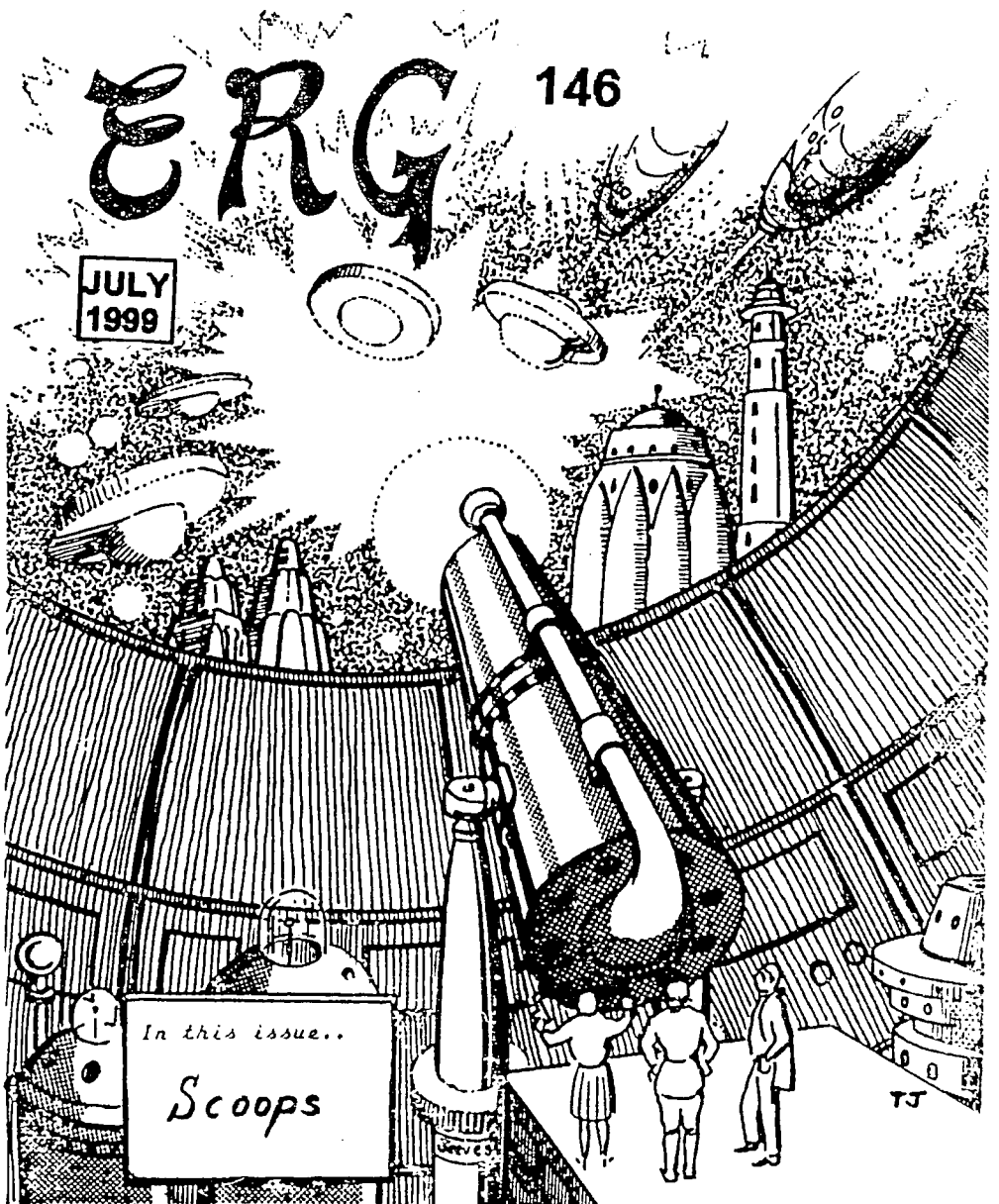


Now in its 41st. Year

ERG

146

JULY
1999



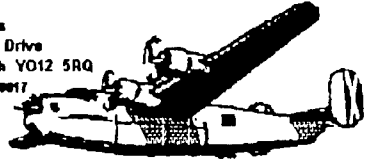
Drawing based on a Scoops cover

ERG 146

QUARTERLY

JULY 1999

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If you enjoyed this issue, you can get the next by sending a LOC, but sadly, for some of you regular 'silent readers', if you forget this little chore I'm afraid this will be your last issue.. Solution, LOC away. Anyone interested in buying SF, just send me a SAE for paperback, hardcover or magazine lists, say which. Overseas readers can omit the SAE, just ask. I also appreciate Statesiders using Commemorative on their envelopes, or sending used old ones, as I collect American stamps, especially 'Space' issues from any country Heartfelt thanks to those who have already sent many such goodies.



Further to that comment on guns and Britain a while back, following the latest massacre figures were published. Apparently 9360 people were shot dead in the USA last year, the total for Britain was only 30. Who says gun control doesn't work? Then there are the people who say TV violence isn't copied. If TV incidents don't influence people, why do advertisers spend thousand of pounds to do just that? Or why do teenagers adopt the dress, hairstyles and other oddities of their pop idols as seen on TV or in film?



People on TV -- Recently, whilst watching 'Collector's Lot', I was delighted to see Phil Harbottle displaying his John Russell Fearn collection. The following week Ron Bennett was on the 'Fifteen To One' Quiz and reached the last pair. The the other night I saw one of my ex-pupils as a drunk in 'City Central'. Who next I wonder?

IN TOUCH WITH SPIRITS in this issue is another oldie from ERG 8, way back in 1961. Dated as all get out, but I thought it might be fun to run it again. Comments?

