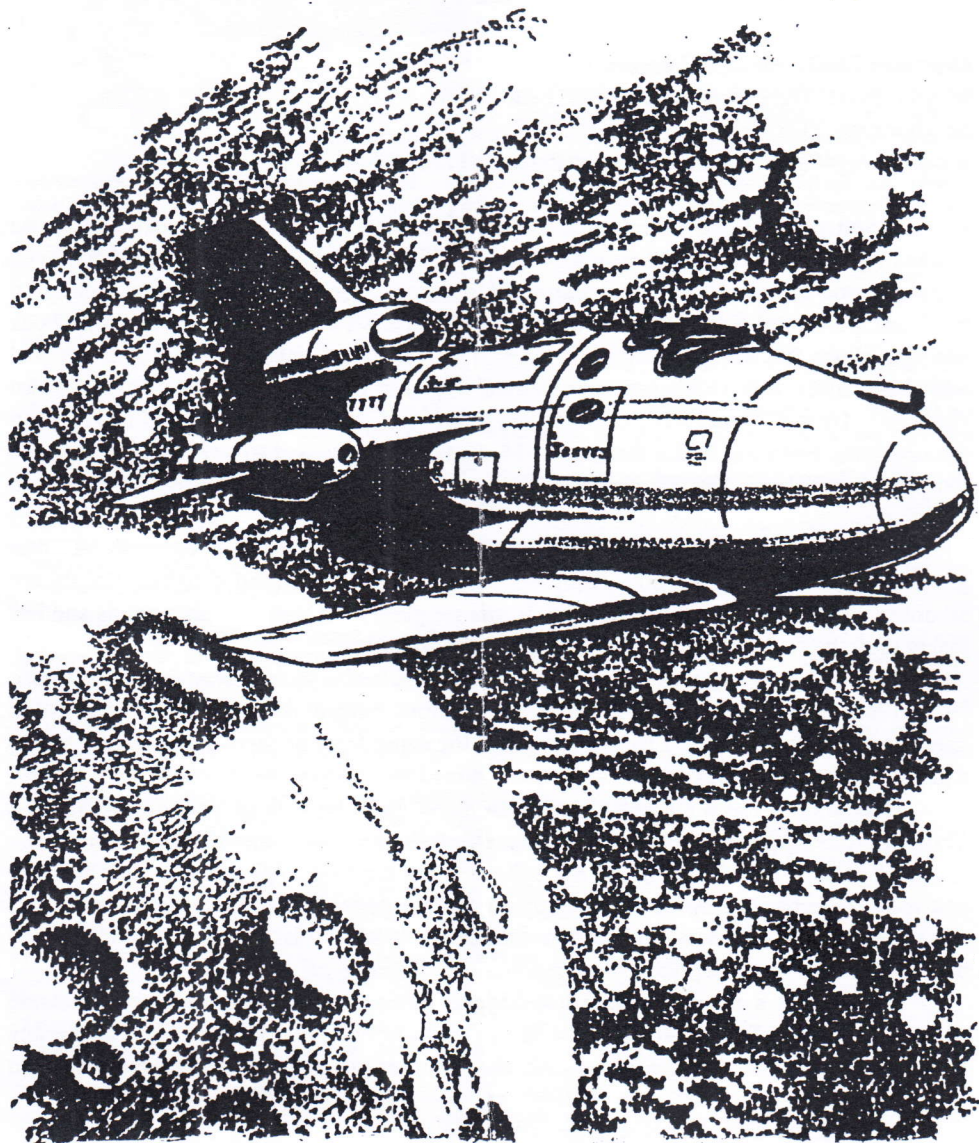


ERG 151

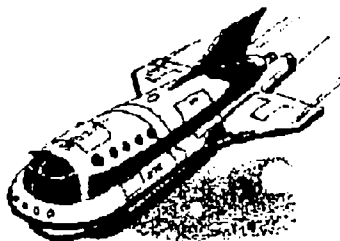
QUARTERLY

OCTOBER 2000



ERG 151

QUARTERLY
October 2000



Greetings ERG bods. ERG comes to you from Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ
e-mail.. erg40@madasafish.com Phone (01723) 376817

If you enjoyed this issue, a Letter of Comment will get you the next. This issue marks my 78th. birthday and nearly 42 years of ERG. Since the mag began, I have moved up from using one Gestetner, hand cranked duplicator to Gestetner plus Roneo, then on to BBC computer and Epson printer, next a Windows 3.1 PC, then thanks to Bernie Peek and Co., a new PC with Windows 95 and now with further thanks to John Rupik I've just added a scanner with OCR. and have started changing my old BBC files into Word Pro versions. How 41 years have changed fan publishing, but relax, ERG will NOT go on the net, but I welcome LOCs that way. Moreover I am pleased to say I have solved the illo-pasting problem. The solution is more tedious than it was with Windows 3.1, but can be done.

First the good news. Our daughter, Sandra presented us with another grand-daughter on Aug.5, 2000. mother, husband and other grand-daughter Karina are all doing well. Provisionally named Sarah, she weighed in at just over six pounds and has lovely dark hair. That brings the tally to six grand-children.

Now the very sad news Long-time fan, Ken Cheslin passed away in early August. He will long be remembered both for his voluminous fanzine output and for his cartoon character, Olaf the Viking. I have known him for some forty or more years and he leaves a gap it will be hard to fill.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Ken Slater can't be with us with his GENERAL CHUNTERING, this issue. I hope you'll be able to be here next time Ken. All the best.

