

ERG 161  
QUARTERLY

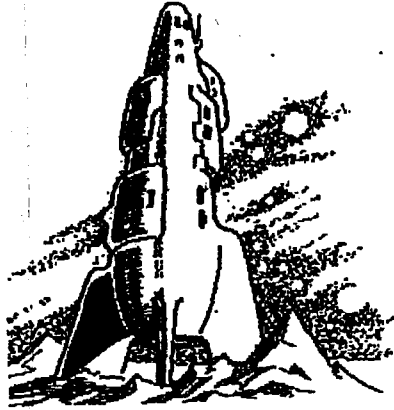
APRIL 2003



# ERG 161

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Terry Jeeves  
56 Red Scar Drive  
Scarborough  
N.Yorks  
YO12 5RQ



Ph.(01723) 376817  
e-mail [erg40@madasafish.com](mailto:erg40@madasafish.com)

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**Greetings ERGbods,** With this issue ERG notches up its 44th. Anniversary Issue. The first one appeared in April 1959 and the mag is now older than some of its readers. I hereby award myself the ERG Oscar of persistence. Since that first issue, several SF crazy ideas have become reality; Man in Space, moon landing, a space station, world wide TV, test tube babies, clones, atomic powered submarines and many more. The question is, are there any good old staples of SF which we shall never see? Sticking my neck out I'll name a few themes which will forever stay unattainable.

First off is time travel, oh I know that quantum physics and black hole theory support the idea but only as a theoretical bit of mathematics. (using maths I can prove that  $1 = 2$ ) even then it postulates an unpleasant end for the traveller.

H.G.Wells and others wrote of invisibility, but since the act of seeing involves intercepting reflected light. I can't imagine any way of stopping light getting reflected. If you make something totally transparent you would need to remove all reflecting matter from the subject; I submit that as an impossible.

Faster than light travel, as I wrote in an earlier story, as you approach light speed, time goes slower and slower until by the time you reach light speed, time stops and you could never press the reverse button to come home again.

Antigravity sounds nice in theory and we get an artificial version via acceleration but not only would we have to cut off the interchange of the 'gravitons' which theoretically cause gravity by their interchange, but we could make perpetual motion machines by shielding one half of a nice heavy wheel. I submit that perpetual motion is also on my list of things that will never come.

Of course these are just my opinions, so if you disagree, please let me know.

All the best

Terry

## SCHOOL DAZE

On the educational front, though not a Catholic, I attended a Convent school as a paid for pupil. I shirked my way through classes as corporal punishment was (officially) a no-no. I followed my naturally lazy bent and competed strenuously for bottom place in my class. My developing personality was allowed to develop in every direction and allowed me to become a sort of black sheep. On one occasion we had a new teacher, Miss Linton, who frowned on my practice of making paper aeroplanes during English lessons. After she had crumpled up and destroyed two of my cherished creations I decided to get even. A third model was made under total secrecy and ink spread all over its under surfaces. Then I allowed it to be seen. Miss Linton snatched it up, screwed it into a ball, then gazed in horror at her ink-stained fingers. Corporal punishment or not, I got my fingers well rattled with a ruler for that escapade.

On another occasion, during the reading of 'Kidnapped', she detailed me and another lad to go into a corner with a blackboard turned away from the class and draw the cave lair featured in the story. I suspect this was a ploy to keep us quiet for a spell. It worked - for a while, until the time came to reveal our artistic masterpiece. Machine gun nests, barbed wire entanglements, grenades and air-cover didn't feature in Kidnapped, but our new improved design had them. Once again ruler rattling was in order.

My most triumphant deed came when I got the gift of a jumping frog from a new comic.

Made of tinfoil, it had spring loaded arm which you pressed against a dab of pitch. Over a minute or two, the arm would work free and the frog then jumped high in the air. Very amusing. Naturally, I played with it during the English lesson. I was spotted and called to the front. "Put that silly thing on my desk and kneel down at the front" said she who must be obeyed.

I couldn't resist the temptation and duly placed the thing on her desk, craftily setting the spring as I did so. Then I knelt humbly at the front of the class and waited. Lessons resumed, peace reigned, all was silent save for the scratching of forty pen nibs. Then the spring worked. High into the air leaped my little frog and the class erupted. Once again the ruler got a good work out.





