

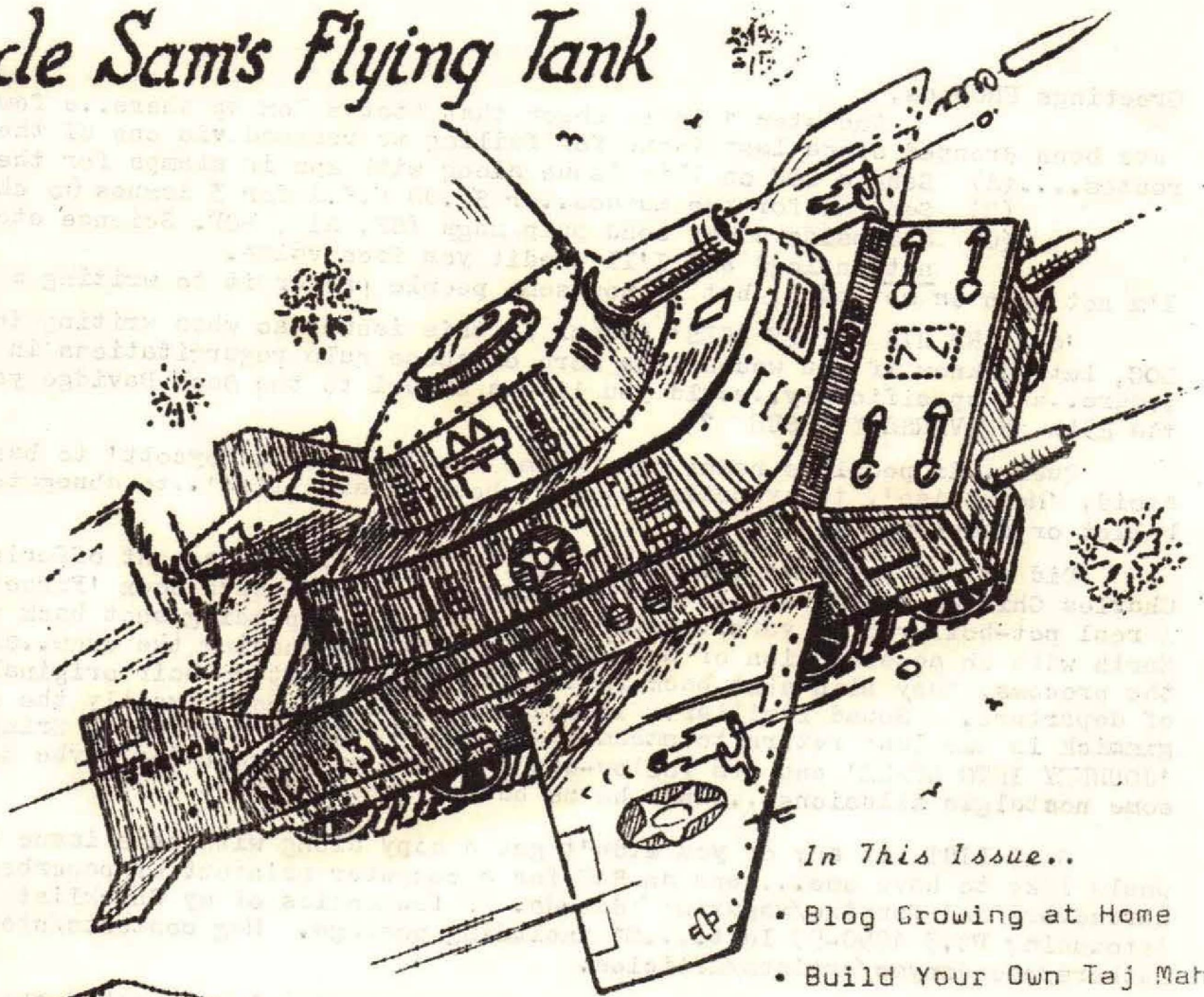
ERG

87
July
1984

modern popular
everyday mechanical
science & handicrafts

QUARTERLY

Uncle Sam's Flying Tank



In This Issue..

- Blog Growing at Home
- Build Your Own Taj Mahal
- Teaching Your Fish To Swim
- Amateur Safe Cracking

ERG QUARTERLY

Published, printed and perpetrated by:-

No. 87 July 1987

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..... Status Box
.....

Greetings ERGbods,

And step 1 is to check that Status Box up there..a few people have been dropped since last issue for failing to respond via one of the usual routes....(A) Send a LOC on this issue along with 25p in stamps for the next.
(B) Send £1 for two issues..or \$2.00 U.S.A for 3 issues (in cheques)
(C) Statesiders may send pulp mags (SF, AIR, POP. Science etc..but not Analog) and I'll credit you face value.

I'm not keen on method B, but I know some people prefer it to writing a LOC.

'G-8 AND HIS BOTTLE ACES' appear in this issue..so when writing in that LOC, let me know if you would like more of these pulp regurgitations in the future..and specifically..would you like a sequel to the Sock Davidge yarn in the 25th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE ?

Query..if people's names can become usable words..'Boycott' to ban or avoid, 'Mesmerise', to hypnotise,..how about 'Scargillise'..to abnegate any ballot or democracy ?

Did any of you have the misfortune to listen to the recent offering by Charles Chilton on Radio 4...'SPACE FORCE'? It should have been 'Farce'. A real pot-boiler of a yarn..ending with the Earthship being shot back to Earth with an acceleration of zero to FTL without squashing the crew..and in the process, they also shot back in time to shortly after their original time of departure. Sound familiar? It ought to, Chilton used exactly the same gimmick in his last return to steam radio/space about a year ago. Bring back 'JOURNEY INTO SPACE' and its follow-ups and give us a treat (or maybe destroy some nostalgic illusions)..can't be as bad as Space Farce'.

SALE LIST..if any of you didn't get a copy along with this issue and would like to have one...send an SAE for a computer printout of paperbacks, hardcovers and fanzine/magazine addenda. A few copies of my Checklist to Astounding Pt.3 1950-59 left....£1 including postage. Mag contents/stories/authors/pseudonyms/artists/Articles.

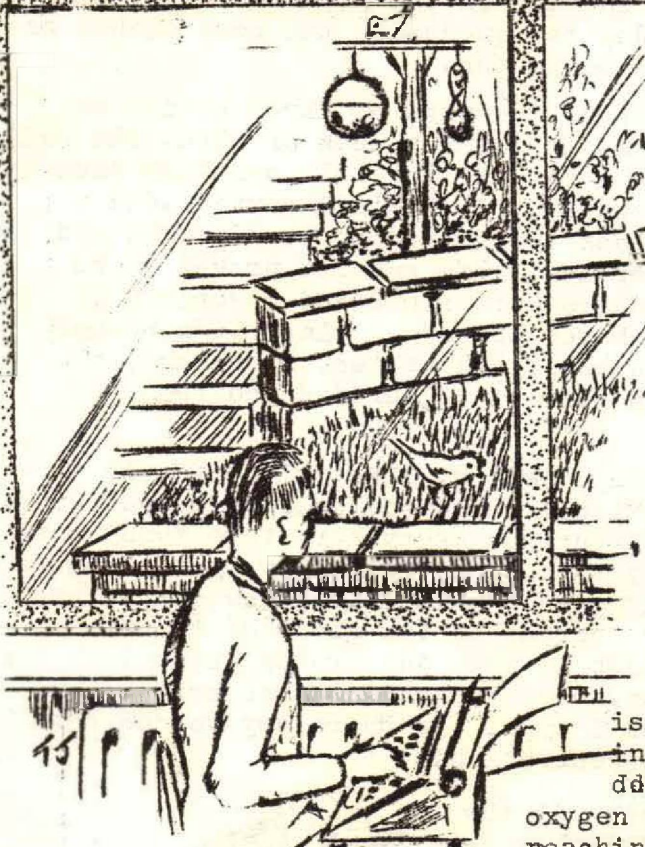
STAMPS...have been taking up some of my time lately..I lashed out on a new album (£11..ouch) and re-housed all my SPACE stamps. Then I re-filed all my UK issues into the album thus vacated plus another, making two albums of UK issues. Now I'm re-sorting the album of USA issues. If any reader out there has any unwanted stamps depicting any space event..or who has a complete set of the 1982 issue..4 x 20c on Ballooning..mint or used....I'm your man. If we can work out some sort of trade deal..for ERG, books etc. ???

Bestest,
Terry

WORD-BOTCHING

or

THE TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS CAUSED BY OUR
FURRED, FINNED AND FEATHERED FRIENDS



Visitors to the Crumbling Jeeves Mansion will not need telling about the steepness of our garden, others must be told that on arrival here, some twelve years ago, I was faced with the task of removing several hundred square miles of brambles and of terracing a garden built on the side of a steep hill. My eventual system was to build several stone walls, cap them with home-cast tops and fill-in behind them to create a series of terraces. I finally put up a ten by eight greenhouse.. the base of which is on a higher level than the roof ridge of the house!

The terrace below the greenhouse is where I put the garden fish pool..and in Winter, the feeding of the critters demands donning Arctic explorer's gear, oxygen equipment for the altitude and then on reaching the pool..the removal of sheet ice in order to minister to the little darlings. This supplies stage one of word-botching. When I return to the house, my fingers are so frozen that for two or three stencils, they will happily clout any key in sight.

Another of the boundless joys of Winter is that my 'office' becomes too cold for comfortable work...so I bring the typewriter down into the lounge and work on the table beside a large window which overlooks the first of the terraces...a small affair, roughly ten by six, grassed over and bounded by one of my retaining walls. One feature is the bird table on to which, in the early days, we simply put odds and ends of bread. Now typing and watching the antics of the birds don't go together too well..at least, not without additional word-botching. The table proved a great attraction to the local sparrows, so to bring in other varieties, we added one of those plastic-net bags full of pea-nuts. In flocked the blue-tits and coal-tits with a fascinating ability to hover by the bag whilst selecting the best spot on which to land. It wasn't long before the sparrows could emulate this Immelman turn and were also stuffing their little tums on the nuts.

It was about this time that we were presented with a clear plastic feeding-ball, about six inches in diameter, and with three holes to allow birds to get at the contents. The tits took to it at once..swooping up and grabbing the edge of the hole. In with the beak,, a quick grab, and off they would go with a whole pea-nut...none of the hold on and peck for a morsel as dictated by the mesh of the bag. One of the little blighters

smaller than the rest, even had the cheek to make a practice of going in at one hole, through the inside of the ball, and emerging, nut-laden from one of the other exits. Sparrows were not so nimble, they lacked that hovering ability so necessary to making sure of landing on the lip of a hole..even so within a few days, they too had joined the queues on the rose bushes as they waited for their turn to make a feeding run.

