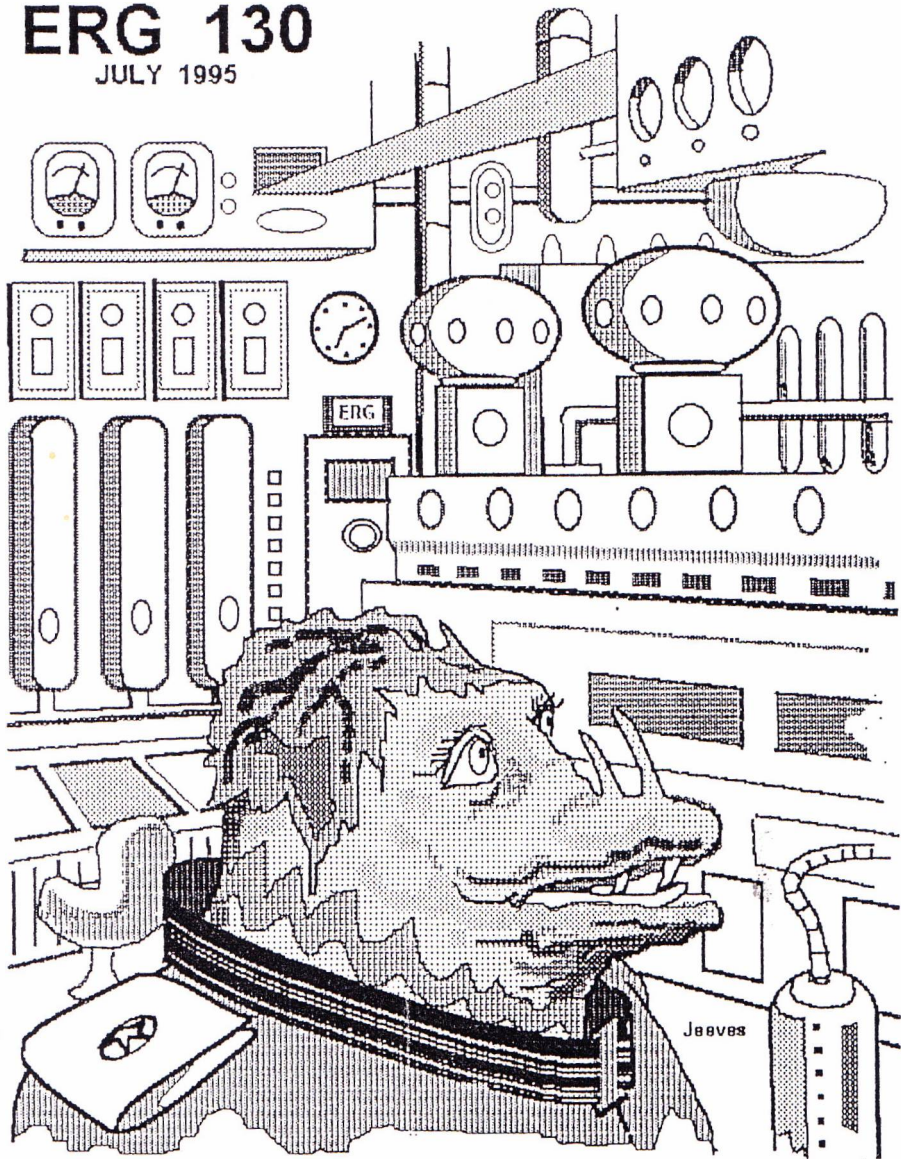


# ERG 130

JULY 1995

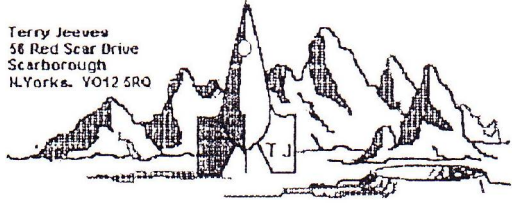


☺ NOW IN ITS 37th. YEAR ☺

# ERG

QUARTERLY  
No. 130  
JULY 1995

Terry Jeeves  
56 Red Scar Drive  
Scarborough  
N.Yorks. YO12 5RQ



Greeting Ergbods,

With this issue, ERG, first launched in April 1959, now begins its 37th. Year. The cover and all interior illos were drawn on the PC using WINDOWS 'Paintbrush' and the 'mouse'. Comments?

#### BOOK & MAGAZINE SALES

Anyone want to buy a run of Astounding/Analog (1930 to current issue), with only five missing, , appx. 800 magazines. Yes, Collection selling time is here, so don't miss the advert further on.

DAVID ALLEN, 74 HENTY CLOSE, WORTHING, SUSSEX BN14 7HF is also selling off his collection, contact him for details or send your Want List. (SAE appreciated)

KEN COWLEY. TRINITY COTTAGE, 153 OLD CHURCH RD., CLEVEDON, AVON BS21 7TU, is a dealer with loads of magazines and an excellent stock of sensibly priced hardcovers. An SAE will get you a catalogue.

STENCILS. Is there anyone out there still using a duplicator? I have a box of 49 Gestetner stencils to sell £7.00 inc. post/packing.

Val and I were BMEWSed at the end of April. Thanks to the kind influence of our next-door neighbour, we had the pleasure of a conducted tour of Fylingdales Early Warning System. For years the place boasted three huge 'golfballs' holding the radar aeriels watching for Russian missiles. Sadly, they have now been dismantled and replaced by a giant, seven-story, truncated pyramid.