The official reward and punishment was based on the giving of House Points, a system without any visible end product but nevertheless points were eagerly sought. I seldom got any reward points, my speciality being in demerits. Then one day a miracle happened. Miss Linton wanted a bit of peace from the chore of trying to instil the beauties of poetry into our thick heads so she came up with an idea designed to keep us busy while she meditated on higher things. Instructing us to turn to the poem, 'The Arethusa', she said, "I'll give twenty House Points to the first to learn verse one". Since the verse was about ten lines long, she anticipated a nice long snooze. It was not to be. Something clicked in my noddle, 'In about five minutes I had the verse off to perfection. An astonished class and an even more

astonished teacher listened to me rattle it off. My stock rose as twenty points were logged to my house, but now the carrot had been taken away. A new offer had to be made, "Twenty points to the first to learn verse two" spoke our leader. Incredibly I got that one in four minutes. Sagging on the ropes Miss Linton offered another twenty for verse three. Incredibly, I did it again and repeated the performance for the remaining two verses. A hundred points in twenty minutes was unheard of, it was the normal tally for all the class each week. I wish I knew how I did it as I have never repeated such a performance, but I still remember the Arethusa after all these years.

Eventually I moved along to Grammar School, De La Salle College where instead of House Points they had Detention Classes. They also employed a very effective teaching

aid in the form of a leather strap some 12 inches long and an inch and a half wide. This was applied to the palm of the hand when the need arose. It proved a marvellous stimulant to dormant brain cells. Despite all modern howls and use of the emotive term, 'beating, I know that I for one was much better for being whacked when I deserved it.' Even in those days I bore no grudge against the teachers who used the strap, on me. It was never used unjustly or excessively. Once over the culture shock, I rapidly acquired a keen interest in learning. Starting in 29th. place, I moved up the exam results to 23rd. 15th., 4th, and finally top of the class for the rest of my stay there. I look back affectionately at the Catholic Brothers who taught me without ever trying to indoctrinate me to their faith. Instead they gave me a strong interest in Science, Art and Mathematics. I took to the latter so avidly that after the war I attended evening classes in Differential and Integral Calculus and achieved a Higher National pass mark. Sadly, unlike the Arethusa, I have forgotten almost all of it.

I seldom got Detention, but on one occasion I landed it for getting the wrong answer to a maths problem. No matter what I did, I kept getting the same answer. At last Brother Peter, the teacher in charge of the class took pity on me. "Lets go through it together and find where you're going wrong" he said and began to set out the method

A lovely glow went through me as he took the same steps I had been doing and finally arrived at the same 'wrong' answer that I had got. His face was a picture but he apologised manfully. "Oh dear, the book answer appears to be wrong. You'd better get off home". It was worth the lost half hour for the sheer pleasure of coming out ahead.

I recall the time when Mr. Blayden, the art teacher appointed me as monitor. The idea was I had to collect the art homework and deliver it to him. This was a bit of a chore especially when some pupils hadn't done it and I had to remember their excuses. What really got my back up was when he expected me to vet the work and reject it if it failed to measure up. I solved that one by helping the less able to lay out their work or touch up unfinished sketches before handing them over.

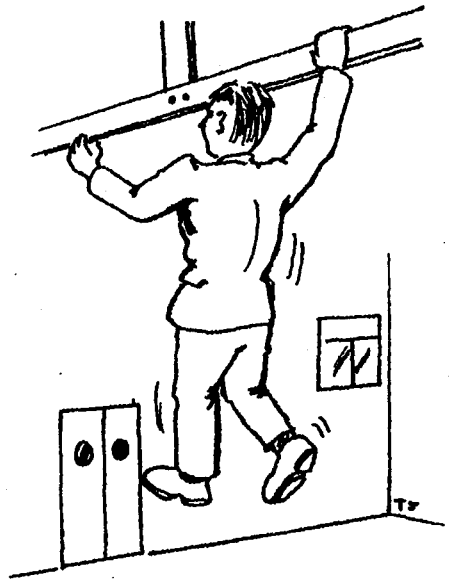


Thanks to chronic Bronchitis I managed to avoid Saturday morning 'Sports', but just once a new and officious Sports Master decided that even if I wasn't going to kick a football I could at least be a referee. In vain did I protest that I knew absolutely nothing about football, he gave me a rule book and made it clear I'd face a firing squad if I failed to turn up. Came the great day and despite much reading of that rule book 'Offside', 'Free Kick', 'Penalty' and other esoterica were double Dutch to me.

