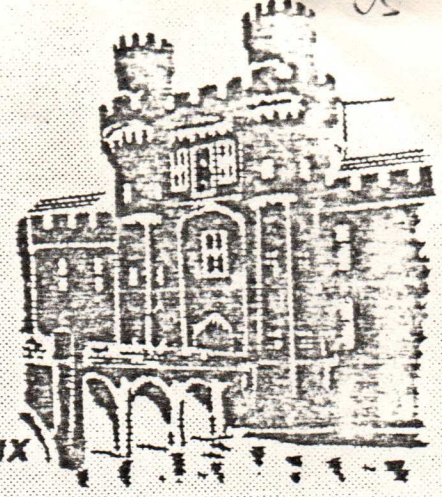


NOT!

GEMINI

La Palma

Herstmonceux



Newsletter of the Royal Greenwich Observatory

April 1st 1983

No 1.

Easter message from the Director

We live in troubled times and, like so many other undertakings, RGO is faced with its share of grave problems. I would like to urge everyone to make the next Five Year Forward Look period one which really puts us on the map, one that shows the SERC that, given the appropriate resources, we can deliver the goods. No! I don't mean we should take over the Ordnance Survey, but I do mean that we should try to make a fresh start and show the rest of the world a different image. To start the ball rolling I have in mind a few ideas for smartening the old place up, so we present a neat and tidy face to visitors. This is terribly important for first impressions and will give each one of you a sense of pride in your own institution.

Take notice boards for instance: many people insist on hanging up notices any old how with no regard to the balance of the layout or the colour composition. I would like to see notices tidied up, arranged in neat rows and boards placed where they do not offend the eye. The same goes for offices: desks covered with masses of papers, feet deep, and walls covered with pictures are an affront to the senses. I aim to provide more neat, metal filing cabinets and larger waste paper baskets so that no one is tempted to keep anything within view. Similarly I shall ask cleaners to erase blackboards every night and perhaps staff would consider getting into this very desirable habit when leaving their offices for tea or lunch.

We all know that corridors attract disorder and unsightly items; and so I would like to suggest that staff do not loiter in them for the purposes of idle conversation but retire to an office. A wonderful way to speed up walking in the corridors would be for people to keep left, obey the "Push" and "Pull" signs on doors and to hold the door open if they arrive at the same time as a person of a higher grade (coloured tags by Dior will be provided to all so that no confusion about rank can arise).

This brings me to the vexed question of dress. Now, I wouldn't expect everyone in this day and age to wear a suit, far from it: for our casual working environment flannels, a white shirt, dark tie and hacking jacket are just fine. And for the ladies, well no hard and fast rules, nothing formal of course, but something you wouldn't feel out of place in, say, the coffee shop at Harrods. I am well aware that some people find the subject of dress a particularly taxing one and, in order to make it easier for all, I propose to appoint an advisor at SSD level (Senior Sartorial Officer). He will be available for consultation between 8.30 and 8.40 am each morning. Andy Lawrence has kindly agreed to take this challenging post.

Outside the office there are still numerous opportunities to put my precepts into practice. Car parking is a good example. Rather than the higgledy-piggledy lines of cars which greet the eye at the moment, how much better it would be if parking were more disciplined. It would all be so much

easier if cars were all the same length and I am, therefore, requesting that any staff member thinking of getting a new car should aim for a standard of say 18 feet 6 inches, and midnight blue is a lovely colour!

Well that's probably enough from me. I'm sure by now you will have cottoned on to my little ways and will all do your utmost to put your best foot forward, shine your shoes and give RGO a brighter future.

Best wishes to you all.

Bosen G. Laceberk

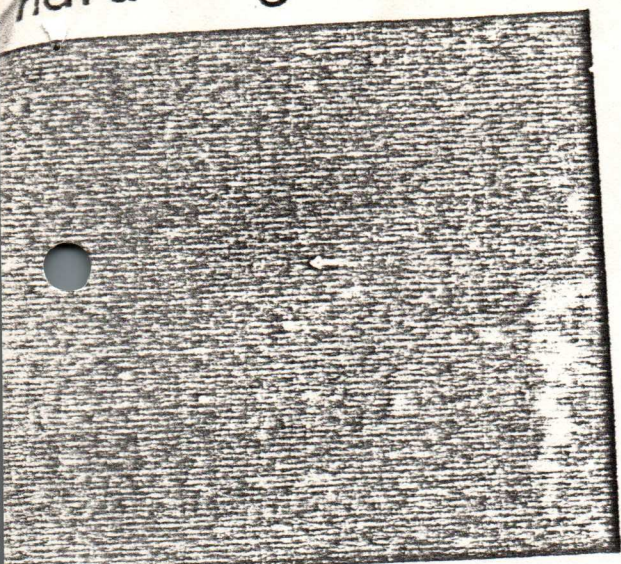
BOSEN G LACEBERK

Signed by him but dictated in his absence

P.S. One way we could all make life more pleasant for each other and for our visitors is to smile more. If you are not naturally of a cheery disposition, try my little secret and next time you walk into a room say "Thrush" as you open the door and you will always be sure of greeting your colleagues with a grin. Indeed, next time I visit you, don't say "Good Morning" say "Thrush"!!



Trev plays
hard to get



It was when any bloke propounding a hypothesis concerning the nature of this recalcitrant object would've been sat a faster than a Playboy in an RE class, but now the 's cleared a bit on the theory front we're in a better position to let the dog see the rabbit. I've been looking at the radial velocities on and off between tinctures for at six months, but to really get to grips with it I've got to rope in a few other guys. Boredom Greenwich, great of mine from the Rutherford Appleton High Energy Astrophysics Observatory, good bloke, lovely wife and a mighty quaffer of the snorts to boot, anyway he reckons we're faced with a binary system featuring a precessing precession disk and simultaneous Doppler shifts in both directions, and that's when he's off the stuff. I dunno about that but I will say I haven't seen such high speed ejection since the landlord turned nasty after that session of Derek's stag-night at the Vole. Boris McWhirter, old sparring partner from MIT days, is weighing in on the radio front, while Dr Simon E Vero of Frascati is keeping me up with what IUE has to say. Cherylene Bayliss, and girl I knew at college - a Tauri pundit at heart, less her cotton socks - gave me a burst from the AAT the other day and amid a welter of expletives I discerned that she too thought the object was of more than passing interest. Certainly the general consensus appears to be that as far as modelling goes it's a pretty stiff dingo to tickle. If you've nothing better to do after a session at the pub, why not take a butchers at QRZ Trev? I'll look forward to hearing from yer!

D J Stokesparameter

COMMISSIONING THE PRU KETTLE

0855 hours, 5 February 1983, A22, Mailsham to Polegate: Hangover. Back of a 187 bus bouncing down the dual carriageway, jostled by fat Saturday shoppers, air reeking of tired cigarette smoke, noisy chatter, mouth like the inside of a camel's armpit, and why do I feel a strong inclination to park a custard? Do I even remember why I'm here?

Vaguely, yes. In November 1982 the RGO's Propagation of Rumour Unit (PRU) - Caroline, Dave, Robert and Peregrine - had decided that it was about time they had a kettle of their own. A KETTLE (Kinetic Energy Transfer To Levels of Excitation) is, as its name suggests, in its simplest form an unsophisticated analog device normally employed to induce a change-of-state in H₂O molecules for the purpose of preparing hot beverages. We weren't, at the time, looking at non-beverage applications - a factor which had unfortunate consequences as we shall see! It was definitely felt that a kettle would exceed in a) elegance, b) efficiency and c) signal-to-noise ratio, the hitherto employed method of lighting a fire of twigs in the middle of the floor. Moreover to those staff who habitually brought beverages in thermos flasks, normally prepared via a variety of off-site kettles, it would offer the irreducible advantage of onsite operation and real-time access to the results. Having thus established a need, the next procedure was to investigate possible modes of operation. We summarise below the reasons which led us to concentrate on the electrical version to the exclusion of all others.

- Fire of twigs No improvement in real terms on current situation.
- Gas flame Elegant, but absence of access to national gas facility in immediate environment of PRU.
- Electricity Elegant, clean, invisible, odourless. Access points proliferate.
- Solar energy Tendency to discontinuous functioning owing to massive glitches alternating with long periods of quiescence.

A number of us felt, regretfully, that though the solar kettle was doubtless the truly eco-integrated kettle of a future leisure society, we might die before it boiled and electricity was obviously the best bet.

Our next step was to investigate commercially available off-the-shelf systems. An on-line literature search, kindly performed on our behalf by Mr Rufous Bushchat of the Library, swiftly brought to light the by now classic papers in *Which?* magazine. These results are tabulated below in condensed form.

(To those listed should be added the Zanussi (formerly "Product X") a new discovery made by Charles Koala of Caltech, and becoming increasingly popular in certain quarters.)