One result of this was an addition to the mngce of birds coming to our patch...whereas one plastic bag would last for a week or more, the ball needed filling every two days! I stopped filling the ball and went back to just keeping the net bag topped up. However, being kind-hearted..and a sucker for this free entertainment, I took to scattering breadcrumbs and other odd scraps on the grass of the terrace. The results proved to be spectacular...to the hover-and-grab noshers were now added a variety of ground feeders..plus a few more of the hover brigade. Blackbirds became regular visitors..along with siskins, a bullfinch or two, starlings, the odd magpies, an occasional thrush and a pair of collared doves from the wood behind the garden.

We also acquired our most appealing visitor, 'Trotty', a female black bird which at some time in her existence had suffered a damaged wing. Because of this, she seldom flies, but scurries everywhere in a funny sort of hopping gait. She has become fairly tame, comes along every morning for her grub..usually when I put it out and give a whistle. A few months back, we added a feeding tray which actually fastens to the glass of the window by two rubber suckers. I put bacon rinds in this and Trotty knows just how to hop to the window ledge and get them..even though doing so brings her only 18 inches from my left shoulder as I type. Is there any wonder that I don't always give the typing full concentration?

Then of course, we get the robins. At the start of the season, the first one inevitably sets out to establish that this good feeding patch is his. A claim which involves attacking every other bird, no matter how large, and chasing it away. Despite their spindly legs and cheerful, friendly look, robins are the most aggressive birds around at this time..seemingly scared of nothing. On one of my word-botching days, I was wearing a bright red pullover as I typed away. I probably looked like a king-sized robin, anyway, down came a territory-marking robin. It hopped onto the window ledge, sized up this giant invader and actually jumped at me twice..both times it clobbered the glass of the window with quite a bang. A slightly bemused robin then decided I must be protected by a force screen and buzzed off. Happily, once set in their spot, robins prove extremely friendly and a pair of them share the happy hunting grounds with all the rest of our aviary without any trouble.



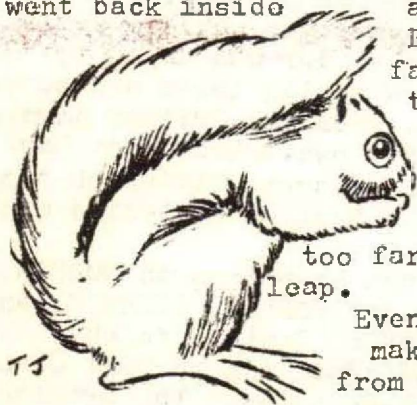
Apart from living dangerously as I type along, there are other distractions apart from the feathered variety...furry ones! A couple of field mice have nested somewhere in the cracks of the stone wall. Now and then, they will sally forth in search of some tasty morsel before heading back to their den. That wall must be a labyrinth of passages, as one day, we were sitting around the table having a peaceful lunch..and entertainment arrived in the form of one of the mice. It would pop out of one hole, then scurry along to vanish in another, only to reappear from somewhere else.

If you remember Charlie Chaplin caught in that huge machine in the film, Modern Times, then you can imagine how entertaining it was to watch our tiny ball of fur as it popped in and out of different holes in the wall. Admittedly, that particular performance didn't wreak any havoc on my typing..but on the other hand, the little blighter loves to come out whilst I am bashing away on the machine..timid as all get out, the slightest move will send it scurrying for cover again. Even birds woffing at their crumbs and nuts keep it safely out of sight in its den.



Then of course we have the squirrels..one in particular is a determined critter. On its first foray we watched entranced as it made its start-stop run down the garden. Each pause being a total freeze so that it looked like a stuffed animal rather than a real one. Eventually, it scrambled up to the bird table, leaned over the edge and began to rend a hole in the nut bag..pausing now and then to sit up and nibble delicately at a tasty morsel, holding the item up in much the same way a human would do. At last, the bag burst, the squirrel nipped down to the ground and ate the bally lot before vanishing off up the garden. We'd enjoyed the show, but a bag at one go could prove expensive, so I nailed an extension bar to the bird table and hung a new bag out on the end. Vain hope, a few days later, back came the squirrel..this time, it hung upside down by its hind legs from the end of the bar..and again got all the nuts.

Now much as I enjoyed watching this performance, I didn't like the escalating food bill..so I shoved in a metal pole, ran a string from it to the bird table about five feet away, and hung a nut bag in the middle of the cord. Then I got on with my typing. Sure enough, back came the squirrel. It jumped up the metal rod, but slid back like someone on a greasy pole. Then it tried the bird table...came down and got up on a rose bush and went round this route several times. "Aha! I said to myself..foiled you! Pride goeth and all that..making up its mind, the squirrel mounted the bird table and with a flying leap, got on to the bag and hung on with its hind legs as it began its feast. That was too much, I opened the window and yelled at it. The darned animal ignored me! I had to go outside to chase it away. My next ploy, was to move the metal pole right away..about six feet, from the bird table, and since the squirrel had failed to scale it, I hung the nuts on the very top..then went back inside and awaited developments. It didn't take long.



Back came the invader, this time making several false climbs of bird table, rose bushes and tries at the pole. Again, it made up its mind and did a standing broad jump, from the table and out a full six feet to catch the bag and start its meal. I have finally foiled it (I think) by moving the bag right up near the window...just too far away for even that Olympic-quality squirrel to leap.

Even so, I look forward to seeing him come back to make another attempt...even if it does distract me from my typing and lead to further Word Botching.

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Gadgetry Inc.

Among my earliest purchases from the bookseller who lurked in the cavern of old pulps, was a slim little magazine with the prosaic title... EVERYDAY SCIENCE AND MECHANICS.

I was originally attracted by the vaguely SF-ish covers..which it turned out, were drawn by Frank R Paul, familiar to me from the pages of AMAZING. E.S.M. was also edited by another old friend..none other than Hugo Gernsback...which explains why the contents tended to dwell on the gosh wow of 'Look What They've Just Invented!' or 'Guess What They'll Invent Next'.

I acquired some dozen or so of these edifying little marvels..long since gone to keep the home fires burning, I'm afraid. Even so, I dimly recall Gernsback extolling such wonders as 'The TV Videophone'..which could not be called 'Everyday' by any stretch of the imagination. Nipkow had invented the scanning disc and Baird had applied it to his early TV attempts but the BBC's own faltering steps were still to come. This of course did not stop Uncle Hugo extrapolating the idea in all directions.

Another speculation spot was where Gernsback offered free advice on just what to invent if you wanted to make a few odd millions. This corner took the form of a small, approximately 4" square, illustration depicting the suggestion in operation. All the reader need do, was go out and invent it. One illo depicted a whole local community going up in flames - save for one house standing untouched amidst the inferno. It was protected by a coat of fireproof paint! The catch was, no such product existed..but if, as Hugo pointed out, you invented one, then as with mousetraps, buyers would beat their way to your door. In another issue, the reader was urged to devise a fog-dispersing ray for clearing airports, shipping lanes and so on. There was an interesting follow-up to this series...when the British juvenile weekly, SCOOPS appeared..it re-ran this series as its own..which must have baffled a few readers when faced with illustrations of cars driving on the right hand side of the road, American policemen, and typical Stateside mail-boxes.

It was in this era that I also came across such magazines as MODERN MECHANIX, POPULAR MECHANICS, MECHANICS ILLUSTRATED and POPULAR SCIENCE..and one again, it was the covers which supplied the initial impetus to buy. Who could resist..."America's New Flying Tank", or "Hydrofoil Liners Will Cross The Ocean at 100 mph!" ? Cover coaxers such as these allowed the artists to run riot with off-beat speculation. Once inside, a two or three page article usually waffled all around the history of the great new device with only a sentence or two as to how it might come about.

8 Another perennial favourite was the 'Moon Rocket'. This gave the editor a chance to bring out all the stock shots of Fritz Van Opel's rocket car and plane experiments, the model from 'Frau In Monde' and a few illos from Verne's Voyage To The Moon. We also got all the obligatory historic tales of moon trips...on swans, flasks of dew, cannon balls etc., all of which still crop up whenever anyone sets out to talk about visiting the Moon.

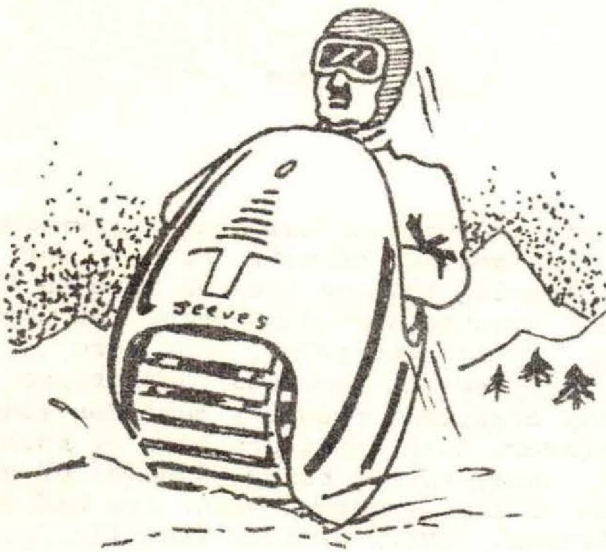
The Karloff films... 'Frankenstein' and 'Walking Dead' spurred many an article on the creation or extension of life. Photographs showed what purported to be the head of a still-living dog, its body removed and life sustained by trays full of tubes, bottles, pumps and dials. The implication being that what the Soviets were doing to dogs today, they may well try out on people by tomorrow. Such theorising inevitably featured Frankenstein's monster, strapped to its harness and about to be hoisted up for a dollop or two of the life-giving lightning - which always rages around old castles. Alongside the fantasy..and obviously included to prove that all this science stuff had a foundation in fact, would be a photograph of the Lindbergh-

Carroll, artificial heart designed to circulate one's blood whilst the normal ticker was getting a 600 mile service. This monstrosity closely resembled an office water cooling bottle mated to a moon-shiner's whisky still. Whether it was ever used is another matter.. a model was there to be photographed...and better still, everyone had heard of Charles Lindbergh.

Sno-cats, sledges, skis and hunting rifles also got excellent coverage..especially if they could be super-streamlined and made to hurtle towards the reader in some eye-catching illustration. They couldn't do this with rifles..but occasionally a shell the size of a house would seem to be coming straight at one,,most off-putting.

Uncle Sam's latest bombers and fighters invariably got plenty of space, usually with artistic and editorial licence pushed to its limit...they were never actually credited with speeds of 600 mph or so...but reading between the lines, it was obvious that this is what they were capable of, but that secrecy forbade anyone saying so in as many words.