The place is isolated high on the North Yorkshire Moors between Pickering and Whitby. Driving up there, we left the main road and turned onto a smaller one, well studded with warning signs telling us it was forbidden to proceed. After a mile we came to a road barrier manned by a uniformed 'bobby'. Huge placards warned everyone that working more than three metres above ground level was dangerous because of radiation. That sort of thing makes you tend to walk with a stoop. We parked here and transhipped to a coach, where our names were checked off on the list of authorised visitors and we were issued with lapel badges proclaiming, 'Official Visitor'.

A short wait, then the coach took us all of half a mile and dropped us by a high mesh fence, bearing an 'ABSOLUTELY NO ADMITTANCE' sign. Here, we were ushered through a steel gate, controlled from a blockhouse and taken to a huge door in the actual pyramid. This led us to a couple of ante-rooms with metal-stripped floors. It rather looked as if these could be electrified to deter intruders. At this point we had our badges wiped through a scanner before, one at a time, we inched through a mechanised turnstile gate.

Then up we went in a huge lift to a small but comfortable theatre for a one hour briefing and slide show telling us what Fylingdales was there for. An RAF Officer gave a superb presentation full of striking statistics such as the main aeriels each contained 3001 stub elements and handled SMW pulses!

After questions, it was time for coffee and biscuits before visiting the actual operations room where were treated to a simulated missile detection. The place looked like a Hollywood space-movie set, with little flashing lights, numerous computer consoles, hundreds of buttons and little flashing lights. Surprisingly, everyone seemed very relaxed and jovial despite the importance of their task.

Next, we visited the computer room (umpteen six foot tall devices) and an exceedingly high noise level which made the explanation impossible to hear. Then we moved on to the rear face of one of the actual aerials. It was a MAZE of electronic wiring, amplifiers, water-tubing (for cooling), all multiplied no less than 3001 times - one complete set up for each of the 3001 microwave stubs. Our guide explained how a 'Blue Peter' team filmed and recorded everything, only to have their tapes wiped by the radiation when they reached this point.

The radiation goes out in 5MW pulses, so the area in front of the aerials is a no-go zone for man or beast. Because of this, the vegetation is rapidly becoming a nature reserve for local flora. Sheep and rabbits graze quite happily everywhere else outside the perimeter fence, seemingly unaffected by the microwave pulses. The complex runs off its own, American-style 60c/s power system and can be sealed tight behind massive, foot-thick, bank-style steel doors in event of attack. When I visited the toilet, a sergeant took me there - and waited outside to escort me back to the others. Security was tight.

After that, it was a re-threading of the entry maze to get out of the place and make our way home. A most impressive tour and a truly memorable evening. T.J.

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...AND NOW FOR A LAST MINUTE LOC.

ALAN SULLIVAN, 30 ASH RD., STRETFORD, LONDON E15 1XL

WHATSOEVER HAPPENED TO THAT SENSE OF WONDER? I've not read that many of the 'pulp' style stories and relatively few of the 'Golden Age' SF works. True, there was action, adventure and really weird stuff, with a lot of apparent tension, pace and variety. I wonder how much of the appeal was down to the sheer number of things that would get put into one single story - pitching the hero (and the readership) from one cliff hanger to the next, on a literary roller-coaster ride.

This was the sort of thing you'd see in the 'action' movies of the time. Things like the original *Buck Rogers*, *Flash Gordon*, and *Tarzan*.

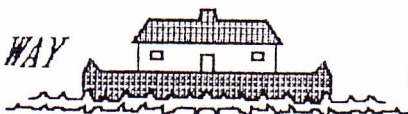
The sort of thing we've since seen revised in the *Indiana Jones* films. - with no small amount of success. Art is fine and splendid, but there's nothing wrong with entertainment. The thing is to make sure that the people get a balanced input of education and entertainment. Best of all is to combine the two.

Pulp writers were hack entertainers, aiming at mass appeal rather than quality of product. More modern SF writers go for quality, but often get caught up with the idea of plot and character development at the cost of action and pace. I wonder if too slow a pace makes grandeur look dull. Also, as you say, there don't seem to be any really 'new' ideas. Technology and developments thereof are so much a part of our everyday lives, we no longer even notice them. They no longer amaze or inspire. @> I agree, nowadays 'style' takes precedence over plot, tension and a good story line. @<

4

After reading "THE ARK" by Rlen Poortvliet, Peter Langley wrote this rebuttal.

NO(AH) WAY



By  
Peter Langley

It is fairly easy to read the Biblical account of Noah and his Ark and think "That's a good yarn: the sort of thing we're used to seeing in the Bible". It's when you look at the detail that it becomes beyond belief. I have no problem whatever with a flood, inundation or deluge. Every culture has its story. I can even accept a boat being flung far inland, ending up on Mount Ararat (Genesis), Mt. Nasir (Gilgamesh, via Hans Keller), or a place called Carrae (Josephus). And maybe others.

Let's consider the likelihood of one family, probably farmers, building a vessel requiring nearly 20,000 tons of timber. (A Dr. Ouweneel, quoted in 'The Ark'). Poortvliet allows Noah an indeterminate number of years to do it: I don't think that renders it any more likely.

Suppose he did do it. The dimensions are very precise and for all I know, the proportions are valid. Noah was told, "rooms shalt thou make" (King James, not in Revised English Bible), but how many and what size? Poortvliet sensibly points out that the space needed for a giraffe would be wasted on a Patagonian hare. The point is, Noah had never seen most of the world's animals. He didn't know what size they were, he didn't know how many there were, or what they ate. And what about when they started to arrive? How did they get there? The Indian elephant could have trudged overland (imagine meeting his African look-alike cousin, "Hallo big-ears"). Many other animals would be readily to hand. But what about the Arctic reindeer, the North American buffalo, the llama, penguin, okapi, mongoose, llaby, wombat and kiwi to name but a few.