ORDINARY KETTLES	usual price £	capacity pints	rated wattage	features	user rating
VEF Electra K68 (R of Ireland)	5.60[1]	3	3,000	A, B, C, H, K	****
Electra EC3	5.60[1]	3	3,000	B, E, [4]	****
Most Electricity Boards					
Electra EC4	6.45[1]	4	3,000	B, E, C	**
Most Electricity Boards					
DH Haden ADM	5.30[1]	3	2,500	A, B, a	****
Hotpoint Hi Speed 4022	7.23	3	2,500	A[3], B, C	***
Jonelle KJ301[4]	5.95	3	3,000	A, B, s	****
John Lewis Partnership					
Pifco Carlton K33C	8.50	3	2,500	A, B, C	***
Selax Summit S134A	7.35	3	2,750	A, B, C	****
Sunbeam IKE 1	8.50	3	2,750	A, B, C	****
Swan A383F Regal	6.00	3	3,000	B, E, a	***
Tower Power 2361-1	5.32	2 1/2	2,750	A, a	*****
Tower Super 2293-1	4.58	3	2,750	A, p	**

KETTLES WITH STEAM STAYS	price £	capacity pints	rated wattage	features	changes
Electra PA72	7.60[1]	3	2,750	A, B, C	****
Some Electricity Boards					
Metway Autoway DA910	10.45	3	2,750	A, B, C	****
Pifco Autoherald Electric K36A	8.50	4	2,500	A, C, M	**
Russell Hobbs K2S	9.05	3	2,400	s	*****
Sona S32P Automatic[5]	11.94	3	2,750	A, B, h, k, s	*****
Swan Autoreal CH01MD 11.13	11.13	3	2,500	A, B, C	*****

GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY KETTLES TESTED IN 1971	list price £	capacity pints	rated wattage	features	changes
Boots 1999B	4.95	3	3,000	[6]	
Pifco Seventy K30A	7.25	3	2,500	A, a, h, A[6]	used to have connector/circuit
Westminster KE 68 (R of Ireland) Currys	4.99	3	3,000	A, [6]	was K1, 68 4
Winfield 3 pint Woolworth	6.95	3	2,750	E, [6]	was Winfield K2750; used to have auto-matically reset cut out

The next step was to investigate possibilities of SERC funding, and here the project received a severe setback. We spoke to Derek Slushfund, head of the Rabbit-from-a-Hat Section, Fiscal Wizardry Department, Central Office, who revealed that under no circumstances could SERC support financially the purchase of a kettle optimised for beverage-making. Further deliberation, however, revealed that £15-£30, spread over a three-year period and even allowing for inflation, would prove no hardship to the pockets of individual department members: after all, "what's a few nicker between chums?", as Peregrine hisped.

So, armed with all the above information, with a packet of No. 6, a two-day stubble, and an open cheque playfully signed Mickey Mouse by Dave in a rare moment of sobriety, I stepped from the bus and threaded my way through the heart of Eastbourne's bustling Arndale Centre. The team, the previous day, had sworn they had every confidence in my judgment. The responsibility was all mine. What would I find? Could I pull it off? The future lay, if it lay anywhere, ahead.

END OF PART ONE

Next month: Steve does something!

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

RGO/Sussex University Seminars SPRING SESSION (1983)

Friday 1 April RGO	Dr J Gibbon (Lewes Tech) "Transit of Jupiter: Apocrypha or Apocalypse?"	4.00 pm
Friday 8 April PBIA7	Dr Edmund Jay-Gibbon (Hollywood) "Spielberg, Hoyle, Drake"	4.00 pm
Friday 8 April RGO	Dr Edmund Jay-Gibbon (Hollywood) "On the nonabsoluteness of simultaneity"	4.00 pm
Friday 15 April Gardner Centre	John and Mary Partridge-Gibbon Schumann: Dichterliebe. Schubert: Die Schone Sternwarte	3.30 pm

Forthcoming Workshops

"Future of the Very Long Baseline": V Wade, R Laver and others.

"Ground-based X-ray Astronomy" (sponsored by the Irish Astronomical Society)

"Hot Clouds in the Vicinity of the NAO Kettle"

"Knowledge in Abundance": a symposium in honour of Professor Badger.

Lunch Time Talks

May - "Gastronomy in Astronomy"
A review of the eating habits of participants at RGO Workshops, by
Dr O Beese

June - "A design for the Far Out Camera (F.O.C) for the Spaced Telescope"
Prof Mike Cartoon-Maker

This series of events, in which staff with something interesting to talk about are, as an alternative, invited to humiliate themselves before a specially invited audience of Chas Parker's friends, reached its nadir last week with the appearance on the platform of Professor Sir Desmond Maximilian-White, CBE. Professor M-W, on leave from the Easybird Tracking Station, Edinburgh, spoke at some length on his work and the problems of suddenly being terribly famous.

"Of course you need a really dark night, 'cos otherwise y' wasting y' time see, like recently the plates've gone down the swanee owing to glare from the limelight. We just have to sit and watch the moon come down. Actually it's really fantastic and you don't want to believe all that stuff in the New Scientist, it's rubbish. And of course the key to it all is in the bunch somewhere [jangling]. But the really interesting thing about it is that it's really interesting."

Professor Maximium-Hele is # 49.



A photograph taken at a recent division heads lunch.

VISITS BY RGO STAFF

March 3	Miss Jeannette Schröder to Sotheby's to negotiate purchase of 'Ariane Bathing', a rare contemporary water-colour.
4,11,16, 25	Dr Lunchtime O'Booze visited Annellus Taberna
19	Mr Charles Lambretta, the well-known self-publicist [the who?], visited Mallory Park.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

April 8,15,22, 29	Dr Lunchtime O'Booze to visit Annellus Taberna
-------------------	--

VISITS TO RGO

March	Dr Al Bedo and Dr Ben Trovato visited Mr John Flamsteed.
-------	--

Mr Claud Rainer made several lightning visits to RGO, and claimed to be 'forcibly impressed'.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

April 4	Mallory Park to visit Mr Lambretta.
---------	-------------------------------------



Mr Rainer inspecting overheads

PUBLICATIONS

SERC General Notices

27/83	Abolition of the Board of Longitude
28/83	Revised scale of pro-rata contributions (Non-Industrials I and III) to SERC/ESA/IUGG Joint Indoor Sports and Laser Ranging Facility (JISLRF)

RGO Library Monthly Accessions List June 1978

RGO Local Orders

126	Wearing motorcycles in NAO grounds
83	Fox (<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>) Protection Order

LOCAL CHURCH SERVICES

St Sepulchre's, Erseman Sloux	18th Sunday after Trinitaskell High Mass 1000 Low Mass 1200 (Mass loss @ 0.06%)
-------------------------------	--

Flowers Green Dissenters'	0715 0750 and at these minutes past
---------------------------	---

THELMA THARG, 16, comes to RGO with a BSE in disco-dancing. This is her first job, and she is assigned to the General Office's new biro-sharpening section.



Alasdair Cardboard-Cutout

ALASDAIR CARDBOARD-CUTOUT is our first Junior Trainee Research Associate, a new post jointly financed by an anonymous SSRC-funded quango and the Department of Health and Social Security. Asked why he had such an unusual name, Alasdair replied: "Well, it's actually Alasdair Cutout, but I thought that sounded silly so I changed it". He can usually be found in the A & A coffee lounge trying to get Capital radio on the percolator.

Adventical STEVE SHAGG, 17, is another newcomer to RGO and to the world of biro-sharpening. He should be well-fitted for the General Office, coming from Manchester Polytechnic where he recently gained a distinction in stealing hair-caps from moving vehicles.

DEBIE NARGS has twelve years' experience behind her as assistant check-out overseer at Safeways in Rickney. Married with five children, Boris, 19, was attracted to RGO on account of its enviable reputation amongst local workers. Asked if she regarded supervising the sharpening of bios as a challenge, Mrs Nargs winked and smiled. We look forward to having her cheery face long with us!



Cindy Nubile-Lissom

Sharpening bios should be child's play to blonde, 25-year-old LUCINDA NUBILE-LISSOM, 36-24-36. Cindy (0323-6060842) explains: "Well, I used to be a wossname, model, but I reckoned I wanted sunnink really dull and pointless for a change. Not that you could call this job pointless, har, har!" She too can be found in the General Office (ninetenth cubicle from left).

STAFF WHAT MATTERS

Retirements

HEMIA LAUD, who joined RGO in 1907, has sadly departed in our midst. From her Brideshead attic she has nannied successive generations of Astronomers Royal and Directors, etc., as she explains, "now it's all getting too much for me". Leaping to prominence as Clara Butt's understudy at the premiere of Elgar's Sea Pictures her trenchant views on musical matters have ever since commanded respect, presenting her with a 'Magiclone' photocopier and 5 x 10⁸ sheets of A4 on behalf of the Conservatory, last Friday's Acting Director spoke warmly in her praise and announced she would receive a Long Campaigner's Award for Merit.