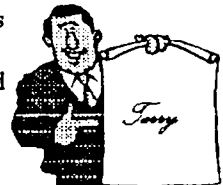
BACK issues of ERG One set of small issues (Nos.98 to 145) lacking 101, and 103. Any offers for the 46 issues? Also many issues from 98 to 145 at 40p.each pluspostage. Send no cash, pay on receipt, just send in your want list.

Charles Fort revisited. When I went out yesterday at 12 noon all was quiet. I got back at 2pm and no less than 21 honey bees were crawling on the lounge window trying to get out. The only open window was upstairs. Where had the bees come from and how had they got in? Any suggestions?

We recently visited Sheffield and yet again, the road system had been changed our former way out of town led us round in circles and back on to the way we had just come. Here in Scarborough, we drive 400 yards to the end of our road and Bingo! we enter the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. Lovely

This is ERG 146, the start of its 41st year So read on, and remember, it's your comments that keep me going.

Bestest



Scoops

The Mechanics Mags spurred me to the use of chemistry sets, starting with a 6d box from Woollies. This held a tin tray, six tubes of harmless chemicals and an inexplicable instruction leaflet. One of the earliest experiments was making stink bombs which were duly planted in cinemas, classrooms and any other suitable places. Textbooks gave a particularly easy formula for Gunpowder, so I tried making that. Luckily, I hadn't mastered the technique of fully pulverising the mixture of charcoal, sulphur and potassium nitrate, so the concoction merely fizzled.



Much better results were obtained from invisible ink made from a solution of Copper Sulphate. 'Fire ink' was even better. After drawing a gun pointing at a row of birds, one could use a solution of Potassium Nitrate to draw in the bullet's path. When a glowing splint was applied to the mouth of the gun, a trail would burn slowly along to the target. A couple of percussion caps glued on the back made a satisfying explosion.

My chemical ambitions grew, and it wasn't long before I managed to fill a large flask with hydrogen. When ignited, it produced a most satisfying bang. This, coupled with the increasing number of acid holes in clothes and carpets resulted in a total ban on all future chemistry experiments. I'm sure Newton or Edison didn't have to face such obstacles.

As a card-carrying hater of football, my Saturdays were usually devoted to hunting - for more magazines to add to my collection. The trip began by a side detour to a couple of local newsagents where one could be almost sure of getting the latest (i.e. only four months old) issue of ASTOUNDING for the sum of threepence. From here, my route meandered down to my favourite secondhand bookshop was set like a blot on the fair face of Spital Hill. It was a pokey little place, cluttered with shelves of worthless junk such as first editions of Dickens, Walter Scott manuscripts and Shakespearean folios. Books were piled from floor to ceiling using up valuable space where more pulp magazines might have been stored.

The place was run by an old fogey who, would emerge-spider like from a secret cavern hidden among the heaped volumes. (See DMBL.5) This lurker in the bookpile had one redeeming grace, he kept all the pulps in a battered old cardboard box by the door. Maybe this was so they wouldn't contaminate his other stock, or perhaps to stop people from coming in to buy a Gutenberg Bible or two. Whatever the reason, this made it easy to spot new additions, and his shop was one of the best points of call on my tour.

Then on to the Norfolk Market Hall, which boasted two bookstalls. The first, tucked sneakily away in a corner, did its best to emulate the cave on Spital Hill, but was better lit and had a visible proprietor. It was here that I spotted two 1928 copies of Gernsback's AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY going at a shilling each. I only had a bob, so I bought one, went back two days later for the other and found it had been sold.



It was at this stall that I peeked in the pulp box and discovered true gold! Six copies of ASTOUNDING, containing the complete 'Doc' Smith serial, 'Galactic Patrol'. It took all my 1/6d pocket money, but I bore my haul home in triumph. For the rest of that weekend I was flitting off in space along with Kinnison, Worsel and the rest of the Patrol as they knocked merry hell out of the Boskonian space pirates.

The other market stall was 'F. Steel's Book Exchange'. I remember the name, as the owner made a practice of bunging a rubber stamp proclaiming the shameful fact, smack across the front cover of each magazine. Still, he did sell many of the pulps which I coveted, so had to be included on my route.

Next came Woollies for the occasional copy of MODERN MECHANIX, then down Dixon Lane and into the Rag Market where a tarpaulin-covered stall had regular supplies of THRILLING WONDER STORIES.

All these dealers operated an exchange scheme. If you bought a magazine for 3d, and returned it, they would give you 2d. In effect, they operated a loan scheme at 1d a time. Normally, this was of no interest to me as what I bought, I stuck to like glue. However on one Saturday, I was making the tour with my friend Sid. On reaching Woollies we found they were selling off stacks of one particular issues of Modern Mechanix at 1d each.

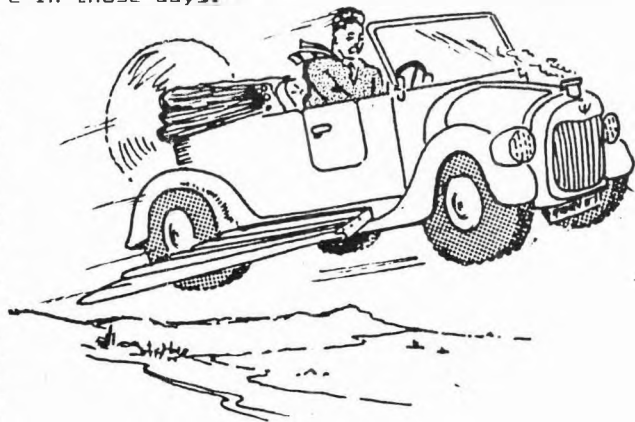


The mathematics of a brilliant idea came to us. We could buy half a dozen copies for a tanner, take 'em down the Rag Market and sell them for a shilling. Operation 'Millionaire' began. We invested our sixpence, rushed to the market, handed over the magazines and got a shilling. Visions of becoming rich, book-dealing tycoons surged through our heads. We raced back to Woollies and splurged the shilling on a further 12 issues of the magazine. What an easy way to keep doubling our money. The bubble burst when the market dealer, having already bought six copies of one issue, didn't want another dozen. We were stuck with the whole lot. It isn't easy to become a millionaire.