So I invented the Jeeves system. Gathering my two teams of assorted masochists together I led them to the most distant pitch away from critical observers and instructed them that for this game we would be using two new rules. 1. They would tell me when to blow the whistle and 2. Tell me what to do about it when I blew.. It might not have been real soccer, but it looked reasonably so from a distance. I don't know why the system isn't used more often.

One side benefit of being a non-Catholic was the fact that I, along with a few others, was allowed to miss assemblies. Since our gym doubled as an art room we were set to putting out the easels each morning. This was a fun game. As each desk was unfolded it was sent skidding across the floor to a waiting catcher who then lined it up neatly.

This task finished, the real fun began.



After posting a look out we would take turns to climb up the wall bars, reach out and grip the ceiling girders and 'giant swing' our way across to the far side where we could then slide down supporting columns and rush back for another go.

When war broke out De La Salle was taken over by a balloon barrage unit. Their job was to sent up large, tethered balloons in the hope that enemy aircraft would either fly into the cables, or go somewhere else to drop their bombs. As a result we had what was called 'Dispersed home education'. This meant small groups met in private houses. Being in my final year and nearly six feet tall, I got the job of callin at the English



teacher's home to collect the keys to the relevant house. The very first time this happened it was pouring with rain so I donned my 'Humphrey Bogart trenchcoat and took a look at my school cap. It was obviously not much use in the downpour so I donned the other half of my 'Bogey' gear and sallied forth in trenchcoat and snap-brim trilby. It didn't occur to me that I had never been seen at school in that outfit until I rang the door of Mr. Hostie's house. He was only a small man and to open the door to face this Bogart clone looming over him and saying, "I've come for the keys, sir", it must have scared the daylight out of him. I think it was only the 'sir' that made him look closer and recognise me; otherwise he would probably have called the police.

Home tuition only lasted one term, in January we were farmed out to rooms in Firth Park Grammar, some three miles away. Unable to get home for lunch, we usually patronised the local 'chippies'. Instead of buying a large dollop in one establishment we preferred to visit several to buy a pennyworth in each. This made sure they were hot and helped to pass the dinner hour.

Occasionally I would cycle there and back. The return trip was down a steep hill and through traffic lights. Normally no problem, but one snowy day it got tricky. By four o'clock, there was a three inch layer of snow on the hill. My brakes failed to work and like a toboggan, I slid down the hill, both feet on the ground and two plumes of snow flying high in the air. No way could I time my arrival at the lights but luck was with me. they changed to green just as I arrived and I slid through across the main road without hitting a thing.

For the final Summer term we were back at De La Salle and sitting the School Certificate exam. Wonder of wonders, I Matriculated - eight Credits and one Distinction (in Maths) apparently I missed on in Art by one point. My heart bleeds for today's youth as it struggles to pass their GCE in a single subject to gain an O level. To get our Certificate the minimum was a pass in each of three areas, English, maths and a foreign language. How times have changed.

Isn't that nice... we're going to have only one Friday the thirteenth this year. This means that it'll be a good year for decent, sunny weather. Especially if you travel abroad, but make sure that you don't travel by ferry; there may be a woman aboard.

We all know of the older superstitions like these and not walking under ladders when there's an 'r' in the month, but have you realised just how many *modern* superstitions there are around? The other day, for example, I counted over forty dangling car mascots and they can't all have been there for sheer beauty (have you *seen* some of them?). Their only purpose seems to be to obstruct the driver's view. Perhaps with drivers like me on the road people feel that they *need* some luck. And what about the people who must get out of bed on the *right* side each morning, so that no-one can say they haven't done so, no matter how foul their tempers? It's ridiculous, of course. I *always* get out of bed on the left, if only because the right hand side is pushed up against a wall.

That's not all. George Clooney wears red socks. Ah, the things one learns from reading *Erg*. Did you know that there are salesmen who always start their daily rounds with the even numbered houses because they provide an edge over odd customers? Or telephone sales people who warm their hands before dialling their first number of the day so that they won't be cold calling? And what about the students who take "lucky" pens into examination rooms or contestant on TV quiz shows who carry little teddy bears with them? Yes, all right, perhaps the teddy bears *are* more intelligent. I watch *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, too. And there are the footballers who have to put on the right sock before the left? I know of one player who puts on his socks and then, after putting on one boot, takes off the boot and both socks and reverses his socks, putting the left sock on his right foot and vice versa. He says he once tripped over his own feet. Yes, he *does* play for the team I support. You could tell, hmm?