Then we had giant robots. Some crack-brained 'inventor' was always coming up with one of these. Most had rectangular, vaguely-humanoid bodies, a pair of electric light bulbs for eyes, one movable arm and an in-built loudspeaker through which pre-recorded records could be played, or speech via a microphone. All such operations were handled by the creator who stood alongside and pressed the buttons. Meeting one of these, any of Asimov's positronic robots would have died of shame.

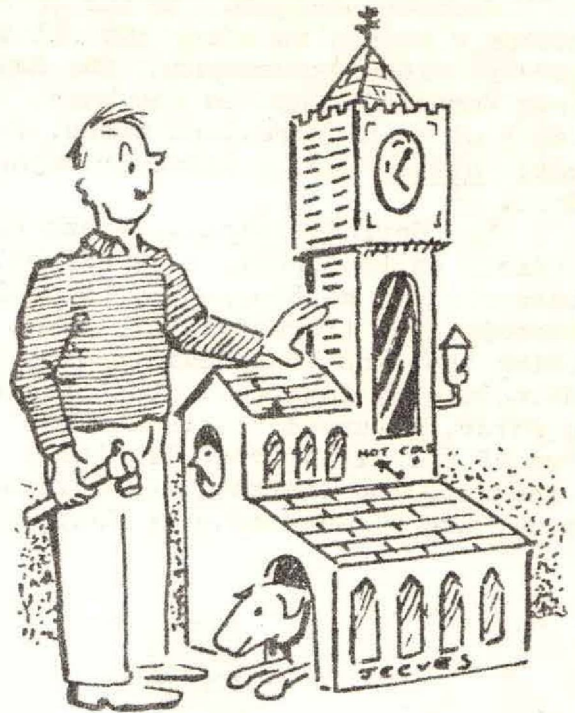


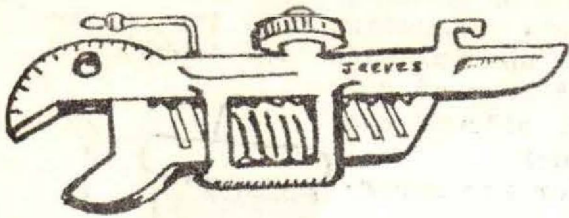
Other articles, (90% of which seemed to have been written by 'Hi Sibley..who I always envisaged as being Japanese) told you how to make a family-sized barbecue pit, build a hunting cabin in your backyard, fix up a swimming pool, or create a 'Lazy Susan'. All of which were as far outside my own personal experience and lifestyle at the age of 12 or so, as the flying tanks and hydrofoil liners. I suppose, in a way, it was all science fiction to me.

Every year or so, another regular would surface.. 'Make Yourself a Soap Box Car Powered By That Old Washing Machine Motor' The sleek, pram-wheeled auto in the pages was particularly frustrating as washing machines hadn't penetrated to our area in those days..let alone old ones. Our washing was done with the aid of a dolly pusher, scrub board and a galvanised iron bath..with all water being heated on the kitchen fire.

If washing machines were unheard of, then the articles on 'Servicing Your Refrigerator' dealt with artifacts from another planet. We kept our milk, meat and other perishables, cold by leaving them on a stone slab in the cellar..along with the coal and firewood. Despite such drawbacks, the mags had enough of interest to keep me coming. Unlike the pulps, they were printed on near-glossy paper capable of carrying the numerous photographs which crammed the pages...and being agency acquired, probably cost far less than the text which they displaced. Moreover, both front and back of each magazine was a solid mass of adverts..the usual format being 30 pages of ads, 30 editorial pages and a further 30 pages of ads...amongst which you had to hunt to locate the final paragraph or virtually every article from the centre section.

In addition to speculating on the world of tomorrow, or rebuilding the present one, we were also regaled with tasty news items...'British Police Try Out Speed King's Invention'...explained Sir Malcolm Campbell's plan to enable police cars to catch and hold, escaping bandits. The invention was a long steel pole with a grapnel on the end. In operation, the police driver manoeuvred his car up behind the fleeing vehicle..his companion operated a remote control which swung the steel pole, hinged to the front of their car until he could close it on the criminal's bumper. Whereupon gentle braking would bring them both to a halt. I suspect that in practice the arm would have simply yanked off the escapee's back bumper .. or else the pursued driver would have braked suddenly so that the back of his car thrust the bar back into the radiator of the police car. No doubt the police tester's had similar objections, as we still don't catch escaping cars in that manner. Maybe a lariat or huge butterfly net might have fared better.





mind, as I didn't work in a shop. Heck, the only shops I knew were the local ones selling everything from firewood to beer-by-the-jug...and not a one of 'em boasted a lathe, router or what-have-you. Despite such cultural barriers, I drooled over the magazines...taking my ideas from the Do-It-Yourself projects, I made weirdly shaped 'ashtrays' from sheets of tin-plate cut from old cans. The results had lethally sharp edges, but that was a problem for whichever unsuspecting adult was on the receiving end of that particular present.

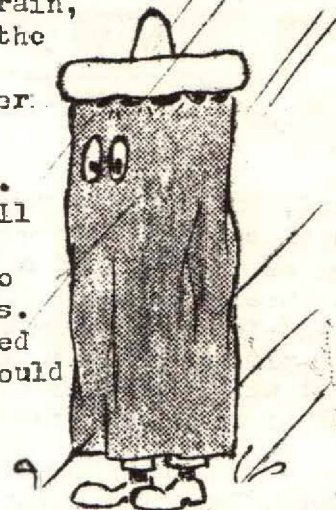
Then there was my crossbow..lovingly scaled down in size (and in power) from the plans for a full-sized version. Unlike Britons, dwellers in the USA were (and still are??) allowed to hunt, shoot, fish, and poop off lethal weaponry in all directions..so why not tell people how to make their own bank robbing equipment? Anyway, my crossbow could propel a six-inch long balsa wood arrow for at least three feet before it hit the ground. Not exactly suited to hunting wild caribou, or even the next door's cat..but I HAD made it myself. Another project was to bind several of my precious pulp magazines into a book. Being aware of my own lack of skill along those lines, I warily selected four old Air War magazines to try out the system..if it worked, then I could of course extend it to the more precious heaps of science fiction pulps. Unhappily, various snags arose .. it was impossible to separate the various 'signatures' of the pulp mags as the crumbly paper simply disintegrated..so in the end I used alternate layers of glue and stitching to produce something which at least looked like a 'book'..if you chose a foggy night and stood no nearer than twelve feet.

Other delights in the gadgetry magazines were the whacky ideas and strange inventions dreamed up by people who must have included either Rube Goldberg or Heath Robinson in their family trees. There was a thing closely resembling an over-wide and elasticless catapult..that was designed to hold your corn-on-the-cob whilst you ate it. One character had devised a personal air-conditioning system for people who liked to go strolling on hot days. The soles of his shoes were built up from small pairs of bellows. From these, rubber pipes led up his trouser legs, inside his shirt and on into his hat. By walking along, the bellows pumped cooling air around his torso and into the crown of his hat. Another inventor had taken up one of Gernsback's ideas and offered cheap, throw-away, waxed paper umbrellas for those unlucky enough to be caught out in the rain.



Those who made a habit of falling off ships, or from bridges into deep water, could be sure of self-preservation by wearing a patent inflatable rubber undervest wherever they went. Competing with the seller of throw-away umbrellas was the purveyor of a special wide (and thick) brimmed hat akin to a sombrero. At the first drop of rain, its wearer would simply pull a rip cord which allowed the brim to unfold into a rain-proof shroud. Under development, was a version designed to render its owner fireproof if caught out in a holocaust.

Home-made diving helmets proved another favourite. Some backyard genius would take an old oil drum, install a window and from the top, lead a rubber tube up to a float designed to rest on the surface of the water. So equipped, he planned to wander around beneath the waves. It was either Sprague de Camp, or Willy Ley who debunked this one in an ASF article. Whilst the diver's lungs would contain air at only 15 lbs/sq. In pressure..if he went down to only four feet, more than 200 pounds of water would be trying to crush his chest. No doubt such articles were paid for posthumously.



The magazines would also teach you how to do all sorts of useful things..such as re-wire your auto, or re-time its ignition..neither of which was much use to my push-bike. It also seemed eminently feasible to convert one's basement into a combined smoking parlour and billiard saloon, but it didn't say what we were to do with the coal. The idea of erecting a chute down into one's swimming pool seemed a good one..but wouldn't have appealed to anyone daft enough to try and glide gracefully down into our old hip-bath as it swung behind the kitchen door. Perhaps I might have made a canoe out of birch bark..but I couldn't identify a birch unless I was whacked by one...and the local River Don oozing its way between banks of pollution-emitting steelworks wasn't a good location for hunting trips.

'Mount Your Own Trophies' might have been useful, but I doubt whether the next door neighbour would have been delighted to see the stuffed head of her little 'Tiddles' glaring from our living room wall. 'Silverplate Your Model Aircraft' looked decidedly more promising..until I discovered it required an area of pure silver greater than the model to be covered.

"Decorate Your House With Junk", was a non-starter..I'd been doing that for years. On the other hand, if I could have located the chemicals, I might well have had my own crystal garden long before Campbell wrote of such experiments in ASF.

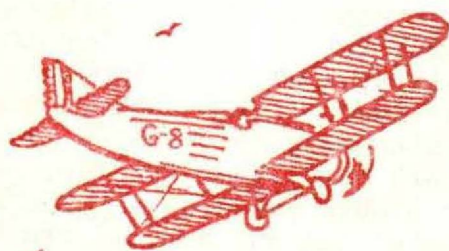
I drooled over those magazines, and in between the lines, managed to acquire a life-long interest in gadgets, gimmicks, Do-It-Yourself and in finding out what makes things work. I still read the occasional issue of Popular Science or one of its clones...the gosh wow cover hooks are still there..only now, instead of 'Shall We Reach The Moon', the cry has become more ambitious..and more positive...~~'We CAN Reach The Stars'~~..and the references come, not from history books, but from SF magazines. On the other hand, Frankenstein, hydrofoils and crazy inventors have given way to endless pages extolling the comparative virtues of the latest gas-guzzlers to come out of Detroit.

A pity, nostalgia isn't what it used to be!

