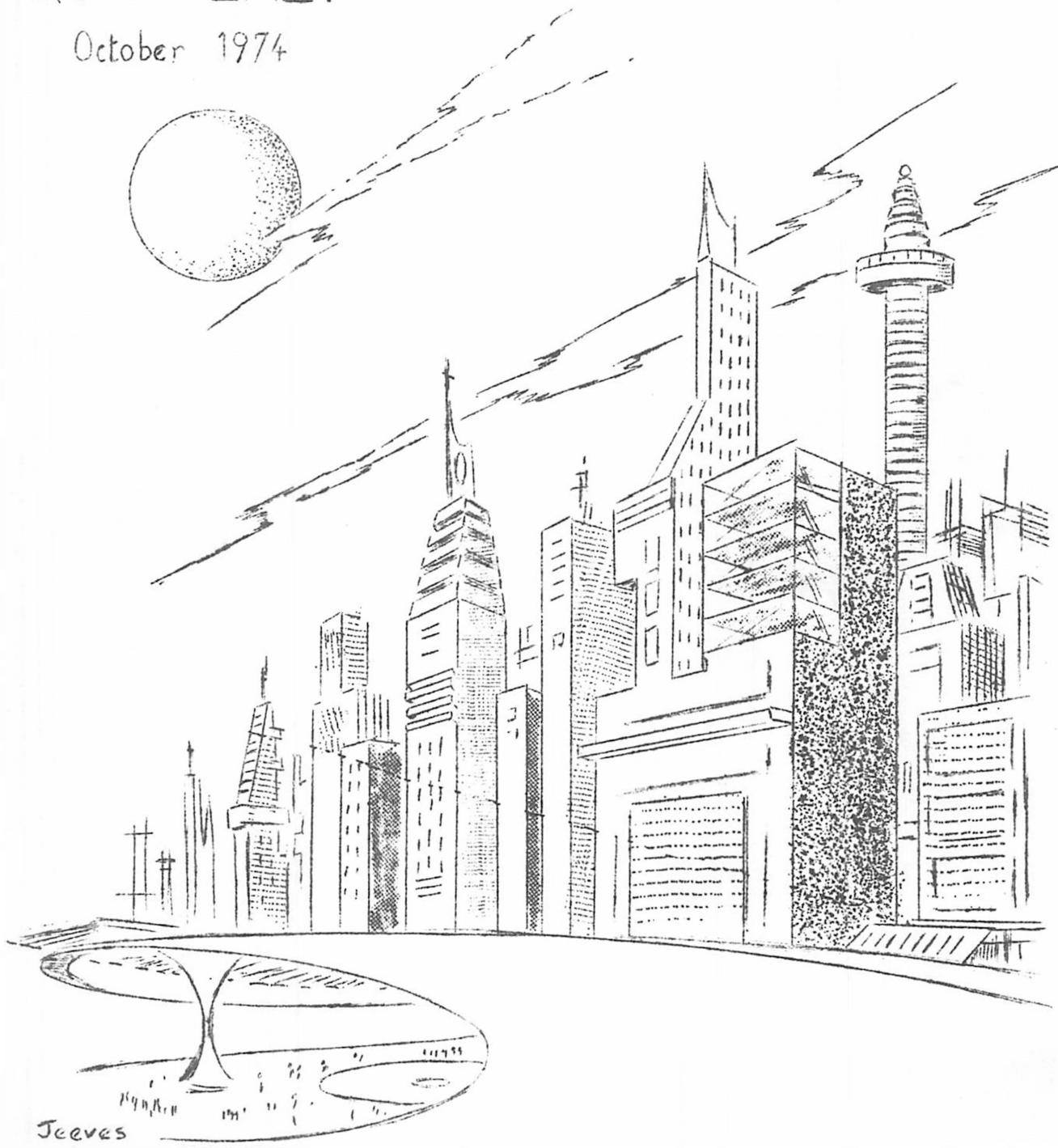


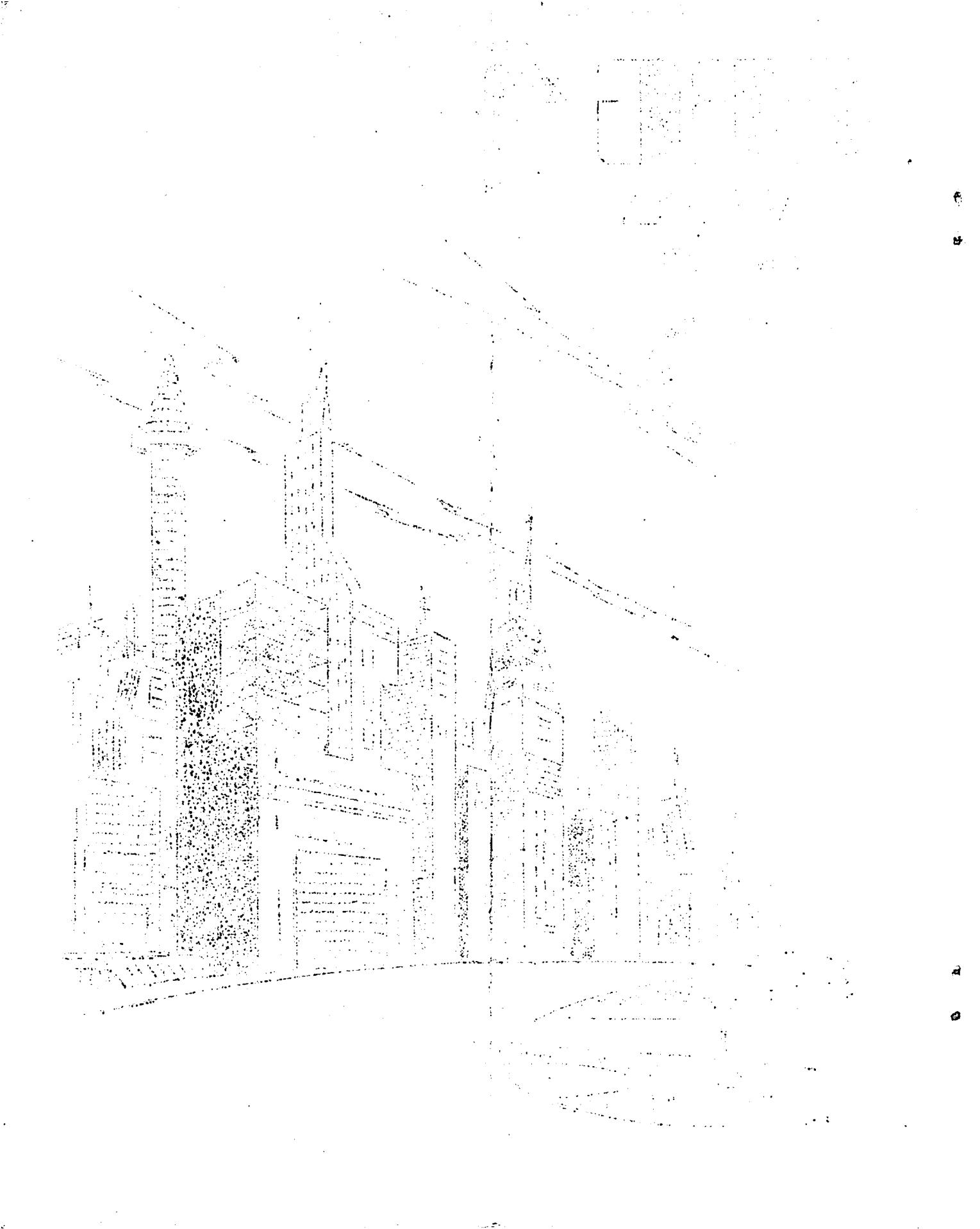
ERG 48.

QUARTERLY

October 1974



Jeeves



Ergotorme

3
ERG quarterly
No. 48
October, 1974

Now
in
its 16th Year

Greetings Ergbods,

Internal postal costs have risen. In their infinite idiocy, the Post Office warns of the inevitability of further rises. Since postage is the largest single item in the cost of one copy of a fanzine, the new rates are bound to have their effect on amateur publishing. The gap between publication dates will widen. Size may be reduced to trim the weight, co-editors (sharing the costs) are likely to increase. Most important of all, 'dead' copies must be eliminated. Publishers, Traders, Subscribers and LOCers all have a place in a well-balanced readership, but there is no place for the fan with a one-way mail box. Personally, I abhor mailing ERG into a vacuum. To my mind, the blood sweat tears and money I spend on ERG, is counter-balanced by some form of return from the reader..be it in terms of book for review, other fanzines in trade, cash money, or just a decent Letter Of Comment....and a decent LOC does not entitle the writer to more than another issue. Some fans believe that a LOC deserves publication by right. Sorry, but NO. A LOC pays for the issue received, and gets you the next...but bestows no other 'rights'. So let's keep it that way. Respond to this issue in some way, and I'll gladly send you the next. Ignore it, and it seems fair to do the same when mailing out the next one, by missing you out. OK ?

Not wishing to belabour the sub point, I would like to clarify the dollar rates quoted on the back page. My reason for asking for a dollar sub from the USA is simple. Such dollars go into my kitty for paying FAPA and First Fandom Dues, my Analog subs, and suchlike items. With actual dollars to hand, I can mail them off to Good Man Ed Cagle, and he does the necessary (Sometimes, as with Bill Evans((Can you hear me BILL ???)) there are louse-ups). In the past I have paid via banks...and had vanishing cheques plus extra charges. Direct dollars make for a much simpler life. In view of this, if any of you Statesiders feel like taking out a gift sub for a friend..it will only cost you a buck. How about it ?

The stencil cutting series continues in this issue (apart from the OMPA issues), and has already provoked some very useful letter responses. Eric Lindsay to name but one has come forth with helpful advice and even a booklet. I hope to include all such reader-submitted material in a set of miscellaneous notes, so please don't be afraid to send in any special knowledge you may have. I am running surplus pages to allow for 50 complete copies of the whole thing when ready.....but no pre-orders for the time being.