SF sales, I'm still selling off my collection, so send an SAE for lists - say whether you want paperbacks, hardbacks, magazines or aerospace lists. For ASF collectors, I can offer the January issue and May to December 1935, 9 issues for £100 or \$ \$180 post paid - write for fuller details of condition etc. Everything must go!

We bought a new Hyundai last March, ABS, powered windows and electronic all-round locking. Six months later, it had to go in to have that locking fixed as the key would only lock the driver's door. Ah the wonders of progress. Preserve me from 'improvements'.

Keep those LOCs coming, all the best, Terry



One can never recall the Pulp Era without waxing nostalgic over the many superheroes who fought with, and triumphed over, impossible odds. Despite large helpings of hack, some of them were such outstanding characters that entire magazines were devoted to their exploits. No matter that such yarns are almost totally unreadable by today's standards - let's face it, much of today's fiction is unreadable the moment it is written, so let's not be too picky. The pulps were a feature of the thirties; tastes and morals have changed a lot since then. Just accept that sixty or more years ago, as a teenager, I and many others, thought these magazines were the cat's whiskers.

Earlier in my musings over flying, I mentioned G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES, the SPAD flying masterspy aided by All-American Quarterback 'Bull' Martin and the diuinitive 'Nippy' Weston. G-8 also had an English batman called Battle and occasionally was also helped (or hindered) by R-1, a glamorous female spy. G-8's arch enemy was the evil Dokto Kreuger who at the drop of a forage cap would whip up zombies, bat staffels, giant balloon-borne hands and other nastiness to plague the allies. Other fictional fliers having their own magazine were DUSTY AYRES AND HIS BATTLE BIRDS and BILL BARNES AIR TRAILS. Strangely, these never seemed to make the trip to the UK in the ballast holds of the ships bearing all the other magazines.

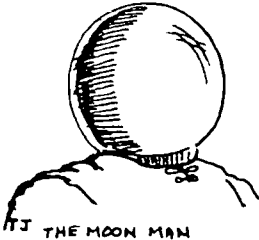
One of the most unusual superheroes was DOC SAVAGE. Raised since birth on a strenuous course of physical and mental training, Doc was not only huge and brainy, but a skilful surgeon, expert chemist, musician, pilot, and a few other things. Thanks to inexhaustible funds from a secret South American gold mine, he was able to devote his life to foiling a variety of incredible menaces. He was aided in his labours by five aides, all top men in their fields (although not as good as Doc). Engineer Renny, Electrician 'Long Tom', the sesquipedalian Johnny, Chemist 'Monk' Mayfair and Lawyer 'Ham' Brooks.

Frequently cluttering up the action were two improbable pets. Ham toted around a pig called 'Habeas Corpus', purely to annoy Monk - who retaliated by lumbering himself with the monkey, 'Chemistry'. Both animals exhibited more brains than the average hoodlum. Now and then Doc's luscious cousin Pat would leave her lucrative beauty parlour to come and help out, usually by getting trapped by the villain. All women fell hopelessly for Doc. Uselessly, as he was scared of females, and would go all bashful at the swish of a hemline.



DOC SAVAGE

Thanks to a superb physique and a rigorous daily training programme which must have consumed half of every working day, Doc managed to cope with sundry pseudo-scientific menaces. Things went a bit awry with his final adventure in 1949. Titled, 'Up From The Earth's Center', the heroes encountered the Devil and his minions. Even the fearless Doc screamed in terror before fleeing in panic. It was an ignominious swan song. Not only did my idol have feet of clay (if you like mixing metaphors) but he even had to make his final appearance as a half length story in Street & Smith's DETECTIVE MONTHLY - but pulp heroes are hard to kill, years later, the Doc Savage tales were reprinted in paperback form by Bantam and we even got the movie, 'Doc Savage: Man Of Bronze'.



TJ THE MOON MAN

THE MOON MAN, In everyday life, was detective Steve Thatcher, son of the Police Chief. He went around crime-busting whilst wearing a black cape and a fish-globe of one-way glass over his head, (presumably with the fish removed). Voluminous black capes were superhero essentials before long johns took over. Whilst detectives had to play by restrictive rules, the Moon Man, once he had cornered his adversary, was quite prepared to fill him full of lead.

The gangster-ridden pulps of the thirties saw many such crime-busters - a notable one being THE SHADOW. He, can you guess? wandered around in a long black cloak, with his face largely hidden beneath the droopy brim of a large black hat. This didn't prevent the occasional glimpse of his strangely glowing eyes - or muffle his hoarsely whispering voice. Nor did these encumbrances impede the use of his automatic pistols as they spat leaden death at naughty mobsters. The Shadow was such a cult figure that he even had his own radio programme.



THE SHADOW

Then there was THE SPIDER, master of men. By rare coincidence, he wore a black cloak, but kept his face hidden behind a black mask. Cloak makers and the distillers of black dye must have made a good living even during the Depression. The Spider specialised in swinging to and fro between skyscrapers on a long rope. When he went off duty and removed his working togs, he became the socialite, Richard Wentworth whom nobody suspected of crime-busting. Don't some of these characters remind you of the French Revolution and 'The Scarlet Pumpernickle'?



THE SPIDER

OPERATOR #5 needed none of these disguise gimmicks. His assignments always seemed to involve him in foiling the many weird and often SF-ish threats to his beloved America by an unknown 'Eastern Power'. He was aided in these exploits by his young sidekick, Jimmy Christopher.