G-8 AND HIS Bottle Aces

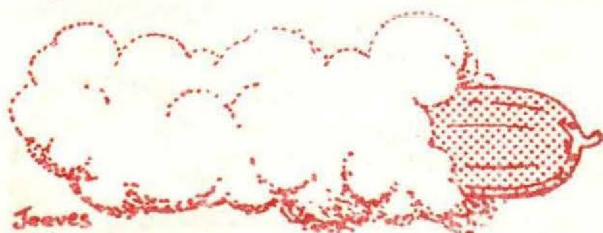
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meet



The CUCUMBER of DEATH

as told to Robert J. Hokum



The Lone Spad flew high over the Western Front, its pilot weaving skilfully between bursts of Archie fire whilst simultaneously eating the six course lunch set out on the table strapped to his knee. G-8's man servant Bottle had prepared the usual sumptuous repast to speed his master on his way. Occasionally G-8 would peruse the map strapped to his

elbow, or interrupt his meal in order to shoot down two or three of the numerous Fokkers which kept attacking him. The master spy took a final look at the map. Many Allied pilots had gone missing in the sector he was now approaching, an area bounded by lines joining Berlin, Munich and Dachau, commonly referred to as the Ber-Mu-Da triangle. Only yesterday, his two assistants, 'Dull' Martin, the hulking former All-American rounders player and 'Dippy' Wetson, a short wiry tap dancer, had both failed to return from the region of mystery. The master spy meant to discover the reason for all these disappearances.

Stowing the map in a secret trouser pocket, G-8 casually shot down the remaining half-dozen Huns. His deft hands sought another secret hiding place to bring out an ink pad and a rubber stamp shaped like an Iron Cross. He was busily marking up his latest kills along the cockpit edge when his Spad lurched, swung to one side then headed straight towards a strangely-shaped cloud.

G-8 barely had time to munch the last morsel of tasty 'chemin de fer' and down a final glass of 'Eau De Cheval' before his whirling propeller began to tear its way through the mist. The master spy gazed in amazement to see what lay within the cloud. Nothing more than a giant cucumber to which his plane was being attracted. The top surface of the cucumber had been sliced away to form a landing field. Barely had he noticed this than a burst of machine-gun fire sleeted leaden death into the engine of his Spad. It died with a brief cough and the whirling propeller ground to a halt. Quick as a flash, G-8 shoved the stick forward, fish-tailed the Spad and made a consummate landing on the cucumber. Barely had his craft rolled

to a halt, than a burly German soldier raced forward and held a wicked luger against G-8's head. He was taken from the cockpit and led away. Even as he went, mechanics were setting to work on the damaged engine of his Spad.

The master spy was taken down through a hatch in the cucumber, along a narrow tunnel, then thrust into what strongly reminded him of the control room of a Zeppelin. Tied to one wall were his two missing assistants. Facing him, holding an automatic in one strangely shaped, black-gloved hand was none other than his old enemy and arch fiend, Herr Doktor Kreuger. The Doktor motioned G-8 to a chair with a sinister wave of his pistol and purred with delight. "Yes, my dear G-8, it is indeed I, the Herr Doktor Kreuger whom you threw into a tank-grinding machine many months ago. I only escaped from that with the loss of my left leg. My right arm, as you well know, was removed when you destroyed my Zombie Squadron. Thanks to your meddling over the years, I now have a metal leg and a metal arm far stronger than the originals..as well as a synthetic left hand, a television eye and two highly sensitive microphones for ears. Despite all this, my brain is still as good as ever. How do you like my latest invention? It will sweep you Allied pilots from the skies". He smirked at G-8.

"It looks just like an overgrown cucumber to me, you damned fiend," barked the master spy. Out of sight of the crazed scientist, he was busily working his foot out of its encasing flying boot.

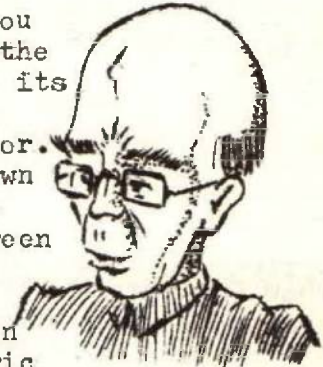
"But it IS a giant cucumber!" crowed the Herr Doktor. "During its growth, I fed it with a special formula known only to me. This caused it to grow to its present huge size. All the time, it was kept in a hydrogen-filled green house. The gas impregnated it throughout until it was lighter than air. Then all I had to do, was slice off the top to form a landing field, install normal Zeppelin controls, a few machine guns and so on. Several electric kettles kept continuously on the boil produce the mist which surrounds us.. which reminds me, would you care for a cup of tea?"

"Yes, and give us some food you swine," burst out Dull Martin from his imprisoning ropes. "You haven't fed us since yesterday."

Despite his own raging thirst, the master spy declined the offer. What he wanted was more information. "But what pulled my Spad into the cloud?" he asked. "Was it some more of your damnable cleverness?" From experience, he knew that this was the best way to get secrets out of the vain Doktor.

"Heee, heee, hee", chortled the Doktor with a sinister giggle. "That was the easiest part of the whole idea. I simply mixed iron filings into the feeding formula and kept a gang of men busy stroking along the cucumber with bar magnets. That converted the whole thing into the one giant magnet which pulled you here."

That was all G-8 wanted to know. Inserting his toe into the now fully loosened flying boot, he lashed out with skilful aim. The heavy boot flew true to its mark on the Herr Doktor's yaw and with a muffled moan, the mad scientist slumped to the floor. It was a matter of moments for the master spy to untie his two Battle Aces, then use the rope to secure the Herr Doktor. From within a secret pocket, cunningly hidden inside his other secret pocket, the master spy withdrew his miniature make-up disguise kit. Flashing fingers flew fearlessly. Within seconds, the master spy had transformed himself into a replica of the Herr Doktor. Turning to Dull and Lippy, he speedily made them over into typical German-featured soldiers.



"Would you happen to have a sandwich on you?" Dull asked plaintively. G-8 motioned him to silence. Quickly, he emptied the contents of Kreuger's waste paper basket on the floor. Removing his strangely overlarge wrist watch, he made cunning adjustments to its several buttons. Placing the watch amidst the pile of papers, he led the way back to the airfield.

Motioning a mechanic to him, the master spy emulated Kreuger's voice. In fluent German, he commanded "'Bring here the aircraft of the verdammt master spy. It has been repaired Nicht Wahr?" "Jawohl, Herr Doktor", replied the cringing mechanic. G-8's Spad was pushed forward. Leaping into the cockpit, G-8 gunned the throttle as Dull Martin and Dippy Wetson threw themselves across the wings on either side of the fuselage. Germans rushed forward to stop them, but Dull Martin lashed out with one beefy foot and knocked them down like a row of skittles. Without waiting for the motor to warm up, G-8 taxied the Spad to the end of the cucumber's runway. Swinging the plane round, he waited.... Bullets were now sleetng their messages of death as they whispered through the flimsy body of the Spad. The master spy ignored them and waited....

Then it came! First, a dull crump as the top secret Uranium atoms in the illuminated dial of his time-bomb watch exploded..then, a fountain of smoke and flame as the hydrogen-filled cucumber caught fire.

"Let's get going," burst out Dippy Wetson. "What are we waiting for?" "Simple", laughed the master spy. "I had to wait for the heat to destroy the cucumber's magnetism so we could get away. Hang on, here we go..." He gunned the engine and the heavily laden Spad shot over the edge of the blazing cucumber and down into space. On the brief flight back, Dull Martin hungrily scoured the Spad's cockpit for remains of the master spy's lunch, but to no avail. The underfed Hun mechanics had scoffed the lot.

Within minutes, the master spy brought the heavily laden Spad in over the Le Bourget airfield which, as everyone knew, was his secret base. He dropped it to the runway as light as a feather before taxiing up to the end hangar and cutting the engine. Behind them, a huge spiral of black smoke curled into the air denoting the end of the fiendish Herr Doktor Kreuger and his deadly cucumber.

G-8's manservant, Bottle, was waiting for them. "Nice to see you all back again, sir." he said. "I've made a big pot of tea and some sandwiches for you." "Damned good show, Bottle," braked Dull Martin. Wasting no time the hefty Bottle Ace snatched up a handful of sandwiches and crammed them into his mouth. Then, his face changed...with a grimace, he spat out the sandwiches. "Just what did you put in these things?" he demanded of the astonished Bottle.

"Why sir," replied the manservant, "I thought you'd like them, I managed to get hold of some cucumber!"

===== THE END =====

SCIENCE FICTION FOR SALE....Send S.A.E. for full lists to:-

Simon Gosden, 25 Avondale Rd., Rayleigh, ESSEX

Phone. 0268 747564



Graham Stone (Australia) is seeking information...Is F.G.Rayer still alive, and if so..can anyone supply his address? If you can help, drop me a line and I'll pass the word along.

OUTWORLDS 37 from Bill Bowers, 2468 Harrison Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45211, USA is a hefty 56pp Qto.Mimeo affair containing a Con rep supplement.(CONFUSION) some..but not a lot, of good artwork..and..'verse', two interviews by Dave Locke (with Willis & Resnick), Bob Tucker discusses 'The Complete Book of SF Lists' and its strange repetition for pages 351 onwards..what is strange to me is that MY copy ends at page 50..stranger & stranger, Bob. Then of course Bill includes a goodly selection of LOCs. Excellent issue..get it for \$2.00 this copy..future issues 1 buck each.

THE MENTOR 47 52pp Qto mimeo from Ron & Sue Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. jammed with articles, short fiction general nattering, letters, a film review..and of course the excellent book reviews, a highlight of which is the placing of a black and white (reduced) copy of the jacket illo. Not much artwork I'm afraid..and the bacover is a disaster..otherwise, one of the better zines from down under..friendly and cheerful striking a nice balance between that and the s&c. Get it for \$1.00 an issue or 'the usual'.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge. Jan.84 12 pages A4 from Jea Weber, PO Box 42, Lyneham, ACT 2602, Australia. Stronghold of Women's Lib, this issue opens with a fascinating discussion of menstrual problems. Next a sparkling account of a day going to work. Letters which (generally) show how useless men are, followed by various other natterings, mainly on you-know-what, bro-f book natter and a bacover cartoon on same. \$1.00 an issue or some response..if you write about your vasectomy or hysterectomy..you're in for sure.

Along with WWV came a diaryzine from Eric Lindsay, in which he tells in 20 pages of his car, job, and computing adventures..mainly the latter. I'm a bit saddened at Eric's hinting that unless things change he is likely to drop out of fan pubbing. Putting his and Jean's items together make a solid 38 pages of two track writing...now I wonder if there are any unliberated homosexual/lesbian computers on the market ????

TO THE STARS..2 Slick, semi-pro, 42 page issue of numerous delights..such as an interview with Hal Clement, another with his alter-ego, artist 'George Richard', brief item by van Vogt, articles on Writing, The Solar System, reviews, letters, news items, a column by Forry Ackerman, Andruschak on the

Space Age and Halley's Comet, natter on Hubbard's books..and much, much more. Excellent value and far livelier than Vector. \$2.50 an issue of 6 for \$8.00 from John & Bjo Trimble, 3963 Wilshire Blvd., No 142, Los Angeles, CA 90010, USA...Oh yes, super, full colour cover by Hal Clement.