And, hey, how about the millions who trust to pins, birthdays and "lucky" number systems in their attempts to pick the winning numbers in the National Lottery? You'll have noticed that they all win every time.

I know a writer who considers it lucky to send any new story he's written to a certain religious magazine from which it is certain to be rejected (come to think of it, I don't believe that they publish fiction), and then there was dear old Bill Temple who wouldn't ride in a lift. One well-known American writer always dismantled his typewriter piece by piece and then reassembled it before starting a new story. I wonder whether he'd have carried over this ritual into the world of the word processor and the computer.

At conventions, some fans insist on certain rooms (after Terry's comments in the previous issue, this might be those with the lowest prices) or membership numbers, while one regular convention poker player insists on wearing his "lucky" ace of spades cuff links. And ensuring that his opponents sit with their backs to a mirror. It's just as well he hasn't insisted on using a "lucky" pack of cards.

## THERE'S NOTHING TO IT



Mathematics is a lovely subject with more byways than a dog has fleas. Tread them carelessly and you may get lost. Even following perfectly logical and correct steps can lead to some surprising results. My own favourite goes like this :-

$$a = b, \quad \text{therefore } a^2 = a.b$$

from this we can say that  $a^2 - a.b = a^2 - b^2$

factorising both sides gives  $a(a - b) = (a - b)(a + b)$

dividing both sides by  $(a - b)$  ....  $a = a + b$

$$\text{so that } a = 2.a$$

and dividing by  $a$  leads to ....  $1 = 2$      A rather unusual result

Of course there's a catch, that line  $a^2 - a.b = a^2 - b^2$  really means  $0 = 0$  and after that on factorising we can say  $2x0 = 4x0$  or any combination we like, so that when we divide by 0, we get  $2 = 4$  and so on.

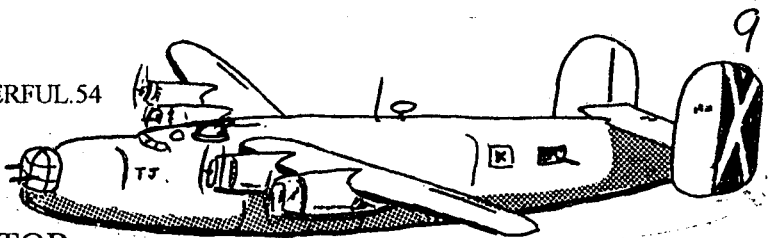
A naughty little fiddle but perfectly legitimate maths. I labour it here to emphasise that logical steps may not always be right. so I wonder if the equations saying we can't exceed light speed may have some similar fiddle lurking in them. Most unlikely, but a lovely thought.

Then there are those ideas which keep cropping up in quantum theory which say that at every decision point in time, *both* (or more) possibilities, each of them comes true and completely new sets of universes come into existence, one for each possibility. Not only does this sound incredible but it begs the question, where does all the new matter come from. I strongly suspect that there's a (something  $\times 0$ ) in the maths of that one.

Another little equation is the one which says the force of attraction between two bodies is given by the product of their masses divided by the square of their distance apart. Clearly, the further the bodies are apart, the weaker the force - and logically, the closer together, the greater the force. If so when two bodies are touching, the distance apart is our old friend zero again. Dividing the mass product by zero gives us an infinite force. Clearly summat is wonky here otherwise everything touching Earth would have infinite weight. More fiddling with zero perhaps -- or is that distance factor suspect, after all, the equation assumes we measure centre to centre and that makes a difference. Even so, once one starts fiddling with figures, strange results can crop up.



The  
B-24  
LIBERATOR



The B-24 was a four-engine bomber intended to replace the ageing B-17. In the event, it wasn't a terrific improvement having virtually the same speed, a ceiling of 28,000ft against the Fortresses' 35,000, although it could carry 2000lbs of bombs more. So why was it built in greater numbers than any other American wartime aircraft? The secret lay in its Davis design wing which together with a hefty fuel tankage gave the Liberator a 22000 mile range, almost double that of the B-17.

