



ERG QUARTERLY

76

ERG
 QUARTERLY 76

OCTOBER 1981

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Sending £1 for 2 issues (low value stamps will do)

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MINI ERGITORIAL

Any bids for the Space Shuttle original drawing from the cover of the last issue? ERGtape No.1 still available at £2.00. My Stateside Trip Report at 75p or \$2.00.

WANTED pre-1935 copies of Astounding, I can offer large stacks of current sf at a trade rate to suit YOU. I have also started compiling a series of cover photos of Astounding and would appreciate contacting anyone who can either let me photograph the pre-'35 issues..or perhaps can do it for me if they have access to them.

At the time of writing, only Roger Waddington has sent in a completed Crossword from ERG 75...so he gets the prize of a hardcover. Not only did the crossword elicit a long loud silence on its response curve but virtually no one mentioned it in their letters...how come folks? Was it too hard? Do you want another..yes or no ???

Recover this time is again courtesy of that very good man, Harry Andruschak, without whom ERG would not be the same. My eternal thanks to a good man. Frontcover..unless plans go awry, will be a HANDCUT stencil original from Jim Cawthorn...one of that superb Tolkien folio he did many moons ago..and now resurrected from the files...which proves you CAN store stencils a long time...and that good work CAN be produced that way, even if ineligible for The McIntyre Award.

In the ERGITORIAL on the ZX81, I mentioned some books I had found useful..the titles are:-

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ZX80 OR 81)	£6.95 each from
and STRETCHING YOUR ZX80 OR 81 TO ITS LIMITS)	Computer Publications,
		Unit 3
		33 Woodthorpe Rd
		Ashford. Middx. TW15 2RP

I have found them almost invaluable..and if you have a Sinclair...order right now.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY..When you've finished with this issue of ERG, don't throw it away,,please pass it along to a friend..or an enemy, depending on what you think of it.

Latest Shuttle news is a launch postponement until October the 9th..plus possibilities of weather/wind delays on the day itself.

On the computer front, the newly announced VIC-20 from Commodore looks very interesting...basic 5KRAM for £189, with 16 colours and expandable to 32KRAM. Then there's the BBC/Acorn micro specially designed for the BBC series due to start in January...this looks even better...16KRAM a basic, 8 graphic modes including an incredibly high for the price resolution of 640x256 pixels..and 16 colour graphics..for £235, and its expandable in steps..32K, 48K 96K and an incredible 8M ! Send S.A.E. for details to:- BBC Microcomputer System, BBC, Box 7, LONDON WC3 0XJ. Sadly, (with the exception of the upcoming £50 job from Sinclair) a printer to give you hard copies of your programming will cost

a minimum pf \$130 (Datac) and on upwards depending on the speed and quality you require. If you also yearn for a floppy disc system and word processing capability, then start looking for a second mortgage on the wife.

HOLIDAYS this year were a bit curtailed as we were expecting Sandy back from her year in the U.S.A. and were unsure of the actual date. Eventually, we wound up taking time out here and there, which suited me fine as not only was it more fun, but it also minimised that mountain of mail normally on the mat when we get back from longer trips. This time, we took a week in Wales (Why didn't you meet us at the border, Presford?) including a couple of days in Lldlow staying at the superb olde-worlde 'Feathers'. On another jaunt, we visited Scarborough and made a point of crossing the world's longest single-span Humber Bridge..fascinating. We also had a weekend in Corby..and discovered the police had sealed off Kettering..we never found out why..outbreak of SF perhaps? Final expedition was into the wilds of Scotland and a stay at the George Hotel in Edinburgh. I managed to avoid the last two days of the Tattoo by talking Val into attending a Stephen Leacock recital instead. I haven't been to Scotland before..apart from two quick 'catch a troop ship' visits in '41 and '42 so I enjoyed every minute of it. A beautiful city is Edinburgh..and CLEAN..even the back alleys and courts were spotless and totally devoid of the trash and filth which mars just about every English town, city and village. Oh yes, and sticking to our tour of Britain's Bridges..we visited Queensferry and drove under both the Forth Bridges..road and rail.

The cartoon on the right will be a bit dated by the time you get this ERG, if Australia didn't win, just change the year, as I hope they'll try again.

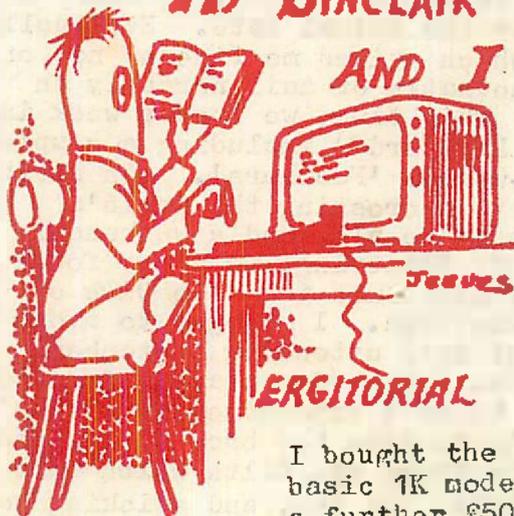


As for home conventions..what ever happened to programmes ?? Once again a Britcon (Yorcon 2) proved abysmal from a program point of view..panel, speech, panel, feeble film, and back to panel again. Whatever happend to such itens as 'This Is Your Fannish Life', The LiG Tape Operas, Fannish 20 Questions; the plays, skits, fan huckster tables, The audience participation competitions, film competitions, slide shows etc. ?

Heck, even the exciting (hollow laugh) debate..'Should SF Support Causes' changed course and got enmeshed in semi-political/anti-nuke propaganda..a farce which upset quite a few people who objected most strongly to their being lumped in amongst the objectors under the blanket statement..'This Convention... etc". Why pay high rates for such feeble programmes was a common plaint..the best part.. as ever..is meeting old friends..and that can be done simply by simply booking us all in at one hotel somewhere..and thus saving a registration fee. I was asked to find such a hotel in Sheffield..and have done so (\$19 a night)..but I gather from Keith Freeman that a more central site..Worcester or Coventry is under consideration. Hope it comes off, as the saving on 'Registration' and fares to Brighton will be equal to an extra day's hotel bill I would imagine.

Which is all for the time being..remember to write (with stamps) if you have any doubts about your ststus on the mailing list. All the best, Terry

My SINCLAIR (ZX81)



Shortly before the last issue of ERG rolled through the duplicator, I became the proud owner of a Sinclair ZX81 microcomputer, plus and additional 16K RAM unit. Since then we have had several months in which to get acquainted, so herewith a report on a very happy relationship.

The basic 1K version arrived two or three weeks before the add-on unit, although both were ordered at the same time..the ad. says 'allow 28 days', but this evened out at about 56. Not really a complaint against Sinclair, but simply an indication of the terrific demand.

I bought the made-up version rather than the kit. The basic 1K model costing approximately £70 and the 16K unit a further £50. Power unit and connecting leads are all included in the cost, so once you have unpacked the computer, you're ready to go. Simply plug in computer, switch on TV and link it to the ZX81 via the (too short) cable supplied..the first thing I did was to extend mine to allow me to sit back in an easy chair with the ZX81 on my knee. Switch the TV to an unused channel, twiddle the tuning, and up will come a small letter K in the bottom left hand corner of the screen. That's all there is to it, you're ready for business.

Having just completed a short course on BASIC programming, I had some idea of what to do next..but total newcomers needn't panic, as Sinclair also supply an excellent handbook which takes you through BASIC a step at a time. Since then, I've invested in several additional books, and find that what one tends to slide over, another covers in depth. One very great boon of the ZX81 is the Sinclair version of BASIC which allows the input of a whole word at one press of a key. There are about seventeen such 'Command' words plus others called 'tokens' and when you have much repetitive typing to do, they save oodles of finger-bashing. On the APPLE, you have to type in such words as PRINT, GOSUB, GOTO, THEN, one letter at a time. On the ZX81, just press one key for the one you want...saves a lot of time. There is another little blessing concealed in the little black box...if you muck up a line of BASIC..the machine will refuse to accept it until you rectify the error. This is much easier to do with one balky line, than having to plough through a whole program in search of a bug which is jamming it. Even if you get a seemingly satisfactory line into the program..but forget to include its values, the ZX81 is equal to the situation..it stops and throws up an error message similar to this, '2/90' This tells you there is an error of Type2 (Sinclair give you a listing of various types of error) on line 90. Piece of cake!

Drawbacks? Well, the ZX81 keyboard is the main one...it isn't a proper ASCII standard bit of machinery with proper typewriter keys. Instead, it uses pressure sensitive keys which require pressing instead of tapping. In addition, they are closer together than a standard keyboard, so that using them is not a matter of plain typing, but of selecting a key and then pressing it firmly. A rather slower process than on 'standard' machines, but when you compare the cost of a basic £70 as against around £150 for its nearest competitor, you can't grumble.

Whether you buy a ZX81 or a bigger machine depends very much on what uses you have for a computer. I often get asked, "What do you want it for?" The answer to such a simple seeming question gets rather complicated..but it goes like this...

One of my interests is mathematical puzzles. Those annoying time-wasters of the kind which Martin Gardner cooks up so well. Using a computer and mastering BASIC is rather like that... a series of problems to be solved and mastered... 'How can I make it PRINT a list of names/ draw a rectangle/ draw a concentric spiral/run me up a list of logarithms? ..etc etc. Then again, I want to know what I can do with keys such as PEEK, POKE, GOSUB,RND,INT and suchlike. I've had endless fascination in bringing them under my control. So, for openers, I get the fun of mastering a new technique. Then of course I can play games on my ZX81...either of my own devising (I've cooked up a neat little Rhine E.S.P. test using the RND function) or from cassettes or computer magazines...so that's another reason for wanting a computer. Then there is the use I plan for it when the Sinclair printer comes on the market and I can run off the ERG address labels at the press of a key..ah happy day. Finally, but possibly of greatest importance is cost/effectiveness. I did think of investing £600 in a SHARP computer with colour visuals and 48K RAM, but caution said, 'suppose you can't master BASIC, Suppose you lose interest, suppose you find you don't need a big computer...what then?' ANSWER, buy a nice, cheap model...the ZX81, work on it, play with it, enjoy it, and if for any reason you want to pull out of computing...then you haven't lost a lot of money.