SQUIRREL UP-DATE...The battle mentioned in the ERGitorial continues..the little blighter shinned up the four foot pole as if it were a ladder and got the nuts..so the next step was to put up TWO poles, 8 feet apart and an eight foot long string between them at the top..goal-post like arrangement. The nut bag was hung in the middle. The squirrel climbed one pole and then hung by all fours to go along the string just as a man might do. Latest defence is to hang the bag from the top of the lounge window frame, if that fails..I'm stumped. Any ideas ??? (Later..it failed!)

A FOREIGN FANZINE..32pp photolith,A5 size,good art..editorial whi... only, from Roelof Goudriaan, Postbus 1189, 8200 BD Lelystad, Netherlands. Don't let the address frighten you, this is an all-English and slightly sercon little zine. The March issue opens with a look at Doc Savage's motives by David Thiry..but which drifts off the point too much. John Berry has a piece on 'good living', William Bains sails into 'IRON DREAM', you get a spot of dreamboat fiction and an excellent lettercol. All in all, a nice friendly and varied little zine. A creeping letter might get you a copy. (With it came 'Shards Of Babel...an offset, news-zine on world and con news)

HELP WANTED by Taral Wayne, 415 Willowsdale Ave, No.1812, Willowsdale, Ontario CANADA M2N 5B4 who wants to get a copy of a P.K.Dick title..he thinks it is something like 'A HANDFUL OF DARKNESS' or something similar. Contact Taral direct if you can help him

XYSTER.2 was listed in the last issue..but I forgot the address...get your copy from Dave Wood, 1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon.

FANZINE FANATIQUE, 1 pp.mim.A4 from Keith & Rosemary Walker, 6 Vine St. Greaves, Lancaster, LANCS LA1 4UF has four excellent, full-page illos plus mention and comment on 30+ fanzines, so if you're wondering which zine is the one for you...FF can help you solve that dilemma..oh yes, and breaking with Keith's long-established tradition..this issue is well duped and perfectly legible..get it for LOC, trade, interest..or maybe 25p in stamps.

THE MENTOR.48 42pp.Qto.mim from Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776 AUSTRALIA..Opening with a good bit of fiction, some 'verse', the regular Bertram Chandler column (on a near-mugging), a Julie Vaux portfolio a lettercol and the usual excellent (with cover repro) reviews. Ron doesn't want outside Australia contribs...segregationist huh Ron? but you can get it for \$1 an issue..or 'the usual'..not sure what that is if only Aussie material is wanted..on the written side..Ron will use your artwork though.

RATAPLAN 25 20pp A4.mim. from Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Sq. ACT2608,

Australia. \$2.00 for 3 issues. LOC, Trade, Contrib etc. Holiday notes, media, a book review, item on the Sydney Entertainment Centre (hoo boy!) review of 2 Aussie Fmz, a local Art Show, education, lettercol with three letters and long responses. No illos. I liked the education item..too many 'soft core' 'advisers' mucking up education these days.

The Sunday Telegraph (Apr8) quotes an Italian 'inventor', Dominico de Renzo, who has designed a metal coffin to 'float in space'..being exhibited at the Genoa Inventor's Exhibition. Now I wonder just when he read the idea in the Neil R Jones, 'Jameson' series where the Professor was buried in just that way..and then rescued by the Zoromes. 'Inventor'?? Plagiarist.

8 $\frac{1}{2}$ has nothing to do with Fellini, but is a 36pp, 4"x7" photolith zine from
 — Brian Earl Brown
 2010 W. Chicago, No. 201, Detroit, MI 48228, USA...and is jammed with con
 photos old and new. Repro could be better, but it's still for fun. Get
 it for stamp, trade, being nice..or subbing to STICKY QUARTERS.

SQUIRREL UP DATE..Squirrell defeated my last resort..moving the nut bag to
 a nail hanging down from the bay window..it got onto the bay, leaned over,
 hung down and got the bag. I'm quitting now and hoping that it will have
 forgotten its ploy by next season..incidentally, Val found it had made a
 cache of the stolen nuts in her bag of seed compost! ...And some you win..
 To lighten our lives a blackbird has nested in the clematis by the front
 door, and sits there, ten inches from my left ear, as I go out...an accusing
 sort of look too, so we try to use the side door except when setting the
 burglar alarm..then, we must use the front door. We look forward to seeing
 the fledglings.

HOLIER THAN THOU 18. 92 (repeat, 92) Qto.pp from Robbie & Marty
 Cantor, 11565 Archwood St., Nth Hollywood, CA 91606-1703, USA.
 Appx half of those 92 pages comprise a mammoth LOCcol full of
 interesting comment/argument..and a (much-needed) put down of
 a certain woman-loving, man-hating fem fan. Jammed with art
 work..including some slightly objectionable 'cartoons', you
 get D'Amassa writing on Joe Nicholas; items by Jack Herman
 (on fans), Mike Glycer (longwindedly covering 2 fanzines); a
 guide to Aussie slang and oodles more. Love it, hate it, but
 you cannot ignore HTT. It is a regular tour de force in the
 fan world..get it for \$2.00 per issue or the usual .. or you
 can send 7 International Reply Couphns for an issue. WORTH IT!

LAN'S LANTERN 11 & 12 From Lan Laskowski, 652 Cranbrook Rd.,
 No.4 Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013. USA. No 11 is a hefty, 90
 Qto page issue devoted to Clifford Simak...what more can I
 say than that it is a collector's item..reviews, comment, art,
 and more. Lan MAY have a spare copy for \$2.50c. No 12 is
 slimmer (a mere 52 pages)..cryonic comment, fiction, an ex-
 Omni piece on ASTOUNDING/ANALOG, reviews, LOCs, art, verse
 and other goodies..this one is only \$1.50....and I recommend
 either or both unreservedly. Both are 'guduns'

XYSTER 5 Dave Wood (address on previous page) has 32 A4 pages
 ..Dave's Spanish trip, Bentcliffe on Knights of St. Fanthony,
 Hazel Ashworth on Eastercon, Dave Langford's great Seacón
 speech, and a bushel of LOCs. Don't know how Dave does it so
 often..and so well. Get it for all the usual ..if Dave can
 get your house number right..he has a fixation on '23' as he
 thinks both Paul Skelton and I have such house numbers.

CROSSWORD. Two entries (both correct) were received. One from
 Ted Hughes, the other from Pete Crump..rather than choose by lot
 between such stalwarts, I've given each of them a copy of the
 mammoth paperback 'GENESIS' by Harbinson. Congratulations chums.
 ANSIBLE from Dave Langford says that the BSFA recently had the
 Doc Weir Award valued...seems it's SILVER and worth £1000. Two
 interesting points arise..(a)Memory says it cost us about £16
 and (b) Who owns it?? The BSFA is only supposed to administer
 the Award each year..the cup itself was bought out of fan money
 donated freely to buy a memorial to Doc'..a memorial sadly
 debased by 'Young Turk' bickering over its award. Solutions on
 the back of a £5 note to the Editor.



I don't know what the collective noun is for Australian fanzines, but here's a load of 'em....maybe a 'Kangaroo of Fanzines' ?

WANF-FULL 42pp/A4/mimeo from Jack Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldg. Univ. of Sydney, AUSTRALIA 2006. A very nice cover, but only six illos inside. Editorial on Convention comment/Sydney fandom/child ed. An item on the Tolkien Society; old films reviewed; and LOCs..I slipped the child ed bit was by Glen Crawford..an easy error as Jack starts each new piece wherever he has reached on stencil..and uses only minor headings. Get it for the usual..article,art,trade,whim..or maybe even cash.

WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE.5 16pp/A4/mimeo (in very small type..so avoid it if you have eye trouble) from Jean Weber, PO Box 42, Lyneham,ACT 2602 AUSTRALIA. A ghastly Julie Vaux cover..two doe-eyed females..one a left-handed sword toter (I know you CAN have left-handers..but why do they seem to outnumber right-handers in fan art??)..I'm assuming this one has hands as Julie neatly avoids drawing same by hiding them behind backs. Contents kick off with a slightly hysterical bit on 'finding oneself through meditation by Joy Window. Then wonder of wonders..a man is allowed to say that women also play power games, in a half page article. Jean's Diary tells of her doings, Book Reviews followed by another anti-man item and finally a bucketfull of LOCs...argely on the same theme. This could be a nice little zine, but it is definitely skewed by the feminist/men-are-slobs bias which overloads it.

GEGENSCHWEIN 46 16pp/Qto"mimeo from Eric Lindsay (address as for Jean Weber) Mainly on and about computers/computing and how they affect and impinge on Eric's life. One interesting snippet is where Eric explains how he chose SF as an alternative to suicide because there is no point to life. There's a superb Fabian cover, excellent interior illos. One annoying item is the practice of having a contents page with page numbers for items and illos..and then NOT numbering the pages..no mention of how to get a copy...try bribery.

RATAPLAN 26 36pp/A4/Mimeo from Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433,Civic Sq.,ACT 2608 AUSTRALIA No illos, not even on the cover..so you get a solid wedge of typescript...typer trouble/Con Hotel/Review SFR/Local news..and an item on Awards...the whole interspersed by three lengthy letter-columns. A lot of reading if these topics grab you with delight..or maybe it's just that distance lends disenchantment. No rates, so assume it's 'The Usual'.

SOUNDING THE RITUAL ECHO..20pp/A4. Steve Green, 11 Fox Green Street. Acocks Green (how esoteric), Birmingham B27 7SD Steve natters on newspaper work, ..and comics. Phil Collins on dancing in the rain, then Steve again on accidents. Then Ken Lake on..er..the Pope? religion? Finally, an excellent nine page lettercol. Nice friendly little zine..get it for the 'usual'

DON'T GET CAUGHT.5 16pp/A4 Kevin Rattan,21 The Square,Scorton, Nr.Preston, Lancs...nattering on colleg problems/digs/contact lenses/letters/films and whatever else takes his fancy. Steve Gallagher has a piece on books. Plus a couple of very good illos (Shep & Atom). Get it for trade or LOC..and it's a nice, friendly, low-profile zine.

Terry Hill just dropped me a line to pass on comments on his reprint of one of my Nartaz items...seems they went down like a lead brick..which is fair enough..tastes differ. What did get up my nose was that several people took the yarn to be a 'Feghoot'..when it was meant to be nothing of the sort. But that is always the case..people have their pigeonholes for everything, and if YOU don't fit THEIR little boxes, then you are the one to blame. Ah well, that's how the crumbly cockles or something.