OPERATOR #5

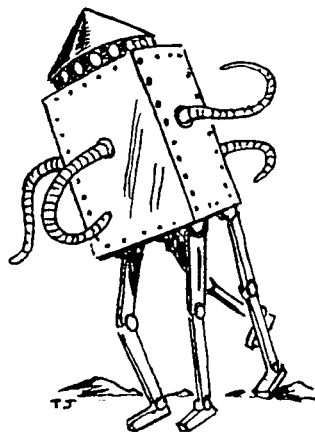
Most, if not all of the superheroes had young assistants (of unspecified age), the idea behind this gimmick was obvious. Older readers identified with the main character and experienced vicarious dangers. Those too young (mentally or chronologically) to see themselves as the superhero, could identify with the role of his trusty aide. Occasionally, they could save him from some terrible peril, as when Operator #.5 was tied to a chair and immersed to the neck in a swimming pool - with the water level slowly rising. Oh, I know that Superman would have escaped by drinking all the water, but #.5 needed help.. Incidentally, if they ever need further stories for the Bond films, they could do worse than dig out the Operator #.5 magazine files.

The magazines didn't always feature 'heroes'. THE MYSTERIOUS WU FANG, was a sinister, Oriental Criminal-mastermind. He bore considerably more than a passing resemblance to Sax Rohmer's Dr. Fu Manchu. This character had his overlong fingernails into all sorts of unsavoury pies. When not puffing opium or throwing sharp-bladed knives, umpteen of his evil slant-eyed minions lurked down every dark alley in America just waiting to grab anyone daft enough to walk their way. Strangely enough, Wu Fang was written by Robert J. Hogan, creator of G-8 and His Battle Aces. However, since 'Hogan' was a pen or house-name, different writers could have been involved. Certainly, Wu Fang never flew around in a Spad. When he finally joined his ancestors, the publishers produced the clone, DR YEN SING but he only survived for a short period.



WU FANG

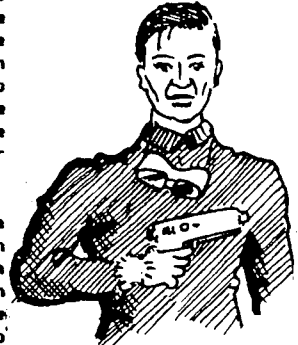
'HAWK CARSE', the space hero, brain child of 'Anthony Gilmore (a Bates/Hall combination) appeared in the very early Astoundings. He had many a clash with space pirates and would often brush forward a bang of hair to cover a scar on his forehead, the relic of an encounter with another sinister Oriental criminal, Ku Sui; a master surgeon, drug dealer, white slaver and other naughtiness. One of these days, someone will do a doctoral thesis on 'The Sinister Oriental Criminal In Popular Fiction'. When they do, I hope he or she remembers Ian Fleming's 'Dr. No' and the pulp villains.



PROFESSOR JAMESON

Another famous series hero was PROFESSOR JAMESON who was created by Neil R. Jones for Amazing. The Professor left instructions that one his death, his body was to be placed in a capsule and fired into space where cold and vacuum would preserve it for ever. Incidentally, this idea was recently 'invented' by an Italian chap who proposed selling burial plots in orbit. In the case of the Professor, his body was discovered several thousand years later, by the space-roving, machine-men, the Zoromes. They stuffed the Professor's brain into one of their mechanical bodies, revived it and off he went as ZIMM392 to share in their galactic adventures.

Another great series producer was E.E. 'Doc' Smith, opening with his heroes Seaton and Crane in the universe wide, 'Skylark' series where each spacecraft was bigger, better and more powerful than the one before. The arch villain in some of these tales was 'Blackie' DuQuesne. So popular did he become that Doc not only named the final Skylark story after him, but had Blackie reform and aid Seaton against an even greater menace.



KIMBALL KINNISON

Indubitably, Doc's greatest contribution to SF and the superhero field was Kimball Kinnison and the Lensman series. Originally starting with 'Galactic Patrol', it became so popular that Smith re-wrote his earlier 'Triplanetary' to fit the saga and added 'First Lensman' to bridge the gap between that and 'Galactic Patrol'. Booksellers (and some historians) wrongly include 'The Vortex Blaster' as part of the Lensman series. This was a totally different series of yarns (in 'Startling Stories') concerning the character 'Storm' Cloud who went around blasting solar eruptions.

Sadly, it is fashionable to denigrate the Lensman series, largely because plots and style don't suit modern tastes in bland, message-ridden fiction. One could say the same for the work of Dickens, or even Shakespeare. Doc wrote for the readers of his day. I wonder how many current dolphin-saving, ecological, feminist and ethnically correct modern yarns tales will still be in print fifty years from now?

John W. Campbell jumped on the series band wagon with the large scale space operas of Arcot, Morey and Wade as they flitted around the galaxy, joining in wars and bashing baddies. He followed these with the antics of Penton and Blake. Banned from Earth for using atomic power, they toured the Solar System encountering weird menaces. I had a sneaking liking for this inept pair as their ability to stumble into trouble was only exceeded by their skill in getting out again.

At this point, one might ask, "Why no superheroiness?" The pulps were mainly written by and for men before women's lib became a buzzword. Men tend to write about men, just as women tend the other way. Few women bought the pulps, so editors preferred stories which fitted their readership. Another factor was the action-type story of that era. Relatively few women indulged in fist-fights, epic battles, distant exploration or scientific research. It wasn't a positive discrimination, but one reflecting the circumstances and society of the day.