4 Not being a news magazine, details of the August Eurocon arrived here too late for inclusion in the last issue. Sorry friends, but if you'd like such news items including, I'll gladly do it, but get them here about SIX MONTHS before the event. One item which isn't dated, and will no doubt interest many concerns the London S-F Circle. The Globe has finally had it. The regular rendezvous (to which all are welcome) is the first Thursday of each month...at the ONE TUN, 125 Saffron Hill, London. EC1. Very near to the Globe, handiest station is Farringdon.

Other less welcome news items (and following my opening remarks). Ken Slater reports paying £3.78 for two reams of A4 paper !!! Even sadder is the word from Dave Rowe, that BLUNT must fold owing to rising costs. Can't we elect a fannish MP to argue fandom's case ???

The last FAPA mailing arrived here minus the Official Organ and also minus the copies of ERG 46 which Gregg Calkins had acknowledged receipt of, two weeks before the mailing deadline. Worse, I'm down for owing money, when I should have lolly in the kitty. At the time of writing, letters to Sec/Treas, Bill Evans, and Editor Greg Calkins seem to remain unanswered. So since in addition to Erg 46, Greg should now have got a bundle of Erg 47, I'm not putting this issue (No.48) through FAPA. If Bill reads this, how about telling me what's happening ???

The start of the school holidays saw us load into the gleaming Jeeves 'Goldfinger Special' (Registration 100K) and boot off down the M1 to Bridge near Canterbury. We had a nice mini-holiday, and the highlight was a trip aboard the SRN74 Hovercraft to Boulogne. Real s-f stuff this. We got there around 8 am, parked the car, bought tickets and were hustled aboard the 8.30 trip to France, getting there in 40 minutes. After wandering round the old fortified town, we had a lunch lasting two hours before making the trip back to Dover and 7 hours on the road back to Sheffield

Dave and Mardee Jenrette were able to spend a night with us the weekend earlier, but owing to a communications snafu in which we didn't know Eric Bentcliffe had got a weeks holiday, we rushed them over to Cheshire earlier than we need have done. Still, it was great meeting them and seeing Dave take umpteen photographs of everything in reach.

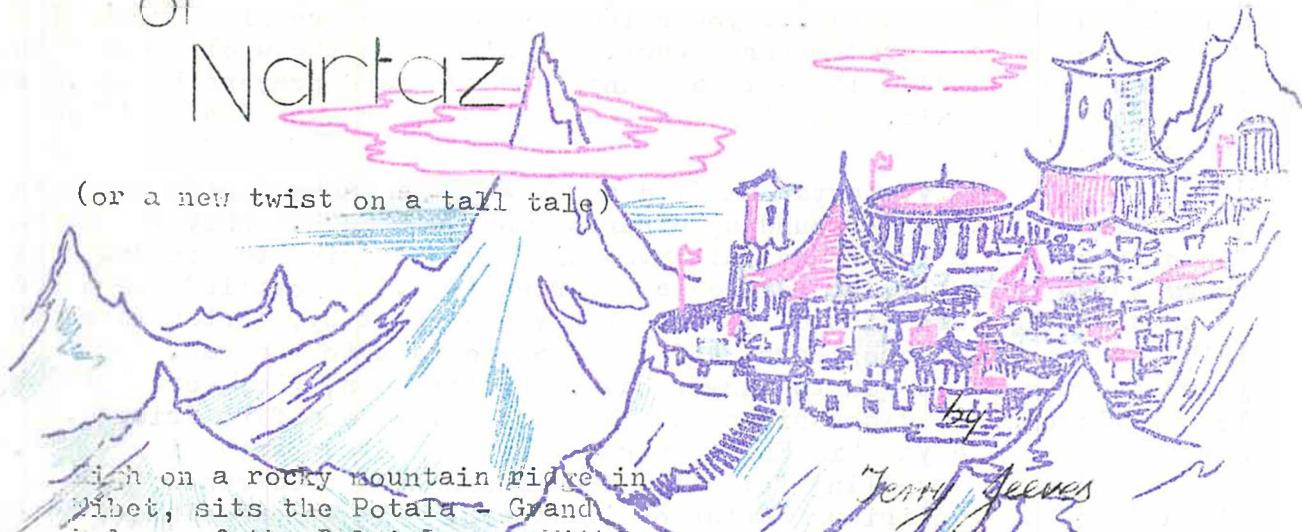
Coventry in 75 is the latest news, and I hope to have better luck this year than I did with the Tynecon, when Val had to go into hospital the week before. Personally, I'm very glad that the 75 Con didn't get to south of the Bert Campbell line. London is bad enough for a Con, distance and pricewise. South of London add the trouble of navigating either through or round the city. Going through is nasty...for some queer reason maps and signposts never agree. Those living in London may be happy with signs pointing to 'Swiss Cottage' or 'Elephant & Castle'..but the AA maps never show these delectable spots. Circumnavigating the place is almost as bad, the outer ring road A406 being a duel to the death with maniacs...and frequently vanishing signs. Ergo, I favour somewhere nice and central for a Con...and Coventry sounds ideal. Hope to see you all there.

Bestest,
Terry

Son
of

Nartaz

(or a new twist on a tall tale)



High on a rocky mountain ridge in Tibet, sits the Potala - Grand Palace of the Dalai Lama. Within and surrounding the building are hundreds of prayer wheels. Some spin frantically in the ever-present wind which howls across the roof of the world. Some are turned by the fast flowing streams fed by the melting snows, and some... some are turned regularly and very tediously by the hands of the monks. Whatever the power source, each revolution of each wheel sends yet another 'Om Mane Padme Hum' winging in the right direction.

The Potala itself is staffed by a dedicated band of monks, chelas and novitiates. Among them, young Zartan (son of the famed 'Martaz of the Baboons', though none knew this). The infant had been found frozen in a block of ice on the front door step, by a monk putting out the milk bottles. Pinned to his chest with a sharpened alligator tooth was a pathetic little note... "Please look after my baby, he is too young to do it himself. His name is Zartan". It was signed, 'A well-wisher'.

The monks were quite used to taking people in. They first thawed out the chile, removed the alligator tooth, bandaged the hole and used the infant as a door stop until he was old enough to do more useful work. Secure in the Potala, the young Zartan grew to manhood. Along the way, he was initiated into the gentle arts of Kung Fu, Khama Sutra and Petit Point embroidery. On the side, he was detailed to the task of spinning the hand-operated prayer wheels. Day after day, his brawny back would bend, his sinewy sinews would strain until they stood out like wire hawsers. Then, with a final mighty effort, yet another wheel would spin madly into action. Prayers would shoot heavenwards like machine-gun bullets, and Zartan's victory call of, "Hoooo...ooo....ooeeeeyy !!!" would ricochet round the pillars of the Potala, and its harminics would shatter the Dalai Lama's best china.

It was a happy life for the lad Zartan (if not for the Dalai Lama), till one morning after a hectic night of Kung Fu, Khama Sutra

6 and a dash of Petit Point...disaster struck! Bleary-eyed and careless, the foundling son of Jungle King Martaz (and he the son of the brave Lord Branestroke) had just finished setting a whole hall full of prayer wheels into motion (and two dozen tea cups into oblivion) when in came the Dalai Lama..on his Dalai walk. He took one look at the madly spinning wheels. "ZARTAN....you reincarnation of a creeping cretin !" he screamed in cultured Oxford drawl. "You've spun the whole damned lot the wrong way round. It must have unsaid a thousand prayers by now. Get thee from the Potala, immediately if not sooner, or even faster if you can manage it !"

Sadly, Zartan saddled a long-haired yak and rode off into the blizzard. His way wound up a narrow mountain path. Only the sure-footedness of the trusty animal saved him from plunging to his death at every turn. Finally, he reached a deserted cave. He settled there and began a lonely life of meditation. The years crept by, Zartan began to talk to himself. More years, and he began to talk to the yak. Still more years and the yak began to answer back. Pretty soon, they were holding long philosophical discussions and had become fast and firm friends. Zartan showed the yak his Khama Sutra. The yak showed Zartan its teeth. When the jungle foundling fell ill, the long-haired creature comforted him and fed the delirious Zartan on its fleas. The friendship grew even stronger. Now, when Zartan mentioned Khama Sutra, the yak simply turned its back. Both were happy.

Meanwhile, back at the Potala, the Dalai Lama was touching eighty (and getting no response). He decided to throw a party. In a fit of magnanimity (and because the prayer wheels had all run down) he decided to pardon Zartan. A carrier pigeon, suitably equipped with snowshoes, was sent out. The faithful creature, flew, walked, and finally crawled to deliver its message to Zartan before dropping dead at his feet. The gentle Zartan, shed many a tear over it as he cooked the carcass and shared it with his trusty yak before setting off for the Palace.

Over hill and dale, through hail, snow and blizzard the faithful animal staggered, finally collapsing exhausted on the Potala steps - the same steps on which the infant had been placed many years earlier. Monks rushed out, grabbed Zartan and hustled him inside. He was warmed before a fire, eager hands stripped him. He was washed, anointed with oil, plied with exotic foods and given a thousand mile servicing. Dancing girls brushed up his Khama Sutra. Music and revelry was at its height with Zartan dancing a Highland Fling with the Dalai Lama. Staggering drunkenly to a cushion he heard a tapping at the window behind him. Removing his arm from around a dancing girl, Zartan clumsily wiped a steamed-up pane and peered out into the night. Something loved in the gloom of the howling blizzard. Zartan opened the window a crack and peered out. There in the pitiless blast, icicles hanging from his matted fur stood the faithful creature which had stood by Zartan through thick and thin when all others had forsaken him. Its soft, plaintive voice could barely be heard above the storm"Zartan old friend, what about me ?"

"Blow you yak, I'm all right", replied Zartan, and slammed down the window.