Bestest, Terry



IAN COVELL

2 Copgrove Close
Berwick Hills
Middlesborough
Cleveland TS3 7BP

I found your articles,
particularly the one
on perpetual motion,
how-alien-is-alien,
and the evocative

one on films, well thought out and well
researched (if it was more than excell-
ent memory) and useful. (((Mainly memory,
with facts checked by research..which
is why I missed 'Rocket Man' etc..I
never saw 'em, so felt it unfair to
'remember' something I had never seen)))

I used to flick fag cards too, in the
1950s and '60s (((Fag cards..or tea cards
??))) Like a lot of street and playground
games, these all seem to have vanished,
at least in my vicinity. Where are the

marbles in the gutter?, or the hol, on the lawn? Where is Pirates, or even
Jacks? Am I right that TV, video, computers etc have taken games away, or
do your readers know? (((Marbles is still played, but kids push the marbles
instead of squirting them..and no 'knee-caps' are used. Similarly, tops..
whip or peg have both vanished..remember spinning 'em on one hand? Another
casual game (Kick Can'..along with 'Relievo', 'Tip-Cat' (or Peggy') and
many others. Up to my retirement four years ago, I used to wonder at the
change in playground (non) activity..nowadays, kids either mooch around..or
engage in 'Kung Fu' fights or to bashing one another with schoolbags. TV
seems to have killed such games dead))) I know what you mean when you say
your opinions on books are just your opinions..but I also think there should
be scope for argument on the matter. For instance, I definitely rate
EMPIRE OF THE EAST and the first two of the Xanth series above 'MORETA'. I
find Chalker, like Wolfe, unreadable, and think INVASION EARTH is among
Harrison's worst books. (((And I can't/couldn't abide P.K.Dick's stuff, or
Burroughs, (Edgar or William) etc. Which is why I seldom pan a book just
because I dislike it..my point was that RECENT READING's aim is to TELL YOU
that a book is available..NOT that it is good or bad...we can argue that
all right..but not until both of us have read it)))

ANTHONY L. TOMKINS
364 Great Clowes St
Salford M7 9ET

I smiled at the Ted Hughes comment about SF zines. Yes
it would be nice to have a British monthly, however as
you rightly say, there just are no general fiction
mags anymore. 'Men Only' used to be a magazine I liked..until Paul Raymond
turned it into a 'ugh' mag. Then there was 'Lilliput', 'Argosy', 'Ellery
Queen', 'The Saint, etc. etc. All vanished I'm afraid. The only hope is
for a British Reprint Edition..that is unlikely I think, something like
Goron Linz's "Space & Time" is the best bet, produced by a fan, for fans
without regard to profit. I can't see any professional publisher attempting
a new SF zine. Past experience surely proves that SF is too small a market
in this country. There are of course, 'Starburst' and 'Space Voyager', but
these cover films, TV, models etc, and what I have in mind is a fiction-
fact magazine. I discount 'Interzone' which I have found rather dreamy.
(((Snag is, we have too many 'fandoms'..Trekkies, Blake's7, media, comics,
and all the hardcore-to-softcore variations on SF. No magazine can offer
regular appeal to all that lot on a regular basis)))

DON FRANSON
6543 Babcock Ave
Nth Hollywood
CA 91606

I wanted to comment on the ads in the old pulp mags, the one that described me to a T was 'The Man With The Grasshopper Mind', for a course in concentration called 'Pel-manism'. I can't seem to find it right now, though I've looked through several stacks of flaking pulps. (Whenever I do that I'm reminded of the scene in 'The Time Stream' by John Tained, in which someone is trying to decypher the monuments in the desert and they are disintegrating before his eyes). Anyway, there is this guy who doesn't know what he wants to do or be, and has many ambitions, but never gets to do any of them, as he jumps from one to the other like a grasshopper. Aviation magazines, I have dipped into but lightly. Yes, I had model planes, the sturdy ones like Mocar that actually flew, and the stick and paper ones (Fokker D7 etc) that were too fragile to fly (((My Fokker flew beautifully..nyaaah!))) Of course every SF fan was interested in airplanes as things of both the present and the future. There was even a short-lived 'Air Wonder Stories'. When did the regular Air War pulps start anyway? I know they died about 1935 with the abortive attempt to make them into adventure magazines. (((G-8 was still appearing at least until the end of 1938...I seem to recall it started (G-8 that is) in 1936. Any reader have anything to add?)))



TED HUGHES
10 Kenmore Rd
Whitefield
Manchester
M25 6ER

"Flicking Fag Cards" was a real steal from DMBL, and I'll bet provokes more comment than your other outside contributions. We played similar games on the pavement, kneeling on the kerb with the target cards propped against the wall of our 'ouse. 'Knocking On' and 'Spotting Johnny', I think we called our games - but they were only variants of those described by Ken Lake. I once started a memory painting of kids flirting cigarette cards, but never finished it. It's been done since, far better than I could. I drink an odd pint or two at a pub near Tyldesly, where they have framed collections of cig cards on the walls. Cricketers (Verity, Larwood, McCabe, etc), dogs, warships (remember seeing those queer Jap warships for the first time?) flags of all nations - they're all on the walls. I never played the game with cards in an exercise book ..I think you mixed with some peculiar kids in your youth! (((Actually, I didn't play that book game either...I watched kids at it in the playground when on duty..and thought what suckers they were..on a hiding to nothing!)))

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Ches.
Congratulations on 25 years of ERG, and I'm glad we're both still around to see it...the only bad thing about ERG 86 is that it is not a number easily divisible by 25 (((It is if you first knock off 61))) A pleasant compendium it is of Jeeves old and new, and it brought back to mind some of the times we had in past eras (((Sssh! Not a word to Bessie))) I have a vague idea of doing an article, 'Life With The Jeeves'..now if I can just find the time. (((ERG's pages await thee, chum)))

PAMELA BOAL
4 Westfield Way
Charlton Heights
Wantage
OXON OX12 7EW

A most enjoyable edition, although I must confess I found the cover a bit disappointing, not one of your best designs. (((Apologies all round for that one..it was to have been a three-colour litho job..but at the last moment it fell through and I had to rush off the thing in black and white))) No, no! You cannot do it, it is against all the rules, you can't kill off a superhero...wait though, we don't actually see him splattered on the sidewalk. Surely, the drop from the 97th floor gives the man of copper more than enough time to spot a passing vehicle with a soft top, to throw his superbly trained body into a series of graceful somersaults that will enable him to land on the vehicle at precisely the right angle that will dampen out the kinetic energy stored in his fall? (((Why go to all that bother..I could simply start off..After Sock Davidge had saved himself from the fall... I can do better than that though..but is there a demand? If readers would like a sequel to the yarn..write in and say so. If there is enough demand, Sock Davidge will ride again)))

Robbie Cantor
11565 Archwood St.,
Mth Hollywood,
CA 91606

I, like many others can place what I see on TV in its proper perspective. Not everyone can. For some, whatever is on TV is as real as what they see in real life. Shows like 'Real People' (a veritable cornucopia of fantasy) are obliged to warn their viewers not to endeavour some of the stunts which are shown, because of their dangerousness. If they didn't warn people, any idiot would go right out and try to do these things. Hell, even with warnings, there are dopes who try to do them. These people might be called sheep or dreamers with no sense of reality..but that's irrelevant. What matters is that they do exist and will believe that what they see on TV is real

MIKE ASHLEY
4 Thistlebank
Walderslade
Chatham
KENT ME5 8AD

25 years of ERG is frightening. It seems nairy a mo since I was saying the same thing over its 21 years..and when I realise I saw my first ERG in its sixth year, it really starts to strike home. What I'm look'ng to now, is No.100. Let's see, that's another fourteen issues..October 1987

believe. (((It also marks my 65th birthday and accession to the ranks of old-age pensioners if I can keep it up))) Just how many zines have made 100 issues, there can't be that many. ((None..under one editor and outside coub organs such as Vector..and I edited 3 of that mag's first 4 issues..still have the file copies...wonder how many grand they're worth?? ..and on that note...)))

ROGER WADDINGTON
4 Commercial St.,
Norton, Malton,
Nth Yorks.

With the excerpt from the new L.S.de Camp novel inside, the issue of ERG could well become a collector's item; have you considered that? Especially if this appearance is acknowledged in the forthcoming book. You'll have Krishna completists rushing about all over the place.."What's ERG?", "Where's it?"...and those magic words, "I'll pay anything for a copy" Better print some extra copies, ready for the rush, or else on the principle of creating a scarcity, destroy those copies you've got left, so the price will go even higher. Could make quite a killing here. (((Come on you speculators, I still have one or two copies left at £1.00 each.))) One of the films you mention is already a favourite of mine, though have only seen it on TV..'A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH' Remembered the rising staircase (which gave it the American title, Stairway To HeavenI..and the 'reception area' of Heaven, the courtroom audience gathered from all places and eras, the superb playing of the judge (Abraham Sofaer) (((How about Prosecutor Raymond Massey?)))



COLIN GRUBB 720 Manche 'er Rd, Linthwaite,
Huddersfield, W.Yorks.

"You say that things are better now than in the past, but what amazes me is the speed with which conditions have improved. My neighbour can remember having one outside toilet to 2 houses, and a tap and washroom between 5 houses. If anyone lived like that now there would, quite rightly, be a massive outcry (((and the sob sisters would really howl 'deprived childhood' over every young yobbo after a crime))). You also say that people in third world countries are starving due to overpopulation, but this is not the case. The world grows quite enough food to feed everyone, but much is wasted because of poor stock-piling ((and sheer graft at depots etc.)) which allows rodents et . to eat it. Other amounts never reach the people because of inadequate transportation. ((You're talking about 'relief' supplies..I'm saying that they don't/can't grow enough locally to feed their ever-growing numbers))) Better agricultural practices would also help to increase their food supply (by for example, improving irrigation). This however only fends off the day when population outruns production, but the whole history of civilisation is one of staving off a problem

until it can be by-passed..as in the use of coal and oil to didge t he wood shortage problem. (((My point was that the third world has already reached the overpopulation state..and continues to breed. I said they needed help to grow more crops..NOT handouts..but one catch is that such help should not be technology/oil-power based, or involve esoteric (and expensive) fertilisers etc. As for the wood--oil. Oil wasn't for wood by-passing..it was more efficient power-wise. Now oil is running out and the ONLY two viable alternatives at the moment are nuclear(fission or fusion) and solar/satellite power beaming. If we don't establish one of those before the oil runs out, we're dead ducks. Windjammers can't bring in enough to feed England any more)))

BERNARD BARP In DMBL you mention THE MUMMY, but not the follow on
21 Moorfield Grove films, 'CURSE OF...', 'REVENGE OF..' etc. ((Simple
Tonge Moor, reasons..(a) I didn't see 'em..so (b) I didn't remember
Bolton 'em))). 'The Man Of Copper'...don't think you've got

out of it so easily, Jeeves. Haven't you heard of 'prequels'?
(((I don't need 'em..I already have a story line sorted out to continue
that 'Sock' Davidge saga..if enough readers write in to say they'd like to
read it. How about it folks?? Can you stand another one?))) Thanks very
much for the very nice review of 'Typer'..BUT it's available only by
editorial whim...though the editors are very whimsical. (((OK, so it goes
to those for whom the whim tells..it's still a good zine)))

Eddy DEAN has a few more illos in this issue, and that Canadian artist
will be on the cover of the next issue if all goes well...and for the Jan
85 issue, Ted Hughes is doing a nifty little robot item front. How's that
for looking ahead?