Ms Laud is 94.



Miss Euphemia Laud

Dr Who? The well-known Time Lord, we are informed, will not now be returning to Earth, thus ending a thrilling twenty-five year series of trips into the distant unknown. Dr Who is best-known in connection with the STARDIS, a sophisticated interactive low-speed networked video game, so-called because it enables many megabytes of stellar data to disappear without trace. But the M40 system, in which he has so often been trapped for weeks at a time, has become impenetrable, and his return is considered unlikely.

Additional Christmas Pantomime for 1983, directed as
 by Ghas Parker, will be *Baron Waste Land*, a brand new
 picking farce hastily cobbled together out of the more
 able bits of several very old rollicking farces. The
 heart arming story of Gretel (Gillian Gibbs), a poor servant
 who through her helpless innocence is subjected to the
 depraved whims of the evil Baron Waste Land (Norman Walker),
 and after a succession of thrilling adventures involving a
 flight to Antwerp, near-rape in Pisa, a slave galley
 off Alexandria and imprisonment in Newgate Gaol, eventually
 returns home after many years to marry the evil Baron's
 noble and handsome son (Janet Dudley), is more or less
 forgotten as the cast chuckle and ad-lib their way to
 drunken oblivion before the final curtain mercifully
 descends. The script was originally devised by Woy Rollick,
 and the rest of the cast is as follows (in order of
 appearance):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mrs Pogle, Gretel's mother | Andy Lawrence |
| Robbin | Phil Rudd |
| Bob | Lynn Wooller |
| Good Fairy | Stuart Keir |
| Man decorating bathroom | Jon Hitchins |
| Remote-controlled liquidiser | Bill Martin |
| Coach-and-four | (front) Chris Hobson |
| | (back) VAX-11/750 |
| Two bald men fighting in a sack | (Paul Jordan |
| | (Tony Jordan |
| Slave driver | Ken Hartley |
| Chorus of professional bridesmaids | The Entire Staff Of |
| | Her Majesty's Nautical |
| | Almanac Office |
| Man in airport departure lounge | Chas Parker |

There will also be a surprise appearance from Alec
 Boksenberg, who will be attempting to impersonate the
 director of an observatory.

OLDE CLEM'S ALMANACK

It is not commonly realised that the true purpose of our
 astrometric observations is to yield predictions for the
 coming year. For the last decade, these have been the
 basis of Treasury models and Conservative Party Election
 Campaign spending strategy, but also have proved capable of
 anticipating important Astronomical events before their
 actual fruition. We are proud to append our 1983 calendar.

- April 5th RGO team discover supernova in LMC.
- April 6th Bill Martin discovers organic absorption spectra in Cepheids.
- April 17th Rumours of "Seyfert mountain" in EEC.
- April 23rd RGO team discover supernova near NGC 5489.
- May 16th Bill Martin discovers organic absorption spectra in RR Lyraes.
- May 27th Fred Hoyle publishes new theory in Playboy: explains X-ray sources as hyper-advanced civilisations obsessed with bad teeth and individual hand-held dental X-ray machines.
- July 7th - 10th Workshop of international experts on Astronomical Catering at RGO.
- July 11th Boksenberg publicly announces intention to operate, by December, coffee machine in West Building from computer in La Palma.
- July 20th Article in New Scientist announcing first remote operation of coffee machine at ROE from Hawaii by elaborate lash-up of telephone calls, ropes, pulleys, and carrier pigeons.
- July 29th RGO team discover huge jet emanating from anonymous F star.
- Aug 3rd Wax impression of the Boksenberg grin placed for posterity in the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Aug 11th RGO team discover supernova near NGC 1283.
- Aug 11th RGO team discover 5 more supernovae.
- Aug 28th Bill Martin discovers organic absorption spectra in all classes of main sequence star.
- Sept 1-4th Workshop of international experts on tele-

- Sept 17th Article in New Scientist explains how Edinburgh Astronomer completely controlled the recent PATT meeting by pure power of thought and anonymous donations.
- Sept 22nd Bill Martin nominated for Smoker of the Year Award by manufacturers of Hamlet cigars.
- Oct 2nd RGO team discover previously unknown nebularities near NGP.
- Oct 13th Neill Reid's research program knocked back 3 years. Someone asks him if he wants coffee. He loses count.
- Oct 24th RGO team discover 14 more supernovae.
- Nov 12-15th Workshop of international experts on ridiculously big telescopes at RGO.
- Nov 16th Boksenberg publicly announces intention to build, by NEXT MONTH at the latest, a 150 metre telescope in the Scilly Isles.
- Nov 20th Article in New Scientist tells how scientists at ROE recently covered the whole of Glen Coe with cooking foil. The sun was detected at 5 sigma.
- Nov 21st RGO team purchase 2 doz. barrels of "Spotto", the wonder plate cleaner.
- Dec 13th Norman Walker barred from use of RGO pencil sharpeners.
- Dec 23rd Mike Penston voted "Best Dressed Astronomer" by Eastbourne branch of Bill Haley fan club.



Lynn Wooller and a young Dave Thorne posting their entries for this year's Maltese Marathon.

A small adjustment in the method of levying contributions resulted in the RGO Club netting over £79,000,000 in the last financial year, reports secretary L C Tanner. Work has thus been enabled to begin on the new greyhound race-track and, as you can see from Fig. 1, is well advanced. The site chosen [Fig. 2], 50 feet below Pevensey Levels, can double as a nuclear shelter for 237 people.

A hare has generously been donated by Mr Wallace Roy.

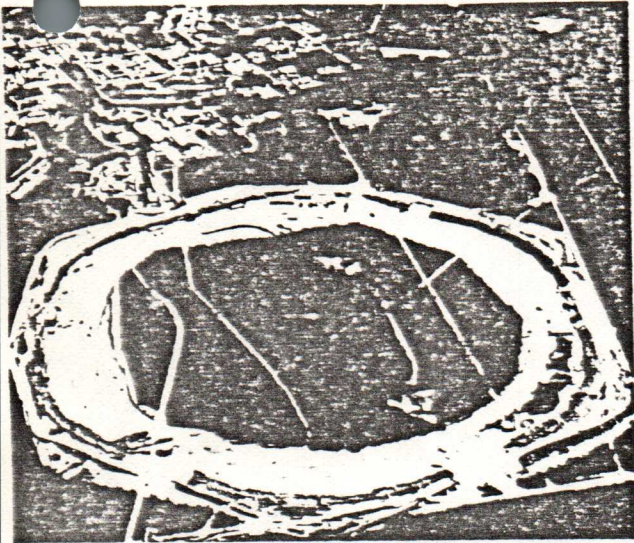


Fig. 1

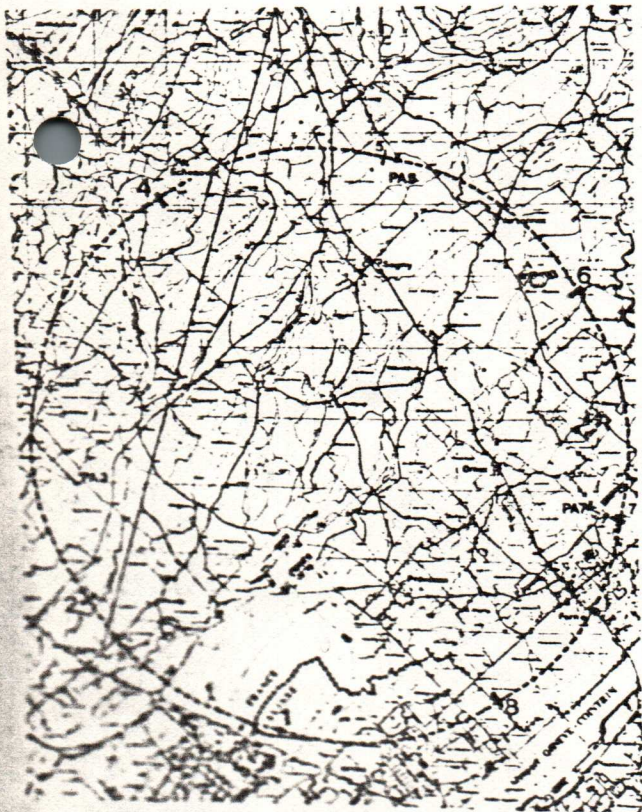


Fig. 2



Sr. Gresi Diego hands over the key to a giant tin of sardines to Zoe Gitjeen in return for a model of the dome of the 2.5m telescope which can also be seen in the background.

