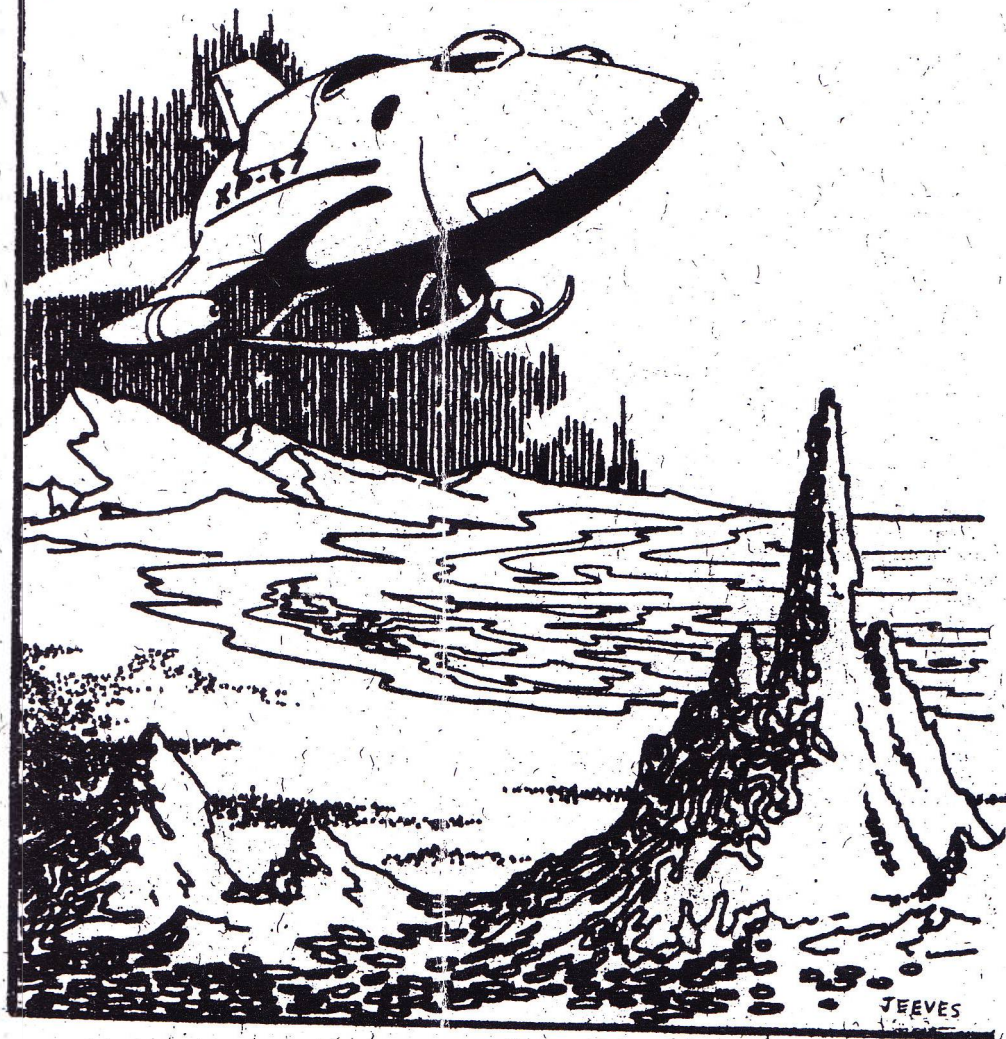


# ERG 163

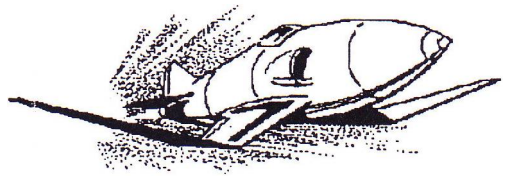
OCTOBER 2003



# ERG 163

QUARTERLY

OCTOBER 2003



If you enjoyed this issue you can get the next for a LOC

Greetings ERGbods, last time I mentioned a few home disasters here at the Crumbling Jeeves' Mansion and ended asking, 'What next?' Next problem sounds like a nightmare. Two weeks ago we had the greenhouse re-glazed at a cost of £139. Then last weekend Val went up the garden and surprised a cat in the greenhouse. It was so surprised that it took off at high speed - straight through the newly-glazed end panes, all five of them. Our friendly repair man came and put in new glass for a further fifty quid. Now what next?

Then there's unwanted spam. It started with 12 items and is now averaging sixty a day and can peak at 100. Apart from the time and money waiting to download, it then takes an age to delete all the names from my address book. I hope Microsoft wins its case against spammers and puts 'em off. Otherwise the net will seize solid with junk.

October 1st. here again and another year added to my score, the total is now 81 and I am beginning to feel that walking is a chore and my writing is now a scrawl. I want to download my SF collection, so if you are in the market for hardcovers fiction, non-fiction, aeronautics or magazines, drop me a line. Everything must go Here's a sample, if ordering send no cash until you get the mags, I'll enclose and Invoice, add postage as on parcel and pay then. This saves a refund if an item has gone. Can I tempt you?