These reasons may not apply to you...but before investing in ANY sort of computer, it will pay you to analyse your reasons for wanting one..and bear in mind...new and better ones keep appearing on the market..and the BBC in conjunction with Acorn computers have a computing program plus a new computer, all lined up for next year...you may want to get in on that..I do.

I mentioned games back there. I bought two cassettes of these, plus a Household Accounts package from Sinclair. Sadly, each cassette had at least one programme which stubbornly refused to LOAD (I've written to them asking about a replacement set). Of the 1k games...they are very basic and also have an annoying screen flicker. The 16K games are better..with an excellent version of 'Mastermind' and an infuriatingly messy 'Lunar Lander'. The Household cassette has a superb (to me) addressing listing program for up to 50 names,addresses, phone numbers and general info...and also a 'Note Pad' which I fancy will come in very handy..sadly, the 'Bank Account' side just won't LOAD..so I'm still wondering about that part.

For my own programs...well of course, I'm still very much a beginner, but have produced several pieces which have given me a lot of pleasure in cooking them up...the E.S.P program mentioned earlier in which you input your guess as to what the computer will come up with...and after 25 listed tries you are given your total out of 25. Then I cooked up a line which spirals into the centre; a set of concentric boxes, a large, visual animated advertising display, and several others.

The Sinclair has a raft of 'GRAPHIC' symbols, and these used along with PLOT/UNPLOT, CLS and the PAUSE function can provide some very effective moving displays..so whether you want your Sinclair for mathematics or for visual displays and games...it is ready to please. My latest programs are a couple of short ones for (a) plotting a set of log tables (b) cooking the sun of a series, and (b) Working out factorials. One thing is for sure, I've all ready got my money's worth out of the ZX81...and hope to get a lot more. Drop me a line if you're interested...and I'll maybe run a few of my (and your) programs in ERG. Bestest, Terry

Or,
HOW THE STAR LORD WALKED OUT OF A
PAINTING AND CHANGED MY LIFE

I never thought of myself as a writer - still don't really. In another time and place I'd be seated in the shade of a tree in the corner of the market place, telling tales to anyone who'd throw a coin in the cap, I used to do something very like that at school to amuse my classmates. But holidays were a different matter.

Being an only, lonely child with no friends and both parents out at work, making up stories was one way to stay sane. I even started to write them down occasionally - unfinished stories were a speciality. Sometimes I painted pictures (I was misguided enough to think I could become an artist) One such was typical: a young man in medieval costume leaning on a castle wall. The only thing was, I didn't feel that I had painted it. Oh sure, the bad drawing was mine and the black doublet and hose trimmed with red was intentional (I was short on colours), but the face? He was exceptionally good looking for one thing - I was normally hopeless at faces. And why did he look so haunted? I got to thinking about him, working out what sort of person he was; I even wrote a few chapters in the gothic-romantic style I was into at the time. Then I became bored and put it away - for seventeen years.

The intervening time was spent passing exams, falling in and out of love a few times and getting thrown out of art college. After doing a number of odd jobs, ranging from kitchen-maid to warehouse-packer, I eventually enrolled in the Birmingham School of Radiography. Somewhere in there I got married and obtained a post at the Children's Hospital, where I worked until I had babies of my own.

It was the babies that did it. All those nappies, miles of pran-pushing and endless dull conversations at the local play group. I went back to making up stories - in particular that sad young man in medieval black. Only this time I knew he had to be an SF character - Mycaal the Star Lord had finally achieved recognition.

My husband, Roy, was to blame for getting him on paper. He complained about my lack of finish, got me angry and ensured that I completed the work. For three months I took my scruffy exercise book and biro everywhere; then Roy bought me a typewriter and I spent another three months typing it all out, (I'm no typist). That manuscript was called THE MASK OF THE GODS. Coincidentally I discovered 'The Writer and Artists Year Book' in the library and copied out a few addresses. The publishers didn't want to know. They wouldn't even read it. So I tried the agents - and progressed to rejection slips.

While the GPO toted my precious book backwards and forwards, I consoled myself by writing THE SHEEG, finishing it just as I found an agent who would take an interest. Armed with the A to Z of London and the new manuscript, I went to see him. Inevitably it was in a poky little office at the top of two flights of stairs. He'd take me on - provided I'd do some revision on the first book.

A CORNER OF THE MARKET



Jeeves
Judith Buffery

For the next six months he collected rejection slips on my behalf while I got stuck into SAFFRON. Then he spent another six months trying to sell all three manuscripts, finally sending them to Dennis Dobson.

I was told that it was easier to get mercy from the Inquisition than a decision out of Dennis Dobson, so, after yet another six months of frustration, I demanded a personal interview with the man.

As soon as I saw that crumbling corpse of a house in Kensington, I felt as if I'd walked into another world. The atmosphere reeked of long-lost Bloomsbury and the kind of left-wing intellectualism that went out with the thirties. Trepidating to the core, I climbed over the piles of old newspapers and magazines that heaped the steps and rang the bell. The American lady who answered the door looked surprisingly human. I followed her through a hallway clogged with bicycles (The Dobsons have several children) into an office filled with books. In fact there were so many they appeared to have dispensed with furniture altogether and used piles of books in place of tables and chairs.

The fleeting glimpse I caught of Dennis Dobson left me with the impression of an old movie nutty professor, with bald pate and a tuft of white hair sticking out horizontally above each ear. He flitted in and out a couple of times, muttering incoherently. It was Margaret Dobson who talked to me. She turned out to be an untidy-looking lady with hair drawn into a bun at the nape of her neck and, despite the heat, wearing a thick winter coat. A kind of urban Mrs. Tiggywinkle.

The upshot of the interview was that they wouldn't take THE MASK OF THE GODS, but would take the other two if I would lengthen THE SNEEG, by including material from the rejected book, and shorten SAFFRON to a comparable length. It was to be another two years before I saw my books in print, by which time STAR WARS had burst on the scene and suddenly everybody was writing SF. For me it was the only medium in which my convoluted imaginings could survive. A bookworm since I was three years old, I'd cut my teeth on Enid Blyton, grown up with Dickens, the Brontes and Austen, become enamoured of Shakespeare, fed off Scott, Ainsworth and Haggard, then discovered Orwell and Huxley. From there I progressed down through Verne, Wells, Bradbury, Wyndham et al; until, only in recent years experiencing American pulp and Marvel comics. (My son must be the only ten-year old in the country who has to wait while his Mum reads his Dr. Who monthly first!)

Margaret Dobson once said to me, "We think you're the best story-teller we've found in years."

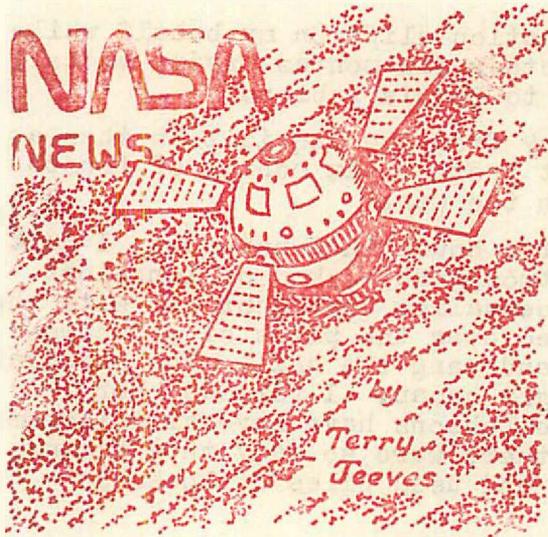
The remark has a bitter ring these days. Even the best storyteller in the world needs a few pennies in his cap at the end of the day.

J. Buffery



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NASA NEWS



THE FOURTH MAN TO STAND ON THE MOON, Astronaut, Alan L. Bean has resigned from NASA to carve out a new career as an artist. Lunar Module pilot on Apollo 12, Nov. 1969; Commander of the second Skylab mission, 1973; backup commander for Apollo-Soyuz in '75. Bean has logged 1,671 hours in space which rates him fourth among all astronauts in flight time.

A TETHERED SATELLITE is under review by NASA in collaboration with Italy. The idea is to loft a satellite aboard a Shuttle, then troll it through the upper atmosphere on a 60 mile long cord. Designed to measure gravity and atmospheric data, the trolling is to prevent orbital decay while the satellite is only 130 miles above the Earth.

SHAPING and POLISHING OF THE 94 INCH

Primary Mirror of the Space Telescope has been completed to a perfection of less than one-millionth of an inch error. The 12 ton telescope will be placed in orbit by Space Shuttle in early 1985, at an altitude of 370 miles. Its unrestricted viewing will pierce seven times farther into space than land-based telescopes have achieved. The mirror will next receive a reflective coating of pure aluminium followed by a protective layer of magnesium fluoride.

FOR THE 'WHAT USE IS IT?' brigade, encouraging results were reported from a test to see how satellite data could help high flying aircraft to avoid heavy ozone concentrations. These cause shortness of breath, plus eye, nose and throat irritation among passengers. Satellite Nimbus 2 transmitted its information to Goddard who relayed it to Northwest Airlines where it was used in meteorological forecasts for airliner guidance.