Let's suppose they did all arrive safely. Did they come neatly arranged in pairs or did Noah have to sort out suitable couples? Would he have known how to 'sex' say, a marmoset or a crocodile? The King James version says he took seven pairs of 'clean' beasts, which was good thinking, at least Noah wouldn't be deprived of his Sunday roast.

Now let's suppose that, aided by three stalwart sons, he sorted them into pairs and got them on board without too much fighting and quarreling. To do so, they would have been working in the dark, physically as well as metaphorically for there was only one window in the ark and we may be sure that would be located for the benefit of the family, not the cargo.

"Take thou of all food that is eaten" What food? Noah didn't know what his charges would want to eat. Ruminants and vegetarians could have been catered for, supposing there had been enough, but what about carnivores? Their usual diet is each other! And two ants wouldn't go far in satisfying a pair of hungry ant-eaters. Alright, suppose the insects sneaked aboard in droves. As Poortvliet says, fleas and their like would have ridden aboard their hosts.

All would have defecated in varying quantities and with varying frequency - so would the Noah family for that matter. Try to imagine the stench as foul matter piled up and up, month after month - not to mention the build up of highly explosive methane. And this is a true story!

We are told that the waters covered the whole world and every living thing was killed. Who was there to see? We are told the water rose fifteen cubits above the mountains. Who measured it? We are told that the waters eventually "returned from off the Earth". Where to? The whole world was water! Maybe, given that they were flat Earthers they thought it fell off the edge. In which case, how did it stay there in the first place?

Talking of water, what was the role of fish in all this? They would of course, have been in their element, (a wholly intentional pun). Poortvliet suggests they may have been killed off by a series of underwater explosions! Fish don't make an appearance in this story till it's all over, when God gives Noah dominion over every living thing, animals, birds and fish. (Genesis 9, 2-3). Vegans and animal rights activists please note!

Well alright, the Ark landed, the land dried out and Noah opened the door. Everyone was no doubt delighted to be on Terra Firma again. Hey man! What's all this white stuff? They are on a mountain top for goodness' sake! Some say the Ark is embedded in a glacier, (the last Ice Age was pre-8000BC). All those animals from the Equatorial jungles would not have been very excited about that and it is doubtful that the desert dwellers would have been terribly impressed.

Genesis 8, 20 tells us that Noah sacrificed one of every clean beast. He must have shown remarkable restraint, not to have eaten them during the voyage. And if he only took two of each and then sacrificed one of them, bang goes reproduction!

Finally, let's suppose they did land safely and were sent forth to multiply and people the Earth. What did they do for food on the long trek back home? The ruminants and vegetarians could manage on soggy greens, but the carnivores would only have year-old corpses. Well, maybe if they were hungry enough!

Long before reaching this point, my critics will have said, "Come on, you're going too far. It's part of Jewish folk-lore, history even, but it's pure allegory" My point exactly! But that is precisely what I am asked to do by the Bible-is-literal-truth brigade. To believe it, literally.\*\*

It's asking a bit much, isn't it?

Peter Langley

=====

\*\* (Years ago, I had a two-hour argument with a pair of Jehovah's Witnesses who swore the Noah story was true! T.J.)

## DOC SAVAGE RE-VISITED



I first met Doc Savage in the pre-war 'remainder' pulps which retailed at 3d each - or just over 1p in today's money. He wasn't exactly a superman but probably the next best thing. Doc was a skilled pilot, a top-level electrician, chemist, inventor, musician, a ventriloquist and a first-rate brain surgeon. He had numerous other skills as well, but these will do to go on with. Described as a giant amongst men, somehow his amazing disguise ability allowed him to become a convincing midget. He also carried several tons of 'special equipment' in various secret pockets around his person. With such a background who needs ESP powers? In the pulpzines, Doc boasted a mop of dark hair with a fetching forelock. In paperback, under Boris Vallejo's brush, he appeared with a helmet-like skinhead cut - but he still retained his badly ripped shirt.

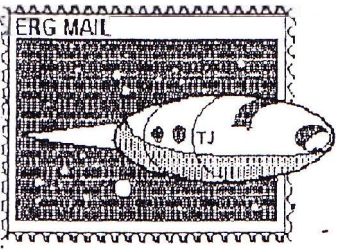
Savage had five henchmen, 'Renny', Colonel John Renwick a 6'3" engineer who looked small beside Doc. 'Long Tom' Major Thomas Roberts was a 'sickly-looking' electrical wizard. 'Ham' was Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks, a dapper, swordstick-toting lawyer. William Harper Littlejohn was a distinguished archaeologist. Finally 'Monk' who looked like a gorilla but was really ace-chemist Lt.Col Blodgett Mayfair. Without these 'aides' continually getting into trouble, Doc might have had an easier time.

The first adventure, 'MAN OF BRONZE' opens just after Doc's father has died in suspicious circumstances. A sniper is climbing a nearby skyscraper to pick off Doc in his laboratory in the Empire State Building. From here the trail sets off to South America to locate Doc's father's legacy. They travel in a 'plane which can cruise at 200mph! encountering sundry nastiness along the way - including an attacking shark which Doc punches unconscious.

Numerous fist and bullet fights ensue in which Doc actually kills numerous opponents - a change from his later attitude of protecting life at all costs by using 'mercy bullets' to merely render opponents unconscious. Eventually Doc and his men reach the Valley of the Vanished, find a lost race with an English-speaking ruler whose daughter sets her cap at Doc, and face various plots by the baddies. They eventually win out and find Doc's legacy - which turns out to be a mine supplying unlimited gold. Doc evades the girl, and he and his men ride off into the sunset bent on fighting evil and doing good to all mankind.