Nevertheless, we have had a few female heroines. Swordswoman Jirel Of Joiry was one, John Russell Fearn gave us 'The Golden Amazon', Susan Calvin starred in Asimov's robot yarns. 'Doc' Smith supplied Lenswoman, Clarissa Kinnison and her high-powered daughters. James H Schelz provided telepath, 'Telzey Amberson' and I think it was Kuttner who wrote of the explorer, 'Gerry Carlyle'. In Amazing, W.K. Sonneson gave us 'Greta Queen of Queens', admittedly, a bee, but still the heroine and the cover painting showed her as human. McCaffrey's (women's romance) dragon tales feature female heroines. Times are changing.

Where is English Going?

By James Verran

Would our great grandparents be able to hold a meaningful conversation with us, our children or grandchildren, today? Whether we like them or not, verbed nouns (just added or ing) and clumsy euphemisms are becoming acceptable, indeed, essential components of modern English. Political correctness aside, the need to get a message across in as few words as possible is augmenting this perceived degeneration of our language.

Journalists of the popular media are avid exponents of creative grammar, followed closely by politicians. The members of our governments (gumments) can hardly excuse themselves by pleading verbal economy while they are seldom economical with anything, including taxpayers' money. Tactical temporising, by monotonous repetition of opening phrases, puerile objections and ethereal points-of-order, are employed to pad out their allotted time at the rostrum. Apart from generating thinking time for the ill-prepared speaker the only real beneficiaries are comedians who make a living from exploiting such grandiloquence.

In the realm of buzz words and catch phrases nothing is tested anymore since trialing entered the prevailing jargon. We get nothing for free, especially from companies growing their businesses. Material acquisitions are outsourced, staffing is rationalized by downsizing, so proactive, upwardly mobile persons leverage themselves into more lucrative positions.

Spoken English has always effected the written language and the British and Australian propensity for swallowing syllables is partly to blame for the declining ability to spell by our youth. Our North American cousins are also adding to the confusion, especially with pronunciation. It is becoming fashionable to add a syllable to monosyllabic words to extend hour and our to ower, known to knowen, and here to heyuh. Conversely, we use contractions when speaking, and have is frequently modified to sound like of, as a result it is now common to encounter 'should of' and 'could of' in the writings of our young.

A simple question like: "Have you got a computer," will more than likely invoke the response: "Yes I do." However, this could be a subtle send-up of the enquirer's inelegant grammar. It also is increasingly common for otherwise articulate interviewees, who run out of steam, to end suddenly by validating their remarks with: "ah, yeah."

The police, or pleece, have difficulty describing dead people as such, rather they are deceased male or female persons -- why not decedents? On occasions detectives are tasked with surveilling the haunts of alleged perpetrators.

That sloppy old bugbear, saying 'brought' when the speaker really means 'bought' has been turned on its head by those who insist they have bought along a friend. Adding the aspirated H to aitch, the eighth letter of our alphabet, is endemic. The social security system is now burdened with sporting (supporting), invariably single, mothers. Industrialations occupies the attention of unionists Down Under. However, because it is unclear whether spent nuclear fuel will be made into nuclar weapons, they black-ban its shipment.

You may think it is nothink, yet somethink seems to be wrong. Many people, most often those involved with sport, now have the ability to finesse their chosen activity, especially the breeyunt, or briwyunt (brilliant) athletes who are earning meeyuns (millions) of dollars, or Megabucks. Even aluminium (Anglo usage) frequently comes out as aluminyun.

A hideous Australian tendency (one of many) is to append 'ie' to truncated words, Christmas presents becomes Chrissie pressies, chocolate biscuits are chockie bickies, and the ritual cremation of meat is performed on, or at, a barbie. The spelling may differ, but the speaker invariably sounds like a feeble-minded twit.

Who thinks up those absolutely idiotic names given to many Asian-built automobiles? While names like Mentor, Proton, Satria, Matiz, Sirion and Lexus may not stick in our memory, we will never forget the Nissan Cedric, try as we may. There is even a small car named Applause -- could that be because it is clapped? Asian automotive nomenclature is confusing, if not downright hilarious.

You have (you've) probably heard the tired old excuse that English is a living language, some would say English is transitioning, but contemplate this: picture, culture, and nature, are commonly mispronounced pitchuh, kolchuh, and naichuh. "Meechuhathbyraxlaituh," complete with closing upward inflection, was once overheard on an Aussie school bus. Despite the rising inflection the question mark has been omitted -- the excited student thought he was saying, "Meet you at the bike racks later." So, will we be able to hold a meaningful conversation with our own great-grandchildren? J.V.

I REMEMBER IT WELL

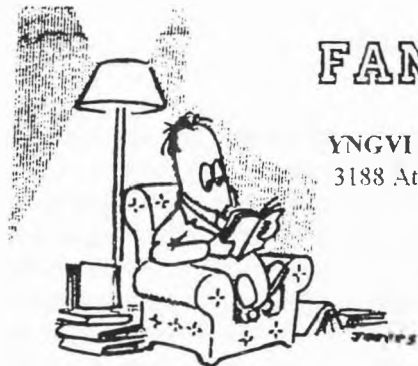
Looking back over the years which separate me irrevocably from my youth, all sorts of things come to mind. I can well remember those happy days when you could wander into W.H. Smiths and pick up a magazine without precipitating a minor avalanche of advertising inserts onto the floor. Don't think you can avoid such little treats by staying at home. If the 'phone rings, odds on it's someone with a wonderful offer to double glaze every opening in your house, not exactly free, but at some incredibly low price of only a few thousand quid. If the doorbell rings, it could be another salesman of the same ilk or else the postman delivering large important looking envelopes which on opening prove to be more requests for your money. Support the perishers, preserve the diplococus, enrage some wildlife or buy a time-share flat in historic Serbia, all these and more can be yours by signing away your income for the next 200 years.