Glossary of Technical Terms

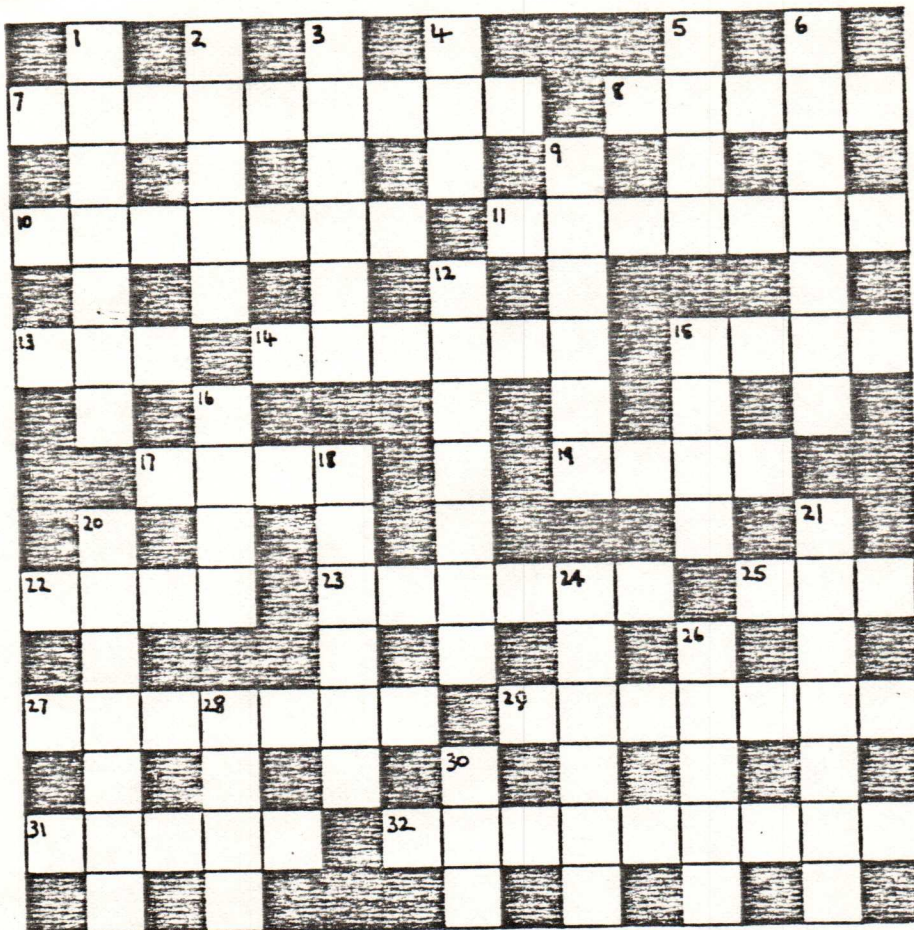
- Anti-reflection coating: black leather jacket
- Autoguided: Steering wheel
- Colour Excess: Blush
- Colour Index: Dulux chart
- Common user instrument: park bench/seesaw
- Dekker: Recording company
- Digital encoder: prewar cryptographer
- Digital (output): finger print (readout)
- External memory: memo pad/secretary
- Fast secondary: mistress
- Field corrector: bulldozer
- Flat field: bowling green
- Floppy disc: Frisbee
- Fringe removal: haircut
- Ghost images: recorded by spectrograph
- Guessed Investigator: we think the plate is in South America
- Hardware resident: ironmonger
- High performance triplet corrector: vasectomy
- Image dissector: film critic
- Image intensifiers: Saatchi and Saatchi
- In house research: homework
- Lick survey: icecream testing
- Light baffles: we don't understand it either
- Limb darkening: suntan
- Local standard of rest: 45 minute tea break
- Microfish: Krill
- Orbital perturbation: squint
- Palomar chart: Californian top twenty
- Photomultiplier: enlarger
- Plate holder: oven glove
- Polychromatic emulsion: rainbow paint
- Principle Investigators: Spanish Inquisition
- Project leader: human cannon ball
- Proper motion: "This house is loyal to the Queen"
- Redshift: attire of scarlet woman
- Reduction programme: diet
- Saturation level: about 10 pints
- Software package: Andrex
- Spectral classes: a school for ghosts
- Standard error: common mistake
- Time Allocation: prison sentence

Prize Crossword

by

Fame-spear Pierce*

(to whom entries should be submitted in confidence in a plain brown envelope before the draw on April 30)



Across

- 7. Vessel for twins? (9)
- 8. Palindromic lady (5)
- +10. Knight (7)
- 11. Musical beans (7)
- 13. Azimuthal motion (3)
- 14. South sea islander (6)
- 15. Oh dear! (4)
- 17. Hindu music (4)
- 19. Eastern maid (4)
- 22. Festival (4)
- *23. Cossack headman (6)
- 25. Salt deposit (3)
- 27. Bright orange-red (7)
- 29. Persian lynx (7)
- 31. River nymph (5)
- 32. Aromatic North American poplar (9)

Down

- 1. Crazy fruits (7)
- 2. At the lowest level (5)
- *+3. Girl's name (6)
- *4. Piper god (3)
- 5. South American illusion (4)
- 6. Spanish pelota (7)
- 9. Jewish oral tradition (6)
- 12. Condiment (7)
- 15. Homeless boy? (4)
- 16. Shaggy dog story (4)
- 18. Climbing perch (6)
- 20. Moslem month (7)
- 21. Scottish tar (7)
- 24. Hindu incarnation (6)
- 26. Slow dance (5)
- *+28. Whale of a captain (4)
- 30. Cooking vessel (3)

Answers appear in Concise Oxford Dictionary and Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary except those marked

* not in COD
+ not in CTCD



The Editor and his staff celebrating the sale of the two millionth copy of the first issue of Not! Gemini.

Well, it's been lots of fun putting together this, the first issue of Not! Gemini. I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all the boys and girls who have worked so hard to make it such an unqualified success, and whose contributions have enlivened what would otherwise have been blank pages.

Sue Derrim

31 MAY 1984



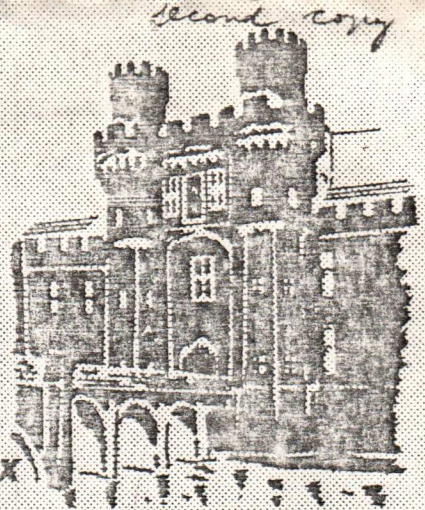
La Palma

NOT!

GEMINI

II

Herstmonceux



second copy

Newsletter of the Royal Greenwich Observatory

Christmas Edition 1983

A Christmas Message from your very own Director

It was in the bathroom that I had this flash of inspiration (I often get dazzled when I'm cleaning my teeth!) about how to lift RGO out of the mire. Such a simple idea really and I'm amazed that no-one has thought of it before; but that's where we innovators come in don't we - boldly going where others have not dared to boldly go before. I was brooding about the Rayner review and muttered to myself "What the hell does Rayner know about astronomy?". Naturally, I immediately had the perfect answer, "Nothing!" I replied. Delighted at the way the conversation was going so far, I decided to pursue this promising line and ask myself a further question. "Why do all these Rayner people have to come poking their noses in here when they should be keeping the shekels flowing at Marks and Spencer?" "Shekels" I mused, and my pulses began to race: "Marks and Spencer!!" I exclaimed, splattering the mirror with a galaxy of white warf and startling dozens of geese into flight, "That's it!" a wondrous vision of a commercialised, privatised, revitalised RGO grew before me. Since that moment I have been working out the details of my plans (which will be revealed in full in my colour brochure "RGO in the Naughty Nineties"). There is not space here to explore the whole range of consequences for the work of the observatory, but I would like to give you a flavour of what I have in mind. In fact some of you will already know that I have commissioned some preliminary work in some areas and it will now become clear how this fits in with the master plan.

First I plan to make much better use of the Castle, after all that's what people come to see isn't it? Taking a leaf out of the books of the impoverished aristocracy, I propose to offer rich Americans and Arab Sheiks luxury weekends at a real English Castle. Staff will already have seen that some of the dull old rooms on the ground floor have been redecorated in a pseudo-Ashkenazic sepulchral style. A particularly noteworthy feature of this style is to be seen in the canteen where doors half way up the walls signify the futility of life and the promise of better things in the next world. The next stage of development will be the re-establishment of the Banqueting Hall in what is now the library (finally getting rid of all those surplus, untidy books to the old INT dome). Then guests and casual visitors will be able to enjoy the pleasures of real medieval feasts - roast ox, mulled ale, quail, tripe and onions, prunes and custard - all those dishes that made Old England great. Members of staff will be expected to play their full part in officiating and assisting at these functions and in the New Year I shall be auditioning for handmaidens, dancing girls, oafs, serving wenches, madrigal singers and so on: a volunteer is worth ten pressed men, they say, so if you feel you have a talent for one of these roles please let me know. I myself will continue in the well known guise of court jester which I know you've all grown to appreciate. Another aspect of the olde worlde approach will be the

manufacture of period furniture in the Workshops. A prototype four poster bed, complete with built-in TV, cocktail cabinet and bedwarmer, is already in the early stages of manufacture in the carpenters' shop and over the years we should be able to increase the scope of this side of the business to produce other items such as Elizabethan commodes, wooden replicas of Herstmonceux Castle and baby grand pianos.