Four authors wrote the 181 yarns of the series, but the majority were written by Lester Dent. I fancy he didn't write the final yarn, 'Out Of Earth's Center', as it had Doc 'screaming in fear'. Dent would never have had him do that.

Did someone say pot-bolling adventure escapism? True, but it was also great fun and more entertaining than the average teenage diet of football heroes, school stories and other stodgy stories.



ALAN BURNS, 19 THE CRESCENT, KINGS RD. STH. WALLSEND NE28 7RE

I had to look at the cover for a while to make up my mind whether it was a spaceship in outer space or a spaceship in inner space, picking its way among cells and such. Was it drawn on the computer?  $\oplus$  No, pen & ink  $\oplus$  Sense of Wonder, I thought it had all been said. My sense of wonder is at the proliferation of gays, lesbians, apostles of political correctness

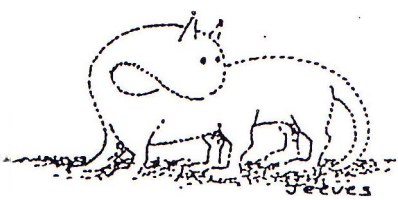
and such. I'm told that America has got sick of them and voted in administrators that don't like them. I also read that the Army wants none of those who let their braces dangle.  $\oplus$  Nice to know some things are going right.  $\oplus$

A.V. CLARKE, 16 MENDOVER WAY, WELLING, KENT DA16 2BN

I've read a few yarns that keep the Sense of Wonder awake - David Brin is an author that comes immediately to mind - but on the whole you're right. I think it's probably that in the good old days even a trip into space was a subject for speculation. Nowadays it's on every kid's TV programme. The news is full of the marvels of Internet, DNA, etc. In the '30s the man in the street didn't know anything on this level, and even in the early '50s I remember *Picture Post* publishing a letter from someone who'd read an Arthur C. Clarke article. 'Mr. Clarke', he said, 'had overlooked the fact that in space there was no air for rockets to push against'. Such a level of ignorance is unbelievable these days.  $\oplus$  Not so sure when you hear of people avidly scanning their horoscopes, putting razor blades into pyramids to sharpen 'em or wearing magnetic bracelets to cure rheumatism.  $\oplus$  There was a different scale in the '30s, when we read of scientific wonders, it was of giant airships giant bridges, giant telescopes etc. The possibilities of wonders on the molecular level were hardly considered.

MIKE ASHLEY, 4 THISTLEBANK, WALDERSLADE, CHATHAM, KENT ME5 8AD

I agree with you about the lack of wonder in most modern SF, though I think this is probably true of any fiction once it comes of age. I was not even around in 1932, let alone discovering SF then, but I have to confess that the bulk of SF that I find the most enjoyable is that from the 1933-1950 period. There was still some good SF around in the 50s, but not in proportion to what was being published, and by the 60s it was scarcely recognisable. I regarded Colin Kapp as the last of the great true SF writers and to some extent, people like James Hite, Bob Shaw, James Hogan and Greg Bear. By the late 60s I was already preferring fantasy because that was emerging with a new sense of wonder, but even that's gone stale and I find it very difficult to find a good fantasy novel these days, at least ones that are marketed as such. I find more enjoyment out of reading mystery and detective novels than most modern SF and fantasy. I suspect that if we properly analysed and counted it all up the amount of good SF (that will stand the test of time over the next few decades) is more than that from the 30s or 40s, but because of the morass of rubbish that's about it's less immediately obvious and easily overlooked.



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

What happened to the Sense Of Wonder? Well, it might be strange to imagine, but there must be some out there, the present generation who'll find theirs in modern eco-sf, in playing with dolphins, in glorious crusades against the villains who are bent on turning life into a nuclear desert; just as you and I found it in an earlier age. Wasn't it Terry Car who said that the Golden Age of SF is ten? Right on the button in your case. I've probably got more time on my hands than Alan Burns; but it's more with a sense of amazement than a sense of wonder, that I read he's likely to bin any unsolicited fanzines. Especially for we fen without a zine of our own, that's surely the ultimate in Egoboo that someone thinks highly enough of us to want, and print, our opinions. It's one of the things that makes fandom worthwhile. Of course, fandom in itself can hold a range of opinions, and I shouldn't think Alan is a man alone; but thank goodness his isn't the prevailing view. @> Too harsh for me, I'm afraid. I try to respond to all fanzines and only once have I written and said 'Please don't send any more', that was to John Nicholas and his obnoxiously named FTT. <@

NED BROOKS, 713 PAUL ST., NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23805, USA

Glad to see another ERG, who did the very nice cover? @> I did, see name on spaceship <@ Great page on OTHER WORLDS although I suppose they must eventually have had something better than the turkeys you describe. Intriguing speculations about Schrodinger's cat thought experiment. I have never understood that although I took a course in quantum mechanics in college. I think some of your objections are really involved with the fact that this is a 'thought experiment' rather than something that could actually be performed. The decay of unstable atoms can be detected in the large scale at the decay of one specific atom can't be detected. @> You misunderstand me. I made two points, neither of which is affected by the inability to operate with ONE atom. Point 1. One might set up a series of such concentric experiments with a series of rooms. Even if in room 1 the box is open, the cat revealed and the probability wave collapsed, what about the outside rooms where the cat's fate is unknown and so the wave remains uncollapsed. Point 2. Why not just toss a coin behind you. Until you look at it, does that remain in limbo? That's a thought experiment which doesn't even need ONE unstable atom, counter or poison gas. <@ Your review of the Julie Bell art book - is her husband Harry Bell, fan artist? Also I am a little confused by your review of GARLANDS OF FANTASY Linda &. @>