Bestest to all,
Terry



MOCKINGBIRD

Walter Tevis Spofforth is a near-immortal android in a decadent, decaying America. No children are being born and the remaining adults live an indolent, drug-stupored life. Then enters Paul Bentley who has taught himself the lost art of reading; he teams with loner, Mary Born and thus violates Privacy customs. Spofforth has Paul taken to jail, whilst he sets up house with Mary. Paul's triumph over his troubles along with Spofforth's own desire, makes fascinating reading. Tevis has constructed a credible and convincing future whilst avoiding the standard cliches of sadistic guerilla bands and gang rapes. It is a story of real people - with a chilling warning against a TV, drug and robot-ruled society. One of the best yarns I've read in a long time and one which I just had to read in a single sitting.

NO GRAVE NEEDED I

John Russell Fearn, Harbottle £1.25 Young widow, Elsie Timperley has been warned of an early death by mystic Rawnnee Singh, but goes ahead and marries Peter Malden. Then her former husband returns as a vampire and strange killings ensue. Despite the help of elderly Dr. Meadows, expert on vampirism, Peter is unable to prevent the deaths of Elsie, her mother, and others. The yarn is a hitherto unpublished horror tale from the effects of the late Fearn. The story is a bit dated and at times, over-simplified; nevertheless, it is a gripping mystery yarn with all the classic ingredients plus an unexpected (if dubious) denouement. Readers who recall the 'cover coppers' SF yarns of the early days will get quite a surprise at the intricate plotting of this one. Get your copy from Phil Harbottle at 32 Tynedale Ave., Wallsend, Tyne & Wear.

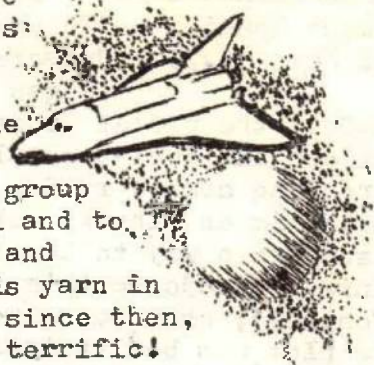
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THE DESCENT OF ANANSI

Larry Niven and
Steven Barnes
Orbit £1.95

'Falling Angel' is a satellite station in Lunar Orbit and faces close-down by NASA. To finance independent operation, the

spacemen seek to sell a monofilament cable they have made. A Japanese company contracts to buy it, but a Brazilian consortium joins with a terrorist group to carry out a missile intercept on the Shuttle Anansi and to hijack the cable. What ensues is taut, realistic - and excellent hardcore SF. Analog ran an excerpt from this yarn in 1982. If you have been shedding tears of frustration since then, don't miss this chance to read the whole epic. It's terrific!

DOCTOR MIRABILIS

James Blish
Arrow £1.95

First UK Publication in 1964, this is a fictional account of Roger Bacon's life, his studies, writing and eventual imprisonment for heresy. We see him against a background of contemporary events and characters of the 13th. Century where his compulsive urge to know more about his world is hampered by the beliefs of his era. Not an easy book to read, but fascinating and rewarding if you make the effort. Blish has achieved his own magnum opus, a triumph denied to Bacon, in a scholarly work far more gripping than any pot-boiling epic of sword or sorcery. Whether you agree will depend on your tastes, but this is indubitably a work of scholarship...and of art.

CONAN THE REBEL

Poul Anderson
Sphere £1.50

Conan the Barbarian has had many imitators..and almost as many chroniclers. This time Anderson takes up the saga and teams the mighty-thewed warrior with pirate Queen, Belit who seeks vengeance on Stygia and the rescue of her imprisoned brother Jehanan. However, the snake-god Set has charged the black priest Tothapis with the slaying of Conan. A wicked priestess, seduces Jehanan and gains the information needed to trap our hero..but he survives and fights many battles against men and magic before all is won. Conan is an acquired taste..which I never acquired..and Anderson's visualisation seems rather cardboard..even so, for those who DO dote on the barbarian, here he is back in action.

A CASE FOR CHARLEY

John Spencer
Fontana £1.50

Set in 21st Century, post-Earthquake, Los Angeles with social and traffic problems extrapolated out of sight. Long life is guaranteed to those who can afford a never-fail, 'Perma Plus' heart. Then singer Camille's heart packs up on her and the company is in trouble. Private Eye Case is hired to prove it was a murder..and in no time at all, in typical 'gumshoe' fashion he has acquired a 'tail'..and an attempt on his life..with more excitement to come as he gets on the trail. Mr. Spencer has successfully up-dated the Mike Hammer school of detection into an exciting, Harrison-like future. The result is a fast-moving 'who dun it?' linked with an excellent bit of SF.

TO CONTROL THE STARS

Robert Hoskins
Del Rey £1.75

After a long Interregnum after the First Empire's fall, Humanity has established a Stargate-linked Federation. Shan Eliot graduates from the Academy, is seconded to the Hominidic Society, then finds himself caught in a power struggle to control the Society and the Federation...as one faction seeks to serve, the other exploit. A fast-moving adventure yarn. Characters are not developed, but the plot never drags. Sadly, a too-facile ending seems like pulling a rabbit out of the hat.

TO ESCAPE THE STARS Set millennia later than Robert Hoskins 'To Control', but in the same Del Rey £1.75 Universe. Adventurer James Oregas is called in to exploit the planet Llango, but treachery follows the deal's completion and James is forced to make a random 'Gate' jump. It lands him on library world Prime where he discovers a way to the legendary world of Alnia. I enjoyed this far more than 'Control'; characters had greater depth, the plot was better integrated and as a basic adventure yarn, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

THE GOLDEN WITCHBREED Mary Gentle
Guest review by Judith Buffery

I have to agree with John Owsn that this is a most impressive work. I also agree that it is true SF and not fantasy. However, where he was reminded of Jack Vance, I found more similarity with Joan Vinge's SNOW QUEEN. I am a Vance fan, but would describe his work as coldly masculine, whereas Mary Gentle is all feminine warmth. TGW is the best attempt I have read to describe the whole culture of an alien planet rather than the more usual one-city-constitutes-a-planet philosophy. My favourite characters are the traitor Ruric and the mercenary Blaize. I was somewhat irritated by the slightly pompous heroine, Christie, and for my taste, she undergoes far too much suffering. TGW also follows the current trend in alien contact stories in which Earth people are depicted as complete fools. I suppose this is a reaction to those older BEM tales where the aliens were always thoroughly nasty. Hopefully, a more balanced view will eventually prevail. I found it somewhat unlikely that the xeno-team would be all from the British Isles and speaking of their homes as if they hadn't changed from the Britain of the 80s. One other small niggle; as a mother of twins, I was slightly miffed when Christie states flatly that human women only have one baby at a time..although having been through the experience, I can appreciate how useful it would be to have four mammaries instead of two..imagine the problems of bra' designers though! Quibbles aside, the book is a tremendous achievement, representing as it does, a vast amount of painstaking detailed work. Despite its enormous length it gallops along at a spanking pace. I look forward with pleasurable anticipation to Mary's next offering.



DARKCHILD Brakrath was settled by spacewreck survivors who have acquired Sydney van Scyoc new powers and characteristics (but seem to have no men). Penguin £1.95 Princess Khira lives in a castle-like building shared with commoners and the alien Arnimi. Whilst commoners hibernate and her mother is off on an annual battery-charging expedition, 'Darkchild', arrives...a strange lad plagued by a possessive, information-gathering mental guardian. The Arnimi warn Khira that he is a 'Rauthimage' and should be destroyed (This appears to be their sole function). Can Khira protect him from the Arnimi, her mother and yet aid him to escape the control of his guide. Highly evocative, good characters, but overwordy and rather slow. Shortened and more carefully plotted, it would be a winner. As it is, it is still a pretty good read for fantasy lovers.

MERCHANTER'S LUCK

Sandor Kreja, skipper of the beat-up freighter 'Lucy' has a one-night-stand with Allison Reilly, high-up in the hierarchy of the rich crew family of the 'Dublin Again'.

C.J.Cherryh
Methuen £1.95

Sandor suicidally races the Lucy against the Dublin and Allison persuades her family to fund and crew the Lucy and thus aid her ambition. However, the first voyage is as pirate-bait, and because of time slips, it almost ends fatally. Rich in improbables, but otherwise good characters, situations and a well-paced, entertaining adventure yarn.

SPECIAL DELIVERANCE

Edward Lansing plays a slot machine and is translated to an alternate world where he joins two men, two women and the robot Jurgens..each of whom has similarly been drawn from some alternate world. From here on, as they try to discover why they have been 'collected', we have the standard quest saga which Simak does so well..and so often. Encounters include a strangely guarded giant cube, a city of traps and world-gates, a syren-singing tower, Chaos and other perils before the main problem is solved. A Chinese proverb says it is better to travel than to arrive...so it is with this yarn..just enjoy the travels and forget the ending. That way it's a good, typical Simak fantasy mission.