GALAXY NOVELS Nos.1 TO 28, 30 & 31, plus pb size 32 & 33 and digest-sized

Galaxy Megabook No.1 Gd. cond, but spines taped All 33 items for £40.00

GALILEO 15 large-size issues (one a double issue) All 15 for £25.00

INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION usa digest 1967/68 The only two issues £4.00

ISAAC ASIMOV SF MAGAZINE First 21 issues plus 2 anthologies All 23 for £30.00

ORBIT usa digest 1953/54 Full set of five £8.00

ORIGINAL SF STORIES UK edn of US mag Nos. 1 to 11 #9 in poor state £14.00

SATURN SF usa digest Mar.57 to May.58 Full Set of all five issues £8.00

SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK usa, large Nos.1 to 5 Full set £8.00

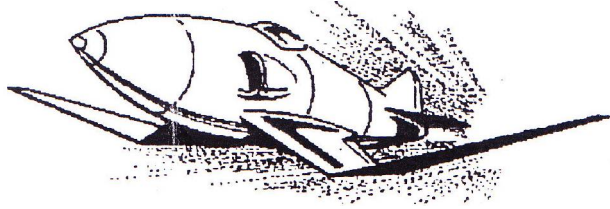
SPACEWAY usa Dec.53, Feb.54, Apr.54, Jun.54, Dec.54, Feb.55, Apr.55, Jun.55, Jan.69, Jun.69, Oct.69, Oct.69, Jun.70 Full set of all thirteen issues £20.00

SATURN SF 1957/58 Nos.1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Full set of all five issues, £9.00

SF MONTHLY uk bedsheet size. Nos 1 to 10 plus Vol.3 no.3 All 11 issues £15.00

SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST 1954 Set of two issues £4.00

All the best, Terry



Joining the RAF in wartime sounds easy but in actual fact it was a trifle more complicated as the recruiting office had been damaged in the raid. A helpful Flight Lieutenant told me they couldn't give me a Spitfire right away, but if I came back in a few days they would be sorted out and ready for business again. I went back to the Home Guard Post to see if there was anything I could do. There was. A sergeant issued six of us with (empty) rifles, then marched us off to stand guard and keep the public away from an unexploded bomb. Feeling very proud with our clumsy rifles and Home Guard armbands (not having been in long enough to get uniforms), we strode out manfully (personfully ?) over heaps of debris until where we were finally halted at a crossroads. "Stand here and divert the people round that way" said the sergeant pointing down one road. "Where's the unexploded bomb?" somebody asked. "Oh, it's just back there in that shop", was the reply -- and he pointed up the road down which we had just marched.

The bomb was thoughtful enough to refrain from exploding whilst we were there so when we were relieved I went home and casually dropped into the conversation the news that I had just volunteered for the RAF. The effect was rather as if that unexploded bomb had followed me home and finally decided to go off. Shrieks and tears gradually subsided to be replaced with,

"What do you want to do that for, you're in a reserved occupation?"

I pointed out that I had always wanted to be in the Air Force and this seemed a good time to join up. The argument gradually simmered down, but it was a while before I stopped feeling as if I had swiped the Crown Jewels.



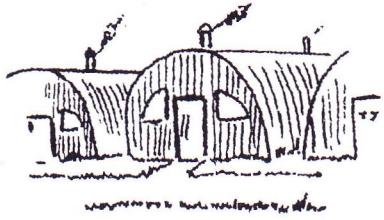
A week later, I duly turned up at the R.A.F. Recruiting Office, filled in several yards of forms and in answer to the question, "What do you want to do in the RAF?", I naturally answered, "A pilot". "Right", said the nice kind gentleman, "Come back next week for a medical." Off I toddled, full of gung-ho enthusiasm for my forthcoming role as scourge of the Luftwaffe. I returned the following week and was duly prodded, poked and investigated in some highly personal ways before being sent off home again to await the results.



They came in the form of an apologetic letter from the nice friendly officer.

*"Dear sir, I regret that owing to defective visual acuity (I had a weak right eye and so couldn't be trusted to play with one of their aeroplanes), I am unable to offer you a job in aircrew. I can however, offer you a position as a Wireless Operator, Ground Staff. Group.2. Your obedient servant. Flight Lieutenant Thingy".*

That was the last time ever, that a Flight Lieutenant was my obedient servant. However, feeling that half a loaf was better than a kick in the teeth, I wrote back and accepted the very kind offer. I also resigned my job as a hopeful steel analyst and sat back and began to wait I didn't have to wait very long. In early January 1940, I was sent a travel warrant and told to report to RAF Padgate for Induction into the Royal Air Force. Padgate was a cold and miserable dump. We were ushered into corrugated iron, Nissan huts 'heated' by totally inefficient coke stoves, one at each end. Naturally, coke was only available by purloining it from a locked fuel dump - a skill which we acquired very early, our actions spurred by the fact that it was a cold, bleak Winter



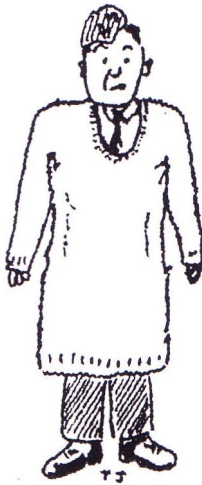
Induction included yet another medical examination with its probing of intimate places and the posing of even more intimate questions. These happy, cheerful events were interspersed by filling in further acres of forms and still more questions. Finally, our little band stood to attention and we were duly sworn in, handed the King's shilling- that apparently being all he could spare at the moment - and informed that we were now fully registered airmen. Then came the final query, "When do you want to be called into the service?" Having volunteered for just that purpose and being what was then known as a 'keen type', I naturally replied, "Right away". The chap beside me had been conscripted and didn't want to play soldiers if he could possibly avoid it, so he poured forth a long, involved sob story of all the things he had to do before he could possibly become a serving airman. The result was predictable. Rather than risk him not coming back if allowed to go home, he was kept at Padgate. In my case, I was obviously keen to start my RAF career, so I was sent home on 'Deferred Service' Before leaving Padgate I was handed a thin slip of paper, which I still have. It said,

*"This is to certify that AC2 Jeeves, B.T. is a member of the RAF Volunteer Reserve and has not been issued with a badge as none are available."*

My Deferred Service lasted until April, the 14th. 1941 when I had to report for duty, not in horrible Padgate, but of all places, Blackpool! The Easter weekend of April, saw me arriving at Blackpool station clutching a small cardboard suitcase and wandering around like a lost sheep. I eventually located that seat of all power and authority, the RAF Orderly Room.