Apart from random copies of American pulps, The first regular SF in my life came along in 1934 when Pearson's launched the 2d juvenile weekly, SCOOPS. Contents ranged from abysmal pot-boilers to yarns fit to stand alongside the American mags.

Our newsagent was coerced into supplying weekly doses of this strange, gaudily covered publication. Many years were to pass before I realised why, when I went to collect my copy, it was always withdrawn from under the counter and passed to me, face down. SF was a ghetto literature in those days.

A favourite story was 'Submarine Road Plane No.1', about a young man whose inventor-uncle died leaving him a ramshackle old banger. The chap took it out for a spin. In a sudden emergency, he yanked on the steering wheel causing it to slide back in its socket. Wings unfolded, a propeller appeared at the back and the whole affair zoomed up into the sky and out over the sea.

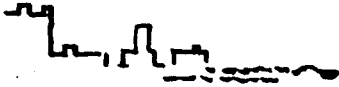
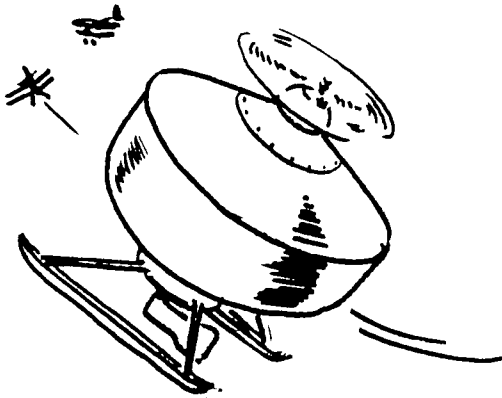


In panic, he pushed forward the wheel, the car dived down, landed on water and tootled happily along. Further fiddling caused a canopy to swing over the driving seat as the vehicle assumed its submarine form and slid beneath the waves. After finally getting the thing safely home again, a belated search reveals full plans and instructions in the tool box.

Professor A.M.Low, the great science populariser of the era, was a regular contributor. How he became a Professor, what he professed, or where he professed it, was never clear. He did the standard potboiling series, 'Tour Of The Solar System'. He and other hack writers of the day must have wished for a dozen more planets to enable them to pad out their encyclopedia mining to even greater lengths.

SCOOPS often ran yarns featuring lost cities and tribes. Cities, tribes and even countries were always getting lost in those days. Atlantis for example, was re-discovered once a month. In one yarn, the people of one of a lost tribe had bones which glowed with an eerie blue light causing them to resemble walking skeletons. Just what caused this phenomenon escapes me, no doubt there was some valid scientific reason such as eating regular meals of U-235, or as it would have been called then, 'Radonite' or 'Radontium'. Nowadays a writer would simply set it downwind from Windscale or Chernobyl and no one would argue.

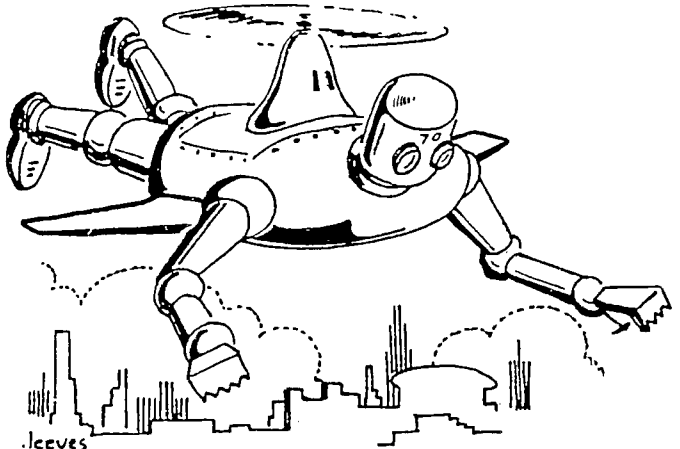
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's, 'The Poison Belt', was reprinted from the 1913 STRAND MAGAZINE. A gas cloud from outer space envelopes Earth and seemingly kills of all save those who happen to be wearing diving suits, have bedside oxygen cylinders or simply hold their breath for a couple of days. These survivors roam around observing everything, until the gas clears and all the sleepers revive again. To prove you can't keep a good plot down, it was used by M.P.Shiel as 'The Purple Cloud', then by the Binder brothers as 'Earth Disinherited', and even Hoyle's 'The Black Cloud' has similarities.



Scoops had a story about a Martian landing with a twist worthy of better things. "It all began with a faint, annoying hum on the BBC Home Service..." Gradually, over a period of weeks, the hum became louder and louder. It spread to all the other radio channels, then to every electrical appliance, vacuum cleaners, table lamps, telephones and so on. It persisted even when they were switched off! People began to go crazy under the cacophony. Suicide rates increased, riots, crimes and accidents proliferated. Then, just when total anarchy was imminent, the racket stopped! The Martians had landed (on Salisbury Plain, naturally)

and switched off their spacedrive which had caused all the trouble. They had come in peace, but got rather a cold welcome. Well, they were foreigners and had caused an awful lot of bother. Nevertheless, they were given a tour of London (centre of culture and civilisation), had lunch at the Guildhall and were presented with illuminated scrolls of eternal friendship between planets. The Martians enjoyed everything, thought our policemen wonderful, apologised for the trouble and hoped we wouldn't be too upset by another dose as they set off home. They climbed into their humming-top-shaped craft, and lifted slowly into the air -- to be promptly blasted into tiny pieces by the A.A. guns which had been moved secretly into place. The world had been saved!