I don't think you asked forasked for Harry Bell's address, it's 14 Grantham Drive, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 6HQ I don't think he's related to Julie Bell. The 'Linda &' was a typo, it should have read, 'Linda & Roger Garland. <@

LLOYD PENNEY, 412-4 LISA ST., BRAMPTON, ON L6T 4B6, CANADA

True, Cons are expensive. One reason is that Cons have been forced to run as small businesses. This means incorporation because some hotels won't deal with unincorporated groups. Then you need insurance to cover any damage done by your attendees. The hotel passes on its cost to each client as well. The demand by hotel and shareholders to increase profits and the increases in property taxes and wage costs all get passed down as well. The sanest Conventions seem to be those little, one-day Cons held in a recreational centre or church basement. @> Good points, but continuous films, three-level programs and lavish 'hospitality' are areas where economies could be made. <@

Paperbacks & Hardcover for sale. Send B.A.E. to the editor.



# Per GYROSCOPE ad Astra .....

(or not!)

Over the years I've seen one or two items on TV, in which someone demonstrated the power of a gyroscope to generate an apparent lift. I've seen a demonstrator sit in an office chair and hold the extended axis of a large gyroscope which has been spun up to power. By moving this sideways, the gyro pitches up; by moving it up or down, the chair turns sideways. This behaviour is often quoted as a gravity defying spaceship drive which only needs the usual scientific interest, plus big bucks to give us the stars.

Always a sceptic, I've long suspected that it doesn't quite work that way. I finally decided to do a few simple experiments of my own to see just what a spinning gyroscope does. I bought a toy one, spun by winding a cord around the axis and giving it a yank. A tricky job holding it, so I made a jig to clamp in the vice, hold the gyro and thus avoid my fingers rubbing on the wheel when yanking the cord. FIG.1 This way I could get the wheel really whizzing and carry out a few experiments.

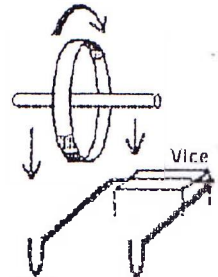


FIG.1  
Jig for holding  
gyroscope

In the diagrams, the top of the wheel is always spinning away from me, and the gyro supported (where relevant) by the left end. Experiment one. If the wheel is spun and the gyro placed on a plinth, it always revolves slowly about the plinth; FIG.2

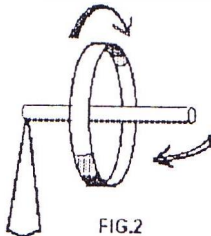


FIG.2  
Gyro on plinth rotates  
in direction of arrow  
as gravity pulls end  
down

BUT which way does it turn, and why? Observation showed it always revolved in the opposite direction to the wheel's spin. Why? Because gravity was pulling one end down. The turning motion must be taking energy from the wheel.

The next step was to see what happened if I removed the pull of gravity by supporting both ends, but leaving the axis free to rotate. Diagram.3 The result was no rotation either way. Clearly, the downward gravity pull on a free end produced a couple with the gyro's momentum which provided the sideways turning movement. Could there be an analogy with the electrical Fleming's 'Right hand rule', for generators?

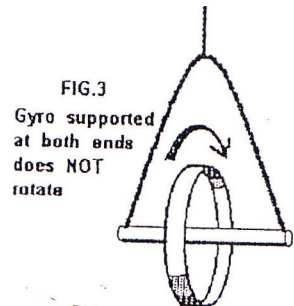


FIG.3  
Gyro supported  
at both ends  
does NOT  
rotate

The next step was to spin the gyro, hang it by one end, then rotate the far end of the axis. If the end A was moved in the direction of spin (towards C), the end pitched DOWN. If turned against the spin,

(towards B), the axis pitched UP. This is shown in FIG.4 Ah, lift at last -- or was it just a rotating couple?

Final experiment was to support the gyro in a long narrow U of wire. This allowed me to turn the axis, but left the whole gyro free to rise up the U section if there was a genuine vertical force. There wasn't! The axis tipped down or up as before, but the gyro as a whole made no attempt to lift up the U section.

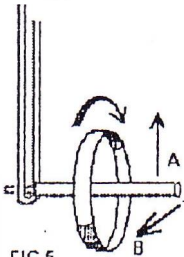
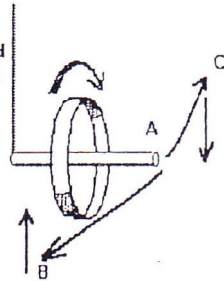


FIG.5  
If suspended in U band and free to rise when end A is moved towards B, only end A rises, NOT the whole gyroscope.

FIG.4  
If end A is moved in direction C, it goes down. Moved towards B, it rises



Conclusion. All the peculiar movements of a gyroscope are rotational forces gained at the expense of taking momentum out of the system. There is no vertical 'lift', but just a turning motion. Spaceships aren't likely to get very far if all they do is spin round and round at right angles to their axis of their gyroscope's rotation.

Ah well, bang goes another pipe-dream for the stars.

Terry Jeeves, Scarborough

## SHOP EARLY FOR CHRISTMAS

PAPERBACKS, HARDBACKS, You want books, I want space on my shelves. Why can't we get together? Send me an SAE and I'll send a printout of what's on offer. Paperbacks run from List.1 at £1.00 each, List.2 at £1.20 and List.3 from £1.50 upwards. List.4 Hardcover start at £4.00. Postage is extra I'm afraid. All items are in 'as new' condition unless stated otherwise. How can you lose?

This offer can not be repeated until next time, so grab the nettle by the horns of a dilemma and act now while the iron is hot.