After the usual bout of form-filling I was directed to a billet on the other side of the town. Naturally it proved to be full. Back to the Orderly Room for another address to try. This time I was luckier with the billet they gave me. I ended up sharing a tiny attic bedroom in a commandeered boarding house run by Mrs Rye and the ubiquitous 'Jim' at 238 Hornby Road. It was only a stone's throw from Stanley Park - if you happened to be an Olympic grade shot putter. This proved handy as much of our initial marching was carried out in the Park as we learned the highly essential military skills of 'Changing step on the march', 'About turn', 'Right incline', 'Officer on Parade, to the front Salute!' and of course the various exotic antics of rifle drill including the 'Naming of Parts' and how to 'Present Arms'. Funny that, we never presented 'em to anyone, just waved 'em at Senior Officers. Maybe they didn't want them.

Two days later I was kitted out with sundry brushes, button cleaning equipment, and my RAF uniform. To acquire this gear we crowded into a small room where a sergeant stood on a counter and threw sundry items of cap, tunic, trousers and pullover etc., into the mob. I got an oversize pullover which reached below my knees. Happily, this proved a blessing in disguise. With the lower half folded back up and stitched in place it made a double thickness garment, ideal for keeping me warm in winter. It also helped to fill out my uniform tunic which was for someone twice my size. Every time I donned it I had to put a couple of pleats in each side to make it look decent. A little detail which I was able to get adjusted, several months later, by a local jobbing tailor in Belfast.



Once attired like a real airman, Service training began in real earnest. Mornings usually saw us drilling up and down the streets of Blackpool or around the paths of Stanley Park as we mastered the deadly, German-defeating intricacies of foot drill, the awe inspiring menace of rifle drill and what to do on encountering an officer. That instruction was simple, "If it moves, Salute it, if it stands still, paint it." Luckily for me, these esoteric actions were made easier by my having met such military secrets all before when in the Home Guard. We also spent a lot of time doing PE exercises on the beach. During one of these sessions, I managed to strain my knee making it almost impossible to bend. I duly reported sick and an officious (and sadistic) sergeant insisted I kneel down and re-thread my bootlaces in the approved Service manner - parallel, not crossing, before I saw the MO. Nice chap, I'd love to have given him a stick of dynamite to play with.

Large helpings of time each day were devoted to Morse Code training in the Winter Gardens learning how to send and receive messages in Morse Code. This wasn't too onerous as I had taken the trouble to learn the Code whilst on Deferred Service.

Thirty of us armed with headphones, Morse key, pad and pencil were seated around a long table. We either had to receive the messages transmitted by an instructor at the far end, or take turns in sending them to him. One little trick used to add enjoyment to the proceedings was to place a coin across the headphone terminals. This caused an ear-splitting, banshee wail in all the other headsets, much to the annoyance of the instructor

Our pay during training was a princely 2/6d (12.5p) a day. By hoarding this magnificent sum I was able to indulge myself once a week in the local cafe Egg, chips, pot of tea and bread and butter. A meal which went down very well after one of the regular route marches. Our corporal disliked route marches as much as we did, so they usually terminated for char and wads (tea and cakes) at a cafe on the outskirts of Blackpool. Of such simple pleasures was life made

Boating on the lake in Stanley Park, was another pleasant way of spending our leisure time. If the weather was bad we would spend an hour or so in Blackpool Tower wandering round its Zoo, the Aquarium, playing the slot machines and of course, we enjoyed dancing to the strains of Reginald Dixon playing the mighty organ in the Tower ballroom.

Such delights were not to last, seemingly it was not my role to defeat the enemy by becoming a Wireless Operator. We had reached the speed of sending and receiving at 12 words a minute when our lesson was instructed by a messenger ordering me to report to the Orderly Room. Full of trepidation at the thought of undiscovered crimes such as leaving my mug with the handle pointing the wrong way, or knife, fork and spoon set down in incorrect order, I went along to Headquarters. After the standard confusion of nobody knowing why I had been summoned, I was ushered into a room where a sergeant was seated at a desk. He asked me a few questions about my schooldays, then shoved a pad and pencil across to me. On the top of the pad was a short equation,  $2.p.f.L = 1/2.pi.f.C$  "Soive that to find f in terms of the other quantities", said the man. After a couple of starts to get my noggin in gear, I produced the solution. It was much later that I discovered that was the resonant frequency of a tuned circuit. "Right," said the man, busily writing something on a long pink form, "You can go back to your squad now." I duly returned to my key bashing wondering what it had all been about. I eventually discovered that there was a shortage of Group 1 Wireless Mechanics and some boffin had hit on the idea of winking out airmen with School Certificates in Mathematics. The result was that a week later I was posted to Belfast for training as a Wireless Mechanic with, once I passed out, a higher rate of lolly. A flight Sergeant escorted us to Belfast, first via a train up to Stranraer, then across the Irish sea to Larne, followed by another train ride to Belfast.