Naughty as this action was, it left Britain (and SCOOPS) free to foster further weird ideas. So we got 'The Flying Robot', a rivet-studded monstrosity which got airborne with the aid of a very small airscrew mounted in the centre of its back. Thus equipped, it was able to swoop to and fro on its highly secret tasks - so secret, I've forgotten what they were.
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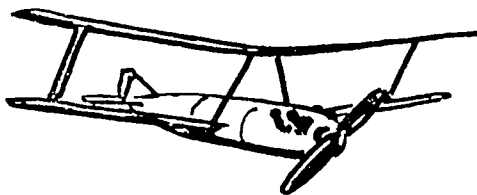


GENERAL CHUNTERING

7

Recently I have been getting around fandom again. Fandom seems to be a lot bigger than it once was (I think somewhere around the late forties or early fifties an American fan estimated that there were only some five hundred active fans in the world, and we all know that a good convention will muster rather more than that) but at the same time one gets the impression that it is not all that big, either. At least in Europe. At Eurocon in Dortmund I met people who had been at Bergen-op-Zoom or at Elblag, and yet again I met a number of others at Seccon (Stevenage). Admittedly, this last time they were all British, but earlier we were an admixture. At Dortmund I was displaying stained glass artifacts that were made by Polish lady I met at Arracon, and which had been brought down to me for that purpose. And one of them (the most impressive and naturally costly) was purchased by a Brit. On occasion I found myself continuing discussions which had commenced at an earlier meeting/convention. Fandom seems, at such times, awfully small still. And I find that whilst I can recall things that happened at Boz-con, I do not have much recollection of the mundane interludes between the conventions, (but you can exclude my last sojourn in Glasgow from that; I was running on autopilot thru that one). Anyway, the next Eurocon will be in August 2000, titled "TriCity", and held in Gdansk. Bridget Wilkinson will gladly relieve of a membership fee if you wish to go (e-mail bjw@cix.co.uk). Incidentally do not ring the Polish Tourist Board yet; they don't seem to know anything about it. On second thoughts, strike a blow for International Fandom. DO ring the P.T.B. and demand information! The phone number (unless BT have done something new) is 0171 580 8811. Just think, your call could be instrumental in making an agency approach fandom for details, rather than the reverse! Driving through Holland was much like driving thru Britain; I have never noticed much difference (apart from the little man in the back of my brain who keeps insisting I'm on the wrong side of the road, and he usually shuts up after the first few kilometres) but when I got onto the German autobahns the differences were speedily noticeable. I hadn't driven in Germany for more years than I like to recall, but I was impressed by the politeness and consideration shown to other road users by the German motorist. In the main the speed of travel was greater than on the M-roads in Britain, but the pressuring and cutting-up and general indisciplined driving exhibited over here was noticeably absent. I had only one experience of being "tail-gated" - and then when I managed to pull into the lane of the big trucks on the right, damned if the tail-gater didn't pull in behind me! Among other things being discussed at the conventions was pricing - or at least in bars and cafes frequented by fans at the conventions. In the "Amazon.de" bag which contained the programme and "freebies" for TRINITY were a couple of German sf mags; a digest 64pp plus covers at 5.50 DM, called *ALIEN CONTACT*, and an A4 size 48pp inc covers at 9.80 DM, with the title *REN DHARK Magazine*. The former is in its 34th issue; the latter would appear to have made its first issue in 1998 Autumn. I didn't discover how many more there had been, but it would seem to have been preceded by a comic of the same name. I could be wrong... Roughly the prices would be (say) £1.90 and £3, about the same as similiar British magazines of like quality. And I guess allowing for the page quantity (*Asimov* still checks in at 144pp) not unreasonably priced against the American magazines. *Asimov* and *Analogue* now cost \$3.50 each, and the "Double" is now \$5.50 Some seventy odd years ago when I was buying my first *Astounding* from a newsagent it cost 1s 6d (7½p); wait around for copies that came in as ballast on the ships and you could buy six magazines for the same money. I don't know what a weekly wage is today; back then 50/- was good wage; if you got 30/- you were surviving (and lots of families did) and a fiver a week made you "rich". Anyone care to figure out whether a mag at around £2 to £2.50 on the current earnings is dearer or cheaper than a mag at 1s 6d against 30/-? No rewards offered, but you gotta do something in your spare time. Of course, you could also read one of the mags, or even buy a book. But why should I put business Amazon's way? KFS

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles



Most people think that UAVs began with the German V-1 'Flying Bomb' of WW2. Not so, in 1914 the Americans put the Kettering Bug into production, it had a 12 foot span, a 40hp engine and carried a 300lb bomb.

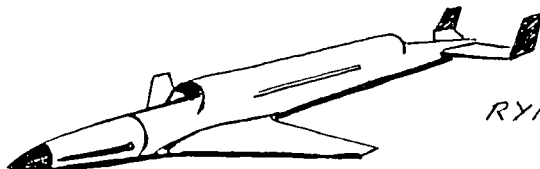
In the thirties, the RAF experimented with the radio-controlled Tiger Moth called 'Queen Bee' and this was followed by the Airspeed 'Queen Wasp'. Both were used as anti-aircraft targets, it says much of the gunnery quality that they were cost-effective.

During WW2, radio-controlled Liberator bombers loaded with high explosive were used against U-boat pens. In 1944, the U.S.Navy flew unmanned attack aircraft in the Pacific Theatre. More recently, the Ryan Firebee missile developed into a remote controlled observation craft which, air-dropped 200 miles outside the borders, flew several thousand missions in S.E.Asia. With a 2000mile range it could photograph a 43x1700mile swathe.