HELP WANTED. I have Ellern's 'New Lensean' and° Kyle's Dragon Lensean, Z-Lensean, and Lensean From Rigwi. Does anybody know of other titles by these authors and if so, can anyone sell me copies? TJ.

# SPACE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

Edited by L.K.Engel, and priced at 35c the magazine's first issue was dated Spring 1957 and its second and last was dated August 1957. The cover illustrating 'The New Worlds To Conquer', was by Tom Ryan. I suspect he also did the uncredited, gloomy interior art.

The issue boasted eleven (undistinguished) stories, kicking off with 'The Martian Calendar' by Carl Jacobi. Here, a convalescent acquires a house, a derelict spaceship and some Martian artifacts. After setting up an unlikely killing, he fiddles with the calendar and is trapped in a time warp.

Adam Chase (Stephen Marlowe) supplied 'The New World To Conquer' where a

military force lands and finds a world ruled by militant women who are hostile at first but of course become soft on the men who then defeat nasty alien invaders.

'Window To Nowhere', Todd Thomey's central character is a tennis pro who says he would 'give anything' to win. Whereupon, time travellers help him because they have the nasty aim of sapping sportsmen's energies.

'The Devil Spins A Dream', John Jakes has a Martian prospector find a lost city and then lose it again.

In 'King Bee' by Winston K.Marks, bees send a giant king to make the Big Five leaders telepathic so they find trust and end the cold war.

Milton Lesser's 'Early Bird' concerns a man who always wants to be first. He sets out to be first to contact a UFO, succeeds and is vaporised.

'Obedience Guaranteed' by Mack Reynolds tells of a robot pilot told to 'get lost', so he does. (Shades of Asimov)

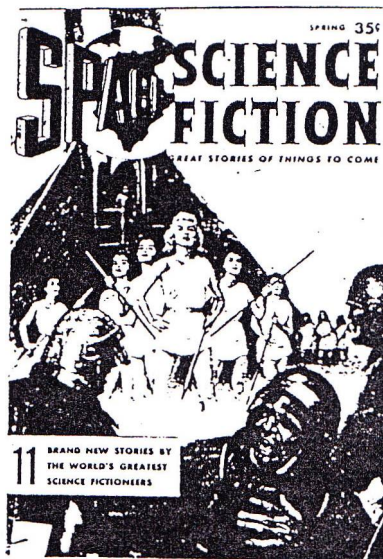
Philip Latham (R.S.Richardson), supplies 'Kid Anderson' about a boxer who trains with an android, turns its performance level up too high and it kills him.

'Reverse Procedure' by Charles Eric Maine has a drug experimenter contact another race of threatened humans - without much to follow.

'The Individualist' by Russ Winterbotham is about a Martian who builds crazy machines. One of which helps a romance. Big deal!

'Posted' by Mark Mallory (Mack Reynolds again) is a turkey about a man from the future thwarting an alien takeover.

This totally forgettable collection of pot-boilers appeared at the height of the pulp boom - and helped to end it.



## A Scottish Idyll



Hamish McAbart, gamekeeper to Lord Elpuz was strolling up the heather covered banks of Glen Milla seeking stray haggis. The timid wee, tartan-coloured beasties were hard to find

against the purple heather as the slightest sound of an approaching hunter would send the little creatures scurrying into their holes. Since Hamish always played his bagpipes whilst roaming the banks and braes, the only haggis he ever caught were the congenitally deaf.

McAbart cut a fine figure as he strode bravely along. His woolly beret at a rakish angle, his hacking jacket hacked in all directions and his tartan skirt of heliotrope and yellow stripes swinging around his manly knees. Lacking a skean-dhu, (Hamish's mother had borrowed it to peel the tatties, a pair of scissors was thrust into his Highland stockings. Hamish knew there was little chance of needing a more dangerous weapon on the peaceful moors of Knockyotover. All in all, McAbart was a figure to bring tears to the eyes of any true Scot - although it must ve admitted that his bagpipe playing helped in that direction.

Rounding a large outcrop of Edinburgh rock, Hamish was delighted to see a bonnie lassie sitting on the brae side, dangling her dainty feet in the water and chewing gracefully on a bunch of freshly picked thistles. It was Elspeth McAnnik, daughter of the local poacher and pigeon fancier. McAbart's eyes lit up at the sight. Elspeth was just a simple country girl, probably the simplest in the whole of Midlothian, having failed every examination available for miles in any direction - including upwards. Nevertheless, the gilly in the gully was struck by the girl's simple beauty. Local beauties were always striking him, usually on the nose. But Hamish had long cherished a secret love for the maiden, ever since the day he had seen her gaily, tossing cabers around at the Highland games. Sadly, Hamish had always lacked the bravery to declare his feelings for the lassie; now perhaps, he would be lucky.

As he approached the maiden, she gave him a shy smile in the shy way that well brought up Scottish maidens have.

"Wad ye no wish tae wash yer fut i' the brae?" Elspeth asked in her gentle, incomprehensible Scottish brogue which had baffled many a tourist and misdirected most of them in the wrong direction. Hamish, being of local origin, had little trouble in understanding her.

"That would please me well lass. I'll sit beside you and remove my shoes, socks and whatever else comes to mind." McAbart replied in the cultured tones he had learned whilst studying in Birmingham University for a degree in piano tuning. Putting down his bagpipes, haggis-bag, scrooping-iron\* and other impedimenta, Hamish sat on the brae side.

\*An obsolete three-handed firtling-bar

Deftly he removed his shoes, then his tartan socks. Elspeth moved a few feet up wind. Her movement revealed that face down beside her lay a placard nailed to a pole, Possibly the pole was nailed to the placard, but no matter, the point is debatable and has no relevance. Elspeth tossed back her long lingering locks with their hand-carved curling grips and flicked Hamish lovingly across the face with the thistles.