Let's be happier, I can also remember when 'bloody' (as in Shaw's Pygmalion) was a terrible swear word. Dashing young things would come out with the daring, "Not Pygmalion likely" to avoid actually using 'it'. In those days, 'gay' people were happy and jolly, cars had starting handles and were so rare that one could play marbles in the middle of the street without being knocked for six. In those innocent times money was different, telephones had a button B which when pressed, returned your 2d. You had octagonal (or were they dodecagonal?) threepenny bits in your pocket and paradoxically, it only cost a penny to mail a fanzine to America, but three-halfpence to mail it across the road. Even happier, Convention registration would set you back a mere five bob, which nowadays my chickadees, equates to 25p. To cut a flash in a brand new bespoke suit would set you back two pounds ten shillings and train travel was a penny a mile! On a more serious note was the way in which buses, trams, private cars and pedestrians would all come to a standstill for two minutes at precisely 11am on every November the 11th. No one spoke, hats were removed and heads bowed. We called it Remembrance Day because we remembered what it was for.

Things have changed a bit since then. In those days the pop music of the era had a tune you could whistle whereas nowadays you have to pound forcefully on some noise-making object such as a dustbin or packing case.. Nevertheless, I can remember when one didn't have to sit through five minutes of advertising plugs for totally obnoxious widgets for every fifteen minutes of TV programmes - or on the BBC, the plugs for upcoming shows.. For that matter, in the old days one could find programmes which didn't have Scottish presenters busily wokking and tokking to us. Thank Ghu for subtitles.

Memory is a selective thing, we all remember the good things and forget the bad. Thank Ghu for that, it would be terrible otherwise. Just remember that!

FANZINES



YNGVI IS A LOUSE .65 Toni Weisskopf,

3188 Atlanta Hwy ,PMB Box 385,

GA30606, USA. 28pages holding book reviews, a nice set of Con trip memoirs, Charlotte Proctor on Movies, gun carrying and an encounter with muggers, LOCs and mailing comments. Enough variety for anyone in a chatty, friendly zine.

ACES.15 From Paul McCann 5801 West Henry St., Indianapolis, IN, 46241 has a great full-colour cover and 82 pages crammed with superlative articles and illustrations from the pulps. Three articles on the Westerns. Another on Paul Carter includes an index to his work, there's an item on the sports covers of Norman Saunders and a number of my own 'Art In SF' articles plus plenty of LOCs - it'll cost you \$10.00 but it's worth it. The bad news is that there won't be another for a year

OPUNTIA 45 & 45. Dale Speirs, Box6830, Calgary, Alberta CANADA T2P 2E7 As usual, this comes in two ERG-sized, side-printed parts. 45 has LOCs and some very informative gen on con running. 45 1 has more LOCs, lots of fanzine comments, book reviews and 'mail art' notices. (What is 'mail art'?) Nice one.

SQUIGGLEDY HOY.4 24pp from Bridget Bradshaw, 19 Hill Court Rd., Cheltenham, Glos GL52 3JJ. is available in A4 A5, or on the net. Personal natter on houses, gardens, Novacon, an all too brief send up of a bodice-ripper and loads of LOCs. Very good.

LIGHT'S LIST 62pp John Light, 37 The Meadows, Berwick on Tweed, Northumberland TD15 1NY Gives listing of 1450 small press magazines from all over the world covering poems, fiction, reviews, artwork. £2.00 including postage. A new version is in preparation and should be out in January 2001

CHALLENGER.11 Guy H. Lillian III, PO Box 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153-3092 This runs to 100 pages with various writers telling of legal experiences, car theft, jury service and suchlike. There's a book review on juvenile shootings, the editor reminisces on famous people he has seen, a piece on counselling offenders, an excellent photopage, Joe Mayhew tell so his cartooning and then comes a huge LOCcol and a fanzine review section. Definitely one of the best. Get it for LOC or \$6.00 and worth it.

STEAM ENGINE TIME.1 Maureen Speller, 60 Bourmemouth Rd., Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ. This first issue has 43 pages with striking back and front covers. There are articles on Stapledon, Cordwainer Smith and R.A.Lafferty plus a piece on ghost stories, five lists of 20 'essential' books (I've read four of 'em) and an essay of SF as well as book reviews. If serious discussion is your line, then this is for you.

THE KNARLEY KNEWS..82 H. & L. Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017. 20 pages with a tribute to Joe Mayhew, Alex Bouchard on the US National Anthem, three book reviews from Charlotte Proctor, loads of LOCs and a page of brief fmz reviews. Get it for the usual or lolly.

THE OLD MILL STREAM -- A Country Column of City Life

by Penelope Fandergaste

DAVID DIMBLEBY: Welcome to another edition of Question Time, our long-running BBC television current affairs programme, which this evening comes from the North Yorkshire coastal resort of Scarborough. Around the table tonight is the usual array of experts who are eager to answer questions from our local audience. Without further ado, can we please have the first question which comes from Mr. Terence Jeeves, who is a fanzine editor.

TERRY JEEVES: What are the panel's views on the overall decline in the value of the Euro since its well-hyped inception?

JIM DAVIDSON: I could never unnerstan' what them people in Westminster was going on abaht, neiver. I said as much to the missus, The latest one that is.

JO BRAND: I'm all in favour of the Euro. Anything that can contribute to the import of Belgian chocolates...