UAVs proliferate - such as the South African 'Kentron Seeker' which flew missions over Angola and the American electrically powered 'Pointer' of 8' span was used in Operation 'Desert Storm'. Israel, Sweden and many other countries have their own models.

How small can such flying spies become? In August 1936, Astounding ran Raymon Z.Gallun's story, 'The Scarab' about a remotely-controlled, midget flying spy device. A sequel 'Menace In Miniature' in October 1937 saw the Scarab used like a set of miniature 'waldoes' to build an insect size model. "Totally fantastic" you may say, but now for a quote from the fascinating ROBOT WARRIORS by H.McDaid & D.Oliver, Orion/Media £18.99.

"In 1998 a 12"-18" micro-UAV will fly. It will carry a small video camera weighing 5gr. Three years later, a humming-bird size version will take to the air. Three years after that an insect-sized UAV will lift off with a 1g. camera, it may even carry a poisoned sting. This is science fact, not fiction!"



RYAN 154

Once again, the real world catches up with SF. Next time you swat a fly, make sure it is a real bug.

I turned my ancient 1936 Morris into the driveway and clambered out, taking care not to lean on the door. The elastic is beginning to perish.

Before I'd taken two strides towards the house I was confronted by a large man in overalls.

"Ah," he intoned in a near indecipherable Irish brogue, "Can I have a quick word?"

Why are these people always Irish? Why do they insist on perpetuating the archetypal caricature?

"Ah," he continued, "We're just working in the next street and have some material left over. We can give yez a good price on relaying your tarmac drive."

"That's very kind of you," I said, hoping he'd give me a hand with the groceries, "but the drive was only laid a couple of years ago."

"Ah, yus, not a good job at all. Look at that crack there."

I made a mental note to return with a magnifying glass once I'd got rid of him and had all the groceries safely put away in the microwave. It saves time later.

"How come you have material left over?" I asked.

"Ah, jus, we had some material left over."

"SO you said," I pointed out, somewhat brusquely. "How come?"

"What?"

"You're obviously a well-qualified professional," I said, keeping my eyes firmly on the large packet of cornflakes I was juggling and trying not to drop on the evidently disintegrating driveway.

"Yus, yus?" he seemed a little uncertain

"How come you've over estimated the materials you needed to tarmac someone's drive?"

"Ah these things happen," he admitted

"They certainly seem to," I said, kicking the packet of cornflakes across the tarmac to the front door. "Some over estimation. Enough material left over to do another entire driveway. He ignored the jibe. "We can do you a special price," he offered."

"I'll bet you can," I said. "Anyway, I can't afford it. I haven't the money." Clever of me this, move. There'd be no point in his continuing if there was no ready at the end of his tunnel.

"Ah, you'd be able to afford it if the price was right," he pointed out with the logic of a member of a *Question Time* audience.

"No, I haven't the money."

"You've not heard my price," he insisted.

"Look," I said, "The annoyance surfacing at last, " I don't have the money. It wouldn't matter if you were offering me a Rolls Royce for a hundred quid. I wouldn't have the money for it."

He looked at me with True Understanding on his face.

"Ah, the only person I know with a Roller is meself, isn't it? and it's not for sale. One up for his side.

He kicked aimlessly at one of the original tyres on the Morris and went on his way.

I juggled some more groceries as I opened the front door. pf



In Touch With Spirits

by Larry James

Some people must think I'm a sucker, or at least I'm like the washing on the line, just waiting to be taken in. Anyway, they keep accosting me in pubs and suchlike, places with offers of free books, free love or free soul-saving. That's how I met Vishnu Ramasjudder. I had just commenced a scientific experiment involving the specific gravity of a complex liquid and had barely

blown off the froth when this bewhiskered Indian geezer sat down opposite me.

He wore a black beard and on his head, one of those turbines that Indian chappies wear. Leaning towards me, he produced a slip of paper from somewhere in his face fungus and handed it to me. In large black letters it said, **VISHNU RAMASJUDDER**, in smaller print came the legend, "Medium, Seer and Occultist" Near the bottom, in tiny print appeared 'Agent For Acme Shoe Polish' and finally, in microscopic letters, "Printed in Wigan"

"Pleased to meet you, Mr.Ramasjudder", I said "What made you pick on me?" his eyes seemed to blaze as with some hidden fire, but it could just have been cigarette smoke. "I was called to you as one in need of spirit contact from the vast beyond said the medium, seer and occultist. That reminded me of my pint. I removed the South end of his beard from my glass, squeezed a few surplus drops back into my glass and took a good swig. Something gave a jump in my throat, but it was probably just a hop.. Anyway, too late now, it had gone. So had the beer. I ordered another and asked Mr.Ramasjudder if he would care for one. "No sahib., it is forbidden for we of the Inner Circle to allow beer past our lips. Perhaps I may have a double whisky instead, but only if it is 'Johnny White Horse, as their distillery is located at the Third Focal Point of the Great Pachyderm"

The drinks came and Mr.Ramasjudder began explaining the Inner Meaning of his Life Cycle. It proved to be a long story and several times Ramasjudder had to replenish his fuel tanks; each time at my expense. As Mr.Ramasjudder explained, another rule of his Order was that he was not allowed to touch money. By the call of "Time, Gentleman" I was beginning to see it has advantages. It was at this point that Ramasjudder invited me to accompany him to his home for a consultation with the spirit world. I could already feel a certain warmth of spirit, so I agreed.