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((For earlier Martaz horrors, see 'Martaz of The Baboons'... ERG 39
'Return of Martaz'... ERG 41

Recent Reading

7

*** Highly Recommended

A POCKETFUL OF STARS. Pan.50p

Edited by Damon Knight.

The Milford S-F Writer's Conference was first held in 1956 and repeated every year since. Top writer's meet and discuss each other's yarns. This anthology is composed of no less than 19 such tales, each with a brief preamble by its author. In addition, Knight contributes a highly interesting introduction telling the story of the Milford Conference.

Of the nineteen, well assorted stories, only two (Sallis and Russ) were below par - and the other seventeen much more than made up for them. At 50p, this must be one of, if not the best collection for value on the market. Buy it for yourself or for a gift. Either way, you'll not be sorry.

MUTANT 59 - The Plastic Eater Pedler & Davis Pan.40p

This one has an off-putting title, and gains little from the anaemic TV programme which sparked it. Nevertheless, once you read far enough to get past such preconceptions, it proves to be a rattling good story in the old 'escalating menace' tradition. A germ culture mutates until it can attack all plastics. The result is death and destruction as it spreads and propagates. Plausibly and excitingly developed (with the notable exception of an implausible clash with jewel thieves) it has a sex interest more deftly handled than in most s-f. I thoroughly enjoyed this one, and can recommend it to all lovers of mainline S-F.

PROSTHO PLUS Piers Anthony Sphere 35p

A light-hearted send up of interstellar dentistry. Dr. Dillingham is kidnapped by tooth-troubled space voyagers, and proceeds to drill and fill his way around the galaxy as he works on (and in) a variety of alien jawbones in a manner reminiscent of one of James White's 'Sector General' tales...but without the overdrawn medical jargon of that series. Cheerful, funny, fast-moving and defiantly up-beat. If you like humour in your science fiction, this is for you. On the other hand, if you are an s & c fuddy-duddy who wants serious material with a message, pass it over.

Space pilot Grainger spent two years marooned in the Halcyon Drift, a dark nebula cluttered with debris and energy warped space. By the time he is rescued, an alien 'wind' parasite has settled in his brain. Saddled with the cost of his rescue, Grainger is forced to take the job of piloting a new spacecraft back into the drift in search of the legendary 'Lost Star', a treasure loaded wreck. To add to the danger, the search becomes a race against the Caradoc Company which loaded him with the rescue bill. After a rather tedious opening which sets the stage for Grainger and his parasite, the story picks up pace. The female element is introduced (though never really for any real purpose) when his ex crew mate's sister helps to crew the new ship 'The Hooded Swan'. Apart from having named the craft, and piloted it on the maiden voyage, events never satisfactorily explained, she hovers almost invisibly in the background as Grainger flies the 'Swan' on her saga. They reach the 'Lost Star' after a hazardous flight, including a suicidal race against another ship. This is one of those yarns which a precis can never do full justice. Once you get over that first 'hump' it will hold your interest until the end.

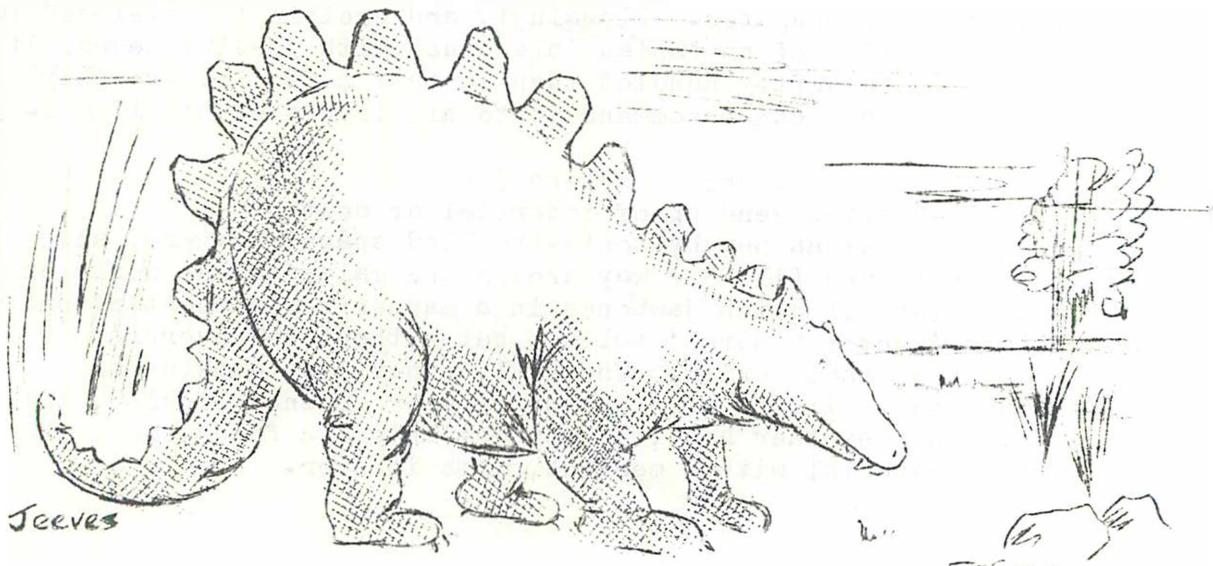
THE PARASURIANS

Robert Wells

Sidgwick & Jackson £2.40

Close your eyes until you get past the awful dust-jacket on this one...you'll be glad you did.

22nd Century is the scene where Ross Fletcher (a first time rejuvenee) is approached secretly by Megahunt. For a cool million, they will transport him to their secret island where he can experience the thrills of hunting their solar-powered robot dinosaurs. Ross accepts, but once on the safari things get complicated. For companions, he has multi-rejuvenile, pipe-chewing crackshot Bodee. Megahunt have also tacked a beautiful photographer on to the party to get action films. The guide, Sternius is sinister, enigmatic, and obviously has a private scheme in operation. The action is continuous and at all times, fully credible. The plot may sound trite, but the way Wells handles it, it simply isn't. I found this one of the most exciting items of s-f I've met in a long time



9

From SPHERE come two more in the 'SF Classic' series. Nos. 13 & 14.

NEXT OF KIN Eric Frank Russell Sphere 30p (Classic 13)
Boasting an uncredited cover by Chris Foss (rather like a squashed Sunderland flying boat), this is an expanded version of a 1956 story in Asf. Lieutenant Leeming is sent out on a scouting expedition into alien-held star territory. He crash lands and is taken prisoner. To escape, he invents an invisible symbiote which he calls his 'Eustace'. This confounds the aliens and leads to Leeming virtually winning the war on his own. Russell is the only writer I know who can skate so glibly through the implausible and make it sound like downright common sense. Humourous, fast-moving and always entertaining. Well worth buying if you haven't read it before.

THE NEW ADAM Stanley G Weinbaum Sphere 35p Classic 14)

Edmond Hall is a rather unsympathetic mutant genius, his single brain holds two minds. Unlike most superman stories, he has no designs on taking over his world of the early 1900s, being content to obtain an assured income from a single invention and some shrewd stock market deals. Virtually a recluse and a scientific dilettante, he sets out to examine humanity and falls in love with a childhood friend after seducing her. The remaining half of the book tells of their bitter-sweet relationship; A brief encounter with Sarah, a mutant like himself, leaves a son and a very slight hint of future world conquest. This is a work of thought rather than action and as such quite different from the supermen of Wells, Stapledon and the rest. Whether it deserves rating a classic, you must decide for yourself.

THE EARLY ASIMOV Vol. 2 Isaac Asimov Panther 35p

Twelve stories, plus an Asimov introduction, plus interspersed vignettes telling how each tale came to be written. Personally, I found these historical notes the most interesting part of the volume. Most of the yarns lean to the action-adventure side with such props as 'Tonite' guns, Venusian jungles, and rather card characters. There are a few goodies though. 'Homo Sol', 'Super Neutron' and 'Not Final' still stand up well. Overall, not as good as Volume 1, but even so, good value for 35p

Beyond THIS HORIZON Robert A. Heinlein. Panther 35p

This one originally appeared in the 'bed-sheet' astounding of 1942, and shows only the merest trace of the off-trail concepts with which the author set fandom on its ear some years later. Set in a mid-21st Century America where war and want has been eliminated and most men wear side arms to defend their honour. (Heinlein's state benefit seems a strong forerunner for Jack Reynolds basic shares). The hero, Hamilton Felix is a games machine designer and a star-line in the Government genetic programme. Sadly, he is reluctant to extend his line. However, he becomes an undercover agent against an anti-Government set; eventually gets the girl and eventually, two unusual children. Large slices of Heinlein philosophy a dash of metaphysics and a trace of reincarnation makes this a good buy with something for everyone.

MISCHIEF OF FIRE

Edmund Cooper

Hodder & Stoughton

£1.95

It is the near future. Vanessa is a 17-year-old star telepath confined with others in a Government institute. She escapes and is befriended, then loved by a failed psychiatrist. Also hunting her, is the small band of warped Espers led by a brilliant but half mad scientist who wishes to use her powers to assassinate the Prime Minister. Vanessa is tracked down by the PM's agent...a particularly engaging villain, but she is snatched from his grasp by the other set of hunters. The action is thick and fast enough to paper over the cracks in the cardboard characters, and the plot has plenty of twists to sustain interest throughout (At one point, even the hero is killed for a while!).

Edmund Cooper seems well at home with an ESP theme and handles the permissive dialogue (mandatory in most modern novels) deftly and without the ostentation of so many authors. Despite the rather stereotyped characters and unambitious plot, I enjoyed this one. It moves along nicely, has no boring philosophical sidetracks and makes good if not great reading.

THE TIME OF THE EYE

Harlan Ellison

Panther 35p

It seems mandatory for the jacket blurb of any Harlan Ellison book to say how explosive, abrasive, irritating, etc., etc., the writer is. Why this should be considered favourable to sales, I'm not too sure, but this collection is no exception. Once inside, the author explains that the twelve stories come from the latter half of a Stateside anthology called, 'Alone Against Tomorrow'. As you might expect, the tales are wide ranging, and have (mainly) rather horrendous themes - frequently downbeat. Often, I suspect that Ellison himself didn't know where the stories were going when he set off. Nevertheless, they are different, entertaining, and never dull.