GERI HALLIWELL: ...Gucci, Versace, Georgio Armani...

DENNIS WISE: Them lot done what they fort shudda done.

DAVID BECKHAM: Thas woh I sedda Wictowia.

GERI HALLIWELL: ...Pierre Cardin, Estelle Lauder...

PAUL GASCOIGNE: Wa' hey, the gizza wazza hazza Euro, like, mon.

NASSER HUSSAIN: It's all very much the same with the England cricket team. The guys know that if there's a loss, which with us, there usually is, then it's all part of the learning curve. At least, that's what I'm told to say.

JO BRAND: ...those lovely German sausages and Black Forest Gateaux.

GERI HALLIWELL: ...Givenchy, Lancone, Chanel...

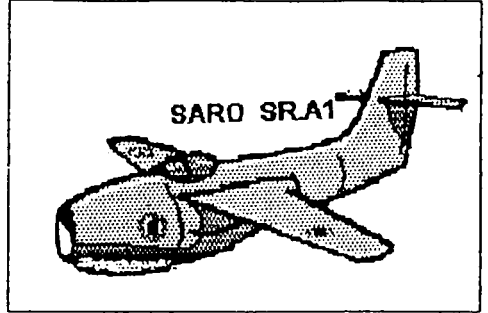
PAUL GASCOIGNE: Burp!

DAVID DIMBLEBY: Baroness Williams, you're a highly respected and renowned authority on political matters and a lecturer in political science. What do *you* make of the Euro's decline?

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS: It goes deeper than mere day to day oscillations on the stock exchange and any fluctuations in the pound. Of course our export market is affected, but we have to appreciate that the different problems of member states contribute to make the situation constantly volatile. For example, when Germany...

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE: There we shall have to leave the debate in order to bring you the latest Jerry Springer Show.

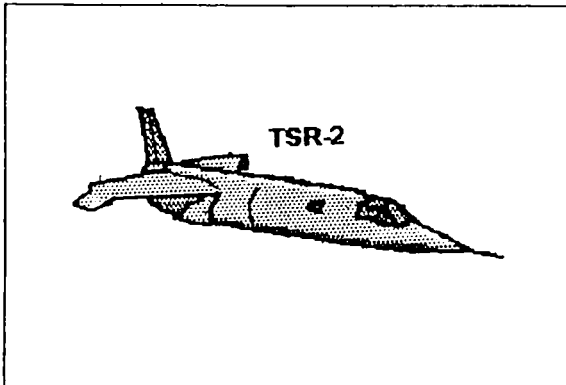
LOVE'S LABOURS LOST



A rather unusual design came along when Saunders-Roe, previously noted for their huge, multi-engined flying boats, surprised everyone when they produced the first single-seat flying-boat fighter. This wasn't as crazy as it seemed at first sight, the idea was that with the warfront advancing on Japan via assaults on the various Pacific islands, such a machine could operate among them without needing new runways building along the way as the battles advanced. Another advantage was the fact that by landing on water, it would not be possible to have its landing areas bombed out along the way.

The result of this reasoning was the fully aerobatic, Saro SRA.1, (it demonstrated at Farnborough and was a sleek monoplane with twin jet engines buried in the wide hull, a feature which also helped to give extra stability on the water. Having a length of 50ft with a span of 46ft, the design was to have a speed of over 500mph, carry four 20mm cannon and either two 1000lb bombs or eight rockets.

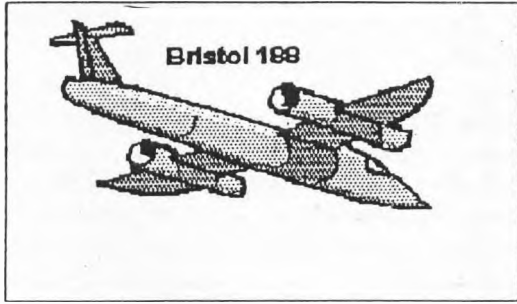
Three machines were ordered, but the war was well over by the time the first flew in 1947. Proposals to use them in Korea were never followed up and the project ended. One machine was lost when it struck floating driftwood and sank, another crashed in the sea and the third ended in a museum.



Then there was the TSR-2 designed to a requirement for a two-seat, high speed bomber and built by a conglomerate of Vickers and Shorts in order to spread the very high costs. The TSR stood for Tactical Strike Reconnaissance, (In case you're wondering, here was never a TSR-1). The resulting design was a twin-engined, delta wing machine 89ft long and spanning only 37ft.

Top speed was around Mach 2.5. Many were ordered, but rapidly escalating costs, slow progress and numerous problems delayed the first flight until late 1964.

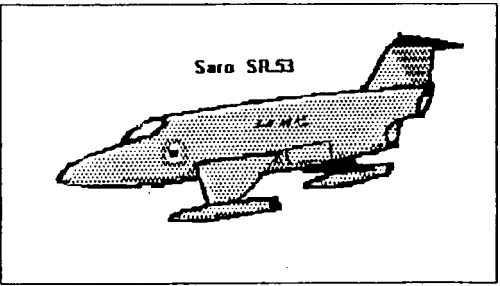
The TSR-2 proved an excellent performer in the end, having met or exceeded all requirements. Sadly, the last flight was made in early 1965 when the Government cancelled the project and all orders. One machine ended up in Cosford Museum, another went to Duxford and a third ended up as a gunnery target. I suspect that this fate, meted out to quite a few promising machines was the Government's way of ensuring nobody could come along to revive the projects. Princess flying boats and the giant Brabazon airliner escaped this fate, but ended up in mothballs.