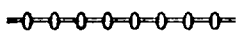
We took a taxi, (apparently his rules also barred the use of public transport) to a dingy street in the East End. Once there, Ramasjudder led me up a scruffy alleyway, through a rickety unpainted door and up a narrow stairway to his room. I was struck by his thoughtfulness for others when he insisted we go on tiptoe to avoid waking his landlady.. We entered a gloomy garret lit by one small bulb. Several other rules of the Order were immediately apparent. They obviously frowned on wallpaper, laundries, washing in general and the use of any bulb larger than 15 watts. On the other hand,

judging by the empty bottles, they were clearly strong supporters of glass reclamation projects. and in Ramasjudder, they had a strong adherent.

"Take a seat on the bed, oh Sahib", said the seer. Turning away from me he fiddled with something, there was the sound of pouring water and the Mystic placed a goldfish in a jam jar up on a shelf before turning and producing an oddly shaped crystal ball. "Sahib, before we use the Magic Crystal, we must first drink a glass of the true nectar blessed by the Inner Circle". So saying, he picked up a black bottle and two empty jam jars, into each of which he poured some amber liquid. "You Sahib, are unused to the dangerous evil forces of the Great Pachyderm and must be protected against them. by the addition of this powder. Sadly, I only have enough for one of us, so I must take my chances." Saying this he unwrapped a spill of paper and poured a white powder into my jam jar. "Now I will don my robes of Office and we will partake." He turned away to an old dressing-gown hanging on a nail and began to don it. It was at this moment a thought came to me. I couldn't let this kind, thoughtful gentleman run risks on my behalf. I must let him have the protective powder. Quick as a flash, I swapped the jam jars round.

Ramasjudder turned back, now wearing the tattered dressing-gown, picked up his jam jar and said, "Let us now drink to the Great Spirits that we may be enriched by their aid." He downed his potion and I did likewise. He made a motion over the crystal ball and commanded me, almost as if he was brushing away dust "Look into the all-seeing globe and tell me what you can see". I looked and was amazed. I had always thought it twaddle that anyone could see anything in a crystal ball, but I had been wrong. I could clearly see a large hole in the dirty tablecloth. I told him so. Mr. Ramasjudder had a little difficulty swallowing, but recovered and suggested I try again. He re-dusted the crystal and said slowly, "Look deep in the glass, do you feel sleepy: .. you are feeling drowsy... you are falling .. asl-ee-eep". Mr. Ramasjudder fell across the table and began to snore. I was afraid for his soul at first, but then I saw he was merely sleeping soundly. I lifted him on to the bed and was about to leave when I noticed a pile of pound notes sticking out from beneath his pillow. Clearly, some enemy, knowing his avoidance of money, had put them there to bring evil upon his head. Ramasjudder had risked his life for me, probably only my switching the powder had saved him. The least I could do was to help him now. I slipped the money into my wallet and tiptoed out.

I never saw Mr. Ramasjudder again, but a few weeks later I was accosted by another bloke wearing a turbine. He said his name was Shiva Skuldujeri the Mystic Acrostic. As I said, I'm not a sucker. He drank beer, so he couldn't have been a Great Pachyderm. I bet Mr. Ramasjudder could have taught him a thing or two,





International Science Fiction

Published by Galaxy Publishing Corp. and edited by Fred Pohl, ISF saw only two issues (Nov.67 and Jun.68). No.1 ran to 130 pages with cover and plenty of assorted 'fillos' by Jack Gaughan.

Inside you got twelve stories and two articles, one on the Trieste Film Festival, the other comprising essays on SF in Germany, Russia and Italy.

WANDERERS AND TRAVELLERS by Arkady Strugatsky has a scientist marking newly-appeared 'septopods' for some unknown reason. On a grander scale, aliens had started doing likewise for humans - why?

THE EPSILON PROBLEM, H.W.Mommers & E.Vieck. Mutated children are being used to destroy the alien 'Spoot' but their mentor refuses to accept peace and seeks to prolong the slaughter - then sees sense.

URANUS by M.Ehrwein Two men isolated on a research station become the last alive when the Sun goes Nova. An emotional item.

THE DISPOSAL MAN D, Broderick. Once a week, a body appeared in Aunt Tansy's bath, then vanished. We never find why, but it is dumped by larger scale actors using humans as stage props.

RAINY DAY REVOLUTION No.39. L.Cozzi. In an over-populated city, people are culled by sacrifices to trains at each subway stop and knife-edged doors which close at random and chop 'em up.

ECDYSIAC R.Presslie. An assassin repeatedly kills people who are inhabited by aliens seeking to foment war. Nice twist ending.

PERPETUAL MOTION I.Varshavsky. Robots run the world, but lower ones threaten to strike, so boss robots decree that humans must grow their own food. This yarn gets a bit lost at the end.

THEY STILL JUMP J.L.Mahe. Rivalry between the Eiffel Tower and Golden Gate Bridge over which site has the suicide jump record.

WITCHCRAFT FOR BEGINNERS F.G.Gozzini. The weekly magazine told how to make men vanish, but went out of print before telling how to bring 'em back.

HOMUNCULUS I.Varshavsky. A robot goes awry wrecking machinery for its secret purpose - to build a baby robot. Ho hum.

MONSTER H.W.Mommers & E.Vieck. An orphan discovers strange powers when beset and turns out to be a alien child. Reads well, weak end.

THE BIG TIN GOD P.E.High. The powerful cybermachine is ordered to create the ultimate warrior, so creates humans.

It was a brave attempt to provide a sampling of SF from other countries. Most stories feature unresolved endings causing you to ask, "What happens next?", which leaves the reader slightly dissatisfied.