THIEVES' WORLD

Ed. by Robert Asprin
Penguin £1.95

The garrison town of Sanctuary is a refuge for shady characters and petty criminals to which comes new Governor, Prince Kadakithis..determined to reform without brutality or violence. With this background, nine SF writers have crafted their tales of fantasy using interwoven characters. The idea is not new and the items more vignettes than stories..and that's the extent of the quibbles. This time, the characters and separate items mesh beautifully to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. No mighty-thewed warriors here...instead, enjoy a vengeance-seeking scribe, a trans-dimensional rescue, foiled treachery and more from 'names' such as Offutt, Brunner, Haldeman, Bradley etc. Normally, I dislike fantasy..this time, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

CRONE

Bill Garnett
Sphere £1.75

It's a long time since we had a rattling good yarn in the tradition of Sturgeon's 'IT', or Wilhelm's 'KILLING THING', but this one makes a good stab at it. Travel agent Peter Stone is bored with his marriage and once he hires a new secretary, Roszina Janosi, it isn't long before they bed together. When things go badly awry, Roszina's mother Magda, an old-school Resistance fighter, uses the old powers to create a golem-like creature. Fast-paced and exciting, I thoroughly enjoyed the yarn even though the fantasy part didn't arise until the second half. It was also a refreshing change from the common 'Black Magic' or 'satan at large' type of tale. Rate it a good 'un.

CORGI announce the third in the series of fantasy's..'Book Of The Isle' trilogy, THE WHITE HART..out May 25th 1984

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MAGICIAN'S GAMBIT

David Eddings
Corgi £1.75

Thins in the five-part 'Belgariad' series. Once there were seven Gods, and one (Torak) stole the Orb Of Power. It was recovered, then stolen again with young Garion, the possessor of strange powers, setting off to retrieve it. Here in part 3, he is accompanied by the sorcerer Belgarath, Lady Polgar, Prince Kheldar, the Princess Ce'nedra (who has her eye on Garion) and one or two others as they seek the Orb now held by the Magician Ctuchik. Once again, Silk and Durnik closely resemble Fahfrd and the Mouser and as Garion and the Princess grow together the young commoner's powers begin to develop. A colourful yarn, but I felt the author was juggling a few too many characters so that some seemed to appear out of limbo to say their pieces. Even so, if you are a lover of heroic fantasy, this is an epic saga and better written than most.

OTHERWORLD

W.A. Harbinson
Corgi £2.50

The 'Otherworld' being set in the Amazonian jungle where dissolute planter Frank Paulson beats his workmen to death and debauches their nubile daughters..whilst ignoring the homilies of Father Benedict, the local priest who is also troubled by his own doubts and denied lusts. Paulson's angelic son Alex has strange powers which flourish when the Yano drums sound. Then the glamorous Laura arrives on a photo assignment and Alex is attracted to her as she is attracted to the drums. Then the planter is butchered, Laura vanishes and we leap ahead a year to Alex, now with a girl friend as he faces the menace of drums and magic. Well detailed jungle setting, plenty of brooding menace and a plot not unlike those in the old 'Horror' pulps. Great stuff for lovers of occult, voodoo and black magic...500 pages of it.

A Directory of DEALERS

Sheppard Press £12.00

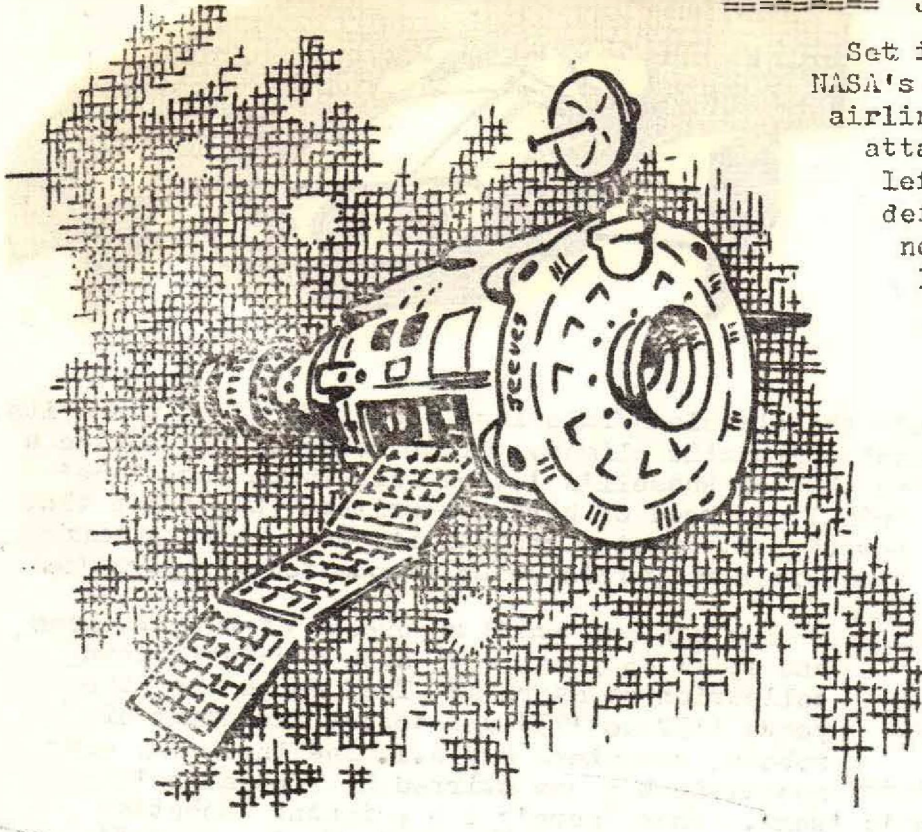
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THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS

Fred Pohl Granada £2.50

I've just bought this one..and thoroughly enjoyed reading of Pohl's life and career and how it has entwined with the promags and the growth of SF. To me, it is a walk down Memory Bank Lane..and any older fan will find it the same. Compulsive, entertaining, I HAD to read it in one session. What gave it an extra zing was meeting so many of the characters (including Fred) in Boston in 1980. If you remember Wonder, Amazing and the like..this is for you.

DOMINATOR J.Follett Methuen £8.95



Set in the near future when NASA's shuttles operate like airlines. Vicious sneak attacks by the P.L.O. have left Israel virtually defenceless and time is needed to replace their ICBM system, devastated in an accident..and in the meantime, the P.L.O. have other plans which include hi-jacking a Shuttle complete with nuclear bombs. Central characters are Neil O'Hara, an astronaut sacked for a scape goat on grounds of negligence, and David Heinlein (one minor character is called 'Kuttner') an Israeli soldier mistakenly cashiered and now seeking his revenge.

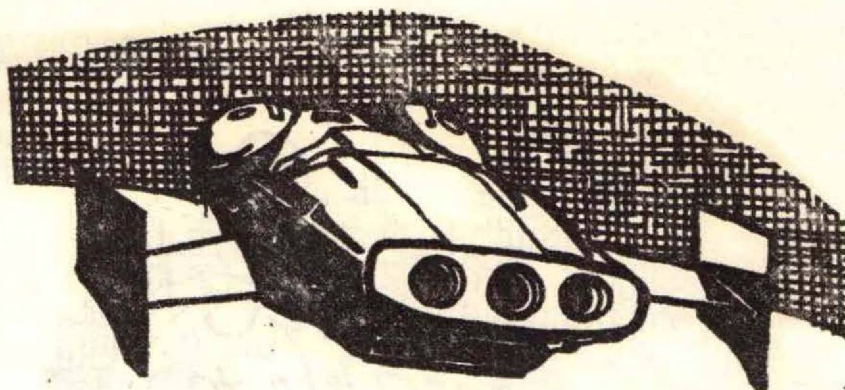
These, and all the other characters are well portrayed and credible. The action is fast and convincingly chilling as events in the Middle East are seen to escalate and the plan to take over the Shuttle 'Dominator' shapes up. An excellent blend of mainstream with SF and a superb jacket that sells the yarn all by itself. This is SF as it ought to be...don't miss it.

IS NOTHING SACRED ? A collection of (at a guesstimate) some 200+ cartoons which display really off-beat humour..including a ration of SF-type aliens. The punch-lines are never trite and often require considerable thought (rewardingly) before the 'penny drops'. I loved the Hell's Angels toddlers on their tricycles and the old lady buying fish, who wanted..'the one at the end with th* nice smile'. More varied than Searle. more off beat than Emmett and more consistently entertaining than either. If you like thought-provoking cartoons, then try this one for size.

TIME OUT OF JOINT Ragle Gumm lives on the proceeds of daily wins from an on-going newspaper competition.. but begins meeting inconsistencies in everyday life. Salvaged magazines mention a 'Marilyn Monroe' he has never heard of, and an old phone book lists non-existent exchanges. Gradually, he uncovers the reality behind his peaceful world and the true reason for the competition. Written in 1959, when Dick was writing real stories, this fascinating yarn holds you throughout. My only quibble lies with the ending..which did not sustain the high level of interest and credibility shown by the main body of the tale. Even so, it's a darned good read...Dick lovers...here's your chance.

VOYAGE FROM YESTERYEAR

James P. Hogan
Penguin £2.50



A starship is sent to Chiron to seed it with robot-reared children. Then years later, the Mayflower II follows to ensure the settlers follow the right lines. Mission Director Kalens is already working out his rule-roosting plans,

but once on Chiron it seems the classless/rulerless society prefers to go its own way...until events reach a dramatic climax. Older readers will notice a M.Y.O.B. society similar to that of Russell's '...And Then There Were None' but Hogan, as befits the dwindling breed of hardcore writers, has taken that theme and imbued it with new vigour, greater credibility and mounting tension. A refreshing change from the soft core waffle which floods today's markets.

*** MACHINES THAT THINK ***

Edited by:- Isaac Asimov
Patricia S. Warrick
and Martin H. Greenberg
Allen Lane £12.95

How can one avoid an excess of superlatives and still do justice to such a scintillating collection of stories? They range over the years ('32 to '73) and across the gamut of robots, computers and A.I. machines. My own nostalgia bug was stirred by Wyndham's 'The Lost Machine' and Vincent's 'Rex'. Then there's the poignant 'Robot's Return' by Robert Moore Williams; Harry Bates' 'Farewell To The Master' which became the film.. 'Day The Earth Stood Still'. Asimov, VanVogt, Clarke, Leinster, Ellison and many others are here in a stellar 'Who's Who' of SF writers. Thrill (and chill) to Miller's smok battle machine in 'I Made You' or Fred Brown's 'Answer'. Wonder at micro predictions (from 1946) with 'A Logic Named Joe'..and much, much more...and amazingly the editors have managed to avoid the much-anthologised pot-boilers.

Statistics you want? 600+ pages, including a ten-page Introduction by no less than robotic king Asimov himself..a walloping great 28 stories cram into this 2" thick volume. I have two highly treasured anthologies of comparable size and quality on my shelves..'The Astounding Anthology' and Conklin's 'Treasury of Science Fiction'...this one is the first in years to merit a place alongside those giants for both size and quality. If you like real SF, then beg, borrow, steal..or buy a copy, VERY highly recommended and indubitably the premier item in this issue's titles. Oh yes..and as a bonus, it's beautifully printed on good paper. The whole package enclosed in a striking dust-jacket by Peter Gudynas.

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