"Ha ye cot munny o' the haggis then ye ken the noo?" Hamish plunged his feet into the water before replying. Elspeth moved back beside him.

"Och aye. I ha' cot a few of the little beasties. Can I no gie ye one for yer dinna?" Elspeth gave a ladylike sniff as a gentle tear inched its way down her aristocratic nose and dripped onto her blouse.

"Och no laddie. Did ye not ken I hope to become a MOTHER?"

Hamish's face lit up at this unexpected upturn in his immediate prospects.

Well lass, if there's awt I can do to help ye ...", he quavered quaveringly. Elspeth cuddled closer and gave him a wheedling glance.

Och aye Hamish, there is. To help me become a MOTHER there's something I must do first, and you can help me right now."\*\*

A happy smile crossed his honest face as Hamish began to loosen his sporrán.

"Right lassie, I'm your man, how do we start."

"Well you see this?" Elspeth asked, lifting the poster from the grass beside her and turning it to show Hamish. In large letters it said,

STOP THE EVIL TRADE IN HAGGIS.

Beneath this, in blazing crimson were the words,  
BECOME A MOTHER.

At the bottom, in smaller letters was added, (Member Opposing The Haggis Exporting Racket).

Elspeth set down the placard and explained.

"To become a MOTHER, I have to do something to save a haggis from being exported. You can help me by releasing all the haggis you caught today."

Hamish was gumfuzzled, but his love for Elspeth was great. Hastily refurbishing his sporrán, Hamish undid the drawstring at the neck of his haggis bag and tipped out three fat little beasties.

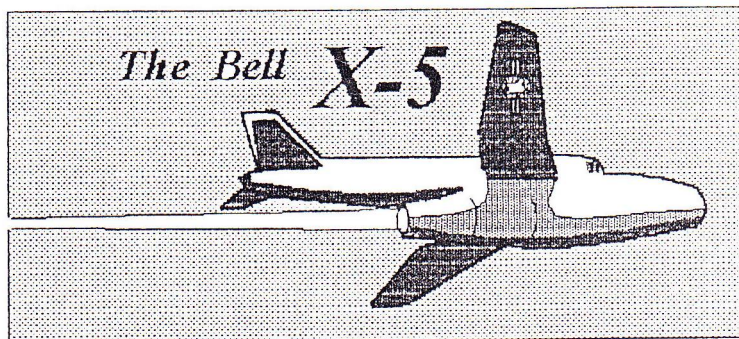
"Oh Hamish, you're a darling". Overcome with emotion, Elspeth failed to conceal the great love she had long cherished for Hamish in her maidenly bosom. Claspng his manly frame to the ample proportions of the aforesaid bosom, she showered him with kisses. Hamish responded with gusto. One thing led to another and Elspeth eventually became a mother. As for the haggis, dazzled by the sunlight after emerging from the dark innards of the bag, they wandered off, fell into the brae and were drowned.

This story has a moral. Unfortunately I have no idea what it is. T.J.

THE END

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\*\* In the interests of intelligibility, this and all subsequent speeches have been translated into English



The Bell X-5 was based on the German Messerschmitt P.1101 fighter which had a ground-adjustable swing-wing. It was captured after the war and taken to the USA. As aircraft approached the speed of sound and began to encounter compressibility effects at high Mach numbers, Bell received a contract to build two aircraft with wings movable in flight. To maintain the centre of gravity, as the wings moved backwards, their roots moved forward.

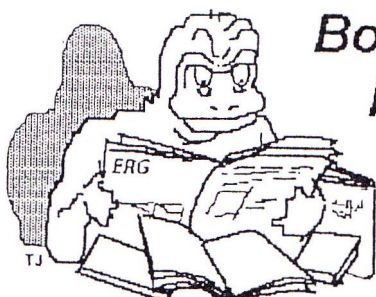
The idea was to combine good low-speed, high lift characteristics for short take off, with a wing which when swept back would stave off sonic shock waves and allow high speeds to be reached. Powered by an Allison J-35 turbojet, the first machine made its maiden flight in June 1950 with its wing in normal forward mode. No difficulties were encountered other than a spurious meter reading.

A limited amount of sweep was tested on the fifth flight and full sweep was achieved by the ninth. At one time, it was considered it might be possible to develop the X-5 into a fighter but this scheme was dropped as it was decided a totally new design would be required.

With the swing mechanism, fuselage strengthening and a full military load, the projected weight would have been far too great.

In flight, the X-5 could sweep its wings from a 20° angle to one of 60°. It had an unswept span of 33'6" and a top speed of around 700mph. It also had a low stalling speed of about 150mph, which made it useful as a chase plane when testing other aircraft. It could stay with them from take-off to high speeds.

The X-5 was always tricky to fly, in October 1953, one of the two machines got into an uncontrollable spin and crashed, killing the pilot. Nevertheless, between them the two aircraft made around 140 flights. When the test programme was finally terminated, the surviving X-5 ended up in the Wright Patterson AFB Aircraft Museum. Although the design was not followed up, the X-5 project had been a highly successful and informative programme and fully justified its cost.



## Books In Brief

PENGUIN Books have launched 'SIGNET-CREED', a new dark fantasy imprint. Here are the first three titles priced at £4.99 each.

REQUIEM Graham Joyce  
£4.99

When his wife Katie dies in an accident, Tom, who has a secret guilt, retires from teaching and on impulse goes to visit his old flame, Sharon, in Jerusalem. He acquires

fragments of Dead Sea scrolls and has visions of a woman in black. Things worsen, and when he visits the djinn-ridden Ahmed an ancient power begins to work, linking Tom's present to the days of the Crucifixion. A meandering novel with plenty of sex and gutter-speak.