# One Size Fits All

7

By James Verran

Was a time when kids would save their pocket money to buy their dad a handkerchief, necktie, or a pair of socks, usually in garish colours, as a birthday or whatever gift. In those days the socks, Argyle, or if dad was fortunate, plain blue or black, actually used to fit. Alas, those times are long gone.

Most fathers probably have as many neckties as they will ever need, and shudder) now use paper handkerchiefs. Real hankies are still available, but are mostly too small and costly to use for more than decoration. Apart from the expensive gifts promoted in so many glossy catalogues, modern offspring can also lavish nattily packaged, hermetically sealed, mass-produced, and reputedly hole-proof ankle-stranglers on their fathers.

Despite the aforementioned embellishments, the manufacturers ignore one important factor: their socks simply do not fit all dads. Tight shoes may be squeezed on with the aid of a shoehorn, but there is no such device for installing those tubes of tougher-than-steel synthetic fibre. After a hard day's wear, removing the things is not only painfully frustrating, but sometimes just short of impossible. If the human foot lacked a heel, the matter would be greatly simplified because modern socks seem to lack accommodation for the average ankle joint; in fact, one manufacturer once marketed heel-less socks under the name of "Tubes". Adoring progeny frequently present their doting parent with socks embroidered with all manner of designs, not the least being those cartoon characters incorporating miles of extra, many-coloured thread, all of which is deviously looped around the inside of the apparel for the apparent purpose of trapping toes, most often the small ones.

Now, if dad is the rugged outdoor type, he will have need of work gloves. The better quality cowhide "rigger" gloves come in three sizes, helpfully marked S, M, and L. However, some retailers think all customers have the same size hands, and their merchandise reflects this "one size fits all" philosophy. Incongruously, some cowhide gloves are manufactured on an Asian subcontinent where cows are revered as sacred. Although it is not apparent that our hands differ from those of the inhabitants of that fascinating country, they seem to think people of European extraction are closely related to apes. Why else would they make all the fingers the same length? Although the leathers used for making work gloves are dyed in several shades, the dominant colour is a hideous yellow. Apart from staining the hands they are intended to protect, the over-long fingers bend back at the tips, and eventually retain that shape. The cunning makers also leave fiendishly thick seams right where they are certain to be felt the most, so after a short time the victim's yellow hands are blistered anyway.



Mass-production sweatshops have given humankind the shirt cut with shoulders to fit a gorilla, as well as overlong sleeves designed to bunch up in the armpits. Such an ill-fitting garment may also have a built-in garrotte and extra buttons placed to snag on other garments. Off-the-rack trousers are not much better: flimsy pocket linings, missing fob pockets, minuscule belt loops, and low-slung waists with high-slung crotches contrived to make your eyes perspire.

Underwear shall remain unmentionable because my spouse assures me that ladies also suffer similar, or worse, indignities, but she modestly declines to elaborate. Just what shape is an average head? Take the ubiquitous baseball cap. I'm darned if I have found one that sits securely on the head without competing with my spectacles for the space just above my ears. Thank goodness we have ears, or the things would cover our eyes and settle on our noses. Well, maybe I'm just a low-brow.

Toothbrushes seem to change shape weekly, especially the handles, which often resemble elongated, dog droppings. The scientifically designed heads feature bristles arranged to reach everywhere -- except where that last trace of lunch has lodged. Mind you, it helps if you have a mouth of equine dimensions.

In the interests of reducing greenhouse gasses, and my overdraft, I have mostly owned medium to small cars. Having driven trucks, buses, and bicycles, my experience spans most of the road transport spectrum. Certainly, after driving large vehicles, handling a small car seems like a piece of cake, provided you can squeeze into the thing. Unfortunately, shopping mall carpark designers have a fetish for squeezing an extra vehicle into each row of parking bays, so not only are the bays seldom angled, they are painted to the minimum specified dimensions. Add to this the average driver's car-parking skills, to wit; leaving the steering slewed, parking sideways, or missing most of the allocated space altogether, and you might be wise to buy into an auto spray painting and crash repair business.

Gardening tools also deserve a mention. Spades, shovels and digging forks usually have handles intended to force you to put your back into the work, or more likely, put your back out. Brooms, rakes and hoes likewise. Most power tools are potentially hazardous to use, yet they all seem designed for very fast workers. Anything more than a few minutes running gives the operator all manner of posture-induced agony, and/or fried fingers. If you are a southpaw, you may also find it necessary to swap hands to switch the machine on, or off. Missing fingers, toes, and eyes, are one thing, but who is going to sue a company for manufacturing a tool that causes tennis elbow, or a backache? At the end of a hard day, we can pick the tissue paper from our faces, swab our sunburned ears and necks with cold tea, rub liniment into traumatised back muscles, before dragging off our socks. Chafed armpits, blistered hands and painfully compressed nether regions will need something to soothe them also, then off to bed to sleep, unless we have choked to death while cleaning our teeth.