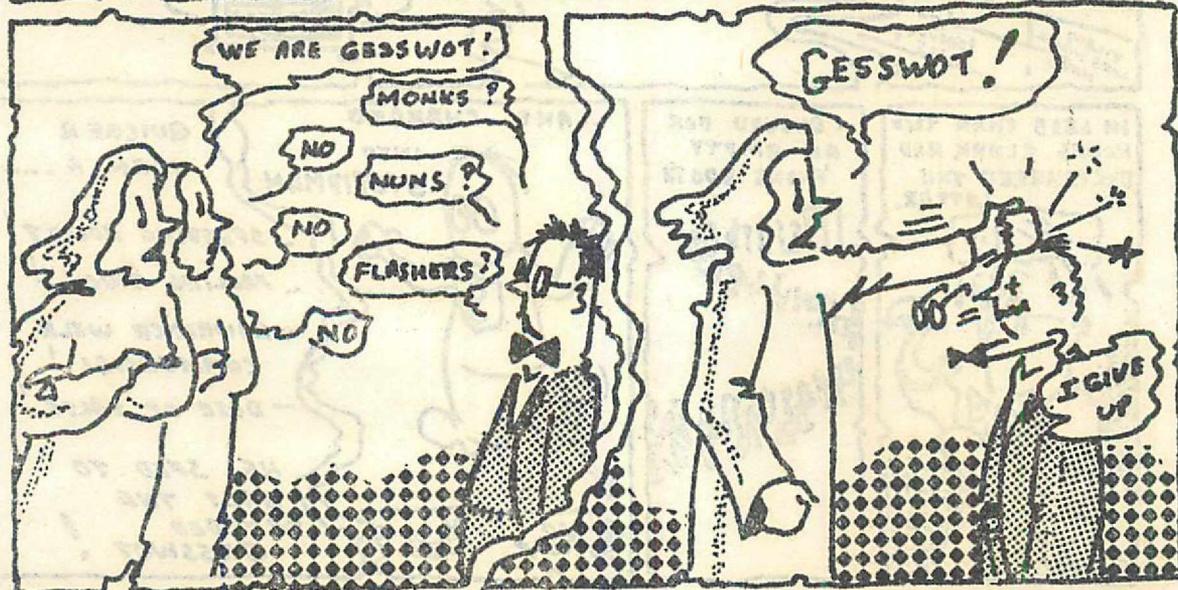
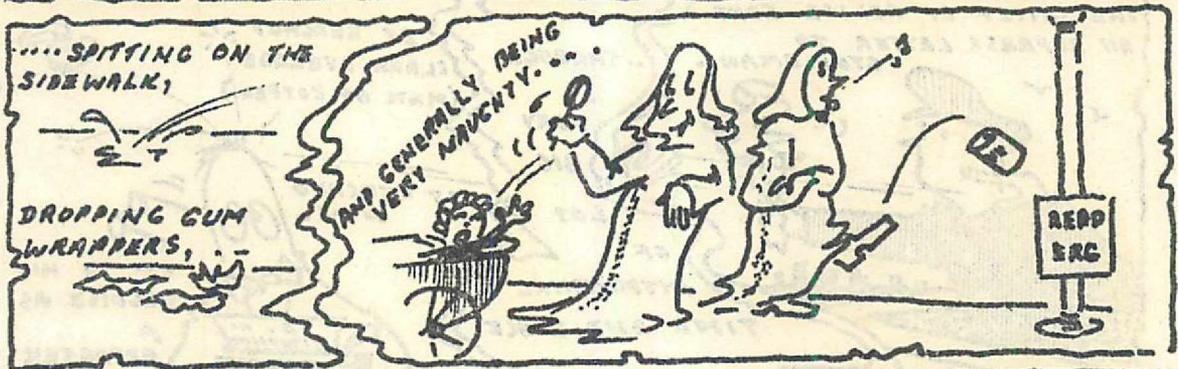
NASA research during the past 10 years has led to the development of a simplified natural biological sewage treatment process which represents a major technological breakthrough in wastewater treatment and water recycling. The system is odour-free and costs less than half as much as a conventional system to operate and maintain, and has been approved for the treating of municipal sewage.

COLUMBIA FLIES AGAIN! Columbia arrived at Kennedy Space Centre on April 28, 1981 after its transfer from landing at Edwards AFB. Minor repairs, tests and modifications plus the strengthening and replacing of some of the famous tiles has been carried out. The Remote Manipulator Arm (50ft long) has been fitted and tested. The current schedule calls for rollout of the assembled Space Shuttle to Pad A, Launch Complex 39 on Aug. 26, with the first dress rehearsal by prime crewmen Engle and Truly, on Sept. 2-3. Launch day for the second space flight is set at September 30th, minimum. Mission duration is set for five days, 83 orbits at a height of 137 miles, inclined 38° to the Equator. Backup crew members are Ken Mattingly and Henry Hartsfield.

COVER OFFER Any bids for the cover original of ERG 75 which showed the launch of Columbia on its maiden space voyage ??

STUPIDMAN

by
Terry Teeves

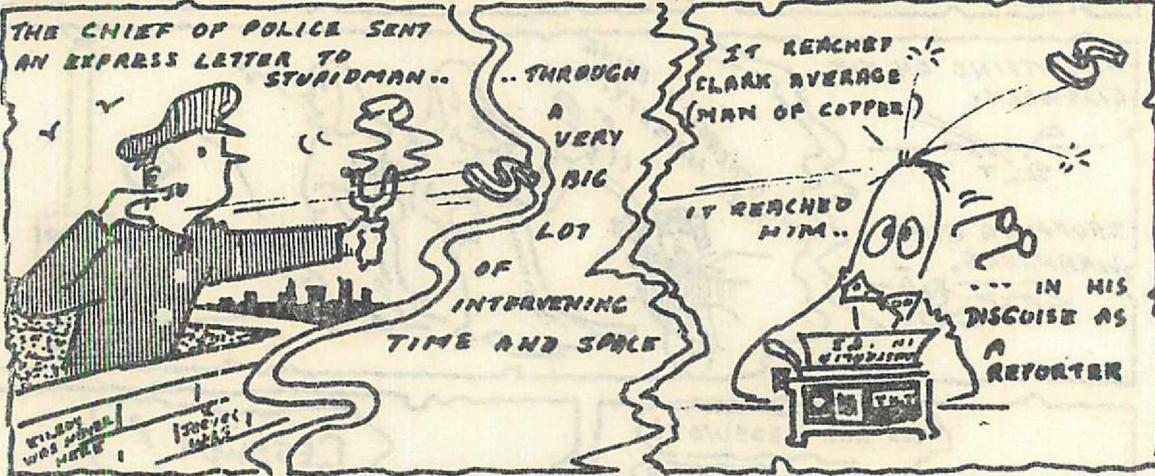




NO ONE COULD
FACE THEM..

EACH INSCRUTABLE
FACE ..

... POSSESSED A STRANGE
POWER TO CLOUD
MEN'S MINDS



THE CHIEF OF POLICE SENT
AN EXPRESS LETTER TO
STUPIDMAN..

.. THROUGH
A VERY
BIG
LOT
OF
INTERVENING
TIME AND SPACE

IT REACHED
CLARK AVERAGE
(MAN OF COPPER)

IT REACHED
HIM..

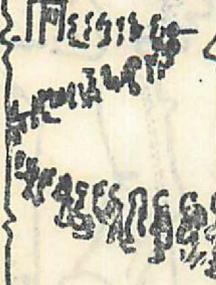
... IN HIS
DISGUISE AS
A REPORTER

IN LESS THAN TWO
HOURS CLARK HAD
DECRYPTED THE
LETTER.

.. QUEUED FOR
AN EMPTY
PHONE BOOTH

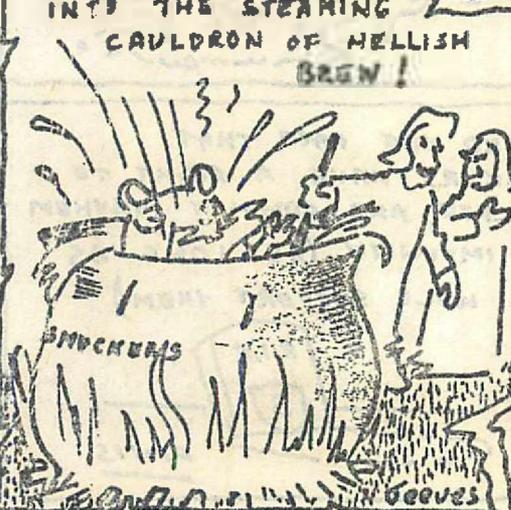
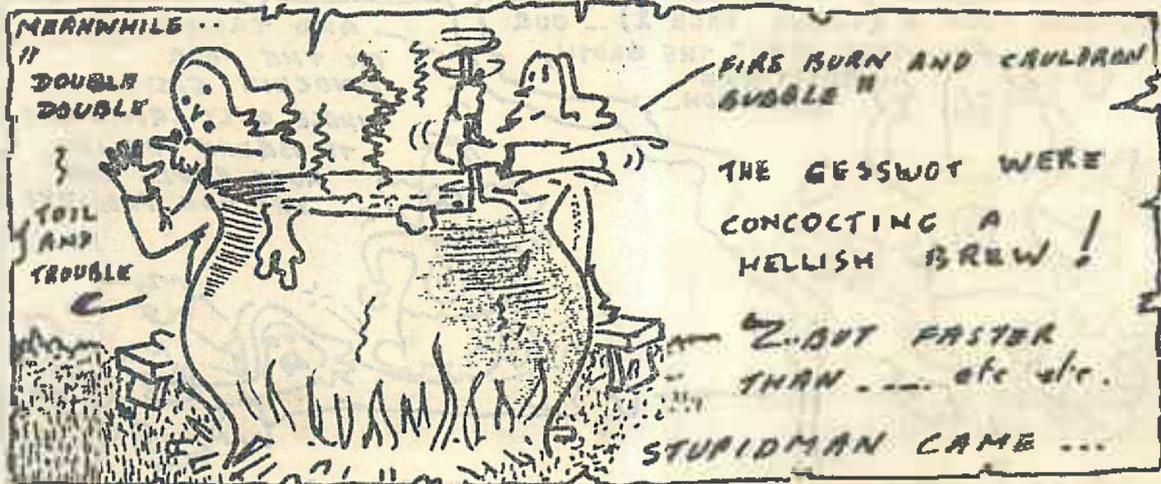
.. AND CHANGED
INTO
STUPIDMAN

QUICKER
THAN A



.. SPEEDING BULLET!
.. FALLING BRICK!
.. LAWRENCE WALK
COMMERCIAL!
.. DOSE OF SALTS!