The B-24 had ten 0.5 machine guns located in four turrets and two beam guns, a nose turret, a mid-upper turret, a tail turret, a single beam gun either side and the dorsal ball turret located just behind the bomb bays. To get into this required folding like a jack knife with your head almost between your knees. Most uncomfortable as I found when squeezing in my 5'11" in order to test the intercom. Once in the ball, the hatch was clamped down and the whole turret cranked down beneath the bomber. No room for a parachute and once down the gunner had to rely on someone cranking him again on the way home. It was a real death-trap and must have been nerve wracking in combat.

One peculiarity of the Lib was its bomb doors. These didn't open sideways as in other aircraft, instead they rolled up the sides of the bomber much like the front of an old roll-top desk. Another tricky bit was getting from front to rear of the aircraft in order to use the all-important p-tube. To do this you had to inch your way along a 10" wide catwalk running between upright girders. Not an easy job when wearing parachute harness and Mae West as I found when my Mae West caught and inflated, trapping me in the bomb bay several thousand feet above the ocean.

An important item on the b-24 was the 'tail bumper' under the rear end. Once the aircraft had landed and been parked and up-ended oil drum was shoved under the bumper to prevent the Lib tipping back on its tail if too many workers entered the tail. I suspect this was and is a hazard with all tricycle undercarriage machines.

The Liberator had a crew of ten, a front gunner, a navigator/bomb aimer, pilot, co-pilot, wireless operator, mid upper gunner, ball turret gunner, two beam gunners and a tail gunner. To keep them all in contact, each position had a two-valve Packard Bell pre-amplifier complete with mike and headphone sockets for both American and RAF connections. Electrical gear abounded. There was a radio compass with control boxes for navigator and pilot. A large liaison transmitter and its receiver for long range contact, for inter-aircraft and ground to air there were two Command transmitters and three receivers. There was a modulator unit for these and elsewhere lurked a separate motor generator for the intercom and another motor wound up or down the trailing aerial.

All in all, a highly complicated aircraft.

TWELVE BEST Just for fun here are my 12 favourite items of fiction, non-fiction and music. How does the list compare with your ideas?

**NON-FICTION**

|                                |              |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| The Collapsing Universe        | Asimov       | Cosmology          |
| V-2                            | Domberger    | Rocketry           |
| Perpetual Motion               | Ord-Hume     | Various attempts   |
| Faster Than The Sun            | Twiss        | The Fairey Delta 2 |
| The Ambidextrous Universe      | Gardner      | The fall of parity |
| Our Changing Universe          | Gribbin      | Cosmology          |
| The Next Ten Thousand Years    | Berry        | Cosmology          |
| Future Tense                   | Brosnan      | SF Films           |
| The Invasion of the Moon. 1969 | Ryan         | Apollo 11          |
| In Search of Schrodinger's Cat | Gribbin      | Quantum theory     |
| The Quantum World              | Polkinghorne | Quantum theory     |

**FICTION**

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| The Nine Billion Names of God | Clarke             |
| Hobbyist                      | Eric Frank Russell |
| Sinister Barrier              | Eric Frank Russell |
| Dreadful Sanctuary            | Eric Frank Russell |
| Who Goes There?               | J.W.Campbell       |
| The Moon Is Hell              | J.W.Campbell       |
| Three To Conquer              | Eric Frank Russell |
| Grey Lensman                  | E.E.Smith          |
| Under Pressure                | Frank Herbert      |
| Voyage Of The Space Beagle    | A.E.vanVogt        |
| Killdozer                     | Theodore Sturgeon  |
| Microcosmic God               | Theodore Sturgeon  |

**MUSIC**

|   |
|---|
| Albinoni's Adagio in G Minor                  |
| Faure's Requiem                               |
| Rodrigo Concerto d' Aranjuez Adagio movement  |
| Ravel's Bolero                                |
| Tchaikovsky Serenade For Strings              |
| Tchaikovsky Andante Cantabile                 |
| Chopin Military Polonaise                     |
| Grieg Piano Concerto in A Minor               |
| Rachmaninov Prelude in A                      |
| Pachelbel Canon and Gigue                     |
| Puccini One Fine Day aria from Mme Butterfly  |
| Puccini The Humming Chorus from Mme Butterfly |