## JOURNEY INTO SPACE

### AND SO ON

SF has long been concerned with space travel and writers have given us many assorted methods of achieving that goal. One early Grecian voyager made a giant leap assisted by a flock of geese. History does not record if he ate his engines at the end of the trip. Another intrepid flier used the well known fact that dew rises in the morning. He fastened flasks of the stuff to his ankles and duly soared heavenwards. Then there was Baron Munchausen who with great bravery and impeccable timing, claimed to have leaped aboard a cannon ball as it emerged from the muzzle of the weapon. He may not have got to another world, but he should have reached the next

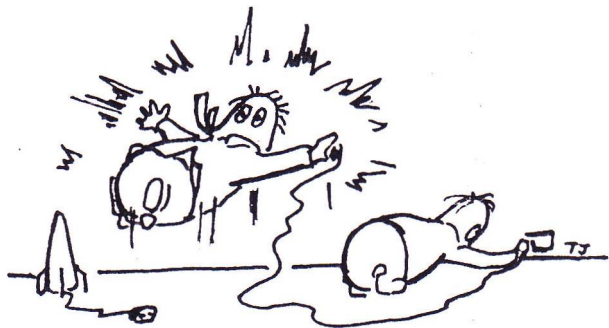


Getting more scientific, Jules Verne flung his men into space by shooting 'em out of a huge cannon, a process guaranteed to play havoc with their digestion, not to mention their braces (suspenders to you Colonials). Clinical tests indicate the elastic was near its breaking point, this can prove embarrassing to a mixed crew. H.G.Wells had different ideas, no high-g lift off for him; his hero, Cavor, stirred stuff up in a cooking pot and came up with the wonderful metal 'Cavorite' which nullified gravity and allowed him to build a hollow ball of the stuff and float gently up to the Moon. The worst effect of this process was to give the travellers a touch of mal de mer, or to be more accurate, mal de void. Apart from the machinations of the Selenites, they had a great time.

Nothing really new came along until Doc Smith thought up the Bergenholm, a device which not only eliminated inertia but also allowed instantaneous acceleration. In the process it also eliminated broken braces and tummy trouble. Sadly, none of these methods was available for the Apollo astronauts, although one fannish group had vague plans for a tower of bheer cans to the Moon. It was at this time that rockets came along but unfortunately, these proved noisy, dangerous and rather unreliable. Worse still, you had to build a new one for each flight. What was needed was a nice simple lifting device. It came along in the shape of the Dean Drive. I first met this gadget in the pages of Analog, although it also got considerable coverage in the prestigious trade journal, 'Missiles and Rockets'. In the Analog version you got several pages of incomprehensible wordage accompanied by some blurred photos. Made seemingly from parts scrounged from Junior's Erector set, the device itself consisted of an electric drill which whirled counterweights around whilst also shifting their axis of rotation.

The whole shebang was mounted on a set of bathroom scales to demonstrate its lift. Well maybe it wasn't a space drive, but it was a good way to batter holes in the floor. Various magazines did erudite articles on the Drive; letters flew in all directions, as did assorted pieces of the apparatus and enough hot air was generated to put a man on the Moon. So good was the idea that it has been re-invented in several different forms which all have one thing in common -- none of them work. After all, what can bathroom scales push against in a vacuum?

Even more delights were in store for Analog's readers. Hank Stine described a



series of experiments designed to help a model rocket takeoff. The method was delightfully simple, just give the model a hefty static electric charge, and lo! the inherent repulsion would boost it into space. As is always the case, a few 'bugs'

needed ironing out and full scale were required before it was ready for NASA to use.

Apart from new ways into space, Analog editor, John W. Campbell, explored many other unusual byways. The Hieronymous machine was one of the more controversial inventions. All you had to do was build an audio amplifier, hook its input to one coil and its output to another encased in a plastic sheet. You then placed a sample in the first and began to rub the other whilst 'tuning' a prism. It was rather like rubbing your tummy whilst you stroked your head. At some point you were expected to feel a sensation as you stroked away. Some people said the plastic sheet felt 'sticky', other reported it felt bumpy. Eric Jones made one and when I tried it, John W. Campbell appeared. To be fair, we were at the World Con when he came up as I was trying it and we had a nice chat.



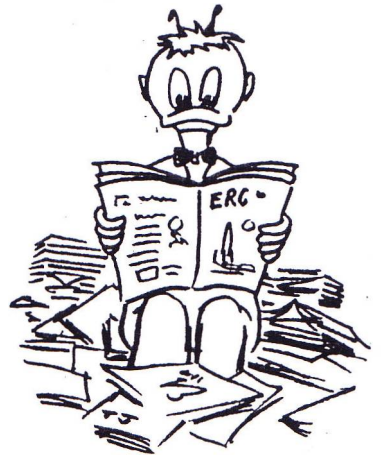
To be fair, SF does widen one's horizons. Take the case of parapsychology, having encountered the stuff in many a story I read the books and even made my own set of ESP cards. I tried valiantly to develop my own talents as described by sundry authors but sadly, without experiencing that blinding flash and headache which would be followed by acquiring instant telepathy, telekinesis and so on. I wonder how many other fen have trod the same

path, gritted their teeth until the enamel powdered away and their back collar stud flew out of the window as they tried to move some inanimate object.