THE EARLY ASIMOV (Volume 3)

Isaac Asimov

Panther 40p

The third (and final ?) book in the series, with the same formula of an Asimov introduction and historical reminiscences to point up the six stories and one (Thiotimoline) article. The stories are, 'Author, Author', 'Death Sentence', 'Blind Alley', 'No Connection' 'The Red Queen's Race' and 'Mother Earth'. Two points stand out. Asimov's (understandable) leaning towards chemistry, and less predictably, his penchant for using psychologists in his stories. A foible also evident in the Foundation series, and with Dr. Calvin of the robot yarns. In this particular collection, the tales are better and more neatly constructed. As a bonus, you also get an Appendix listing the 60 stories of the Campbell era. Definitely the best buy of the three.

THE GODS THEMSELVES

Isaac Asimov

Panther 40p

This Nebula and Hugo Award winner, first appeared (insanely) as a three part serial shared between Galaxy and If, so I was glad to read it here in full. Simply told, contact is made with a parallel universe and a power interchange set up via an 'Electron Pump'. All opposition to this is mercilessly squashed. A lovely section is set in the para-universe with one of the best alien sex (and self abuse) sequences I've ever met. Finally, the discredited scientist emigrates to the moon, and comes up with a new slant on the problem. Without doubt, one of Asimov's best, gripping, well told, and deserving of its awards.

From Coronet comes a 'Science Fiction Galaxy' of twelve paperbacks, all with excellent covers, many by Chris Foss. Sadly, the lack of a credit line prevents 100% identification. I wish publishers (hint) would note that s-f readers are also interested in the cover artists.

Six of the title are by Edmund Cooper - who gets as much sex into one tale as you'll find in a year's reading of the mainstream magazines.

SHIMMERS IN THE SKY (30p) 16 people are spirited away and awake to find themselves installed in a vivarium along with other groups. They explore, meet, and escape through a 'force wall' and confront their alien captors before the secret is revealed.

FIVE TO TWELVE (35p) Dion Cuern is a nonconformist in a woman dominated society. A 'dom' chooses him as her squire and he satisfies both her needs and those of the host mother she hires...until he is tricked into assassinating the Queen.

WHICH NEEDS MEN? (35p) Lesbians rule Britain, parthenogenetic birth is SOP, and Exterminators hunt out the remaining men. One of them, Rura, is caught and mass-raped while hunting, and this changes her viewpoint so that she changes sides.

TRANSIT (30p) Four humans and four aliens are snatched and set down on a small island on a strange planet. The scheme is a king-sized aptitude test set by Galactic intelligences.

THE LAST CONTINENT (25p) Negroes have colonised Mars, while whites remain on Earth, and sink into near-barbarism. Then a Black ship comes visiting after a thousand years and friction appears.

THE UNCERTAIN MIDNIGHT (25p) John Markham accidentally deep-freezes for 150 years and awakes to a Britain gradually being taken over by androids..and he becomes the central figure of the resistance.

After the Coopers come two Damon Knight anthologies :-

DIMENSION X (36p) This one contains the two excellent yarns, Heinlein's 'The Man Who Sold The Moon', and Kornbluth's prophetic, 'The Marching Morons'. An excellent and contrasting pair.

ELSEWHERE X3 (35p) This one boasts three novellas. 'Fiddler's Green' by Richard McKenna, 'The Ugly Little Boy' by Isaac Asimov, and 'The Caliva Tree' by Brian Aldiss. Enough variety for anyone.

Leo P Kelley has a trio which provide more off-beat sex than a Khama Sutra anthology...

THE COMING OF MURPH (35p) Post A-war tribes worship Murph, a computer outlet, and make all their decisions by coin-tossing. Then Lankh learns how to programme the output.

THE MAN FROM MAYBE (35p) A sleeper awakes to a world of robot simulacra. He rambles through an incoherent countryside having fun..and sex.

HYSTERIA (35p) Fornication around the spacelanes by flesh-peddling Captain Shannon and his crew as they raid for, and then sell, body cells.

If you like 'spicy' or 'racy' tales, try the above three...but if you want S-F, then Kelley isn't your man. Far, far better, is the final yarn in the series from the pen of Poul Anderson...

THE ENDWELLER (35p) The 21st Century, and an alien starship has orbited Earth for three years and all communication attempts have failed.. then two people find a way. Various power blocs scheme to take over and grab any technological spin-off for their own ends. Gripping and plausible s-f right down the main line.

DUCED MONSTERS

Ed. by A. Cheetham

Panther 40p

This is the pocket-book version of Sidgwick & Jackson's excellent ten-tale anthology where each story is based on some form of alien (NOT necessarily a BEM) Identical with the parent volume, right down to the 'A.E.VanVoight' credit. A good selection, with tales ranging from the 'War of the Worlds' radio script, Brown's superb, 'Arena' and many others equally good...only 'Dance of The Changer and the Three' lowering the standard. A good buy.

from ARROW comes an excellent 4-volume set on James Blish's 'Cities In Flight' series detailing the Okie saga :-

TINY SMALL HAVE STARS (40p) Not strictly Okie, but the stage-setting tale where the anti-agathic immortality drugs are developed, and way out on (or near) Jupiter, the ice bridge is built and the spindizzy makes its first appearance as a spacedrive.

A LIFE FOR THE STARS (35p) Sixteen-year-old Chris is press-ganged aboard Scranton city at its maiden flight, then transferred to New York, where by hard work and ability, he winds up as city manager. Slanted to the juvenile market, but still a good yarn.

EARTHLAND COME HOME (40p) Amalfi's city makes a final landing on a priesthood-run slave planet. The ruling sect plans to take over New York, but Amalfi deposes them by educating the slaves, and founding a New Earth.

A CLASH OF CYMBALS (35p) The wandering planet He returns with news of the end of the universe. Experiments confirm their story, and Amalfi heads up a team which explores possibilities as things wind to the end.

THE SUN GROWS COLD

Howard Berk

Panther 40p

A prisoner-patient in a multi-level hospital complex finds he is further advanced than others in his group, so starts to rebel in an effort to find why he is being treated, along with hundreds of others. All are being rehabilitated from insanity and amnesia. A gripping, well-written story even if the denouement doesn't quite jibe with - or live up to, the rest of the story.

THE BEST OF A.E. VanVogt.

Sphere 60p

Thirteen stories ranging from the early '40s right up to 1968 - with a bibliography thrown in. Sadly, VanVogt's first (and greatest ?) tale, 'Black Destroyer' isn't here, but we do get a host of other goodies in the 437 jam-packed pages. 'The Monster' is here, as is 'Juggernaut', 'Green Forest', 'Weapon Shop' and a host of others. Without doubt, one of the best bargains of the year.

THE SAME TO YOU DUCED

Robert Sheckley

Pan 35p

Sixteen stories in this one, but since they are shorter, the result is a much slimmer (and not so scintillating) collection. For the first two-thirds of the book, Sheckley serves up some of his best, tongue-in-cheek whimsy. He takes a whacky premise and follows it logically..and delightfully. Unhappily, the final third of the book tapers off a lot. Even so, Sheckley is seldom bad, and you'll not regret buying this one.

The title refers to the monolithic dwelling block which houses the various characters appearing in the story. No central theme, but a slow drifting look at the lives and incidents therein of the people brought on stage. The time is 2027, the city, an overpopulated New York. The life is the sweaty, sleazy, get-off-my-back one where drugs are common, and so are the unimaginative four letter words which besprinkle most conversations. You might like it.

13

TEN PATTERNS OF CHAOS

Colin M. Kapp

Panther 50p

Good old space opera which grips and holds you right through. Bron is an agent with an implanted line back to his HQ, as he is infiltrated into the ranks of the Destroyers to locate their home base. He succeeds, but only to uncover that the real enemy comes from Messier 31, and can forecast the future exceedingly accurately. Action piles higher and he leads the combined fleets of Earth and the Destroyers against the aliens. One of the best space opera items in a long time.

LOST WORLDS Vol.1.

Clark Ashton Smith

Panther 35

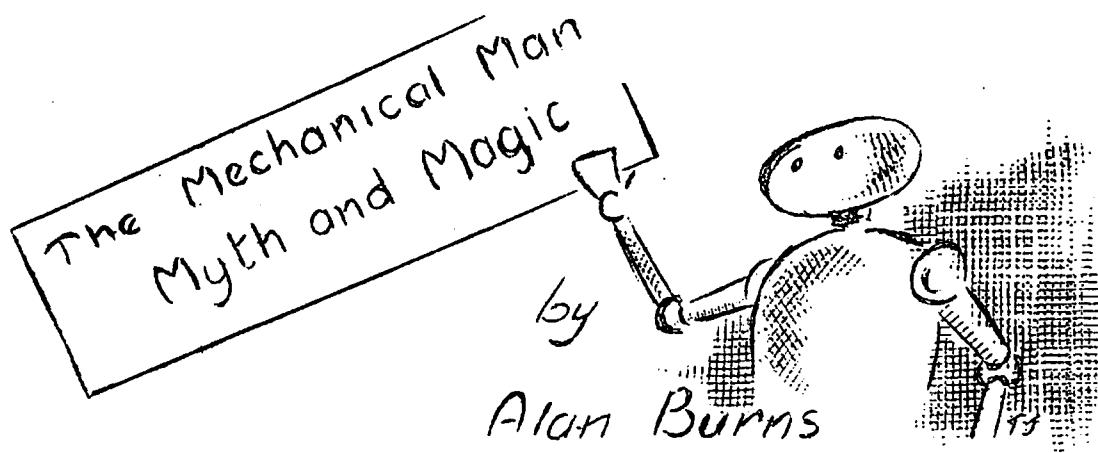
Ten tales of horror, fantasy and strange happenings. In three sections, the first two of which, set in the lost worlds of Hothique are both powerful and beautiful. The more modern, third section loses by contrast. Smith selects his words with care and assembles them far more delicately than Lovecraft ever did to produce a delightful collection.