MIMOSA.23 from Nicki & Richard Lynch has 29pages including a striking, wrap-round card cover by Julia Morgan-Scott. All the articles are devoted to Conventions including the Bucconeer and Worldcons in general as attended and enjoyed by a scintillating line up of fans. There's also a hefty LOCcol, equally 'name-studded'. All for \$4.00 Nice one

VISIONS OF PARADIDE.79 from Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Mount Court, Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023 34pp with Bob's personal diary for ten of 'em, Then an assortment of book reviews and comment, some amusing quotes, a one-fanzine review and a LOCcol. Each item presents enough variety to knit it all together into a highly readable whole.

THE KNARLEY KNEWS.74 from Henry & Letha Welch. 1525 16th.Ave, Grafton, WI 53024-2017 30 pages opening with personal notes, a fanzine parable and on to another instalment of Don Patenden's epic cycle ride round Australia. Next a book review, Gene Stewart on joining fandom, and a massive LOCcol. plus a page of fmz reviews.. A nice friendly zine with something for everyone

FOSFAX 194, c/o FOSFA, PO Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281. USA

No less than 84pages crammed with assorted reviews, Conreports, poetry, comment on the works of Asimov and Heinlein. Notes on Iraq and 44 pages of LOCs You can get it for \$12.00 for 6 issues or join FOSFA for \$18.00 and get it via membership

LETTERSUB.20 Terry Hornsby, 66 John's Ave., Lofthouse, Wakefield WF3 3LU.

10 pp of personal news, comment, LOCs and reviews. A pleasing mix of whatever takes Terry's interest, Nice, friendly and available in trade.

HIDALGO.48. Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, USA

40pp and a superb full colour pro-mag cover reprint. Devoted to pulp mags, this one has pulp story reviews with illo reprints, an Xmas 'wish' list, comment on pin-ups, book reviews, calender making and loads of LOCs. Excellent zine for pulp lovers.

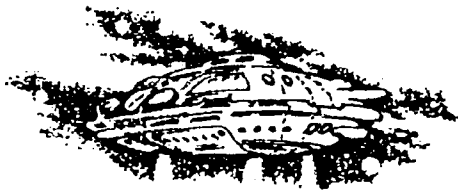
FANTASY COMMENTATOR.51 A.L.Searles, 48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, NY 10708, USA Card covers and 74 superbly printed pages holding a load of time-binding articles including a great Moskowitz account of his dealings with Gernsback,

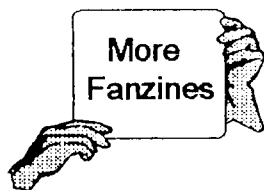
Other goodies on women sf writers, interviews, Lilith Lorraine, reviews, verse etc. All well written, serious material. Get it for \$5.00

FABLES OF IRISH FANDOM.5

76 pages of John Berry tales, all well Atomilloed, plus an Atom art gallery.

OLAF.2 Around 80 pages of Olaf cartoons, two to each page. Get both titles from Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Rd. Halesowen, W.Midlands B63 2PH





YNGVI IS A LOUSE, T.K.F.WEISSKOPF, BOX 130162, BIRMINGHAM, AL 352130 pages of LOCs, comment and natter on relativity and other topics..

OPUNTIA 41.C and D, DALE SPEIRS BOX 6830, CALGARY, ApLBERTA, CANADA T2P 2E7. Two issues, each 16pp A5, side rinted and full of comment, reviews and assorted natter on a variety of themes - Xword puzzles, the telegraph, etc. Nice one.

BANANA WINGS .13 Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Rd., Croydeon, Surrey CR0 7HA and Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Rd., Croydon, Suttley CR0 6JE. 64 pages of articles on fanzines (Erg omitted), SF, Conventions (including a report by Vince Clarke on my first one in 1948. There's a hefty LOC section and a photo of "all seven of the pre-1951 faneds" It omits Ted Carnell, Mike Rosenblum and Wally Gillings to name but three. An excellent issue wiuth plenty to read for everyone, but the small print and limited number of space breaking illos make it a bit heavy going.

OUT OF THE KAJE.3 Karen Johnson. 35 Mariana Ave., Sth. Croydon, Vic. Australia 32 pages including an excellent variation on 'Desert Island Discs' - 10 things to take to Mars. An appreciation of Ian Gunn, LOCs, a fan glossary and reviews. Nice and friendly.

BARMAID.6 Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpley, Worcs. DY12 INP Interesting articles on problems of management, ;pub running, and its assorted fiddles.. The LOCs are sorted with excerpts on common themes grouped together and there's a bit on my pet hate, pop music

HIDALGO.49 52pp from Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224. 52pp and a lovely full colour cover (Weird Tales repro). There's a piece on finding, sorting and scanning pulp mags; then come two hefty sections, an excellent, illustrated article on Edmond Hamilton's fiction followed by a Murray Leinster bibliography and finally, A good LOCcol. If you're into the old pulp mags, then this one's a must.

THE KNARLEY KNEWS.75 28pp from Henry L. Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024, USA Editorial musings on a Convention trip, one fan's GAFIAtion, comment on Credit Cards, sundry book reviews, on getting fanzines, a story by me amd oodles of LOCs all make this highly readable and not too sercon.

NO AWARD.5 48pp from Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St., #105, N.Hollywood, CA 91606 USA A nifty cover by Schirmeister. Natter on LASFS auctions, a piece on fanzine commentary, a Rotsler item on porn filming, memories of various LASFS incidents, a review of *Reluctant Famulus*, memoirs of army life, Mike Glyer recalls some unpleasant pongs, and finally a big LOCcol. Plenty of variety for everyone Get it for the usual

LAN'S LANTERN.47 George Laskowski, 2466 Valleyview Dr. Troy, MI 48098-5317 USA. This is a hefty, 64page Poul Anderson Special from a veritable 'Who's Who?' of fan and pro-dom writing of meetings, memories, facts, anecdotes and more. A bonus is an eight page 'visual adventure' illustrated by Poul himself. A snip at \$2.00

IT GOES ON THE SHELF. C.W. (Ned) Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720, USA This is either No. 20 (on cover) or 18 (on logo page) Either way you get 22 pages of capsule notes on items read by Ned plus other comments. NB, It was Frank Whittle invented the jet, not Whipple (page 20). Useful as a pointer to sundry books.