Even so, strange powers exist in the universe. Mathematicians tell us that if you toss a penny one hundred times, you can expect almost a fifty-fifty distribution of heads and tails. Try the same trick with buttered toast and 99 times out of a 100 it will land sticky side down, especially if you toss it over a carpet. I wonder if anyone has tried the next logical step of tossing buttered pennies? Another field ripe for investigation is the correlation between car-washing and the onset of a heavy rainfall. Any Sunday morning car washer will bring down the wet stuff much faster than any Hopi rain-dancer. Then as any housewife will tell you, a saucepan of milk will boil over as soon as you turn your back on it. The saying "a watched pot never boils" needs the scientific test of bunging a full pot on a hot stove and keeping watch on it. Then there's the correct line on the lottery card which only turns up the time you forget to record your entry.. Life is full of such inconsistencies but nobody ever seems to put them to a real test

There's no doubt the world is full of wonders. Each year, many people catch pneumonia by rowing up and down Loch Ness in search of a Scottish publicity man's brainwave. They pull the same trick (with a different animal) each year at London Zoo. Now if they tried that one on with a report of a rare invisible creature which only appeared in its cage at rare intervals, thousands would flock to look and many would actually 'see' the thing. After all, if thousands can spot stray UFOs, why not an invisible alien in a cage?

Speaking of UFOs touches on another topic. Why is the ratio of UFOs photographed compared with those photographed badly, out of focus or upside down an almost one to one figure? Possibly the alien craft is Dean Drive powered and its occupants are advanced exponents of the sundry paranormal skills which enable them to make a mystic gesture and employ their powers to cloud any camera film at the click of a shutter. Such a possibility doubtless has a possibility approaching zero as a limit, but heck, all true blue saucer enthusiasts are undaunted by such odds. Since there is no smoke without fire, I wonder if UFOs are really piloted by Loch Ness monsters? It makes you think. Perhaps the best thing is just to keep on reading the magazines.



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

"Gramps, you know everything..."

"Yes, Penelope, darling?"

"Why are soaps called soaps?"

"It's 'cos when they first started... that was on the wireless... they was all clean. No dirty language like what they has today. Them was the days, all right. We used to crowd round the set in the corner of the sitting room and twiddle the cat's whisker. That's a joke, Penelope, darling. We didn't have no cat's whisker..."

"You mean they hadn't been invented then?"

"What? No, them cat's whiskers had gone by then. We had proper..."

"That was a joke, too, Gramps."

"What? We used to crowd round the set in the corner and listen to Hilversum and Radio Luxembourg and ITMA. After you, Claude. No, after you, Cecil. And I don't mind if I do. Right good rollicking fun, it was. And Mrs. Mopp and Funf and I don't mind if I do. Every Thursday at half past eight. I was allowed to stay up to listen. And there was Rob Wilton. He used to start off with 'The day war broke out' and then go on with things like 'My missus said to me, Well what're going to do about it?' He came from Liverpool, y'know. Like that other fellow. You know..."

"Michael Owen?"

"Yes, that's right, Ted Ray. And there was that American couple, Ben Lyon and Bebe Daniels. She'd been a big Hollywood star, y'know, and they did a programme called "Hi, Gang," during the war. With a South African fellow called Laurence Oliver who married Winnie's daughter. He was very big headed and they used to put him in his place."

"I bet he loved that. Why did he put up with it?"

"Some people said they was only joking but I think they must have been paying him. And there was all those American programmes what we used to get. Some of them was funny, as well. Like that comedian what used to take his fiddle everywhere and threaten to play it. What was his name now? Jack something or other. He used to make nasty remarks about another comic called Allen something or other. He used to have a funny chat with his wife and a young chap what used to sing and then they'd all do a funny piece with a special guest what was a big film star like Gary Cooper. They didn't manage to take a rise out of him, I can tell you. He kept pretty quiet and let them get on with it. This Allen fellow had his own programme, too, and used to make nasty remarks back and he used to go down an alley and meet all sorts of funny people like a Mrs. Nussbaum who always had something wrong with her. I can laugh even now, thinking about her. And there was that W.C.Fields fellow who was always drunk. Don't know why they allowed him on the wireless at all. I was always expecting him to say something shocking. And there was Duffy's Tavern, where all sorts of people dropped in and made funny remarks."

"Something like Cheers, I suppose."

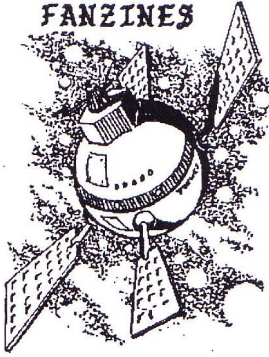
"What? Oh, they said Cheers, all right. But funny stuff as well. Them was the days all right. Tell you, what, Penelope darling, next time you come round, I'll tell you about them card games what we used to play."

I can hardly wait.

-- pf



## FANZINES



I had prepared the fanzine page for the next issue of ERG but I lost it, with my notes and. Ghu knows where they have gone but it means there will be scrappy comments this time as I try to remember everything. I hope any faned that I may have missed will forgive me. .

**SKUG.16** Gary Mattingly, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin, VA 94568 102 pages with superb colour covers ideal for framing. Natter on books, pets, fandom, TV, witchcraft, beliefs, fiction, oodles of verse and more. A great zine  
**THE KNARLEY KNEWS.100** Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA Personal notes, news, and travel, a tour round Tahoe, [*I've had a boat trip on the Lake*] LOCs and capsule fan reviews. Nice and friendly.

**FANTASY COMMENTATOR** A.Langley Searles. A massive 270 pages and crammed with 'names'. Best item is a great, long article by Sam Moskowitz on his years with Gernsback. Well backed up with pieces on Lloyd Biggle, F.G.Rayer, plenty of verse, and book reviews. Sadly, no illos. Logo says \$5, \$8 overseas, but the cover has £10. It's worth it for the Moskowitz bit alone. Serious and constructive

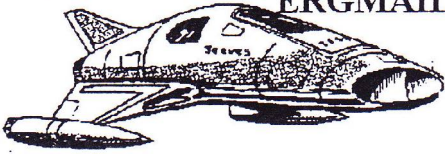
**YNGVI IS A LOUSE.73.** T.K.F.Weisskopf, 196 Alps Rd., Suite 2-385, Athens, GA 30606 Comes in three parts for a total of 116 pages with fiction (one of mine), articles, LOCs. Two of the three part are reprints from earlier issues 8-83 which I don't seem to have received, unless I'm mis-reading the numbers. Nice and cheerful zine.