My proof copy also has the opening chapters of two other novels as a tempter.

NIGHTRIDER Sheila Holligon

On her father's death, Rose Thorpe moves into his isolated cottage on the Yorkshire Moors. Locals are friendly, but something in the house is watching her. There's also a handsome neighbour and a sex-hungry local lout. Rose discovers a hidden cache of pornography, a mummified cat and the evil presence comes to ravish her when she sleeps. Interspersed flashback reveal the cottage's history as events move to a climax.

THE NIGHT INSIDE Nancy Baker

Opening with a vampire emerging from its decades-long hidout in a disused warehouse, the scene then moves to the kidnapping of student Ardeth Alexander. Immured in an old asylum, fed on by a vampire and forced to watch the making of pornographic 'snuff' movies. From here, it's sex and sadism all the way. Not my bag, but if you go for that style, here it is.

MUTANT CHRONICLES 'DEMENTIA' Michael A. Stackpole ROC £3.99

Third in the 'Apostle Of Insanity' Trilogy, following 'In Lunacy' and 'Frenzy', telling of conflict between humans and Dark Forces. When Cyril Dent is killed, his company, Cyertronic resurrects him as a cyborg for special missions. Whilst investigating Lorraine Kovan who has encountered alien creatures, Dent suddenly mind-links with an evil Lord of The Dark Legion. From then on it's a fast-paced action adventure blend of Fantasy & SF in the style of a future James Bond.

THE LAST HUMAN Tom de Haven ROC £4.99

Book 3 of 'Chronicles Of The King's Tramp' to follow 'Walker Of Worlds' and 'The End Of Everything Man'. I switch off when faced with fantasy, but the jacket tells me that Jack and company are in the Undermoment, a labyrinth outside Time where the Grey Men strive to create a Utopia - but a saboteur seeks to destroy the Universe. So begins Jack's battle with the Queen of Noise whose every shriek brings chaos and death.

GRAILS: QUESTS OF THE DAWN Edited by Richard Gilliam,  
Martin H.Greenberg and Edward E.Kramer ROC £6.99

No less than 23 stories plus two unrhymed 'verse' items, one mercifully short. You get tales of priestesses, magic, quests, rape, pillage, kings, princes, magic, sorcery, taverns, ale, warriors and all the trimmings of mediaeval fantasy, plus one or two in more modern settings. An excellent variety apart from the modern style of 'unresolved endings - what happens next?' stories. The theme is quests and goals, so if you like fantasy, then this large-size, 380 pager is excellent value and a second volume is to come.

LOCKHEED'S SKUNK WORKS Jay Miller, Aerofax Inc. USA £19.95 from  
Midland Counties Books, 21 The Hollow Earl Shilton, Leicester LE9 7SA

This 200+pp, A4 glossy softback tells of the work of Lockheed's special section devoted to exotic aircraft such as the Mach 3 SR-71, the notorious U2, the angular 117A 'Stealth' and others.

The text describes the corner cutting to achieve or exceed the targets to deliver superlative aircraft to incredible target dates. Ramjets, Starfighters, Hercules Transport, the XFV-1 'Tailsitter' and many other 'wonderful machines real and proposed, are covered in detail together with loads of superb photographs, performance details, plus a bibliography and glossary. A 'must' for buffs

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## LATE LOC

BRIDGET HARDCASTLE, 13 LINDFIELD GARDENS, HAMPSTEAD. LONDON NW3 6PI

I think punishment is the reason there is such a lot of juvenile crime today. The kids don't fear punishment as the fear of giving them a clip round the ear without fear of being charged with assault are gone. If they are punished for something (not physically), it is often unenforceable. Is this where society comes in, no longer disciplining youth and giving them a sense of responsibility? Gosh, I sound such an old reactionary.  $\Rightarrow$  Personally, I'd like to see the 'short, sharp, shock treatment', implemented more fully. NOT a cruel regime, but a harsh unpleasant one. Rise at 6am, P.E. before breakfast. Cleaning tasks around the place, move everywhere at the double, standard overalls, shaven haircut, no fags. Evening entertainment dependent on good behaviour, and so on. More or less what we had on joining the Forces during WW2. No physical violence, but it kept us out of mischief.  $\leftarrow$  "Aha", said the vegetarian, is killing animals for food and clothing when there are plenty of vegetable alternatives around as bad as killing for fun?  $\Rightarrow$  Not quite sure of your point there, Bridget. But, we are carnivores, designed to include meat in our diet. There is NO INTRINSIC right, wrong, good or bad in killing animals for food, but personally, I feel that all animals, food or otherwise, should always be treated as humanely as possible. I have strong doubts that a really long-term vegetarian diet is good for humans, but it's choice is up to an individual's beliefs.  $\leftarrow$



== YOUR LOC IS REQUIRED ==



This arrived after ERG had gone to the printers. Details from the handout accompanying the excellent 'Collector's Edition'.

CHAOS CHILD, Ian Watson, Boxtree £15.99 Fourth in the Warhammer 40,000 series, following 'Space Marine', 'Inquisitor' and 'Harlequin'.

On a world in a mind-destabilising time warp, Science has collapsed and the heroes are Terminator Librarians in orbital battle monasteries. A brief Introduction sets the scene from the earlier tales. Inquisitor Draco is hunted by Imperial and alien enemies and devastated by the death of his assassin-courtesan, Meh'lindi. Under emotional strain, will he manage to read the Eldar Book of Fate and learn the secret of the final Apocalypse? Time is of the essence as the Chaos raiders approach, along with alien invaders bent on destruction of the planet. A richly-tapestried adventure for all lovers of high fantasy.