HE SPED TO
HALT THE
DREADED
GESSWOT!



WILL THE MAN OF COPPER ESCAPE A TERRIBLE FATE?

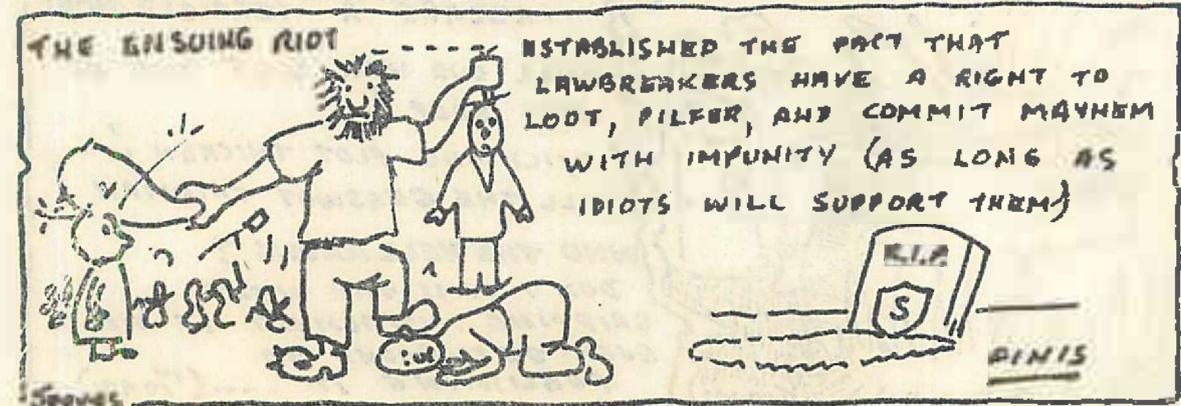
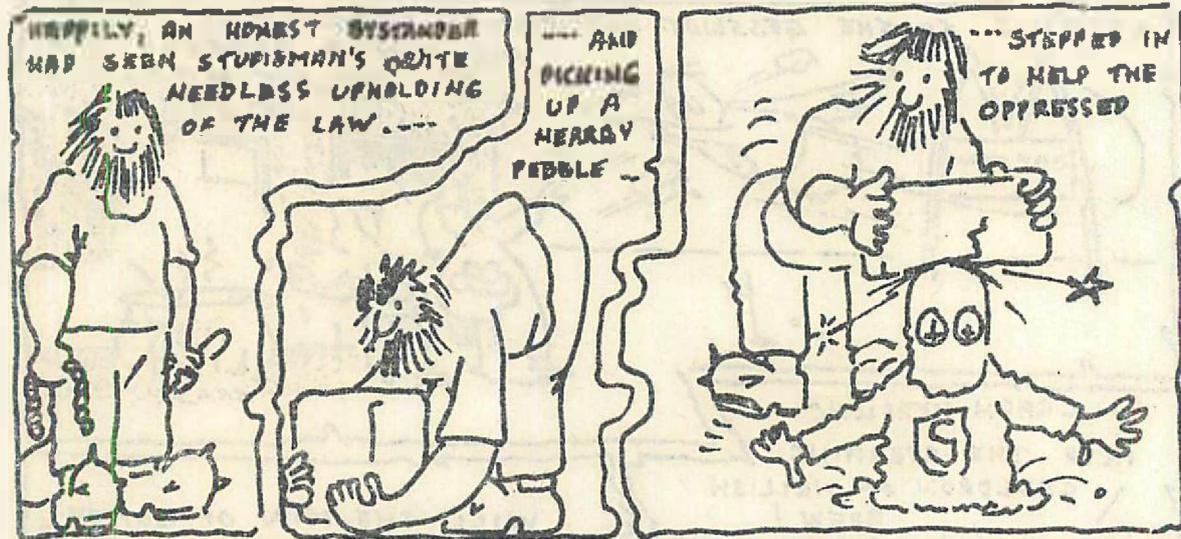
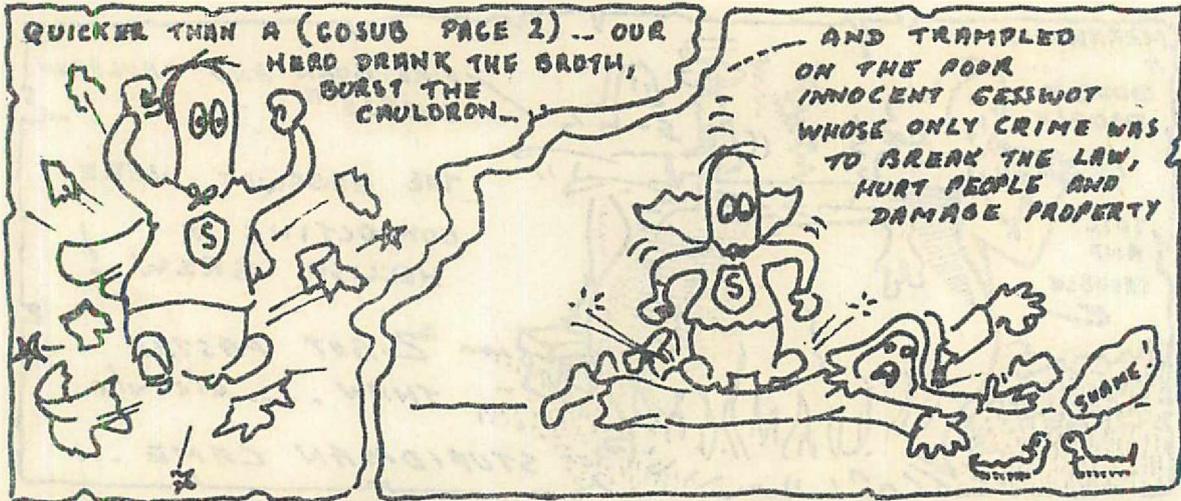
WILL OUR HERO GET OUT OF THE SOUP?

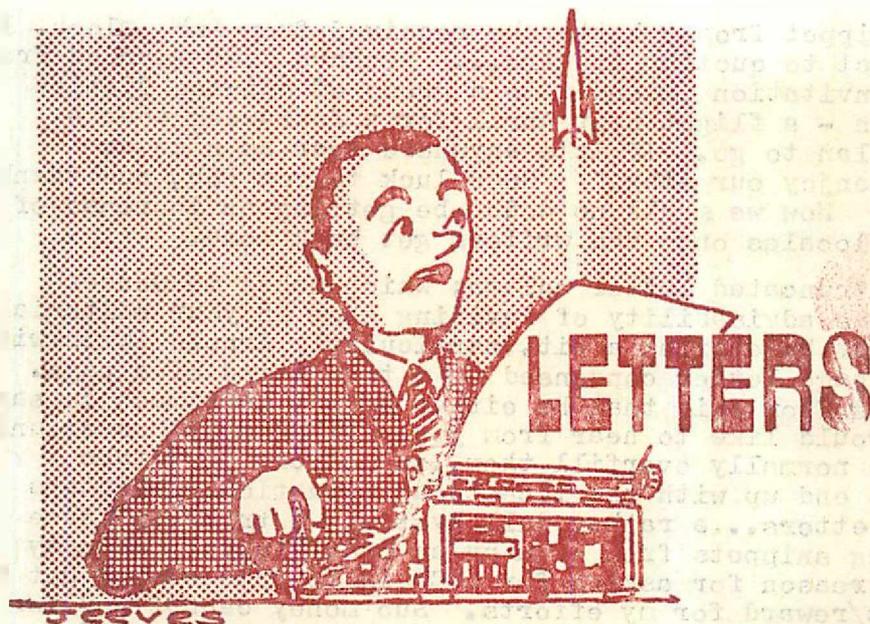
WILL THE PLOT THICKEN?

WILL THE GESSWOT TRIUMPH?

WHO THE HELL KNOWS?

DON'T MISS THE NEXT GRIPPING INSTALMENT IF WE EVER GET ROUND TO PUBLISHING IT ---- (1996)





Opening with a note
from DOUG YOUNG,
74 Church St.,
Whitstable, KENT

"You're quite a charmer for the American way of life aincha? Cover is good (as usual) nice fillers, but what I would like to know is whereinell do you find your weird beasties?..the bottom of a beer glass? (((No, they lurk in the bottom of a bottle of fixed India ink.)))

I enjoyed the

article on the robot factories, it had to happen I suppose, but can't imagine it happening here. The T.U.C Luddites would go clean round the bend. (((Not at all, they would demand each robot be attended by eight men at double the wages...and that it be a Union member with a special face labelled, 'Everybody Out...me included')))

ARNOLD AKIEM

6 Dunblane Rd.,
Seaburn
Sunderland

I wonder if it's wise to spend so much space on micro-computers? Not that it isn't enjoyable - you've provided some good basic guides to an innovation that is bound to become commonplace as time goes on...but I should think, and correct me if I'm wrong, that many, if not almost all of your readers will be fairly familiar with, for instance the basic stuff that William Bains wrote about in 'The Dream Machines'. Or am I making the common error of assuming that things I consider are fairly basic are part of common knowledge. (((I think you are, Arnold. Until about 18 months ago, I knew almost damn all about computers..other than 'what everybody knows' and believe you me, finding out a bit more proved hard work. I slogged through a software jungle to find out what..ROMs, EPROMs, MODEMS, VDUs AND/OR gates, machine language, assembler language and so on, culminating in a course in Basic Programming...and only now am I really coming to grips with it having purchased my ZX&1. Books and magazines lean heavily on jargon and that area is a JUNGLE))) It's true that Japanese industrialists have a paternalistic attitude towards workers - provided they behave themselves..so they aren't going to sack everyone replaced by a micro-chip...but what will all those people do (((Good question, and I don't pretend to know all the answers...BUT...the same might have been said in the Middle Ages..when men, women and children worked from dawn to dusk in the fields and then bedded down at sunset because they had no real artificial light. What could they do when the workday shortened, machines began to creep in and their day lengthened through the advent of better lamps and lighting? Answer. They adapted to the higher incomes and better productivity and expanded their leisure horizons. A similar change in social patterns has come in the last thirty years. Provided we can all feed, clothe and house ourselves, plus social, cultural and educational outlets...does it matter whether we work 8 hours a day, or 1?)))