**TORTOISE.16,** Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle St., Shrewsbury SY1 2BQ 18 Pages with a nice cover illo by Sue. Coverage on food, Novacon, gingerbread, cartoons, a book review, LOCs, fanzines and more food. I loved that cover illo.

**MIMOSA.30,** Rich & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 3120, Gaithersberg, MD 20885, USA 64pp, wrap around covers. Opens with a Con rep and memories then Eve Ackerman writes on Con travel and people followed by Mike Glicksohn reminiscing on BNFs. Then Peter Weston recalls old mags, books and finding fandom and Es Cole goes on a water-melon hunting trip. Dave Williams remembers Claude Degler and Dave Kyle gives us an account of his 1957 Europe and Worldcon honeymoons trip. He misses out the bit where Eric Bentcliffe, Jan Jansen and I ferried them across Amsterdam at midnight. That's a story on its own. Sadly although a great issue, it's the last -- unless, as I hope, they submit to withdrawal symptoms and start again. A great issue

**TRIAL & AIR.14,** Michael W.Waite, 105 W.Ainsworth, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-5336 USA 78pp, crammed with full colour photos of mag covers and fans. There is a large section devoted to remembering John Foyster and an even longer one on Harry Warner, all with stunning colour reproductions. Then Dick Henssen recalls early comics and books, there's a section on Recent Movies complete with credit lists, There's even a Latin Crossword, but beware, the solutions are printed before you get to it. Finally, there are extensive and excellent fmz reviews as well as books, verse and haikus, A terrific issue packed with nostalgia stirring memories, artwork and high readability.

## ERGMAIL



**DALE SPEIRS**, Box 6830,  
Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P 2E7  
The war stories remind me how lucky  
Canada was not to have its cities bombed

out. In this day and age, North Americans do not know what it was like; which is why September 11th was so shocking. We watch the news and see Palestinians bombed out, or war documentaries about the World War, but it never bites home. Yesterday I climbed peaceful mountains, a far cry from Bosnia or Coventry. [*Distance minimises troubles*]

**PAMELA BOAL**, 4Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, OXON OX12 7EW

Our flats overlooked a small playing field. There may have been a war on but this being England Sunday cricket was more significant than air raids. A beautiful afternoon, a keenly contested match, watched from our bedroom window. Suddenly a couple of fielders jumped in the air as if to try and touch the low flying object overhead. Those jumping and every one else on the field seemed to freeze, then realising what the object was, threw themselves to the ground. Fortunately some vaguery of air current lifted the doodlebug and it went over the roofs for another couple of streets before landing on an already bombed out area. The cricketers were on their feet ready to resume their game even before the explosion came. We continued to watch out of the window, even though by that time we were only too aware off the damage resulting from the blast when doodlebugs landed. [*Everyone has a story*]

**ERIC LINDSAY**, Box 640, Airlie Beach, QLD 4802, AUSTRALIA I'd guess fighters and bombers are going to become increasingly vulnerable to small pilotless cruise missiles and rocket attack. Even if the kill rate is low, the difference in cost would make defence a problem. [*I think you are right*] There is an engineer in New Zealand at the moment, busy building his own personal cruise missile (payload 10kg, range 160 km) just to prove he can do it for US\$5000 (full descriptions downloadable from the net, for payment of a small fee - that is how he is raising the money). Given the same guy has already built a working pulsejet engine, and used it, I think his chances are rather good.

**ALAN BURNS**, 19 The Crescent, King's Rd, Sth., Wallsend, Tyne & Wear NE2 7RE  
Re non replies to ERG, strike them off. I always acknowledge, but some fen are lazy. Now wartime experiences, I have non really. I did three days in the Army and was then sent home for poor eyesight. When I told the Adjutant that I was going back to make high grade Toluene for explosives, he grinned and said I was doing more useful work than the shower he had for soldiers. Old Mill Stream, I seldom watch films on TV unless they have teletext (deaf you know) [*Me too*] even then, but a few, like The Hunt For Red October, I recall with pleasure.

**JOHN HERTZ**, 236 S. Coronado St., No.409. Los Angeles, LA 90057, USA The thought of you as an ARP Messenger recalls the artist Hans Arp. However your tale was stirring. If you didn't win the war I might never have been born or else a slave.

JAMES VERRAN, 12 Ellis St., Port Noarlunga, S.Australia 5167 "Wartime Daze", the article on how you defeated A. Hitler single-handed was a real gem -- can't wait to read the next instalment. Penelope Fandergaste's column seemed plagued by several

typos, as was "Mightier Than The Sword". I felt that "Mightier" would have benefited from some revision and minor editing, but a nice little story all the same. Such easy to read SF is rare these days. Unfortunately the impact of the ending was softened by the unnecessary final paragraph. Thank Ted Hughes for passing on the real meaning of Wye Tart

**ROGER WADDINGTON**, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, N.Yorks YO17 9ES  
Re Geoff Barkers LOC and whether E.F.Russell can stand the test of time, I still have fond memories of *The Great Explosion*. It's one of his that I can read and read again and it has a message that can be read and enjoyed just as well today. But where's the publisher who still wants to take a risk on single, stand alone titles rather than the multi-volume sagas now filling the bookshelves? [*I agree that EFR was one of the most consistent writers*]

**TED HUGHES**, 10 Kenmore Rd., Whitefield, Manchester M45 8ER The reminiscences of your days as an ARP messenger and later in the L(Look), D(Duck and V(Vanishers)) were extremely vivid. They made me shudder, Manchester hadn't had its blitz then. I was peacefully attending wireless college while you were being bombed nightly by Goering's flying boys. Manchester didn't get its blitz until Christmas 1940, at which time I was at sea in the SS Peterton and suffering the personal attendance of a lone German bomber. Don't give up on ERG, I don't know how you manage to keep publishing it, but please make the effort. Your readers appreciate it.

