicated athlete Jillian Shower is selected for the new Olympics where achievement level is so high that contestants must use 'The Boost' to enhance performance. This drastically reduces their life spans - unless they can win the coveted, life-sustaining 'Link' to the World Information Network. Jillian uncovers corruption and an unexpected ally before a disappointing ending wraps things up. Some excellent illos by Boris Vallejo, otherwise, long on athletics, but short on plot. Large print takes it to 200pp. trade-size.

CHANGELING: Shadowrun.5 Chris Kubasik Roc.£4.99

Magic and shape-changing are common in Chicago of 2053. Young Peter Clarris wakes to find himself a powerful, nine-foot tall troll. Having an unsympathetic father, he runs away seeking a way to reverse the process. Hated and hunted by normals, he enters the half world of sub-humans, orks, dwarfs, trolls and mobsters in a quest with an ending he hadn't expected.

THE LAST OF THE RENSHAI Mickey Zucker Reichert Millennium £8.99

Four wizards control the land but a final war is pending. The evil Carcophan triggers a massacre which leaves ten-year-old Rache as the sole surviving Renshai warrior. Taking service with warlord Sentagithri, he trains his master's daughter in martial arts. Carcophan's puppet is raising a huge army, but Eastern wizard Shadimar has plans to foil him. Neatly avoiding introspective padding of societies, names, customs and tankards of klah, this excellent fantasy is credible, fast-moving, packed with incident and doesn't lean too heavily on sorcery or evil Dark Lords.

ANVIL OF STARS Greg Bear Legend £4.99

Self-replicating killer robots have destroyed Earth, but a few survivors rescued by the 'Benefactors' are on a vengeance mission in the semi-sentient starship 'Dawn Trader'. Approaching a suspected star system, their robot mentors leave the final decision to the humans - but is it the right place? Gripping space opera, totally credible characters, and a plot which sustains the tension and interest for the whole 490 pages. Highly recommended.

STATIONS OF THE TIDE Michael Swanwick Legend £4.99

Advanced Technologies are proscribed on Miranda but master illusionist Gregorian is suspected of having smuggled it in. When an agent is sent to sort things out, not only does he lack authority but the inundating 'Jubilee Tides' are pending. Moreover, he has treachery at base. An intricate blend of Vance-like SF with Dick's involved reality twisting. Anything can - and does, happen.

THE MEMORY OF EARTH Orson Scott Card Legend £4.99

First in the Homecoming series. When humans fled a devastated Earth to establish colony world Harmony, the A.I. 'Oversoul' was set in orbit to watch their descendants and steer them subtly away from warlike attitudes. Millennia later, Oversoul is wearing out, factions are rising, led by the militant Gaballufix. Oversoul starts more direct manipulation. 14-year-old Nafai and his elder brother discover this and set out to help the A.I. A gripping yarn which sucks you in and holds you to the end. Once again, Card has written a winner.

THE CALL OF EARTH Orson Scott Card Legend £8.99

Second in the Homecoming series. Gaballufix is dead and General Vozmuzhalnoy defies Oversoul to invade Basilica. Nafai and his brothers return to the city to find wives and get geneticist Shadewei to collect flora and fauna to re-stock Earth. (I'm not sure what happens to this plan). Strange dreams are experienced and Oversoul doesn't know their origin. This one failed to live up to the promise of Part.1, long on dialogue and dreams, but short on actual plot development, an epilgue moves things forward many years in just two pages.

DANGEROUS JOURNEYS: 'The Samarkand Solution' Gary Bygax Roc.499

Set in an ancient Egypt where 'magickal' powers work, Priest-Adept Setne trails an assassin, and eyewitnesses a horrible killing. Accompanied by official Tuhorus, he follows a trail leading to further deaths and an involved conspiracy. A better than average murder mystery fantasy (no mighty heroes or magic wielding princesses). A highly readable yarn which flows well and is I suspect part of a series. I enjoyed it.

STEPHEN HAWKING: A Life For Science Michael White & John Gribbin.

Viking, trade size. My copy was a very kind gift and has no price. This is really two books skilfully woven into one. It covers Hawking's life, 'warts and all', with his indomitable fight against creeping paralysis. It also explains in very understandable terms his theories and the contributions he has made to the advancement of quantum physics, black holes and the origins of the universe. Not only is this an easier 'read' than 'Brief History Of Time', but it is also a gripping account of Hawking's refusal to admit defeat. Highly recommended, I couldn't put it down, definitely one of the best 'popular science' books around.

THE TALE OF THE ETERNAL CHAMPION.5
'SAILING TO UTOPIA'

Michael Moorcock MILLENNIUM £10.99

A massive, trade-size 9"x6" of appx. 460pp. Fifth in the series of collected works, this one has another striking cover and contains four yarns. THE ICE SCHOONER (Arflane and Ulrica sail for frozen New York). THE BLACK CORRIDOR (Ryan flees a ruined Earth). THE DISTANT

SUNS (A Jerry Cornelius adventure), and FLUX (Von Bek braves the time streams). If you like Moorcock's charismatic writings, this together with the earlier four volumes will give you a comprehensive collection of his works - if your bookshelves are strong enough.