A new space-opera series is being published by Pan, at 40p each. Written by Dan Morgan and John Kippax, two titles have appeared so far.... The tales centre around the adventures of the starship, Venturer 12, and it appears that a lurking alien menace, 'The Kilroys' is to be brought gradually into greater and greater importance as a continuing menace...

THUNDER OF STARS Venturer 12 is being completed in this tale and the chief crew members chosen (and haggled over) by the selecting board. Lieutenant Commander Bruce breaks off a love affair with his sleeping partner, then is forced to kill a ship load of colonists in order to save the lives of thousands. The question is whether or not this will prevent his commanding V-12. The alien Kilroys have a minor part though their atrocities have a key effect.

SLED OF THE STARS As with book 1, this starts with the two main characters naked in bed....and they get back there in various permutations a bit more often. Venturer 12 comes to Kepler III to find if she is now ready for home rule. The Asiatic colonists have a problem (the incidence of monster births is rising) which they try to conceal. However two crew members desert so that the woman can have her baby. The man discovers the cause of the mutants, and the Kilroys actually take an active part in the action





I begin by saying that, if Asimov's Laws of Robotics are true then we have no robots as such at the present time, because whatever we are pleased to term robot can be turned against any or all of us. So I beg to propound some laws of my own:-

- (1) A robot is any device which can duplicate or extend any action of which a human being is capable.
- (2) A robot is only capable of performing (1) when it has been programmed by a human being. It is incapable of any action for which it has not been programmed.
- (3) A robot is completely neutral, and subject only to the desires of its programmer.

There are a lot of other laws that can be thought up, but in general a robot without a human programmer is only a piece of mixed material construction. But let us consider the above laws, or perhaps axioms would be a better word, in more detail.

Duplication or extention of a human action. A man can pick up a piece of rock weighing a pound or so, a robot can pick up a piece weighing hundreds of pounds. A man can hand-frank a letter, a machine can frank many letters in the same period. We could go on, but there is not one action done by a machine that in perhaps a lesser way could not be done by a human.

A robot must be programmed before any action is possible. Even the so-called self-repairing and self generating robots have to be programmed. Even in the future, when, perhaps, telepathic amplifiers take the place of switches and other controls a robot will still have to be programmed to perform any action, although a very sophisticated robot may only require to briefest of instructions to achieve a most complicated assignment.

A robot is neutral. It may be programmed to hold an opinion or give a decision, but the programming is the personal choice of the programmer.

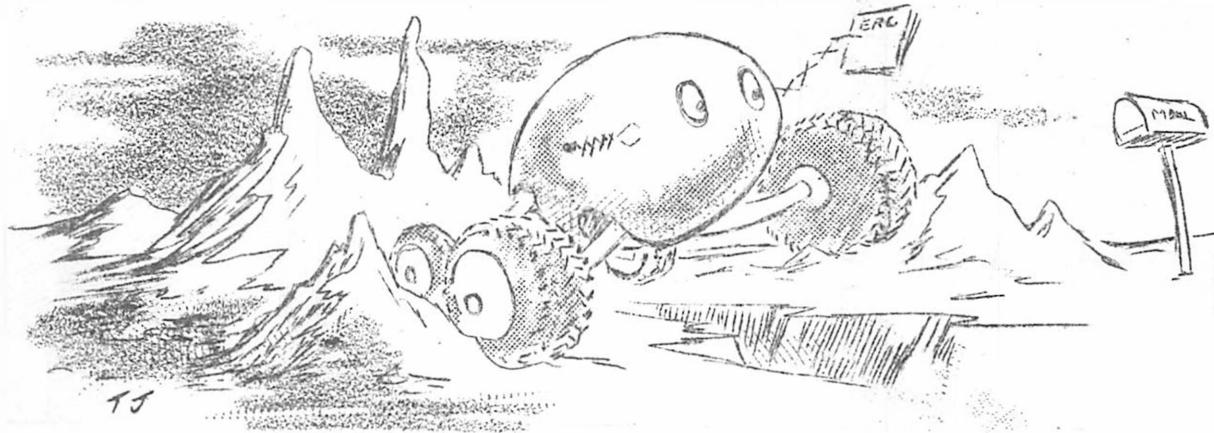
I have carefully thought over the above and am unable to find any exceptions to it, that, by careful analysis cannot be made to conform to the principles laid down.

In the light of this let us talk

about robots consider them in more detail. Perhaps sad, but certainly true, is that the height of a civilisation is proportional to the laziness of its inhabitants, for, it is obvious that as more and more work is done by machines, so people will have more opportunities for being lazy. The sole object of the building of a robot should be to make things better for mankind. If it were feasible I would suggest some other word but robot for a machine that doesn't make things better for everyone. How about Malmech?

Now the design of any robot has certain essential parameters, and the first is, is it necessary universally? For instance my sister likes washing and ironing, but hates cooking. So a robot that would cook would be a blessing to her. I am just the reverse, hence a robot for washing and ironing would be what I require. But it can be agreed that any robot that removes drudgery is worthwhile, but unfortunately to get the best out of, say, a housecleaning robot, a house would have to be designed around it, and there complications set in. Hence, the creation of computers, for example, necessitated the creation of buildings of superb cleanliness, even temperatures had to be maintained and the air had to be most scrupulously conditioned. Fortunately computers are now a little more rugged and excepting in the major terminal buildings don't have to be specially constructed to house them. So we come to another thing. A universally necessary robot must be rugged, because it is natural for the finding out process in humans, and especially the young, to take a destructive form and it is often quite easy for mishandling to turn a robot into a Malmech. So, universal need, ruggedness, what next? Well of course convenience. In early days vacuum cleaners needed two men and a boy to operate them, now they can be put in any odd corner. So in design natural evolution must be taken into account. There is a final parameter, ignored by big companies and governments, and that is cost. The price of big computers is staggering, in fact most people just rent them, which has the drawback that if anything goes wrong someone outside the department has to be called in, and invasion of privacy takes place. So we have then the main parameters for a new robot, need, ruggedness, convenience and cost.

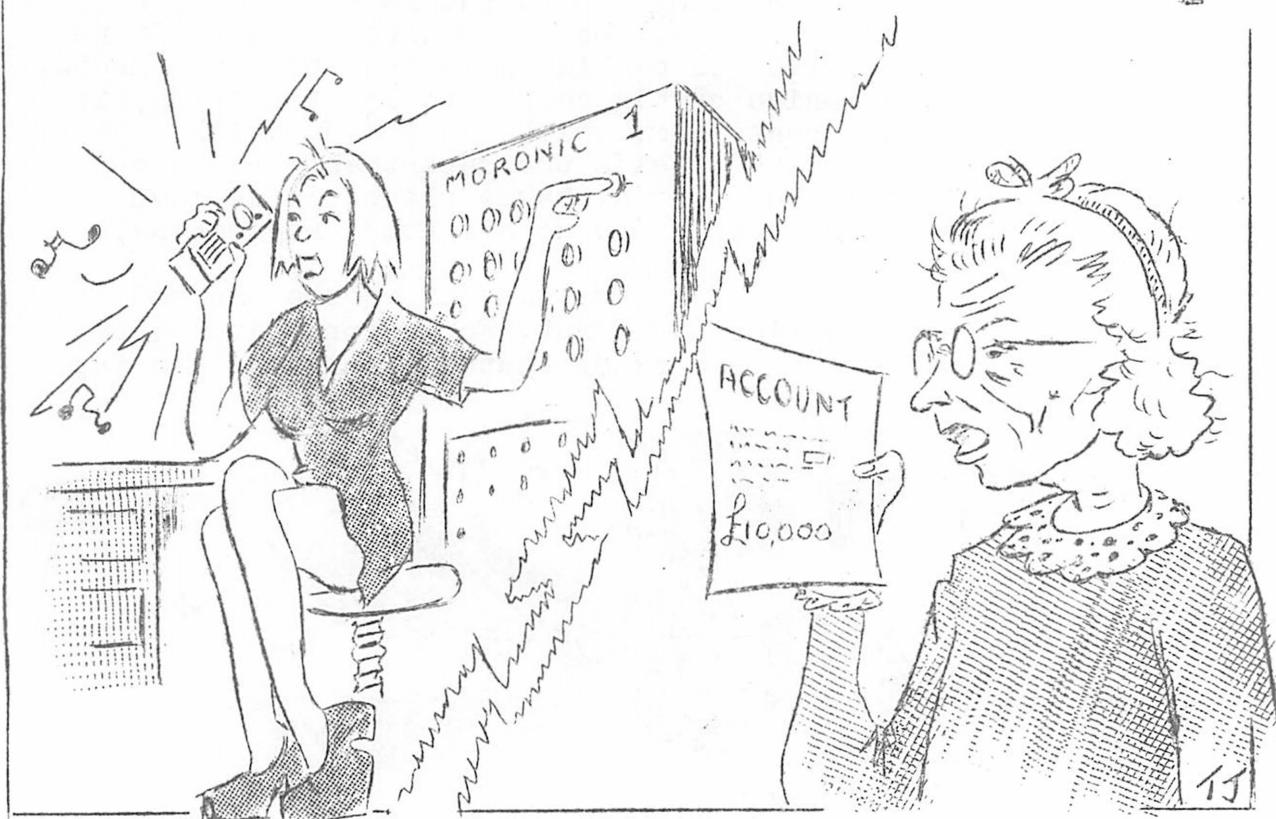
The uses of robots are not always transparently obvious at first. For example it may be obviously desirable to have a robot that will trundle its way



over difficult and dangerous terrain, either on Earth or in space and bring back a complete report of what is encountered. It is not so obvious to have a robot trundling about a city reporting on roads needing repairs, or bad pavements, or even inconvenient arrangements of traffic. Such a machine would be linked in with a city computer which would assign repairs in order of priority.