By far our greatest opportunity will be to tap the market and this is where the staff of the N. into their own. Accurate horoscopes by post and by telephone will form the basis of the work with future expansion into graphical charts from the Starlink output devices. I am currently negotiating with the TV companies for a staff member to appear on one of the breakfast television shows (after a crash grooming and personality course, naturally) and this will get the name of RGO Inc into every home in the country. Indeed, a modest amount of advance publicity has already occurred through my starring appearance on Woman's Hour. As a follow up to this I intend to press for appearances on other opinion-making shows such as The Archers, The Sky at Night, Saturday Superstore and, the ultimate, Blankety Blank. But these are early days yet and we mustn't set our sights too high.

The one vital aspect of our public image which I am not happy with, even after months of careful work by myself and the entire and indefatigable Design Office, is the letterhead on the observatory notepaper. None of the dozens of designs has really captured the spirit of the new RGO and so I am here inviting all readers to enter my grand Christmas competition to design a new letterhead. Entries should reach me before 1984 April 1 and should give the name, age and height of the entrant. I have undertaken to judge the entries personally and will announce the winner on 1984 November 5 (or perhaps a little later if I have not been able to make up my mind or am away from the observatory). I hope you will all seize this exciting opportunity and help me decide this vexing question.

So you will see that I am very optimistic about the future - there are new and different challenges ahead for us all. I am pleased to have this chance to outline my plans for RGO and to wish you all the compliments of the season.

Bob Greenslack

Bob Greenslack

P.S. Whoops - I forgot to tell you what the prizes were for my competition. The winner will enjoy a week's holiday for two at a mystery Portakabin on the top of a volcano not a million miles from Santa Cruz de La Palma. The 16 runners up will each receive a brace of Sussex ducks and every entrant, irrespective of merit, will be awarded a handsome signed photograph of yours truly at a recent ASR Board meeting.

* Copies at £5 each will be posted in a plain brown envelope on application to Your Very Own Director, Herstmonceux Castle.

Iota Wincarnis — now it can be told!

Well, a fair amount of the old solids have hit the air conditioning since your correspondent last put Pentel to paper, but I'm hoping it'll die down before PATT get their horny hands on my next application. Basically I'd been struck by a blinding flash of inspiration, to wit that VW Polo more closely resembles a BMW 528-type slow nova than it does ZZ Top, 23 Skidoo and the rest of the Karma Chamaeleonis variables. Now I got this down on a scrap of paper the minute it came to me, while I was mowing the lawn. I set pitch as a matter of fact, but then the wife put the trousers in the wash and I was back down the snake to square one before you could say Roche lobe.

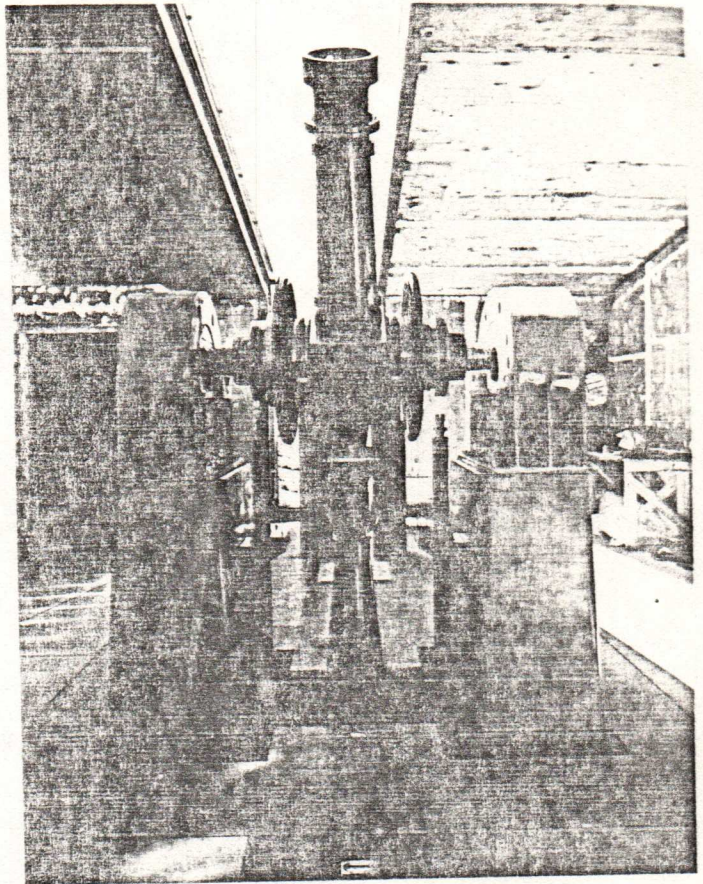


5
arc-min

Anyway, and this is where the story really begins, being at a bit of a loose end as a result of this catastrophe I was moodily blowing the dust off some Palomar charts one fine day when I noticed a vast splurge reminiscent of Sirius only bigger, which I couldn't immediately put a name to, and which the overlay, when with trembling fingers I slotted it into place, didn't mention either. Hitherto unnoticed galactic supernova, epigrammatic note in IAU circular, the acclaim of millions, Nobel Prize, interview with Heather Couper - even Sir David Stokesparameter - all these swam before my fevered gaze, as the poets say. Well to cut a long story short the yard and a half of references I got from CDS maintained a deafening silence on the subject, so I reckoned I was in with a winner. Jets several zillions of parsecs long were clear for all to see, and by a stroke of luck Gordonne de Fromage happened to mention over a snort or twain that he thought it might be inside an EXOSAT error box. Needless to say I reckoned I'd be pissing on the IP boson, but the morning of the press conference a colleague of mine, who shall remain a nameless cretin, casually pointed out that my precious print was the one over which our little Kiwi friend Cadbury-Fruitnut spilt his sparkling tonic wine while playing Hunt the Herbig-Haro with Linda Smith after an all-night party in the Starlink mess.

At which point is trooped the reptiles from the Fairwarp advertent and sundry other rags, grinning from ear to ear and licking their lips. Talk about a bloodbath, boy! Haven't been so tangled since the imprudent scum under the table at Fifi's twenty-first, that time her brother-in-law had the unpleasantness with the kirsch. Anyway, as I say, I hope to God it blows over before the next round of global warming or it'll be waterwings at Navagissey for yours truly instead of picking up the duty-free on route to the sun-bleached beaches of bloody Hawaii.

Med den Transit- Zirkus on La Palma



A special report from our Anglo-Danish correspondent,
OLE RØMER-NEMPIRE

En Københavnsuniversitet spaceshuttle von-und zu-Schlump-hausen bei RGO en 1983 gynaecologist. Hed den "Roque de los Olividados Observatoriums" video nasty huggermugger spam, spam, spam. Siden 1979 teem von RGO-staff deriblandt Kristina Thobón ed Meik Swifte-Tempó undersøgelsens bubblesqueek minicomputer den Carlsberg-ATC, med collimation error og azimuth error jah wobble. Mogadon johnny mathis disco club hi-de-hi meridiankredsobservationer von FK3 bis FK5 med den AGK3 eric mœrecambe of +0'10 ± 0'04 beachball pufnstuf. Wodwo? Med papadopoulos cat og Doktor Deevit Øwen in een soufflé. Tek 2 litre drambuie ed jabberwocky en pederast, hoity-toity airyfairy hans, knees und bumpsadaisy! Nê -né : ob finnigans wake ob mœlewrench blodwen poltergeist jockstrap. All blow øver in a motter of dees. Den pixel-to-pixel broiler chicken waldenmar har ikke data transfer, habermas, horkheimer ed hitchhiker, pa 0.2 arcsec. Rayner albatros [contd. p.94].



Our own Honey Jedson (of Honey Jedson and the Sex Kittens fame) working on her new single "Body Tale".



The face that launched a thousand slips.

GREENWICH SCORES WORLD FIRST IN HUNT FOR 10TH PLANET

In an amazing feat of precognition, a Greenwich astronomer has discovered a 10th planet in the solar system months ahead of rivals using slower, conventional techniques.

Scientists at the New Greenwich Observatory (NGO) have named the planet "Coupersephone" in honour of its discoverer.

The discovery was made with the aid of computer graphics facilities at BBC TV's Lime Grove studios. There, the computer magically turned the discoverer's brain waves into pictures readily comprehensible to viewers of the news programme 60 Minutes.