OIL BE  
SEEING YOU

It was a freezing cold winter evening in July. Brass monkeys sat in the gutters, crying their eyes out as they debated the relative recuperative merits of epoxy adhesive or spot welding to ease their problems. Inside the "Wye Tart" only a handful of regulars were gathered around their customary corner table with its delicate, beer-polished patina and equally delicate tracery of cigarette burns. The desultory conversation had drifted fitfully from Arthur Blord's latest pot boiler, 'Book Of Tart', lingered briefly on Brunel's, 'Fall Off Zeebrugge', and finally fizzled out with a few random comments on TV's latest SF series, 'Doctor Watt'. Things were so desperate that even old Billings was showing signs of relating his latest, authorised and up-dated version of the saga of British Fandom.

Bill Church broke the silence by putting everyone's thoughts into one nifty, cogent and biting sentence. "It's a bloody cold night."

"Think yourself lucky", came Miguel Moork's voice from behind a cunningly created barricade of beer soaked whiskers. "When I was in the desert at Sidi Barrani we would have welcomed a cold spell." Fred Butt, seated downwind from 'Saucy' Sanderman, raised his eyes heavenward and hummed a few bars of 'Sand In My Shoes'. The histrionics were wasted. Moork was firmly fixed on a one-way time track as he shuttled back to cherished memories, shedding years and waistline inches as he went. Even a hastily round of drinks signalled by Fred Butt failed to derail his journey.

He eased his now sun-parched throat with a copious draught before resuming.

I well remember one incident at the oasis of Kumman Getit. Me and a Yank named Cagle had been hired by Monty to find some oil for his tanks. For days we wild-catted round that oasis without finding a drop. "Quite a sticky situation" quipped young Cluck, heaving another batch of poetry crudzines on to the fitfully flickering fire. Moork warmed his fingers before resuming. "One night Cagle and I sat drinking cans of beer among the dead holes, chucking in the cans as we emptied them. Suddenly Ed grabbed my arm, "What's that?" he whispered in his cultured Bostonian twang. My glance followed his pointing finger in time to see a dark figure emerge from our supply tent and vanish over a sand dune. Pausing only to finish out the last few cans, we hastened to follow the tracks in the sand. They led to a campfire surrounded by the nastiest bunch of characters you have ever seen. "Ompans?" queried Church, "... or Gannets perhaps?"

"Worse" grunted Moork. "It was the legendary Eldritch The Unmentionable and his robber band, all swigging our beer and pitching the empty cans down the dead oil holes. Obviously they had pinched both our beer and our habits. Judging by the swastikas painted on their tents, they were in the pay of the Germans. Cagle and I decided to draw up a plan but before we could find a pencil and paper, a great big Arab called Mustafa Slash came staggering out into the darkness, tripped over us and all hell broke loose. The whole gang came boiling after us as we raced back to camp. Bullets whistled in all directions, only the poor light and drunken marksmen saved us from being hit. Something had to be done and Cagle did it. Reaching into his back pocket he withdrew a few sticks of dynamite had had been saving for Bonfire Night. Lighting the fuses he tossed the sticks behind him. There was an almighty 'BANG'. The last we saw of Eldritch and his gang was a bunch of singed nightshirts heading off into the darkness. We heard later that they had accidentally overrun Rommel's headquarters and won the desert campaign for Allies. The whole affair was hushed up and Monty took the credit." Moork downed his beer and sat back complacently.

"Was that all?" asked Keith Gratisbod looking up from the abacus he was using to keep tabs on the whereabouts of the BSFA library. "Not quite" smiled Moork. That dynamite must have stirred one of our drill holes. There was a loud rumble, sand flew in all directions and from a nearby hole spouted a huge oil gusher and several million empty beer cans.

"Well if your gusher came in, why aren't you rich?" smirked Fred Hummings. "Good question", conceded Moork. "Sadly, it turned out that we had accidentally blown a hole in an Anglo-Iranian oil pipe. We blamed it all on Eldritch and his mob. The dust settled and I was posted back to England. Cagle went back to America and bought himself a ranch and a wild pickle farm. He irrigates 'em with home grown corn whisky and lives the high life." Well how come he made a pile of money and you didn't?" queried the mercenary minded Hummings. "Yes, tell us how he made his pile" chimed in Gratisbod as he moved a bead on his abacus and effectively moved the BSFA library into darkest Lancashire.