Eric Needham encloses a snippet from a letter he received from Bob Bloch. I don't think Bob would object to quoting it here... "I have just learned from Ackerman about a special invitation extended to a group of science fiction writers by the Soviet Union - a flight next April for a four-week tour - including Leningrad. We plan to go. If it's anywhere near as nice as Australia, I'm sure we'll enjoy our stay." Good luck to you Bob, and thanks to Eric for the news item. Now we shall no doubt be getting an increase of sf stories set in Russian locales once the writers get back home.

Roger Waddington
4 Commercial St
Norton, Malton
YO17 9ES

A very truncated letter column; which makes me wonder about the advisability of inviting them in your editorial. Some must be chafing a bit..particularly Arnold Akien with his 12 page letter condensed down to a third of a page. It seems from this that he either didn't have much to say, or else Reader's Digest' would like to hear from you! (((ERG only has around 24 pages..and material can normally overflow them..so letters must take second place..otherwise we end up with the incestuous situation of letters commenting on letters on letters...a rather dull system. I try when space permits to cull interesting snippets from as many as possible..not an easy task. However, the prime reason for asking for LOCs is to make sure I get a response to ERG as payment/reward for my efforts. Sub money cannot pay for the time and money involved...it is no fun mailing ERG into a vacuum..I could save the postage by dropping it in the dustbin. No, letters prove the reader is interested in what I'm doing..would YOU keep on writing letters to someone who never acknowledged them? Imagine how much more effort is involved in producing a fanzine. Printing the letters is an added fillip to the writer..but one which no faned can guarantee because of space..we just settle on different letter/text ratios. However, I DO try to reply to most letters personally..so writers do get a response from me))) Roger continues, "And then surely 'encyclopedia' and 'science fiction' make up a contradiction in terms..the one with an objective slant, the other so subjective that half a dozen people will give you a dozen different definitions..and as for agreeing on the proper place of different authors within the field and the contribution they've made to its development...and who uses such a tool anyway..? (((I fancy you're confusing 'encyclopedia' with 'critical survey'. The former gives you all the facts...number and titles of magazines, dates, authors, conventions etc...NOT a subjective assessment of them. Users are any people wanting to find out a particular fact...just as with a standard encyclopedia someone may want to know the highest mountain, longest river, or the currency of Slobbovakia...it's a different ball game as to whether the highest mountain is the 'nicest', etc.)))

DAVID V. LEWIS
1 Hornbeam Rd
Stowupland
Stowmarket
Suffolk

"My latest news..birth of a big bouncing boy, Ross, 8lbs. (((Congratulations to you and Anne...and put Ross down for a Shuttle trip in 2002 for his 21st))) My copy of ERG seems to have lost two pages of William Bains article..unfortunate since our office is on the verge of receiving its own micro and we will be able to sample their delights first hand. I believe it is a model with printer, VDU, and uses floppy discs. Talking of holidays, ours has come and gone. Not to the USA, but just Suffolk and Norfolk travelling through rural England at its best. What a wealth of historical sites we have here in East Anglia. I'd like to visit them all someday. (((I was stationed near Fakenham..Little Snoring and North Creek whilst awaiting demob..sure is lovely, peaceful country around there...time seems to have passed it by. Do you think it would be an ideal place for London's third airport ???)))



THE COMPLETE INDEX TO ASTOUNDING/ANALOG

Mike Ashley, assisted by Terry Jeeves
 Robert Weinberg Publications \$29.95
 15145 Oxford Drive,
 Oak Forest, ILLINOIS 60452

even further and the result is a handsome hardcover volume of 254 pages and measuring 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide by 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long (and an inch thick, if you want to be sure it fits your bookshelves). If the price deters you...either give yourself a treat, or chat up your librarian as I reckon this will become THE book of ASF, and a collector's item. In addition to the bread-and-butter listings of each issue (story, length, author, artists cover, etc.) you get alphabetical listings of authors (fact & fiction), titles (fact & fiction), series, artists, index of letterhacks, and such extras as three An/Lab breakdowns, appendices on total contents and most prolific contributors and coverage of editors and editorial assistants, size, price and title changes and more. I'm proud to be associated with it...and in the U.K. I have no doubt that Ken Slater of Fantast (Medway) Ltd., will get you a copy if you ask.

I'm overwhelmed at the job Mike has done on this one. A COMPLETE index has long been my dream, ever since I covered the first 30 years in my earlier booklets. Mike has gone

PARALLEL LINES

The Science Fiction Illustrations of Peter Elson & Chris Moore
 Dragon's Dream/Windward
 \$4.95

This is NOT one of those 'pseudo-fact' collections. Roger Dean has a brief Foreword with a convincing case for SF art as a design base for the future. Pat Vincent presents a few pages of perceptive comment on the artists, their sources, and future technology...and then...DROOL!

56 superb art plates, predominantly of space technology, real and vivid without any cluttering text, or other verbiage. If you want to frame them for wall hanging, do just that..if you can bring yourself to desecrate the book, (you could buy two copies). Once through this superlative (and no other word fits) display, you get a list of titles for each artist's work. Finally, further visual delight in the shape of (smaller) black and white reproductions of the paintings along with the title of the paperback on which each picture first appeared. One day, someone, possibly even your reviewer (hint to publisher) will come up with a comparable art book which gets each artist to describe his techniques in detail and just HOW he comes up with such wonderful results. Until then, this one is a MUST for any lover of space art. I agree with Roger Dean, if a modeller made up some of these craft, I'm sure they would fly beautifully...as per the dictum.. "If it looks good, it flies good"...and these look very good.

THE POWER BALL

John Lymington
Hale £6.25

Prior to WW2, strange signals emanate from the house of the dead inventor, Andrew Barnes. His nephew John, a sort of half-spy, is sent to investigate...which seems strange, as his father now lives there, and one would expect the place held no secrets for him. However, John finds a strange, energy-giving globe which also transmits unusual scenes. Further complications arise in the shape of Clare and her off-beat daughters. John's boss, 'A.J.', also comes snooping and numerous blind alleys keep everyone busy until events spiral to their doom-laden end. The yarn is entertaining despite the wooden characters, but the main theme is never really developed, which is a pity, as the war is used very neatly to literally 'end wars'

CHINAMAN'S CHANCE

Harry J.Greenwald
Hale £6.25

What effect on the world would arise from the discovery of an edible bean which also yields numerous oil-products and will grow anywhere? We find out when Ambrose Holly flies to China to join Lo Tsung in developing the necessary processes. He also acquires a native wife, becomes involved in an accidental murder and is smuggled out of China before the beans really begin to take over. But the beans are not an unmixed blessing and Ambrose has many ups and down before once again winding up in China. Lively characterisation, some gentle humour make excellent reading..with only the unfulfilled promise of the bean tending to slow the pace. The dustjacket is striking, but sadly, uncredited.

THE TYPHON INTERVENTION

Douglas R.Mason
Hale £6.25

Opening with all the action and panache of a Bond movie, the reader is landed slap in the latest murder in a run of assassinations of top politicians. Security chief Mackay is injured during the fracas, and this puts him in mental contact with the Eich-like Typhons who are softening up Earth ready for invasion. One might ask what opposition humanity could raise against such powerful beings...but that is quibbling as the pace is never allowed to flag in one of the most gripping 'alien take-over' yarns to come along for quite some time. Mr. Mason uses an economy of words where verbosity would slow the pace, his characters are credible, if at times, unusual. The whole yarn lands smack in the 'hard-to-put-down' category.

ESPER'S WAR

Roger Perry
Hale £6.25

Psi-tyro, Trooper Bryn Dexter is pushed into the front line of a colonial war with the rebels aided by aliens. Wounded and with surgically enhanced psi powers he gradually encounters anomalies in the 'war'. After stumbling on a murder plot by Party officials, Bryn gets a close-up view of the aliens side of things (which baffled him a bit and proved incomprehensible to me). Tension builds smoothly to a coldly logical climax, with Dexter proving wholly credible, and the menacing Party, equally so. Pity the aliens (and rebels) were not so well handled..otherwise what is an excellent adventure/action could have been a really outstanding yarn...it deserves a better jacket. This one..as for Gerrold's yarn (see next review) was done by Helen Hale. Sadly, its amateurism detracts from the presentation.



DEATHBEAST

David Gerrold
Hale \$6.25

The plot of time travellers travelling back to pre-history to shoot dinosaurs is not a new one. What David Gerrold does with it, most decidedly is. Eight hunters make the transit, armed with high-powered lasers, detectors and a load of sophisticated gear. However, one, Ethab has plans to hunt Tyrannosaurus Rex with a crossbow..and he proceeds to do just that despite all the hazards and sheer disasters which befall them. The tension both between human and beasts, and human and human, is superbly developed in some of the most exciting fiction you are likely to come across. Characters come across well, and the final ending not only climaxes the action, but produces a neat twist which has you taking blood pressure antidotes. Definitely a winner.

CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY

Robert A. Heinlein
Penguin \$1.50

Baslin, the one-eyed beggar buys young Thorby in the slave market. He educates the lad as well as training him as a beggar. Thorby carries secret messages for Baslin until Baslin is finally taken by the Sargon's men. Thorby flees into space, is adopted into 'The People', then finds that some 'freedoms' can equate to slavery. Serialised in ASF in '57, this is Heinlein's variation on the rags to riches theme, and a rattling good yarn it is despite the strong similarity between all Heinlein's 'father figures' from Baslin, through Jubal Hearnshaw to Farnham and his Freehold. If you want a rattling good yarn without pseudo-intellectualism..here it is.

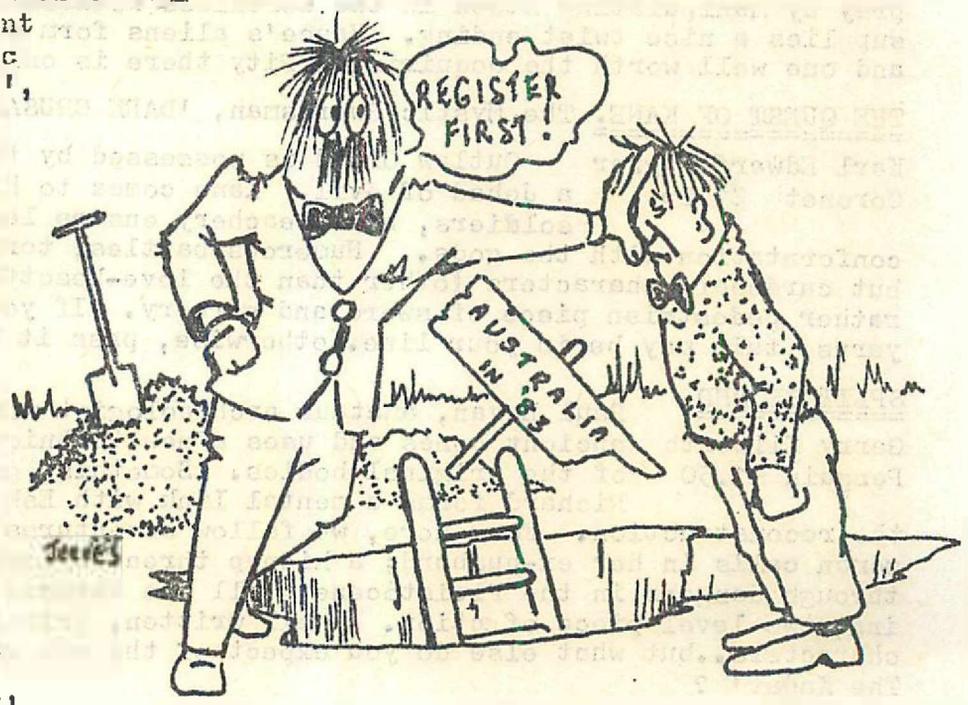
STANISLAW LEM

King Penguin \$3.50

A three-book collection opening with 'SOLARIS' the planet held in eccentric orbit around a binary by the actions of its sentient ocean. Astronauts on Solaris Station begin to meet 'visitors' from their past created by the sentience and cannot be separated from these creations...yes a film was based on it. 'THE CHAIN OF CHANCE' is a grippingly detailed detection mystery of an ex-astronaut attempting to solve an inexplicable series of deaths by re-enacting the last journey of one of the victims...and then the menace strikes at him! 'A PERFECT VACUUM' takes the form of a series of intellectual

reviews of non existent books with such exotic titles as, 'Gilgamesh', 'Sexplosion' and 'Gruppenfuhrer Louis XVI'

Excellent characterisation and a style which : recaptures that long lost 'sense of wonder'. My only quibble lay with one of the translators, Louis Iribarne..as he brand-name-dropped with the abandon of an advertising executive until I thought the astronaut was a travelling salesman. Good stuff!



THE DOOR INTO FIRE

Prince Herewiss has the power of Diane Duane the Flame, but cannot control it. Magnum £1.50 Single-handed, he sets off to rescue his beloved Freclorn and teams up with a fire elemental, Sunspark. Freclorn is saved by the use of magic, and the band joins Herewiss in his search for control of the Flame and how to travel through the strange 'Doors' through time and space.

Definitely one of the better 'quest' yarns set in a credibly depicted world where magic is commonplace. The only bit I didn't like was having homosexual heroes in a similar type of society. Otherwise, a damned good yarn.

STRANGER TO THE GROUND

A factual account of a pilot's Richard Bach thoughts and memories as he makes Granada £1.25 a routine flight from England and takes a storm-avoiding route across Europe to his base in France. We see his training and other incidents in flashbacks called up by his current activities. If you're an aircraft/flying buff, then you'll enjoy this poetically gripping account. My only quibble is that it seems unfair to advertise it as 'An Original Paperback' when this really means it is a 1963 book getting its first U.K. paperback airing. In my innocence, I assumed 'An Original' to mean 'first time out'.

THE FACE

Kirth Gersen sets out on the trail of Lens Lague, sadist and fourth on the list of five Demon Princes who killed Gersen's Jack Vance parents. The trail leads from world to world among many of the credible alien cultures for which Vance is famous. These are engaging different, with even villains having a charm of their own. Musicians play such intriguing instruments as 'chinklepins', others keep appointments at 'half morning'. Against this background, Gersen corners his prey by manipulating stock in the worthless Kotzash Syndicate..and this supplies a nice twist ending. Vance's aliens form a delicate acquired taste and one well worth the acquiring. Pity there is only one more in the series.

THE QUEST OF KANE. The Mystic Swordsman, 'DARK CRUSADE'

Outlaw Orted is possessed by the God Sataki and begins Karl Edward Wagner a Jihad of evil. Kane comes to his aid to train his Coronet £1.25 soldiers, but treachery ensues leading to a final confrontation with the gods. Numerous battles, torture, sadism and agony, but cardboard characters (other than the love-besotted Jarvo) make this a rather pedestrian piece of sword and sorcery. If you are a fan of such yarns, this may be in your line..otherwise, pass it by.

SPLIT SECOND

Paul Levan, amateur archaeologist working on Cyprus, finds Garry Kilworth ancient bones and uses a new technique to create holograms Penguin £1.50 of the original bodies. Something goes wrong and his son Richard forms a mental link with Esk, the young caveman in the reconstruction. From here, we follow adventures on two levels as Levan's woman calls in her ex-husband; a kidnap threat arises, and Richard/Esk go through dangers in the Pleistocene. All the threads culminate in a thrilling, two level piece of action. Well written, gripping story and convincing characters..but what else do you expect of the man who wrote 'The Night of The Kadar' ?

ROADMARKS

Red Dorakeen seeks his origins and destiny by travelling a road through time aided by his computer/car/companion, 'Leaves.' Roger Zelazny Orbit £1.50 However, his ex-partner has declared the 'Black Decade' on Dorakeen...so a series of assassins are after his life, among them a destruction-programmed robot and an unarmed combat champion. A neatly worked-out yarn, enthralling from the word go as Zelazny first spins the threads, then weaves them all together.

STAR GOD

Hallucinations are troubling the various species of the 'Seven Allen L. Wold Worlds'. Society is about to collapse into religious wars over Hale £6.50 'The Visitors' identity. Satinas is set the task of resolving the enigma, so embarks on a trail of surgical and mental enhancement by the Yakatskoi, the Lorkea and the fabled Dirga before his final confrontation. Satinas is cardboard (his fiancée more so) but the excitement and scope of the novel more than compensate for this. The final Satinas/Luxiferos link smacked vaguely of the Biblical, but the yarn gives you plenty to think about and I enjoyed it from the word 'Go'. A strong point (for me) was that the yarn never descended into the standard conflict between 'good and evil'.

THE MAN WHO KNEW TIME

Three immortal criminals escape into time, pursued by Ronald A. McQueen Ariel who assumes the form of a beautiful (and sex-hungry) Hale £6.50 girl. As the criminals begin their plans to alter the future, porn smuggler, John Toner clashes with them, a local thug, and the military authorities (strangely, local police take little notice of gun battles). Toner, Ariel and the alien Trakdarsh set about the task of thwarting the criminals and averting the impending war with the Colonies. A rather hectic romp, much tearing hither and thither and super weapons invented at the drop of a screwdriver. Not great SF, but plenty of fun..and a battle scene fit for 'Star Wars'.

THE LEVELLERS

In the 26th Century, mankind is poised to spread to another Peter J. Grove galaxy when a new President declares a moratorium on further Hale £6.25 expansion and institutes the Pentacon contests. Then the ambitious (and bionic), Gort Tela takes over to bring crime and oppression until the mysterious 'Levellers' begin to operate against him.

A rather amateurish pot-bailer in the 30s style. You may ignore such words as 'dominant', 'armourment' and 'unctious', but not such writing as.. "The question issued from his clenched teeth like gas under pressure trying to escape", or "Ciricnis, (led by the rascally Ras Order)" or 'fawned the unctious little man'.

OK if you want lots of oily villains, treachery, battles against all odds and pulp style writing...otherwise, this one lowers the Hale standard from its normal much higher level. (Oh yes, and both this and 'Man Who Knew Time' suffer from inferior dust jackets)

Summing up... 'STAR GOD', excellent, 'Man Who Knew Time', good and of 'The Levellers'..nuff said.



GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND

Brian Aldiss Panther £1.25

A re-organised issue of nine, basically un-related tales, now linked into a Future History which includes survival of a nuclear war, its Isolationist aftermath, (Quibble, the inconsistency of a doctor making a personal house call for a treatment via videoscreen). We meet the last man in a robotic world, mutation, galactic expansion and civilisation plus a tilt at a status struggle in Hollywood, a human hive-mind mutant and a final space war. Aldiss in his most sprskling form with nine little gems. Personally, I didn't care for the linking material..the stories stand up well enough on their own without being forced into an artificial relationship. Skip the links and enjoy!