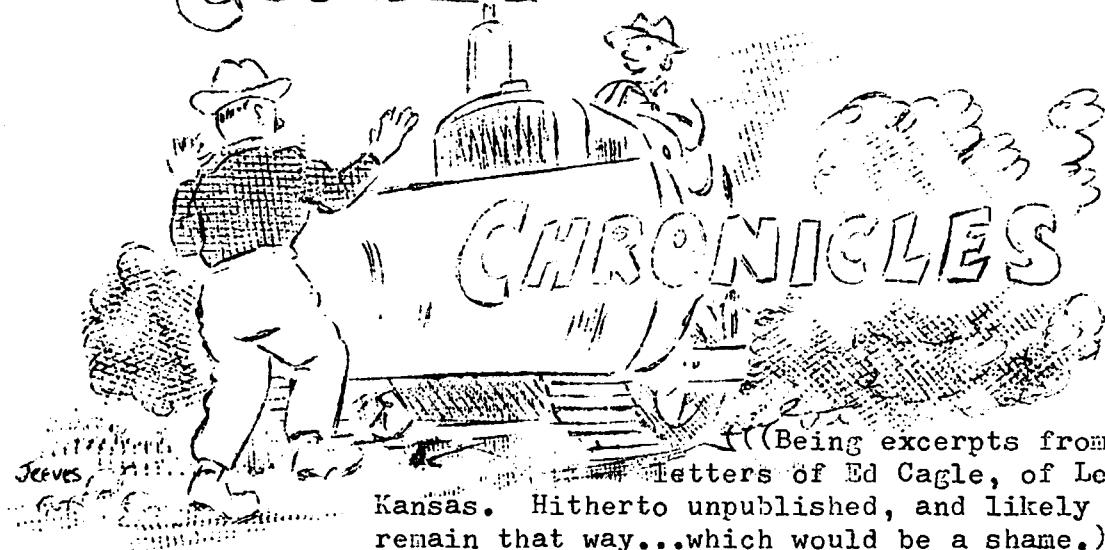
Robots in fiction almost always fall flat, at least to me. Asimov sets out his Laws of Robotics and immediately proceeds to write very ingenious stories in which they are contravened. Frankenstein's monster has unfortunately become a folk mythos, and has put back progress in robot construction for years, and generated an unfounded suspicion at the mention of robots. If people could only realise that it is not the computer that sends some old age pensioner a bill for two thousand pounds for a quarter's gas, but some mini-skirted addle-pated dolly who rattles away at the keyboard with her mind filled with the latest long-haired howler and not concentration on what is a most important matter. For example I had a colossal electric bill last quarter which, on querying was found to have been incorrectly entered.

But in general these are all teething troubles, and I feel pretty certain that in due course we will have self-correcting computers that sing out when a transparently obvious mistake is made. We can look forward to a much better world where the working week will steadily shrink to nothing, while wages will rise continuously in buying power, for it makes economic sense to keep robots busy, in case they get into mischief and start taking over the world!



The CAGLE

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((Being excerpts from the
Letters of Ed Cagle, of Leon,
Kansas. Hitherto unpublished, and likely to
remain that way...which would be a shame.)))

=====

"Your household experiences reminded me of my wife's father, who sells, services and puts up TV antennae and other related gear, and whose manner when attacking an antenna erection project is somewhat.... slapdash. By virtue of begging, threats and sometimes bribery (quite often a bottle of expensive booze), Tom used to wheedle me into helping him do some of his more horrendous chores.

One blistering hot August afternoon I was just hauling my 'dozer to the yard after finishing a miserable few miles of terraces, and anticipating a tall cold drink and a lot of lolling in a hammock. Into the street dashes Tom, idiotically running in front of about 40,000 pounds of rolling iron, rubber, dirt, diesel fuel and assorted other matter, demanding that I stop. Which luckily I was able to do, in a cloud of dust, a jet-like hiss of air brakes and a squeal of rubber. This happened directly in the centre of Leon, in view of several bystanders who got to hear me call my father-in-law a 'crazy sonuvabitch' Tom was not insulted, and launched into a mournful harangue whose intent was to get me to help him with an antenna job. I suggested he attempt self-intercourse at first - then gave in to a bribe of cool tasty drink.

45 minutes and 30 miles later we were looking up at a spindly, 50 foot tower, upon which was fastened a ratty antenna. By now fortified internally, we went to work; Tom got on the roof of the house, and with a rope tied to the tower attempted to lower it, after I cut it loose below a pivot at the bottom. CRASH ! Owner emerges from house, looks at tangled mass of former tower, and expresses certain reservations about its ability to support a sparrow, let alone a TV aerial. I distinctly heard Tom explain how the tower had been disrupting the ground wave, and was better off thrown away anyway. ...ur!

So we erect a roof-peak mounted, 10 foot aluminium pole with aerial attached! and lead-in wire strung and fastened securely across the roof and down the side of the house, and were about to run the wire alongside the screen into the house when the owner suddenly decides he wants the thing to come out of a wall outlet. Tom turns purple, argues

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vehemently, but cannot sway the man. He then goes and gets a drill from his truck, chucks a FOUR FOOT LONG, 5/8" bit, and with all the motions of a rhinoceros charging an elephant, rams a hole through the wall of the house...at random! Owner's eyes get larger than usual, and he vanishes into the house. Tom turns to me, "What the hell, did he have his old lady tied to the wall in there or something?", and then in an offhand way he looks at the drill bit for evidence of blood. He sees none. I move away to the truck in search of a cold drink. In so doing, I pass by the back door, under which is emerging a healthy stream of water. I carry on to the truck and make a strong drink. From my perch, I observe the owner and Tom in animated conversation...something about the vulnerability of copper water pipes, a priceless photograph, and the back of a TV set. They hadn't got around to the effects of water on a rug. On the way home, Tom said he hadn't made much on that job.///

Tom and I built many electronic gadgets. One I enjoyed quite a lot, was a transmitting and receiving device attached to a dog collar and linked to a shock mechanism. It was quite useful in training hunting dogs. You shout, "Stop, you bastard", and when he doesn't, you push the button. This shocks the dog and reminds him that to obey is better than getting it in the neck. It worked well in most cases, but one man was very upset when, after using it on his dog, found himself with a dog who when commanded, would howl and race back to cower between his legs. I think either Tom or I suggested he give up hunting and join a circus with a dog act. Another project was begun to scare rabbits and birds away from my garden. This involved a timer, and miniature recorder and a large speaker. The object being for the device to emit loud and unusual sounds and frighten away the pests. It worked fine and caused no problems for a time, but then Tom and I while sipping something one evening, decided to change the amplified sounds. We did...and a number of the neighbours objected to lions roaring and trains whistling and Jeannette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy singing 'Indian Love Call' all night long...but it sure kept the opossums away from my melons. Actually, I think the real problem started when Sophie Schaeffer, and elderly widow, who was a neighbour and otherwise quite calm and collected, called our neighbourhood constable from his bed one night at 2am and somewhat hysterically requested that he remove a lion from her back yard.

Hilarious episode. I knew the constable quite well..even drank with him and did nice things for him - like turning on the fire hydrants. I happened to be sitting out in the back yard and saw the constable arrive. Chet told me that old lady Schaeffer was hearing things again, and I to his doubtful amusement agreed it was so. Fortunately, the next blaring eruption was the lion, and for some minutes, Chet was somewhat silent and watchful. He forgave me in time, but never did smile much when I met him on the street and asked him if he had caught any lions lately. As a matter of fact, I think my badgering him had something to do with my unusually high water bills thereafter. Chet having several city jobs (all of them), read the water meters each month and also made out the bills. After all, a water bill that jumps from 4 dollars a month to 25 dollars is enough to make anyone suspicious.

Must quite now, Terry. Keep your chin up, avoid low limbs and make sure the air can circulate freely in your knickers.

Cheers, ED

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LETTERS

(With Editorial interjections marked thus)
We open with someone who isn't Gray Boak

Graham Poole
23 Russet Rd
Cheltenham
Glos.
GL51 7LN

"Many thanks for your latest ERG (47).
The only point of criticism I can make is that I managed to read it in half an hour (So read slower and masticate each eyeful twenty times)

The cover was a typical Jeevesian pleasant looking illo. 'Oil Be Seeing You', light and not very memorable. 'Drought and Water' An odd thing to be seeing in ERG, but both of interest as they touched on (a) Things I Did Not Know (Drought) or (b) Humour (Water). 'Sword & Sorcery' seemed OK. And finally the part I've been waiting for for years - 'Stencils'. Maybe at last I'll learn a little more about the practicalities of duplicating. Of course I could go to the library and get a book out on the subject (You couldn't...I've tried..the subject isn't even in the catalogue...although my checklist of Astounding is..Part 3 still in print at 50p (Advt.)-) That wouldn't be the same thing would it...all technical without any fannish hints and remarks. I've said it before, it's a pity you can't go more deeply into the many subjects you've touched upon in ERG and this would be my main complaint of it (I try to avoid running on too long..it can get boring. Say what is needed and then move on, is how I like to do it) Still, you come out with an issue every three months which is more than some people do (although I would defend Ian Maule's good name by pointing out that he was busy helping to organise and run an extremely good convention. (Very true, and I for one wouldn't blame him for not pubbing...but how about a TIEF man who sits on your subs ??))

And now for a few words from one of fandom's staunchest characters, one of my oldest friends, and a good man to boot (also co-author of Yseult.