Moork scowled, "Crafty beggar that Cagle. He collected all those beer cans and sold them for scrap metal"

That ended the saga. Silently we drained the last of our beer and went out into the bitter night.

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**KRAX.49** Andy Robson, 63 Dixon Lane, Leeds LS12 4RR Fifty-four pages of poems plus a short story and a further eighteen of fanzine reviews and small press items. Get it for £3.50/\$7.00. If you're into modern poetry this is a veritable banquet.

**NONSTOP FUN.6** Dwain Kaiser, PO Box 1074, Claremont, CA 9711, USA No less than 80 pages crammed with a variety of material. A tribute to Rotsler, articles, columns, cartoons, a full colour cover (a nude), lots of LOCs and loads of good art. Get it for the usual. How can you lose?

**LIGHT'S LIST** Light's List of Literary Magazines 2003 Contains the names, addresses, price, frequency, page count and a brief note of interests (e.g. "Traditional: poems to 30 lines, fiction to 2000 words, reviews, artwork") of over 1400 UK, US, Canadian, Australasian, European, African and Asian small press magazines publishing creative writing and artwork in English. (70 pages). 18th annual edition ISBN 1 897968 19 1 £3 inclusive of postage (US\$7 surface; US\$8 air) Please make cheques or British postal orders payable to John Light. Photon Press, 37 The Meadows, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1NY, British Isles.

**THE KNARLEY KNEWS.97** Henry Welch, 1525 16th. Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA 22pp with interesting personal doings and educational comment, travel, how to read a fanzine, fmz reviews and a hefty LOCcol. Regular and good.

**VISION OF PARADISE**, R.M.Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Ct., Budd Lake, NJ 07828 USA This comes as three separate fan zines, Halcyon Days 26pp of LOCS. Wondrous Stories 22pp of comment, SF memories, fantasy yarns and the magazines plus beautifully laid out fmz reviews. The Passing Scene 18pp lists books read, Bob's personal (and very full) diary which has both interest and detail. There's also a page of jokes. A great bundle.

**MIMOSA.29** R & N.Lynch, PO Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885 This 92 page, penultimate issues a symposium of some of the best articles from earlier issues. Some thirty or so items from a star-studded list of contributors and plenty of excellent illos. It boasts a wrap-round card cover and is one of the best items of the year. Get it for \$5.00 or \$7.50 for overseas readers. Buy, read and enjoy.



## LETTERS

**PAMELA BOAL, 4**  
Westfield Way, Charlton  
Heights, Wantage, Oxon  
OX12 TEW

I am inclined to agree with Penelope that our feeling of superiority about the English

language is some what misplaced. After all most of our words passed through other hands first,, Greek, German, Norse, French to name but a few. A living language develops and changes one can appreciate the beauty of the old and learn about the cultural changes from the new. Mind I'm not that liberal, I really dislike the ad about a product that kills germs dead, and the person who talks about I myself. I positively shudder at the number of interviewees who say 'You know' every other sentence.

**DAVE ROWE, 8288 W.Kirby State Rd.44, Franklin, IN 461311-9211, USA**

Children's Matinees were a real boon. Saw several silents and early talkie two-reelers there that have now been all but forgotten and many a George Formby flick. Some commentators say that George sold well in the North of England but not in the South but any matinee (in the east end of London) was bound to be packed if it had a George Formby comedy. Some of the extra fun of reading "Tales From The Wye Tart" is identifying whothe names are based on. Sydney Leaps would be Syd Bounds, Bentcrag =Bentcliffe, Blummer is either Ken Bulmer or John Brunner but who is Butt? [Ted Tubb]

**STEVE SNEYD, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8PB**

My favourite 'translation' tale - witnessed, so it is true. Back when Kirklees opened a new centre for those with disabilities. (I was there to do an article). There was a signer to do translations for the deaf, I noticed she seemed to repeat one sign even when speeches were on diverse things. I got the chance to ask her. "oh", she said sotto voce, "that's the symbol for 'bulshit', all the waffle that's not worth listening to."

**ALAN BURNS, 19 the Crescent, Kings Rd., South, Wallsend on Tyne NE28 7RE**

Model making, I never got anywhere, the cement always stuck to my fingers rather than the balsa and it saddened me to watch model planes flying and to see something which must have cost a bomb crash and be demolished. I did have the FROG models, not only the original one but the DeHavilland Moth Saturday matinee for kids, some coming out running about yelling, "We are the Mystery Riders" but yours truly wondering how a rocket ship could pursue Flash Gordon and fly in a straight line yet tilted at forty-five degrees.