This astounding breakthrough in interactive thought processing came only hours after scientists at Rutherford Appleton Lab had denied rumours that the IRAS satellite had discovered a 10th planet.

Where they failed, Greenwich stepped in.

The IRAS team were hampered in their search by the need to spend several months collecting data and then analysing it.

Fortunately, there are no such constraints on Coupersephone's revolutionary new technique, which promises to make costly new equipment, and even other astronomers, completely unnecessary.

The astronomical community can scarcely contain its excitement while awaiting further astounding announcements from the New Greenwich Observatory. Rumours emanating through the letterbox suggest the forthcoming publication of a new book, *The Couper Effect*, dealing with the destruction of Los Angeles by Halley's Comet, and *The Universal Universe*, a bedside table book for jaded astronomers with colour pictures from the Science Porno Library.

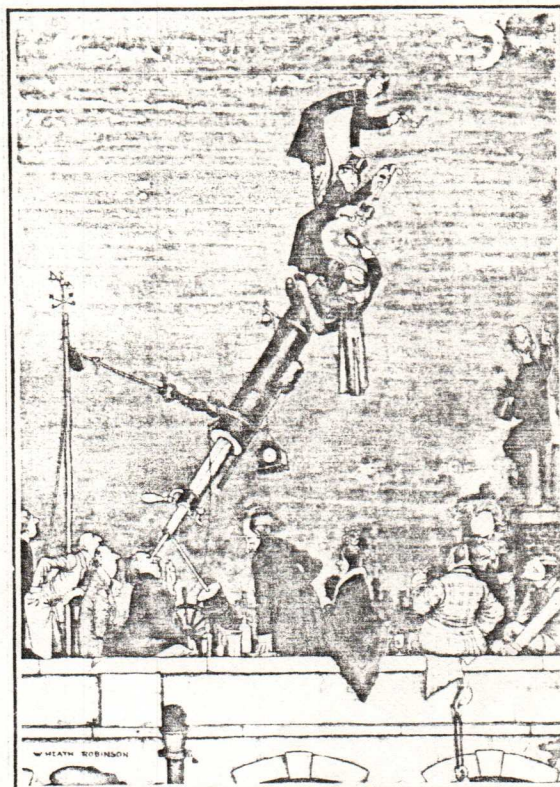
Coupersephone worked closely on the discovery with Nigel Headline, a journalist. Indeed the two are sometimes so close that it is difficult to split them even with the Greenwich 26-inch on nights of steady seeing.

Astronomers have been monitoring the pair for years as part of the Greenwich improper motion survey, but the results so far have been unexpected. Whereas most such binaries undergo recurrent surges of brilliance, this pair is better noted for its catastrophic drop-offs.

The address of the NGO is 55 Colomb Street, London SE10.

When the sudden and totally unexpected discovery of Comet 1983z, which caught astronomers around the world by surprise, was announced, the RGO's P.R. Unit set into full swing a massive public relations exercise to cope with the expected flood of media interest and to gain as much publicity as possible for something we had nothing to do with. Three days after the announcement, this hard work was justified when we got a telephone call from the Salford Sea-Anglers Weekly asking whether or not the year 2000 would be a leap year.

Expecting this high degree of interest to escalate at any minute we thought we'd better take a look at the object itself (first discovered by that renowned husband and wife team of Iris and Eric Alcock). On his way back from the pub one night, Bob Gargoyle dropped in on the 26-inch (he'd been clambering around on the dome and someone had left the shutters open) and noticed that the comet was a splendid naked eye object in the constellation of Pisartist. He succeeded in taking a plate but dropped it on the way to the darkroom.



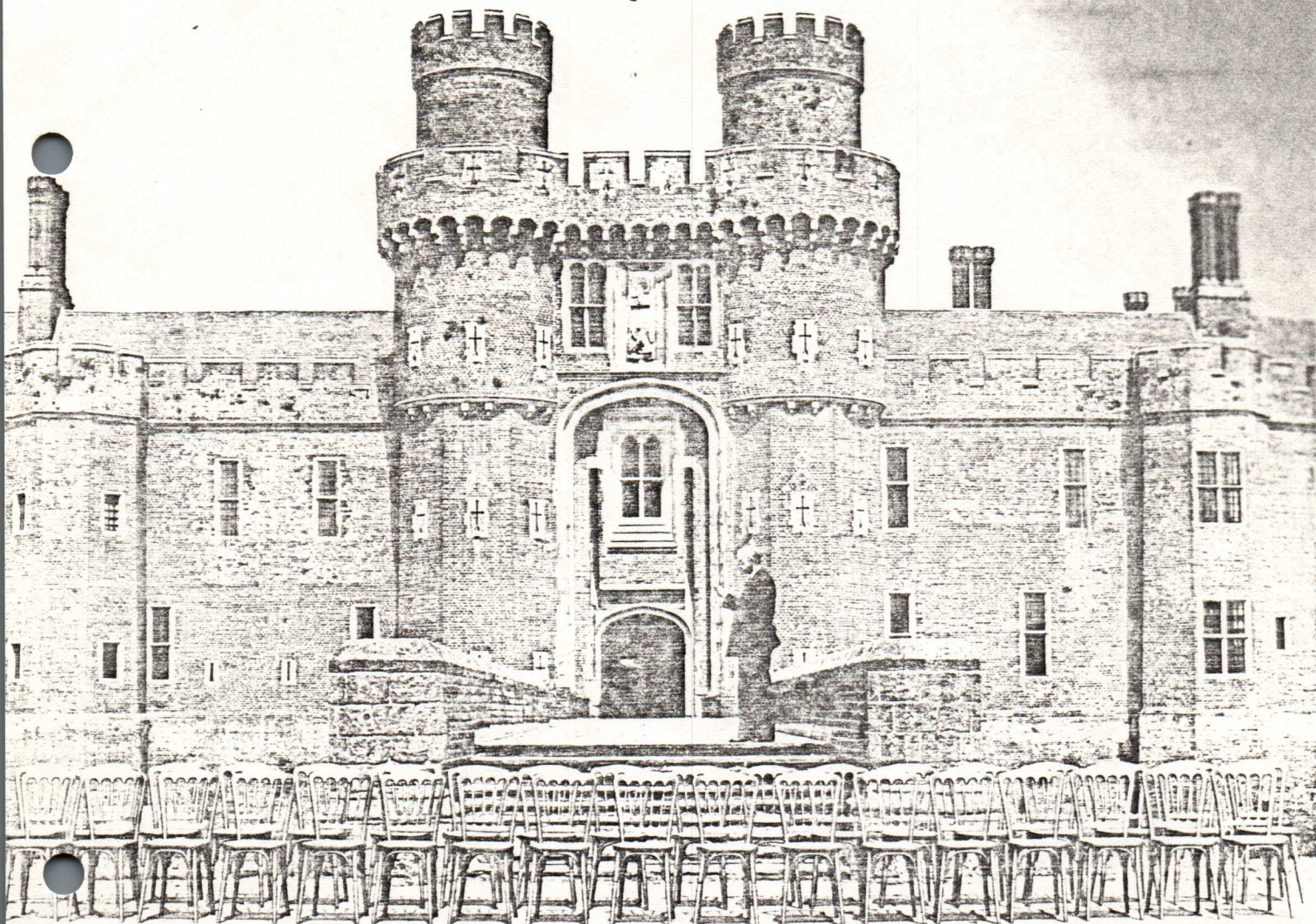
The RGO's P R Unit swings into action.

Meanwhile, in the 13-inch dome, Alexander John was assisting a team from Blue Peter who were showing how you could make your own comet from an old rice pudding and some pieces of cotton wool.

The following day Dave Stickleback produced an A4 sheet for visitors to the Exhibition showing them where the toilets were, and then he and Chad Ballpoint set off, hot foot, to the nearest pub.

The only really exciting pictures of the comet were obtained when veteran observer, Adam Franklin, strapped himself to the side of the 13-inch and snapped away with his pocket Brownie. The following night it was brilliantly clear but we'd all lost interest by then and went home for a good night's sleep.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS



A photograph taken at the recent RGO Workshop on "Apathy in Astronomy".



Forthcoming Workshops

"How to make a little ASR Board funding go a long way"
A topic of interest to everyone in the UK astronomy community. Organiser: K Pounds. Dates: February 27-31.

"Revitalizing astronomical nomenclature with a view to wowing the Great British Public"
Organiser: MV ("Zerg") Penston. Dates: March 1-6.

"Halley's Comet - how do we really know it's the same one?"
Organiser: J Gibbon. Dates: March 7-10.

"Plans for the Southern Hemisphere Infra-red Telescope"
Organiser: Toby Nominated. Dates: March 10-20.

"Sponsorship in Astronomy". A joint meeting of the RAS and Bob Hope Charities with financial support from Mother's Pride, Durex, the Mafia and the Boreham Street Ladies Sewing Circle.