SIGHT OF PROTEUS

Charles Sheffield Arrow £1.60

By the 22nd Century, Earth is desperate to solve over-population and under-nourishment problems. Shape-changing is widely available under the supervision of the Biological Equipment Corpn., headed by genius Robert Chapman. Some shapes are illegal, and two officers of 'Form Control' follow a trail of unlawful experiments to Capman..and from here the plot diversifies into a gripping hard-core saga. One of the best yarns I've read, so it is a very welcome sight to see it now more cheaply available in paperback. If you like fast, well-written and real sf, then don't miss this one.

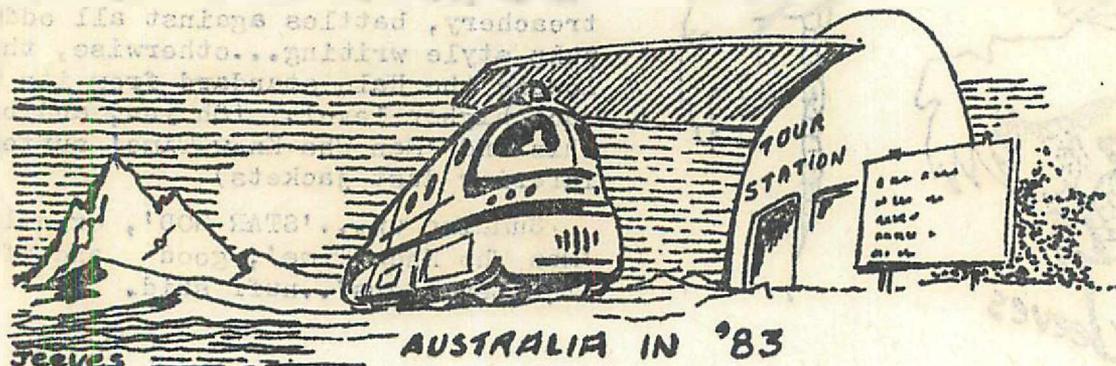
MESSRS SLDGWICK & JACKSON

have come up with two more bumper volumes in their SF Special Series, priced at £0.95 each, No.34 has about 500 pages, and No. 35 over 600....

S.F. SPECIAL 34 contains two Sterling Lanier titles. 'HIRO'S JOURNEY' is a 'trek' yarn, with priest/telepath, Per Hiro Desteen seeking the lost powers of the ancients..and encountering such delights as wizards, monsters pirates and other perils as he crosses a future North America.

'THE WAR FOR THE LOT' sees young Alec March spending summer on a farm where he begins to hear, and talk to, the animals. He has a midnight meeting with a timeless entity of the wood examines him as to his fitness to aid them in a battle against a terrible enemy..juvenile, but a cracking yarn. Lanier has the canvas of Sinak, without the latters overdone, sugar-and-spice type of folksiness.

S.F.SPECIAL 35 proves a real bonanza. Lanier opens it with 'THE PECULIAR EXPLOITS OF BRIHADIER FFELLOWES' a seven-story collection (from F&SF) of the brave Brigadier's adventures as related to his friends..he meets Anubis, sea monsters, a Dracula-like American family, a Paleozoic man, giant crabs and an ancient Greek monster...fantasy in a Gthic horror vein. Next comes the spine-chilling XENO by D.F.Jones, in which strange disappearances of various aircraft are followed by their reappearing months later..apparently unharmed ..until vampire-like creatures begin to stalk the peoples of the world. One of the most gripping and hard-to-put down alien invasion tales in age...and



AUSTRALIA IN '83

as if that wasn't value enough, in comes John Morressy with 'FROSTWORLD AND DREAMFIRE' wherein Hult, last of the Onhlons surviving on the frigid world of Hragellon, sets out to seek a mate. Incurring the enmity of the Starvar-ein Hult enters his third life level of nithbrog which gives him enhanced mental powers...at a price. Some of the best alien life style writing and insight into 'how it might be' enter into this one.

If your overdraft will only run to one of these two volumes..plump for No.35 and you'll not be disappointed anywhere along the line.

THE VERY SLOW TIME MACHINE

=====
 Ian Watson which includes a time-travelling god; the sun's return
 Panther £1.25 to a ravaged world; the miraculous properties of starwood
 and a world segmented by force fields. You get several
 Japanese vignettes, claustrophobic hari-kiri, love in a brothel and others.
 Excellently written in the current style which sets, but does not explain,
 a fantastic situation, follows events, then leaves you to meditate on them.
 Not for those who want logical cause-and-effect yarns, but great stiff for
 lovers of the 'do-it-yourself' school of SF. Watson is a great writer and
 here he excels in his ideas and treatment of them.

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

=====
 John Wyndham If there is anyone out there who hasn't had the
 Penguin £1.25 pleasure of reading what is probably Wyndham's best, and
 certainly, most famous, disaster novel, Penguin are giving
 you another chance with this re-issue. Mobila, stinging
 plants originate in Russia and are aided by a coincidental blindness caused
 by a meteorite shower which leaves the world's population at the mercy of
 the creatures. If the lousy film has put you off..forget it, the book is
 as gripping as the movie version was dull.

THE HORN OF TINE

=====
 Poul Anderson Half a dozen wide-ranging tales by the master. We meet
 Corgi £1.25 the ostracised Kithfolk wandering space in search of the
 Elder Races, the use of assassination as an alternate to war
 and an encounter with computer-ruled aliens. Accidental
 time travel in Iceland; post-war rehabilitation in two forms wind up the
 collection. Anderson digs into the characters and their origins to give
 added background to his writing. The result is an entertaining volume with
 none of the padding which characterises his longer novels.

GENESIS II

=====
 David Wiltshire CIA Man, Robert Main is disguised as a scientist and set to
 Hale £6.25 investigate the mystery of a series of 'dead' scientists
 whose graves contain empty coffins. The trail leads to an
 academic centre near York and a strange experiment in
 biology and survival. Fast-paced, action-packed as a Bond movie..indeed,
 Main's assumed name is 'James'. Maybe not strictly SF, but highly entert-
 aining 'mystery' yarn of a Doomsday avoidance group.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

=====
 Nicholas Garlick A new war gas produces a paranoiac reaction and triggers
 Hale £6.25 the Doomsday war. As the few survivors struggle to
 rebuild, the gas returns in a mutated form which causes
 people to re-live and fight old battles from history and
 fiction. Only Rella knows the source of the gas, and she sets out to fight
 her way through the embattled land to stop the menace and finds herself in
 a gigantic trap. Nothing cerebral, but excitement all the way with a
 stunning climactic shoot-out. Real escapist reading with never a dull or
 un-interesting moment. The characters are warped, but totally convincing
 even if the gas itself is rather implausible. It also bc**s a striking
 cover by Dave Griffiths.

QUANTUM SPECIAL 2

Sidgwick & Jackson
£8.95 700+pp

A re-issue of this gigantic and excellent value volume containing Gordon R. Dickson's THE FAR CALL and John Varley's IN THE HALL OF THE MARTIAN KINGS. TFC tells

of two craft setting off for Mars overloaded with tasks and becoming political footballs thus leaving no margin for error when disaster strikes. ITHOTMC is a nine-story anthology of wide-ranging versatility. If you missed these two titles first time around..then for goodness sake, if you like good SF..don't miss this bargain offer. Both yarns were more fully covered in ERG 65..so why are you waiting ?

SCIENCE FICTION SPECIAL 37

Sidgwick & Jackson £8.95

Another hefty compendium. BLIND VOICES by the late Tom Reamy won immediate acclaim for its lyrical, evocative quality. Haverstock's freak show hits a back water town and the 'monsters' elicit reactions and horror..and then the show's star escapes and rapes a young girl. The whole tale comes to a head with an exciting..and unsuspected finale. THE ULTIMAK MAN see small-time crook Damocles Montgomerie turned into a super being by an alien agent. Opening with more dash and verve than a Dick novel..but slowing slightly towards the end. The two novels make another terrific buy and whether you buy this or Quantum Special 2 is a toss-up...if in doubt, play safe and invest in them both and you'll not be sorry.

SCORPION

Neville Kea
Hale £6.25

Professor Morrelli has discovered a gateway to a future time track and lures doctors Erige and Skarn through it to a world of intelligent beavers who first require convincing of human integrity then elicit their aid against a scorpion enemy. Erige investigates and discovers an underground city ruled by a mental giant who plans to use mutated humans to wipe out the beavers. Seduced by the lovely Ayleen, Erige still manages to win through. An unusual tale, naive in some ways and full of loose ends. Nevertheless, it is full of incident and if you have a large dose of 'doubt suspension' it makes for an entertaining read.

THE FIVE DOORS

Jack Rhys
Hale £6.25

When a giant cylinder appears in a farmer's field, it proves to be the first in a series of gateways to other worlds, each with its own brand of lethal nastiness. Dr James Gordey sets out to unravel this alien intelligence test, and also to manipulate circumstances to his own ends. The trail is fascinating, the yarn one of the most gripping 'alien naze' plots I've had the pleasure of reading..good characters, well handled and excellent from opening sentence to the final full stop. Rate it 'unputdownable'.

THE SECRET SEA

Thomas F. Monteleone
Hale £6.25

Drian Alexander, a young college professor inherits \$600,000 plus a house and chattels..among them, some diaries describing fluxgates between worlds. He teams up with Derek Ruffin to locate a 'gate'. They sail through into a Jules Verne world of the 1900s where they become enmeshed in a battle between Captain Nemo and Robur the Conqueror. Good characterisation but despite the action, the tale seems to bog down once it passes through the gate and attempts to grasp the atmosphere of Verne's period. However, if you are a Jules Verne aficionado, then you'll lap it up. An interesting parallel to Chris Priest's superb capturing of the Wellsian epoch in his 'Space Machine'.