Alan Burns

6 Goldspink Lane
Newcastle on Tyne
NE2 1EP

"Many thanks for ERG 47. As usual up to standard. But Oh Terry, when are you going to shed your fixation for the beautifully streamlined spaceships of the 30's. You may argue they are that way for purposes of atmospheric navigation, but if so what are they doing nipping round Saturn. No, read your Analog, spaceships are unlovely structures of pods and girders. (Just fancy all those idiots at the Cape still designing Saturn rockets along lines of the 30's. Nugs, all of em. However, you overlook one little point. Until we build such ships in space they need to navigate Earth's air blanket..hence the streamlining. As for those on my cover..they aren't from Earth at all, they are the first two Saturnian ships to reach space...nyaaah) 'Tales From The... Not bad at all, tho' you made heavy going of the various puns etc. But you'd be the first to admit you were no Arthur C Clarke. John J Alderson's letter makes me sadly shake my head and wonder why a little money isn't spread around to stop a lot of disaster. Simple catchment

areas don't cost much and save a lot of flooding ((True, but try to tell that to Governments. Take India. Famine, disaster and foreign aid, time and time again (blankets and shoes from the last lot are still rotting at Heathrow, cos Pakistani Air Lines forgot to load 'em) but where does their money go ?? On supersonic planes for their Air Force, and on atomic bombs. They depend on mugs at home to parade, march and raise lolly for them)) The Cagle Chronicles demand that you lay your hands on more ((In this issue, you get your wish)).

And via Pony Express (in bottom gear) comes a delayed LOC on ERG 43 from,

Jim Kennedy
1859 E Fairfield
Tucson
Arizona 85203
U.S.A.

"I enjoyed ERG 43 a great deal. The use of colour inside was very unusual and effective; please continue to use it...if it isn't too difficult you might try mixing red and black as on that bee-you-tee-ful cover, but if you have to go through the horrible complicated process of changing ink and so forth, well.... ((Yes, I do. Normally, I run all the black stencils, then change skins and rollers, wipe drums clean, and then run all the red stencils. I leave the machine set up for red, and then the next issue, start with the red stencils, finally going back to black. It saves little work, but not much))) I've a feeling we wouldn't see eye to eye on the 'permissive society', but its nice to see that we share (aside from fmz publishing) a common hobby in film-making. Otherwise, the most interesting thing about 'my first "British fanzine"' was the fact that it is British. ((Complete with stiff upper lip)) The English of England isn't as different from the English of America as some try to tell me...you use 'lolly', I assume, for money, and 'cine' for 'money'. ((Better avoid calling a donkey and 'ass' thought hadn't I ? and the Norfolk 'Broads' over here are NOT local ladies of easy virtue))) I've been too long away from Lewis Carroll to really understand 'Red Queen's Mate'. 'Supersoggy' was delightful..and hand cut ? ((Yes))

((Jim also sends news of an CSFFA change of leadership, plus Arizona's first S-F Convention, to be put on by OSFFA (Just what is OSFFA, Jim ?) but the news came by the same route as the above LOC..and the Con was held over the weekend of June 29th....Hope you all had fun)))

Frank L Balazs
19 High St.,
Croton-on-Hudson
N.Y. 10520
U.S.A.

"I really liked the cover of No. 46 with the Soggy spaceman. Haule Disposal Unit indeed ! I'm almost afraid to ask what the Cagle Unit does (((It Cagles of course))). Permit me some rank generalisation (((Don't pull rank here chum))) on the articles in 46. I found Alan Burns' piece rather humourous and look forward to more stuff in the same vein, artery, heart (((You mean blood ??))) The s&s article in No.47 wasn't bad, but... I strongly doubt his assertion that there are more plots to be found in s&s than s-f (((He too))) I agree that the field is not nearly as limited as present dogma insists, that writers are simply not adding anything new because of lack of thought and preparation -- viewing it as another hack field, along with space-opera. Look at Fritz Leiber! But no one else seems to have taken up his sort of s&s like everyone copies Howard. I would contend that Leiber is a much better writer. Liked the stencil article and look forward to more. Your examples were welcome. Ditto, and Banda are both strange names (((Banda comes from 'Block & Anderson)))

Sorry to crop Frank, but space is tight this issue. RJ

Cutting Stencils

THE TYPEWRITTEN STENCIL

===== Typing material onto a stencil is a fairly straightforward process, but nevertheless, there are a few tips which come in handy. First, and most important, move the ribbon change lever to 'stencil'. If your machine lacks this facility, then remove the ribbon from the machine. If you try to type through the ribbon as in normal typing, the result will be a fuzzy, badly cut, illegible stencil....like this.

The next step is to insert a stencil in your typewriter. Nowadays most stencils come with carbons attached. If not, it is a good plan to insert a carbon sheet, gooey side up, between stencil and backing sheet. When typing, the reverse sided carbon will take the place of a ribbon and show you what you are typing. Some typists also like to insert a thin sheet of 'pliofilm' below the carbon to give a clearer cut to the typeface. Incidentally, if you plan to use illustrations, it is better to lightly pencil in the outline area of the illo before cutting the typed material, and then cut the illo properly after doing the typing. This has two advantages..the pencil outline tells you where to stop typing. Cutting the stencil by hand is tedious, and the typer is likely to mangle a delicately cut one...so get the typing done first and then the danger of a boob is minimised.

Once you're satisfied that all is well (and tedious as it sounds, it soon becomes second nature), you can happily type away at your top rate of knots..but do try to keep your touch staccato, and as even as possible...a point where two-finger typists come out ahead. It is also a good plan to clean the keys regularly, as a waxy deposit soon builds up and mars the clarity of the cutting. Then of course comes that shattering moment when you make an error. It may be a wrongly typed letter..or even an incorrect sentence. You can of course simply do as I often do, and lazily back space and type over the error ...Like so. On the other hand, this looks messy, and this is where 'corflu' comes in.

LEADING CORRECTIONS

~~====CORRECTIONS=====~~ Correcting fluid ('corflue') comes in red or white consistency, personally, I prefer the red as it is more obvious where it has been used..and it can be used for stencil marking as well. The liquid has a quick-drying base, and at a pinch, you can even use the wife's nail varnish - but please, don't just slap it on anyhow - unless you like messy results. The correct technique goes like this :-

1. Roll stencil up clear of platen, support it on a firm surface such as a ruler, or strip of hard plastic. Gently burnish over the error to close up the fibres and wax as much as possible before applying corflu.
 2. Insert a pencil or similar object between stencil and carbon to lift the two apart and so prevent sticking caused by seep through of corflu.
 3. Wipe corflu brush as you withdraw it from bottle, and lightly brush corflu over the mistake. Allow to dry, then type in the correction. Here are two samples. The first 'blobby' the other done lightly.

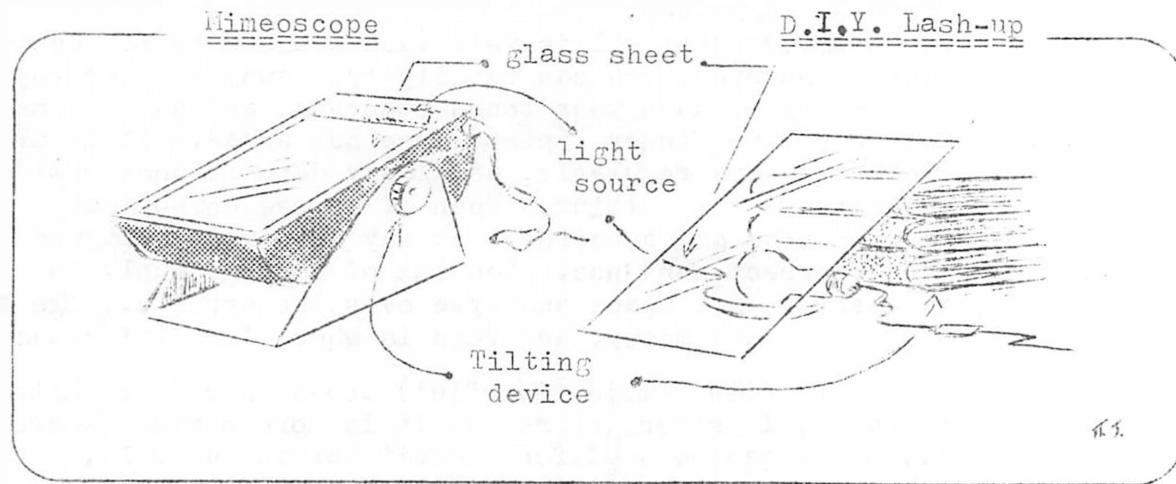
gggggbbbbbbvbvgggggg ggggggggbbbbbbvbvggggggg

THE HAND-CUT STENCIL

Methods vary in achieving acceptable art-work from a hand-cut stencil. A quick glance at the work of masters such as Eddie Jones, or Jim Cawthorn, will soon confirm this. I don't wish to stand up alongside such giants of the art, but simply to pass along my own ideas and methods in the hope that others will find them of use. If you know a different (and better) method, go right ahead and use it...but please, do write and tell me all about it.

There are talented people around who can pick up a stylus and proceed to draw a beautiful illustration straight on to stencil. Sad to say, I'm not one of them. Generally, I start off by making a rough layout sketch first. Once satisfied with that, I add the elaboration at the cutting stage directly on the stencil..which is why hand cut stencils aren't eligible for the McIntyre Award..the rules ask for originals, and in most cases there just aren't any!

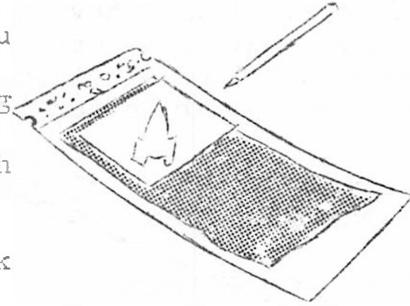
Rough sketch, or detailed illo, somehow the thing has to be transferred to stencil. Which brings us to the light box. Gestetner used to market one under the name of 'Mimeoscope'. I actually bought one of these monstrosities at the '57 Worldcon, and haven't used the clumsy thing yet. I did get as far as setting it up, but the bother and the sheer inconvenience of using it, put me right off. However, if you want to make one (and there is no need to have the fancy swivelling upper section of the Gestetner job) then all you need is a sheet of glass, something to tilt it to a suitable angle, and a light source beneath.