Another sad story was that of the Bristol 188, which was designed to a specification calling for a Mach 2.5 research aircraft intended to study structural heating of fast flying aircraft. Bristol produced a beautifully slim, two-engine design made of stainless steel; 71ft long with a span of 35ft and having a curiously curved-back leading-edge to its wing together with a tailplane mounted

high on the fin. Three machines were ordered, one to be used for static ground-testing. The second made its first flight in 1962, the third one following in 1963. However, continued engine problems and fuel leakage limited the flying time and once again, the Government cancelled the project. Both machines were scheduled as gunnery targets, but one was reprieved and is in Cosford Aerospace Museum where I had the great pleasure of walking round it, the TSR-2 and the Fairey Delta 2. - not to mention the memory evoking B-24 Liberator they have there. The latter leading to a reunion with my old 356 Sqdn. members.

Another potential winner was the Saro SR.53, proposed in 1952 and first flown in 1957. It was a well-designed machine powered by a D.H.Spectre rocket engine and a Viper turbojet. With a length of 45ft and a delta-wing span of 25ft, two were built and speeds of Mach 2 achieved as well as crowd pleasing appearances at

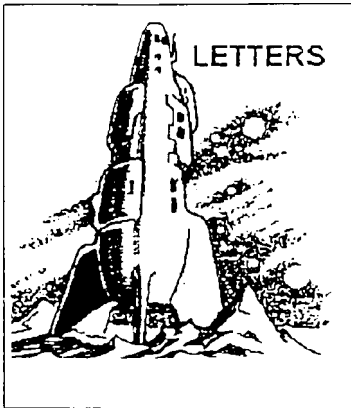


Farnborough. Both Germany and Japan expressed interest in the design and although one crashed on take off, nine more were ordered and large contracts were expected - until the Labour Government did its usual trick, and brought out a White Paper condemning the use of fighter aircraft and cancelled everything. The remaining SR.53 ended up in Cosford Museum

Let's reminisce about the future. "It was easy to forget the way things had been now he was past 70" comments **Sydney J Bounds'** character in '*Advent*'. A weary nostalgia. Old Wrinklies in an aimless crumbling world of dereliction and the teasing menace of feral kids.. A world decimated by the blaring plague of advertising and endless credit provided by self-replicating alien machines. In a neat metaphor for the growth of mindless consumerism the aliens finally come to collect payment by foreclosing the whole planet. Bounds' wry story sets the tone for this, the third in Philip Harbottle's original fiction anthology series from the Cosmos Independent Press, and it's a prime high-grade delight. Science Fiction is not fixed in time. It is present and future, but it has yesterdays too. and here are the writers whose creative imagination took the monochrome skies of the British 1950's and early 60's and crayoned them dayglo with inky worlds of incandescent light, with new atomic dreams that cut the intergalactic darkness with luminous novae of vivid primal colours. Now those near-mythic greats whose tales I read with such awe and wonder as an adolescent are bringing their instinctive story-tellers feel for powerful two-fisted narrative to focus on the new century. There are more recent names here too., including my own. But even the Contents page (illuminated by 'Classic SF Imagery' from Daleks/Dan Dare artist **Ron Turner**), listing my name there alongside new fiction from **E.C.Tubb, Sydney J. Bounds and Philip E.High** is a magical pure-cut adrenaline experience. Something I thought I'd never ever live to see. But these books are no mere self-indulgent retro-trip. In the two previous volumes Tubb's *Mirror of the Night* is a rare example of this most prolific writer's ventures into dark Gothic fantasy, while Bounds' '*No Way Back*' is a remarkable fusion of trad-SF overlaid with disturbing bio-genetic concerns coming together in a near-JG Ballardian acceptance of mutational symbiosis. Then Philip E High's '*The Kiss*' merges a mood of stark assassination documentary realism with a yearning visionary transcendental quality. And there's ER James too, contributing a mad metropolis vision of forgotten individuals caught up in MegaCity residual energy-pollution. Each story - including the lost fragment at the core of '*A Matter of Vibration*' in the current volume, matches moments of these writers at their best. A bizarre Bounds completion to a **John Russell Fearn** idea, 'Vibration' aches with regret for the protagonist's Father's Lab experiment (in Fearn's time *all* protagonists were Scientists). which inadvertently trapped his childhood friend in a freezing supernatural void between dimensions. An irony - in its way, just as hard as that in Tubb's '*Fallen Angel*', where a bartered 57-sec time-delay device given to an alien abductee leads not only to immediate wealth in the casino, but inevitably to an endlessly recycled moment of terminal impact following five-mile fall from a mid-Atlantic plane crash, "an angel suspended between Heaven and Hell" In **P.E.High's** '*The Gulf*' an experimental project 'freezes' an island in time while his second contribution, '*The Falling Elephant*' echoes his own classic, '*The Psi Squad*' as a detective's 'hunches' turn out to be remnants of a race memory.

If this review sounds like a commercial - damn right it is !

You can get a copy for £5.50, from P.Harbottle, 32 Tyndeale Ave., Wallsend, Tyne & Wear NE28 9LS



Eric Lindsay, PO Box 640, Airlie Beach, QLD 4802, AUSTRALIA Eng 150 Very smooth looking spaceships on the cover this time. You asked if there was a part two of the Campbell letters that Perry Chapdelaine did. There was a hardcover, and I used to have a copy. It was nowhere near as interesting as the first one. The only person who might have an idea of where to get copies is probably Bruce Pelz. I still find some decent SF stories with plot. I think people like Greg Benford, Joe Haldeman, Jack McDevitt and a handful of others do a good to excellent job. However I find myself buried in fantasy trilogies that have nothing to do with SF. These days I'm more

likely to get good value out of the 3 for \$10 thriller remainders at the supermarket than I am buying a so called "SF" novel sight unseen. I am edging closer and closer to being a non-reader. The new 10% government tax on reading isn't helping any either.