Charles Harner unable to control his excitement as a member of the Stanlab group attempts to levitate an unwilling and inanimate chair.



Megapundits attending the recent RGO Workshop on "The Mysterious Disappearance of the Boksenberg Grin".

FORTHCOMING PAPERS

"Optimum Egg Production" by N Henbest

"Campanology" by C Knell and L L Bell

"Graphical Methods" by A J Read, P Wright and C H Page

"Monarchy in the modern world" by J J Pharoah and D J King

"Achievements of Robert the Bruce" by R H McNaught

"Central Heating" by C R and D R Brazier

"Birds of a feather" by R H D Swifte, W L Martin, R Martin and G M T Martin

"After the bomb" by C L Amess

"Great rivers of the world XXIII" by A H Avon and A R Jordan

"Dirty old men" by B Mack

"Keeping pets for fun" by B D Slaughter, A Butchers and D J Spring

"Acrobatics" by P S Turner and F J Tuck

"A lifetime at sea" by C D Pike and R V Whiting

"Support of overheads at RGO" by J V Wall

"Comments on the Wall Paper" by R Graffitti

"The Sussex Good Loo Guide" by A Penny

"Heading for Cornwall" by N South and C West

"My system for the football pools" by C G Wynne

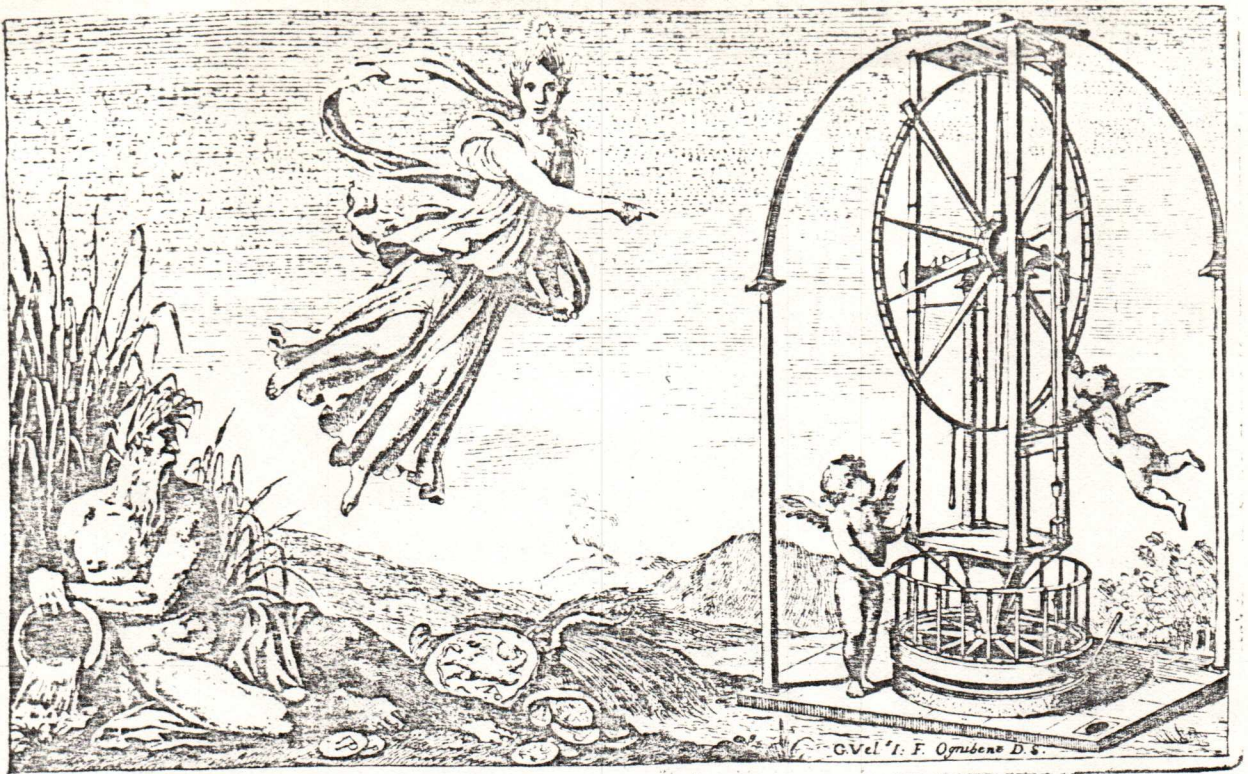
"Sweeny Tood" by V W Barber and R J Baker

"A campaign to eliminate bad language." by R Gordon and V J Bennett

"Is celibacy all it's cracked up to be?" by J D Pope and S B Parsons

"Insomnia" by R J Doswell, G C C Knapp and M J Everest

"Skeletons in the cupboard" by M E Napier



- La Palma 1986 -

The new head of RGO Facilities Division, recently hired under a government positive discrimination policy favouring employment of female chemists, directs the procurement team as they assemble the Herschel altazimuth telescope; but they have not correctly zeroed the altitude and azimuth encoders and are unable to find the daytime supernova in the zenith.

A venerable consulting engineer, reclining amongst his commission pours resources from his ewer in the direction opposite to the problem. The Roque de Los Muchachos, in the distance, becomes active again.



OK Greenslack - don't move a muscle or the Palomar Kid here will drill you full of photons.

"Don't worry folks, this grin's been frozen on for years!"



Our ace reporter Clint Parker (conducting an in depth survey of night life in Rushlake Green for Play School Magazine) is pictured here practicing his directorial grin and trying to cover his out of pocket expenses. "The fact that he is wearing an off-the-shoulder observing jacket has nothing to do with the Rayner Report" said an official spokesman for the RGO.

ECONOMY DRIVE

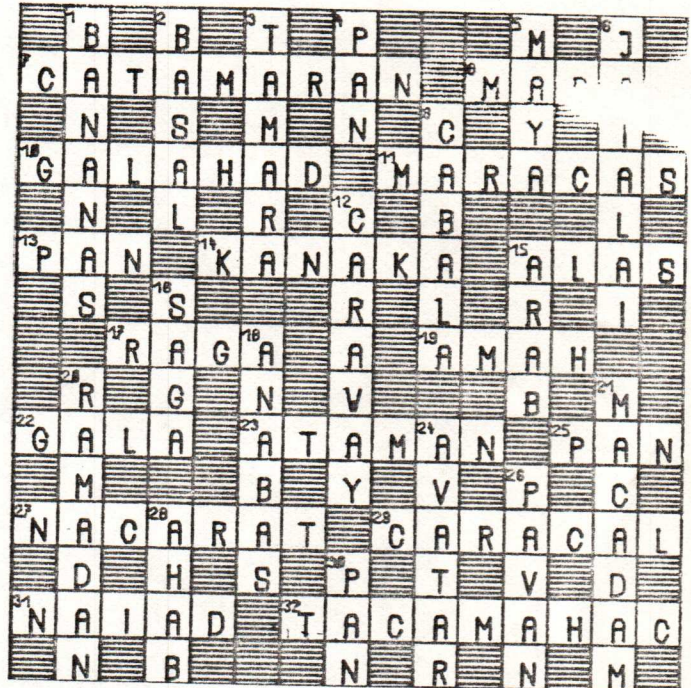
Instructions for re-using envelopes

During the present financial crisis (which is due to end soon, although another is scheduled for next year) staff are urged to economise in every way. One scheme for saving on transit envelopes has been proposed by G**rg* W*lk*ns who has won an award of 17½p for his efforts. If staff receive brown paper envelopes through the post, they are asked to re-use them according to the following instructions.

- 1) Open the envelope carefully to avoid damage. Do not remove the stamp - it wastes writing space.
- 2) On the blank side of the envelope divide the space into boxes according to the Table given below and number the boxes consecutively in the top left hand corner of each box beginning with the top left hand box and proceeding down the columns in order.
- 3) Turn the envelope over and use as much of the reverse as possible.
- 4) Holes of diameter 9 millimetres should be punched right through the envelopes according to the pattern given in the Table.
- 5) Users of envelopes are requested never to use more than one box at a time when addressing transit envelopes. Make sure you use the next consecutive number.
- 6) Please help your friendly messenger by using the proper office address complete with room number and post code.
- 7) If you have any spare envelopes send them to Paul Tomsen at once and he will arrange to have them re-cycled - DO NOT DELAY.

Table

Size of envelope	Number of		Number of holes	Positions of centres of holes
	columns	rows		
A4	4	12	4	61mm from long edge 75 and 243mm from the bottom edge
A5	3	8	2	On the centre line 70 and 165mm from the bottom edge
A6	2	6	1	At the intersection of the diagonals



Solution to Grand Prize Crossword in Not! Gemini No. 1

Only one correct solution was received (indeed only one solution was received!) and so the editors have great pleasure in declaring Desired Helmet of Mars the winner and awarding him the Grand Prize, a stick of Eastbourne rock.