THE LUCIFER EXPERIMENT

Writer Richard Earlman is first coerced, then tortured into aiding the sadistic Orwell with a strange series of psychological tests controlled by the computer. As the experiments progress, Earlman encounters an alien influence behind LUCIFER and he himself acquires superhuman powers. Well executed blend of mystery, horror and suspense in carefully escalated stages, credible, if unusual characters. The whole jells into an eminently acceptable and exciting yarn. I wasn't too convinced of the reasoning of the 'Mind' but this didn't detract from my enjoyment of the story.

A QUESTION OF REALITY

David Benson, member of an underground group, flees from the ruling Intelligentsia after an abortive coup. Attempting a suicidal dive into the sun, he is caught, re-animated and mind-probed with unexpected results when the memory of barbarian ancestor Eldred surfaces. To further complicate matters, an alien starship is approaching and the Intelligentsia plan to destroy it if Benson/Eldred cannot intervene. By this stage you are beginning to wonder just where the hero acquired his strange powers...but a totally unexpected twist of the plot solves that..and several other problems. A rather fragmented yarn, full of blood and action, but Benson is not a particularly likeable character and the result is a potentially excellent tale which never quite gets everything together.

ISAAC ASIMOV'S MARVELS OF SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by George Scithers
Hale \$6.95

No less than a sixteen piece assortment of stories, puzzles and even spoof articles culled from the 1978-79 years of the I.A.S.F.M. Which poses a bit of a puzzle...why collect into book form, material so recently available in a magazine..and/or in the Davis paperback, I.A.S.F.M ANTHOLOGUES ?? However, if you want a large slice of interesting SF safely ensconced between hardcovers...look no further. Opening with an Asimov editorial on how to write SF (Now where have I read that before?) you're into a neatly mixed, shaken, and stirred bag of goodies..complete with the original artwork and heading 'blurbs'. Material tends more to the action side of sf and is a bit bland for some tastes, but otherwise an eminently acceptable collection.

FIRESTARTER

When Andy McGee participates in a drug experiment sponsored by an undercover agency known as 'The Shop', it awakens a latent psi power in both McGee and his future wife. When their daughter Charlie is born, she has even more powerful talents which include pyrotic power. This leads to a taut, suspenseful chase as 'The Shop' seeks to analyse the powers. Compulsive reading, with the sinister 'Rainbird' adding to the menace. A superb blend of mainstream and SF which will most certainly make it to the big screen. Warning, don't start it if you can't spare the time to finish it. You'll not be able to put it down.

EYES OF AMBER

A six story collection opening with the Hugo-winning title story of human intervention in alien conflict on Titan. There are two other human/alien tales; a piece about an isolated astronaut on an outward bound probe; murder in the Heaven Belt system, and finally a human/cyborg love affair. Personally, I found the yarns a bit overwordy with the emphasis more on sociology and relationships than on the logic-problem-solution side. But for Vinge lovers, it is a veritable feast.

A PRINCESS OF MARS

A re-issue of the classic ERB tale of John Carter on Mars. First in the series and with all the action, characters and panache which have made the adventurer and his Dejah Thoris into legends. Missed it so far? Rectify the matter now.

THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR

Gene Wolfe

Sidgwick & Jackson £7.95

Second in the 'Book Of The New Sun', trilogy in which banished apprentice sorcerer Severian continues his adventures. Having acquired a jewel of strange powers, known as 'The Claw Of The Conciliator' in the first yarn ('Shadow Of The Torturer'), we follow Severian and the steel-handed Jonas into an underground lair of half-men. They are taken prisoner by the criminal band of Vogalus; fight of heat-seeking vampires and many other perils. The sequences in the 'House of Absolute' are reminiscent of Peake's 'Gormenghast', and as powerful. The whole yarn is beautifully created and credibly 'other-wordly'. The torturer's travels wind you into a strange web of people and places..akin, yet different from a future earth. A real tour-de-force.

PROJECT POPE

Clifford D. Simak

Sidgwick & Jackson £7.95

Way out on the Rim world, 'End Of Nothings', robots are building their own Vatican, complete with an electronic Pope. They are aided by a small corps of human 'Listeners' who make a mental search of the Galaxy for information. When one of them, Mary, claims to have located Heaven, it causes dissension between those who call for her canonisation and those who cannot accept the new Heaven. We follow the story through the actions of writer Jill Roberts, and fugitive doctor Jason Tennyson, but in addition, there is a horde of other warm, folksy, Simak characters such as the castaway Decker, numerous robots, the enigmatic Old Ones and Simak's favourite stereotype, 'The Whisperer'..plus many others..with each one very much like all the others until by the end of the yarn, I found myself wondering what it was all about. A fascinating yarn which deserved a better conclusion.

SEMICONDUCTOR DATA BOOK

11th. Edition A.M.Ball

Newnes Technical Books

£5.50

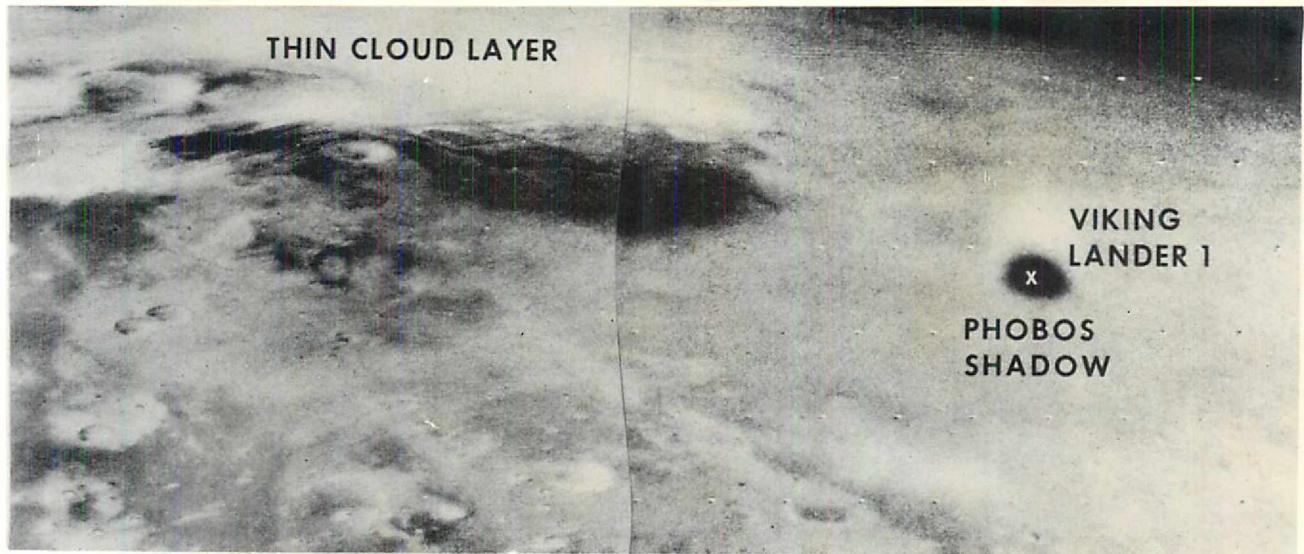
Those who remember 'Radio Valve & Transistor Data', will need no further introduction to this up-dated and re-titled edition. Identical in size (21cm by 27 cm; 175pp). The 70+ pages on valves have been dropped (logically so, have you tried to buy one lately?), as have the capsule notes on possible applications. I'm not so happy at the dropping of the pages on IC's, but the information is readily available elsewhere. There are six pages of lead identification diagrams to aid in solving a recurring problem and the 30 or so pages of comparable types should be of great use to anyone seeking replacements. The major revision has left room for better coverage of the rapidly expanding range of semiconductor devices. Germanium and Silicon transistor of NPN and PNP types have all been united into one massive alphanumeric listing which greatly aids location of a specific type, and this system has been applied to other groupings for FETs, LEDs, SCRs, TRIACS etc, etc. As a bench reference for repairman, hobbyist or potterer, this is an invaluable guide. You may not use it often..but when the need does arise, it will prove invaluable.

LEGACY OF THE STARS

Robert Hoskins

Hale £6.25

An alien starship reaches Earth, colonisation begins but disease starts to kill off the Star Men. As a last resort, they set their robots to guard their technology until prehistoric man is ready for it. As the Ice Age comes, the robots take the savages underground until new man arises and reaches the Atomic Age..whereupon the underground race..now mutated (in 30 years ???) by underground nuclear tests, emerges to the surface. Improbabilities abound, in addition to the mutation, there's a virtually paralysed victim of anemia working on an isolated 'dig', and others. However, it does neatly tie in UFO's, and the Siberian meteorite. The main drawback is a lack of a central character core to link it all together. Without this, the yarn becomes a series of almost isolated incidents.





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ECLIPSE ON MARS – These Viking Orbiter 1 pictures were taken during a new experiment to locate the position of Viking Lander 1 on Mars using the shadows of the Martian moons, *Phobos* and *Deimos*. These pictures are part of a 40-picture series of the shadow of Phobos taken during a three-minute period. The shadow, about 90 kilometers (56 miles) long, moved about 350 kilometers (220 miles) from west to east across the surface of Mars. At the same time, a photo taken during a Lander 1 camera rescan sequence detected the shadow of Phobos crossing the site. Careful timing and detailed processing of these and similar Phobos/Deimos shadow pictures will allow scientists to locate the Lander within 1 kilometer (0.6 mile); and combining the moon photos with other data may allow refinement of the location to about 200 meters (650 feet). *Lunae Planum*, a heavily cratered plain on Mars, is at the left in the pictures. The crater *Sharonov*, 150 kilometers (93 miles) in diameter, is at top. *Chryse Planitia*, where Viking Lander 1 touched down July 20, 1976, is at the right. The Phobos/Deimos shadow experiment is being conducted by Viking guest investigators Thomas C. Duxbury and Linda A. Morabito of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.