Ron Bennett, 36 Harlow Park Cresc., Harrogate, N.Yorks HG2 0AW You're right about modern stuff being largely plotless compared with the GOS (Good Old Stuff). I sometimes wonder whether anyone reading SF for the first time nowadays, feels the same SoW which washed over us in the Good Old Days. Possibly it does. Nostalgia and all that. I get the same thing from comic collectors. Eagle was fantastic. The Marvel comics of the early sixties have never been surpassed and so on. You have a point about the type of SF being so different today. I despair. If only for the fact that there are good... and proved writers who are either unable to sell stories today or who find it difficult to do so. At the Liverpool Con a writer's wife was telling me her hubby was finding it well nigh impossible to sell - and he's a smashing writer. [*I blame it on this 'free expression' tosh*]

ROGER WADDINGTON, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, N.Yorks YO17 9ES Commenting on your Soap Box Corner, I haven't yet given up on the magazines, I can still read them with some pleasure, especially Analog; but then I always was easily pleased. Although the only way I can read F & SF nowadays is by wreathing it in nostalgic memories of the way it used to be in the years of my first encounter, with authors like Avram Davidson, William Tenn and Gordon R. Dickson. I'll maybe qualify that to say that every new issue of Analog always comes wreathed in nostalgia, but the key words there must be 'easily pleased'. Back in the days of my first discoveries I was reading everything possible. It's only looking back with the eyes of experience that we can see what sort of rubbish it actually was. [*Too true I'm sorry to say*]

TED HUGHES, 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield, Manchester M45 8ER Liked Movie Memories in ERG 150. Half the time you might have been writing about my own childhood. I guess we went to the same sort of 'fleapit' and cheered the same cowboys (my favourite was Tom Tyler) [Mine was Ken Maynard] outwitting the villains, and came out in the bright Saturday afternoon sunshine with the same blinding headache. Happy days! I was surprised you omitted mention of the 'Alien' series, or 'Dune', they certainly rank highly as SF films - especially Alien 1. [*They were too modern for my 'memory bank'*]

ALAN BURNS, 19 The Crescent, King's Rd., Sth. Wallsend, North Tyneside NE28 7RE

Re the lament for the old days, I won't shed sobs and tears for the dear dead days of Saturday afternoons at sixpence admission to the cinema though if you went to the Band of Hope on Friday night you paid in jam jars. Odd-shaped planes, I once had a Meccano aeroplane constructor and among the things you could build was that queer plane with a fuselage on one end of the wing, an engine on the other and a tailplane somewhere.. *[That was the Blohm & Voss 1421 developed during the war. I had a Meccano aero constructor set pre-war, I didn't know it was still around after it]*

MARK PLUMMER, 14 Northway Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE I wouldn't dispute for one minute your contention that 'SF ain't what it used to be' although we part company on the notion that it's all been down hill ever since Mike Moorcock took over the New Worlds editorial chair... There has been *less good sf* at every stage in the genre's history and the New Wave is no different to anything else in this respect - and, contrary to your assertion, I don't think you run the risk of being dubbed reactionary for saying so - but I do think it's unfair to brand all post New Wave sf, 'bland, tedious and highly unreadable fantasy'. *[You're right, I was overstressing and generalising too much.]*

ANDREW DARLINGTON, 44 Spa Croft Rd., Off Manor Rd., Ossett, W.Yorks, WF5 OHE As a pre-pubescent I went to Saturday Morning matinees to see an epic of Flash Gordon and was most taken and a little disturbed by the explicit terror of a torture sequence in which he was strapped into a diabolical device which sprays sparks on his fine, Buster Crabbe physique. What can't have been many years later I saw the same episode on TV, It ran on TV immediately prior to Jack Good's rocking monochrome "Oh Boy" which featured such angry young Rock & Roll rebels as Cliff Richard and Cuddly Duddley. Anyone, Flash still seemed to be singularly impressive - and that's the essential thing to all this stuff.

Cuyler W. (Ned) Brooks 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720 As to your rant about SF not being what it used to be - neither are you, or I... I only read current short fiction in **Weird Tales** and *F&SF*, but don't remember any handicapped black female lesbians, though of course I might not have noticed if they were interesting characters otherwise. *F&SF* has had several stories lately where the main characters are homosexual. Didn't note much gutter language. As to novels, I read mostly old ones anyway. I think the last novels I bought and read new were the David Zindell space operas, rather like E.E.Smith but much better written. Good article on movies - I saw the end of the old King Kong the other day. The special effects were good for the time, except that the scale of the animal kept changing. In that last scene, he was larger on the Empire State building than on the street after. *[Well they say size isn't everything]*

Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON Canada M9C 2B2

I don't read much modern SF because it's out of my price range. Another is that modern SF seems to have lost its sense of adventure through plot. An old friend of mine, Robert J. Sawyer, is one of the most popular modern SF writers because he writes adventurous SF. One book I read just more than a year ago is *The High House* by James Stoddart. It had adventure and suspense, and an interesting story, too, with memorable characters. I think I would rather read older SF, much of which I think has improved with age, like wine and cheese. It's much cheaper to obtain, too.