**RON BENNETT**, 36 Harlow Park Cresc., Harrogate HG2 0AW Enjoyed the tale of Corn In Egypt. At the first mention of cigarettes I thought this was going to be the old one about the man wandering in the Sahara with a packet of cigarettes in his pocket and continually hearing a voice saying, "One, two, three, four." After several pages of trying to trace the voice it turns out to be the cigarettes themselves, It's the tobacco that counts. *[ Well how about having a long wait for an elevator and being told, "Get a lift with a Camel" ? Now some readers will be puzzled by that. ]*

**GEOFF BARNES**, 19 Oldfield Grove, Stannington, Sheffield S6 6DR. Up In The Air - I've only ever flown in big planes and I do have a real phobia about heights. I'm a big fan of castles and remember being atop Conisborough Castle (in Conisborough) and Clifford's Tower (in York) and getting that distinct feeling that the stone was going to crumble into dust and I'd come tumbling down. *[ Believe that Isaac Asimov had a fear of flying in planes. ]*

**BRIAN TAWN**, 27 Burdett Rd., Wisbech, Cambs PE13 2PR I agree about the hobbies. Vital! I can't remember the time when I didn't have some sort of interest on the go. Fanzines, mostly Hawkwind related, have kept me happy for the last 35 years. Like you, I've done a bit of writing for money, but can't be bothered with it now. It was good to be able to sell some words, but not so much fun as doing what I want to do and when I want to do it. I don't know how people can be bored when they don't have to work. I just wonder how we found time to go to work. *[ I agree wholeheartedly. Anyone lost on retirement they must have wasted their life. ]*

**CHESTER D.CUTHBERT**, 1104 Mulvey Ave., Winnipeg, Man, Canada R3M 1J5 I quote from 'Franz Anton Mesmer' by M.Goldsmith, "Curiously enough Gassner always spoke to his patients in Latin and they reacted to his orders whether they understood this language or not. In Latin he would command an illiterate sufferer to move his right or left arm and the limb would respond. His treatments were almost always hypnotic as is shown by a commission appointed by the Catholic Church in 1775 to investigate his cures." Terry, languages are merely artificial means of conveying thoughts. Telepathy conveys thoughts independently of language to the subconscious or unconscious which apprises the conscious mind in the understood language. I hope that I have assured you that communication with aliens is possible. I wish I had more correspondents interested in parapsychology.

*[ Anyone out there? Personally I still believe we think in our normal language. ]*

**LLOYD PENNEY**, An apology. Very sorry Lloyd but I accidentally deleted your e-mail LOC whilst editing it. Undo wouldn't work and I lack the expertise to try anything else. Please accept my humble apologies.

**RON CLARKE** PO Box 746, Bankstown, N.S.W.1885 Australia ERG 59 -. I had a bad memory for most things, including my childhood, but I do remember my grandfather making me a wooden wheelbarrow when I was about 4-5; I also remember a neighbour, making me a wooden knife, with the blade painted with silver paint. I loved it. One of the things my father gave me when I was a kid was a crystal set. We put it together, with a varnished wooden base, and I spent hours listening with the headphones. Enjoyed the Schneider Trophy article.

TED HUGHES, 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield, Manchester M45 8ER

ERG 169. I liked the cover with its touch of zany Jeeves humour. It took me quite a minute to work out why all the Saturnites - even the centipedes - wore haloes. I couldn't agree more with your editorial comments about the price of things. We are being mulcted to say the least. When you hear that people take empty suitcases when they go to the States on holiday because they can buy clothes more cheaply there!!! 'Up In The Air' was entertaining. We have a folly near us on Holcombe Hill. I've been up to it - but not in it. I don't think it's safe. Incidentally, I prefer your childhood reminiscences about childhood rather than discourse on model planes. Not that I dislike aeroplanes. I don't, but the only successful models I ever flew were constructed of paper. [ *Each to his own. Re prices, Season registration is £45. I calculate that three days there for Val and I would cost me a minimum of £45 for dues, transport, hotel and food. I could have a week on the Continent for that.* ]

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