**GENE STEWART**, 1710 Dianne Ave., Bellevue, NE 68005, USA That effect whereby two near-absolutely flat planes of metal stick together with no bonding is interesting. It's not that there is stickiness between them, but rather that the pressure of subatomic particles OUTSIDE them press them tightly together. They have to be so close as to exclude subatomic particles from between them. I can't for the life of me recall the name of this effect, so if anyone knows I'd appreciate hearing it. [*I think they are called 'Johansson Blocks' or Jo Blocks.*]

**LLOYD PENNEY**, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON, Canada M9C 2B2 Nice story...any plans to expand it further, and perhaps submit it somewhere? Never too late, and it would keep the marbles moving. Time travel is an interesting notion, but like light, time seems to have a set speed, that of 1 second/second. Doesn't look like we'll be breaking that speed limit any time soon, unless we're having fun, at which time seems to fly faster. For most of us, doing something we'd rather not be doing, time slows down. These are subjective speeds; objective speeds are constant.

**RON BENNETT**, 36 Harlow Park Cresc, Harrogate, HG2 0AW The story reads like a Scott Adams adventure game. One involves the player trying to get into a pyramid, he cannot find a door. A clue sends him into the desert where he finds a pole sticking up from the sand. It is the spade he needs to dig into the sand by the pyramid and reveal the sanded-up entrance. I once wrote a story in which a spaceship lands on a planet where the long dead inhabitants live on the inside but there is no entrance. You got it, the spaceship had landed on a block of stone covering the entrance.

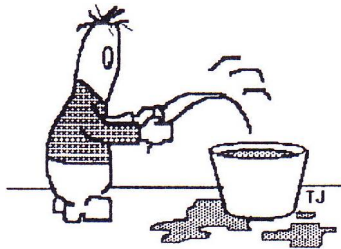
**RON CLARKE**, PO Box 746, Bankstown, NSW 1885. AUSTRALIA Penelope's column: I don't consider myself superstitious -- I open umbrellas inside, and most time walk under ladders (as long as no-one is on them painting). It is amazing, however, just how many people are superstitious: I know quite a lot, most of them women. [*I reckon they also like to read their horoscopes in the press and so on.*] **THERE'S NOTHING TO IT:** I'll leave the maths to you. I did well at school with maths, but have long ago let it lapse. [*Me too, I got a Distinction and later a First in Higher Maths, but now it has almost all gone. Such is old age.*]

**BRIAN TAWN**, 27 Burdett Rd., Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 2PR How you won the war, I love the intro to it. As well as being fun to read, it's a good picture of life as it was then - a history of the people - the individual. I enjoy that kind of thing. Most of my biography books are concerned with Fenland people though I do have one Sheffield biog - it's by a woman who became a 'clippie' on the Sheffield trams during the war. One day, I tell myself, I'll note memories of Fenland childhood. [*Do it now!*]

**GEOFF BARKER**, 19 Oldfield Grove, Stannington, Sheffield S6 5DR 'WARTIME DAZE' first rate as ever. Turret Fighters reminds me of a youth spent thumbing through the Airfix catalogue saying, "Gotta have that. and that, and that. I saw a mention recently of an unusual plane, (d\*mned if I can remember its name) that was a biplane, but with the 2nd wing being retractable! It looked most odd. [*I've seen pictures of a monoplane with wings that could be retracted half way to reduce the span once in the air. A forerunner of the 'swing wing'.*]

**BOB LICHTMAN**, PO Box 30, Glen Eilen, CA 95442, USA Congratulations on your 44th anniversary and even one issue beyond, though it's a little disconcerting to read in No. 162 that you're waffling about whether or not to continue the zine. I can readily understand that your "health may be the deciding factor," but so long as Val can get your socks on I see no reason to quit. In No. 161, I see that Penelope Fandergaste and I have something in common: "I always get out of bed on the left, if only because the right hand side is pushed up against a wall." Same here -- I have a small bedroom and can't have the bed out in the middle with just the head against a wall or there would be little room for anything else. [*Sleep ravel's up the nits.*]

**CHESTER CUTHBERT**, 1104 Mulvey Ave., Winnipeg, MB Canada R3M 1J5



Our home and appliances are breaking down just as yours are, but what can we expect as we are not in our prime. Penelope Fandergaste is far more observant than I am; seldom do I notice errors in movies I watch. It is the overall effect in the picture which interests me. I make enough mistakes myself to forgive easily those of others.

**C.W.BROOKS**, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA30047-4720, USA I remember reading about thermite as a kid and of course wanting to make

some [*I tried too, without success*] My recollection is that it cannot be ignited directly but requires a bit of magnesium ribbon to set it off. [*So that's why mine didn't work*]