In use, the stencil is laid on the glass with the backing sheet hanging down the back out of the way. The illo to be copied is laid beneath the stencil, face upwards, and the light switched on. At this point you can either use the lubber's way, or press on the more tedious, but better route. Let's look at the lubber first. THE LAZY LUBBER takes a stylus, and proceeds to cut over every line of the original which now shows clearly with a strong backlight. The method is speedy, but has two built in drawbacks. First, the stylus work will ruin the original artwork. Second, because drawing paper is no stand-in for a proper backing sheet, the resulting cutting will be poorly defined. However, if your original is a very simple line-drawing; you are in a hurry, and your standards are low, then the lubber's way is for you... and it does have the merit that even a poorly illustrated fanzine has generally got more eye-appeal than a plain mass of print.

Let's suppose that you want to produce better quality work than that produced by the lubber's way. A fair assumption, otherwise you wouldn't have read this far. With the illo on the light box, take a 2B pencil, and lightly pencil in as much of the original art as you think you will need when you start the cutting (the more you put in, the nearer your cutting will approximate to the original). If you haven't got a light box, you can still trace in the main lines fairly easily, which I do when transferring a finished drawing. ...but there are other ways.

THE CARBON METHOD. Simply lay a sheet of carbon, face down, on the stencil. Lay the illo, face up on top of this, and then use a dried-up ball pen to go over the illo with a firm hand. On completing the tracing, you can remove illo and carbon, to leave a clear outline of the drawing all ready to cut. Lacking carbon paper, the same effect can be achieved by scribbling over the back of the illustration with a soft (2B or softer) pencil, and then using the dried up ball-pen. Either method is simple to use, but both tend to damage the original artwork slightly.

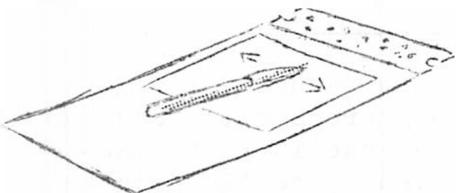


THE DURNISHING METHOD I lay out my rough using a very soft pencil, and go over the key lines fairly heavily to ensure they are liberally laden with graphite. Then I simply turn the rough over, lay it in place on the stencil, and rub back and forth over the rear side using the handle of a spoon, or the domed cap of a ball-pen. Lift the edges from time to time until you are sure that all the key lines have been transferred to your stencil, and then you can remove the rough and pencil in any further layout lines. The snag with this system is

that it automatically reverses the drawing onto stencil...but in some cases, as when a pair of matching drawings is needed, it can prove useful.

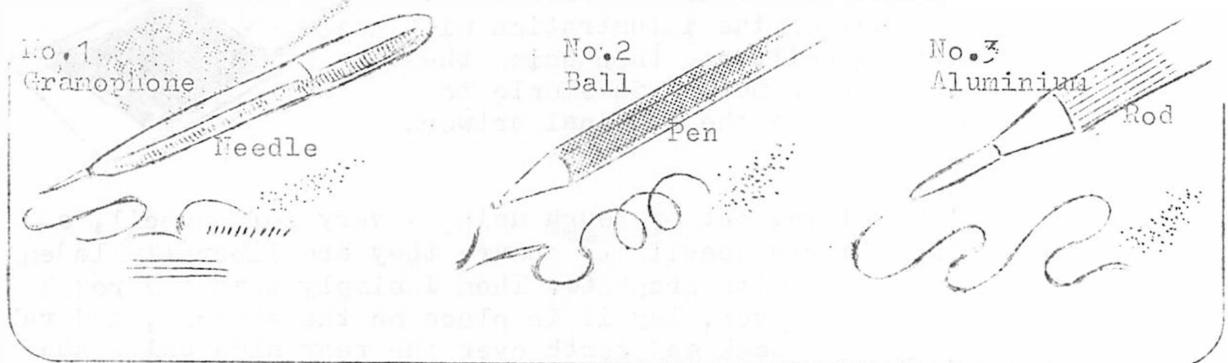
Whichever method you prefer, you will now have (unless you went for the lubber method) a neatly laid out drawing on your stencil. The moment of truth is at hand, you now have to cut it.

THE BACKING SHEET Please don't start in with the stylus straight away. The backing sheet of a stencil is too soft to allow the stylus to 'bite' properly..try it, and the result will be poorly cut, blotchy lines. You need to insert a firmer backing sheet to offer some resistance to the stylus as it presses out the wax, and leaves (you hope) the stencil fibres still more or less intact. In the past, I have tried a sheet of sand-blasted glass - effective, but a bit harsh. Then there was a thin piece of silk cloth stretched taught over an aluminium plate, - less harsh, but also less effective. I finally returned to my first love, a plastic backing sheet (thin, flexible plastic) supplied by Gestetner. If you have access to Banda supplies, they supply an excellent one in each box of carbons. Insert this beneath carbon and stencil and away you go... provided you have a stylus.



CUTTING TOOLS

First and foremost among these is the stylus. You can buy one of these from Messrs. Gestetner, Romeo or a hundred-and-one other places - and waste your money. My favourite tool is an old-fashioned steel gramophone needle, mounted in a discarded ball pen, and its lethal point smoothly rounded off. This gives a smooth, clean line with which I turn out 90% of my drawings. To back it up, I use another discarded ball-pen (given to me by Eric Bentcliffe), and this though less flexible, gives a thicker, more dramatic line for certain effects. I also have a third one, seldom used except for burnishing a shading mat in awkward corners..again, an old ball-pen, with a suitably rounded bit of aluminium rod mounted in the end. The sketches below give you a far better idea of appearance and results, than mere words



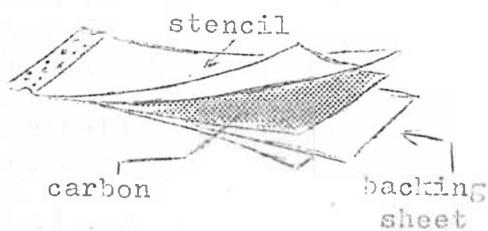
To use them, insert backing sheet and carbon beneath stencil, and go over the prepared pencil drawing with a firm steady pressure. Draw the stylus, rather than push it, or it will dig in, and use it in a near-vertical position. A little practice will allow you to settle down to the cutting technique which you like best. Every so often, hold the stencil up to the light to see if the lines are cutting properly. If they are, the clear, open cuts in the stencil are easily seen (If in doubt, compare your results with cutting produced by a typewriter)

Do not try to cut lines too closely together. If you do, the stencil will 'drag' and tear. You may be able to bodge it with corflue, but the result will show. Where several lines meet, cut TO the point, not away from it, or here again, tearing will result.

Incorrect



Correct



In the illustration showing how to insert a backing sheet and carbon, you can see an arrow pointing on to the shaded carbon.

Always cut the line (arrow) first, and then shade over it, the reverse process will result in a torn stencil.

Stylus work out of the way, it is now time to add special effects such as shading tints, wheel-pen work and the like.

The grass grows highest round the house where the sheep are not allowed to eat it because they prefer the fruit trees, and you don't let them in. So, last November, I did what most of us do, burnt a fire-break.

Except that things went wrong !

THE SCARCE

A
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by

JOHN
J.
ALDERSON

I was of course, alone. There is something else I ought to explain. My property borders what is regarded as a fairly busy road.

All went well for a few minutes. Then there was a puff of wind and I was fighting to save everything I had. My first thought when I saw that the fire was away, was to save the house at the expense of the sheds and grass. By the time I had put the fire out on the side that may have spread to the house, the fire was in the long grass and with a wind that mysteriously began to blow behind it was making speedily towards the sheds. The usual weapon to fight fires here is the lough of a tree, hitting the fire in onto itself, and of course fighting from the rear and side until the front is narrowed and can be put out.

I stopped the fire along the track between it and the first shed, but then in an evil moment a gust of wind carried the flames across and menaced the larger shed. I had to leave the paddock burn the precious acres of grass, and boy were those acres precious, I lamented their loss all through the summer and autumn. But the fire did not have a continuous front along the shed, being broken by concrete, bare earth, and old sleepers, the latter later to burn merrily.

With the sheds reasonably secure I started tackling the fire in the paddock, on the windward side of course. Already it was about two chain ahead of me and I concentrated on putting it out from the back. I didn't want it to spread out any wider. But the time came when I just had to stand there and let the fire burn. I was exhausted. I suffer a little from low blood pressure which means that I cannot keep up continually violent exercie. It was terrible to stand there, gulping in great breaths of air and trying to get mobile again. precious as the grass was, the fire could do little other damage unless the wind changed. On the road side the fire was dying of its own accord in the low grass. Ahead was timber where the fire would burn but



Slowly and was unlikely to damage the green timber. All the time I was hoping against hope that the fire watchers would see the smoke and send out the fire brigade, but the fire watchers were not working yet, being several days before the summer fire period.

Finally I got into action again and worked along the paddock edge of the fire and got it under control, then worked back along the other edge putting out any pockets of flame that lingered. After dealing with another small outbreak at the rear, I got the bucket and started carting water to put out posts and timber on the ground. Done reasonably safe and too far gone for salvage, I let burn. I suppose I was lucky having water so close. I merely had to cart each bucketful some two hundred yards. Late at night I went around and put out more fires and again in the morning. When I went to bed I was too tired to do anything but hold a shovel up... I generally carried the gang anyrate. I slept at 'smoke-oh' and at dinner, and later when the job was done, and for a week, I was completely exhausted. The boss, who wasn't a bad sort said I ought to lay off fighting fires. Yes, must give up that pastime!

I got out of it lightly, apart from losing several years of my life. The fire began at a few minutes past six in the evening, and I had it under control a little after nine. During those three hours, not a solitary car, truck or anything else went along that 'fairly busy road'

Australians are very scarce !

John J. Alderson
Havelock
Victoria

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