KEN LAKE, 36 BARRINGTON RD.,
LOUGHTON, ESSEX IG10 2AY

Diving helmets and water pressure on lungs: how does snorkelling work then? and why NOT 22pages of ads. They pay for the magazine, you know: the cover price is the publisher's only profit. As advert manager for a small magazine extra advert income let me increase pages from 43 to 68 a week. This paid for twice as much editorial - yet lunatic readers demanded we stop printing so many ads, I explained that a 32pp all-editorial issue would cost them two

quid a week instead of ninepence. *[Snorkelling of which I've done some, doesn't leave your lungs open to atmospheric pressure whilst at depth. Dive down 10 feet and try to breathe through a tube open to the surface air and your lungs would collapse. Water weighs 62lbs a cubic foot and that mounts up when no inner pressure combats it. That's why diving suits needed air compressors. Aquahungs use highly compressed air bottles and why divers have to decompress on surfacing. On the idea of advertising, great, but I would have to declare it on Income Tax and the less I deal with them, the better. = so no paid ads.]*

ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, NORTH TYNESIDE NE28 7RE

Mechanics yes, the American versions all assume as standard every house has a cellar with machine tools that wouldn't shame Vickers Armstrong. A router as far as I know, cuts a channel in wood or metal and a nibbler cuts sheets industrially. The cellar usually has a central heating unit, "the iron fireman". Outside the house, usually made of wood and and some distance away is the summer home and every so often there was an article 'Prepare your summer home for winter. It usually involved filling all pipes with anti-freeze and heavy shutters on windows. *[In the UK we get similar advice for cars]*. A relative who lived in Canada had TWO sets of windows, summer and winter.

RON BENNETT, 36 HARLOW PARK CRESCENT, HARROGATE HG2 0AW

Congratulations on the first 40 years of ERG. A tremendous achievement, may it last as long again. *[Making me 116 years old!]* That's a super cover, great perspective. Very reminiscent of Frank R. Paul. Is it supposed to be? *[No, I just drew it that way]* Tales From The Wye Tart indeed. Ha yes, very good. I liked the idea of a long snagging pole for police to catch fleeing cars. Did the police really try out this nutty invention? *[The photo on the item shows it on a car, but doesn't say they actually tried it.]* I like your suggestion of a giant butterfly net even better. Should have been used on Malcolm Campbell. A swimming pool in the cellar. Oh lovely, lovely. Not conducive to gracious living. Great, super article. Excellent piece by Ken, Can't remember a piece by him which has not mentioned books in some form or another. *[Well he does sell 'em for a living.]*

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

On serendipity, my interest isn't so much the spark in the brain that supposedly separates us from the animals, but why did that spark make the connection in those particular brains? There must have been hundreds of people before Archimedes who filled their baths to overflowing and thought no more about it. Similarly, how many have napped under apple trees and been awakened by falling fruit without asking what Newton asked? Maybe treating it as an occupational hazard; though as you say, those kipping under coconut palms wouldn't live to tell the tale.

ANDREW DARLINGTON, 44 SPA CROFT RD., TEALL ST., OSSET, W.YORKS WF5 0HE Old mags? I just bought three hugely antique copies of Gernsback's WONDER STORIES dated March, May & June 1933 - normally changing hands for telephone number size sums. These were going cheap, now I know why, so flimsy, flakes of paper come away on your fingers and a foul damp stench of Cthulhu-breath leaks from each one of them. But hey, when these were new my mother was just 17 and Boris Karloff was making his first British movie "The Ghoul".

[It's called Annie Domino or the scent of history]

ALAN SULLIVAN, 30 ASH RD., STRATFORD, LONDON E15 1HL

Cover: A 'Gernsback' scene - skyscrapers with a futuristic helicopter. You're good with scraper-board. *[Thankee kindly zur, it's a lovely medium to work in]* Ergitorial: Another 10 years? well why not. It never hurts to have a target to aim for. Something I learned once was the importance of having goals to aim for. Certain sages say that once we give up striving to achieve things, then we die. As long as we have reasons to do so, we go on. So I'd say go for 50 years of ERG. When you've done that, there's always 60 years to look towards. *[My own theory is that when you stop using your brains, you start to become senile]*

LLOYD R.PENNEY, 1706-24 EVA RD., ETOBICOKE, ON, CANADA M9C 2B2

I've written before on some of the fabulous ideas and projects you could find in the mechanics magazines...not all those ideas were crazy, Many were just raw, without research, further thought, testing or anything that might flesh it out into something viable and doable. The caterpillar-tracked sno-cats, with the addition of a couple of skis out in front, are modern snowmobiles. I guess that's a crazy idea that did pan out. The Ekranoplan and other planes in the article show the unique research paths the Soviets were taking before the demise of their paper empire. A few years ago, it was some developments in the construction of modern blimps and floating freight platforms. I wonder what happened to those inventions and that era?

CHESTER D.CUTHBERT, 1104 MULVEY AVE., WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA R3M 1JF I have sold my fine condition and autographed copy of Hubbard's Slaves Of Sleep for \$300 so you should get a good price for your copy.

[Any offers?] Unfortunately I have no mechanical expertise so I do not understand what is written about technology. I enjoy the benefits and am grateful to those who supply it. The locs of your correspondents disclose knowledge beyond my capability.

[Not to worry, just read and enjoy.]