THE TALE OF THE ETERNAL CHAMPION.6: 'A Nomad Of The Time Streams'
Michael Moorcock Millennium £10.99

Yet another massive collection holding 'THE WARLORD OF THE AIR' (revised and expanded), THE LAND LEVIATHAN, and THE STEEL TSAR ("An English Airshipman's Adventures in the Great War of 1941"). The six volumes (more to come?) are also available in hardcovers at £14.99 each. As I've said before, Moorcock has wonderful descriptive powers, but for me, he jumps around too much. However, if you're a fan of his, this is a magnificent chance to acquire a large library of his works - uniform in format and with excellent covers.

THE CADWAL CHRONICLES, by Jack Vance. Books 1 & 2 re-issued by NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY to coincide with the publication of Book.3 'THROY' ARAMINTA STATION Book.1 N.E.L. \$5.99

Araminta Station administers the planet Cadwal which has a stratified society with the untrustworthy Yips at the bottom. When Glawen Cladduc's girl Sessily vanishes, investigations lead to assorted crimes and preparations for a Yip uprising. Crammed with Vance's delightful characters, customs, activities and anecdotes. Always good, I'd rate this as one of his best.

ECCE & OLD EARTH Book.2 Jack Vance N.E.L. £5.99

Glawen Clattuc's girlfriend Wyness has gone to old Earth seeking the missing Cadwal Charter Deeds. Meanwhile, Glawen finds his father is still alive and mounts a rescue operation. Undercurrents and treachery abound with the Charter at stake. In addition, some seek to 'liberate', others to enslave, the servant 'Yips' - who have stolen flyers and weapons and seem ready to revolt. If you liked 'Araminta', you'll enjoy this one.

THROY Jack Vance N.E.L. Hbk.£15.99 Trade Pbk.£8.99

Third in the series. The Conservancy seeks to preserve Cadwal as an idyllic world of three continents (Ecce, Deucas and Throy). A new Charter will expand Araminta Station on Deucas, but the LPF want to move many of the layabout Yips to other worlds for slave labour. Con-man Namour seeks to obtain spacecraft from entrepreneur Barduys, but Glawen Chattuc and Eustace Chilke are sent to arrest him and events escalate to a sudden climax. Full of Vance's dry humour and well-rounded, outrageously-named characters - which in no way interfere with a highly readable yarn.

HEART READERS Kristine Kathryn Rusch Millennium £7.99

To become King of Leanda, Purdu killed his brother. Now, when his mistress delivers twin sons, he is undecided who shall inherit his kingdom. He calls in the 'heart reading' lesbian couple, Dasis and Stashie to help him decide. Ten years earlier, Stashie was gang-raped by cruel General Tarne and his soldiers. Now Tarne seeks to intimidate her to further his own plans. A romantic and often brutal fantasy without 'magic', but with a good story line. A good read if you don't mind explicit blood and violence.

DARK FORCE RISING: Star Wars.2 Timothy Zahn, Bantam £3.99

Now in a reasonably priced pb. Admiral Thrawn is rallying the Empire Fleet, aided by the mad Jedi C'Booth and the treacherous Fey'lya of the Republic Council. Smuggler Karrde knows the whereabouts of 200 Dreadnaughts; his aide Mara has sworn to kill Luke Skywalker, but seeks his help when Thrawn captures Karrde. Leia, pregnant with twins is marooned among the warrior Mhogri and Han Solo discovers an ally for the Republic. A complicated, action-packed space opera; all the threads gradually merge. Highly enjoyable.

WARPATH Tony Daniel Orion £14.99

Jackson is a small town on the planet Candle, 500 light years from Earth by matter transmission, three months by starship, and 24 days paddling in a canoe - a method used by Indians who control the AI boosting 'loosa clay'. When newspaperman Will James meets his Indian friend 'Wanderer', they are set upon and robbed of a load of 'rhythm' (a drug style program). The attackers also steal a copy of Wanderer's AI 'Raej', as part of a ploy by a religious sect, pawn of the evil AI 'Hwaet'. Will and his friend fight back aided by Raej and wind spirit Susan, Will's former girl friend. A fascinating blend of fantasy and SF with good characters in a multi level plot.

GLORIANA Michael Moorcock Orion £5.99

In an alternate universe, Albion also includes America and is ruled by Gloriana, a Queen often bedded but never satisfied. Chancellor Montfallon stops at nothing to support peace in her Realm, but his henchman, the sadistic Quire joins a plot to undermine her rule and allow Arabia to take over the land. A highly detailed background and several sub plots keep the action moving in this re-issue of one of Moorcock's best yarns.

SHADOWRUN.9: Shadowplay Nigel Findley ROC £4.99

In a city of street gangs and big business combines, deckers enter their personas into computer networks to steal data. Information dealer and ex-drecker 'Sly' Young acquires a sensitive file which puts sadistic hunters on her trail. Aided by the street-wise 'Falcon' she must find a way to get them off her back and prevent an all-out business war. A fast moving blend of SF and fantasy with some excellent mood-setting illustrations.

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