PULITZER PRIZE ENTRY

A shock contender in the race to win the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction has recently been announced. *The Cinderella Syndrome: towards 2001* has been described as a daring hybrid of medieval dream-poem and renaissance Utopia forged in the uniquely angst-ridden Zeitgeist of late twentieth-century alienation (it says here). It tells of a humble scientific research establishment, neglected and vilified by her ugly sisters, who, driven by fear, exhaustion and low morale, falls into a coma and dreams of a day when she will be queen of the land, beautiful, wealthy, internationally respected and colourfully illustrated. She wakes up to find she is dead. Says author Dr Egregious Proton-Proton: "It just came to me in a flash and it was so lovely a vision I just had to share it with others and it made me feel sort of good inside and so on and it only cost £8,974 incl. p&p."

Other contenders for the Pulitzer Prize include: *Jonathan Livingston Bushchat* by Richard Bleeuuuchh, *Fordham's Polly* - a real cliff-hanger, this - and *Amityville III: A House Called Polaris*, the sequel to the follow-up of the book of the film of the real-life horror story.

EDITORIAL

Following the enormous success of our April 1st issue of Not! Gemini we felt that a second edition was called for and that Christmas would be the most appropriate time for it. Contributions have come from many sources, some of them most unexpected, and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their efforts. Should things not go too well for the old place in 1984 I'm sure that we could go into full production of other publications like Not! The Nautical Almanac, Not! The Rainer Revue and Not! The La Palma Observers Guide.

It has been noticed also that Gemini itself has started to emulate us with spoof articles like Astro-Archeology, so the idea of bringing a little humour to RGO has certainly caught on.

Perhaps for those few doubters who are concerned about the publication of a journal such as this it should be pointed out that Not! Gemini is produced entirely in people's spare time and all costs (including photocopying charges) are paid for.

Reaction to the first Not! Gemini was very favourable and copies found their way to some very unlikely places, so we hope that this issue will be equally well received, that no one will take offence and that it will bring a few smiles and help boost morale during difficult times.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers.

Published by Not! The Royal Greenwich Observatory, Hailsham, East Sussex, UK.

Printed by Snuffitt & Died, Eastbourne, East Sussex, UK.

THE SECRET OF LIFE IN SWINDON

COMPATIBILITY
LOW OVERHEADS
HIGH EFFICIENCY

Swindon encapsulates all the elements needed for operational success.

London is just 50 minutes by train. The M4 is on your doorstep. Heathrow faster than from London's centre. Guaranteed housing for key personnel. Full relocation assistance and introduction to funders.

A large underemployed workforce.

Training facilities geared to future needs. Wiltshire's outstanding quality of life and wide range of Business Parks for offices and hi-tech operations.

Get the facts from Douglas Smith, Industrial Adviser, Civic Offices, Swindon.

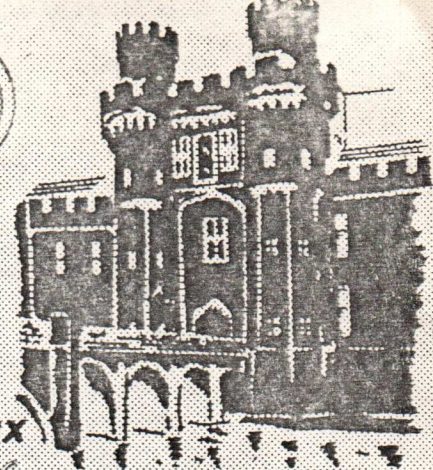
Tel: (0793) 26161 or

Telex: 444449.

JOIN THE
SWINDON
ENTERPRISE



NOT!



GEMINI

La Palma

Herstmonceux

Newsletter of the Royal Greenwich Observatory

No. 3

Christmas 1984

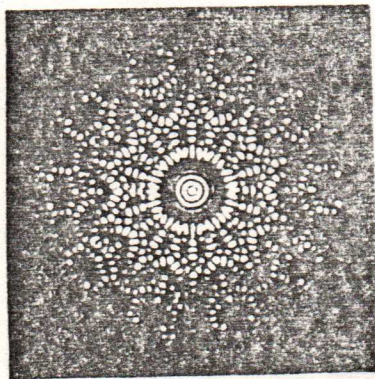
INT TO RETURN TO HERSTMONCEUX!

Shock news from La Palma, announced by Officer-in-Charge Keith Trident, is that the INT is to return to its old home of Herstmonceux after only a few months of operation on the island.

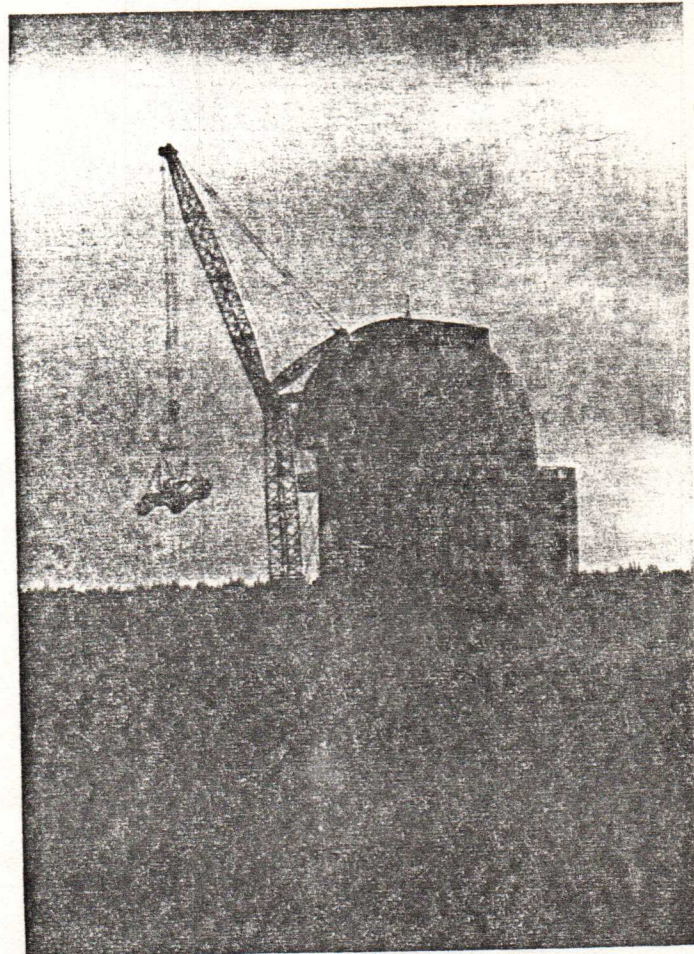
The main reason for this re-relocation of the telescope seems to be an error in the figures of the seeing conditions on La Palma. Mike Buxton, who drew up the figures, is reported to have "got it wrong by a factor of ten". The conditions on the mountain top quoted as being "better than one arcsecond" should have been "worse than ten arcseconds". The error was detected by an amateur astronomer who checked the figures, when they were published in New Scientist magazine, against the images taken at "First Light" by the INT; he couldn't understand how the fuzzy blobs in the photographs could correlate with the seeing figures and rang up the RGO's PR Unit to check. When the error was detected, the decision was immediately taken to ship the telescope back home.

This doesn't mean of course that La Palma is finished as an astronomical site, said RGO Director Bob Greenslack. The other telescopes will continue to function but of course the main emphasis of our effort will be on Herstmonceux. The 26" and 36" are to be completely refurbished and given new instrumentation and will be known as the Group Isaac Newton. These telescopes, together with the ones on La Palma (Telescopes ON Islas de Canarias) will complement one another and it is hoped that G I N and T O N I C will provide astronomers with the best facilities in the Northern Hemisphere.

Controversy has surrounded the re-siting of the INT ever since the move began in 1979; only recently a full investigation was initiated by the ASR Board when it became apparent that one of the observer's log books from the control room on La Palma had gone missing, but reports of a cover-up were firmly denied by RGO senior staff.



A "First Light" picture from the INT of the Lace Doily nebula, named after the Italian astronomer who discovered it, Lace D'Oily.



The INT being removed from its dome at Herstmonceux in 1979. Now it is to return.

Back at Herstmonceux, the news of the INT's return was greeted with emotion by Mrs Gladys Throat who, for the fourteen years that it was in operation, regularly swept the observing floor. She brushed away a tear and said "I knew it was a mistake sending it abroad - I expect the climate didn't agree with it and it probably pined for its old dome". Preparations are now under way to clean up the dome (pictured) in readiness for the return of its former occupant.

The telescope's building on La Palma is to be turned into a Conference Centre.

Dr Buxton, who was unavailable for comment at the time of going to press, is 390.

Jupiter Effect to Arabic sources

Members of the RGO Archaeology Club have recently unearthed a cache of Arabic manuscripts from a gravel pit near Piltown, East Sussex. The finds include a series of writings by the famous 15th-century Arab astrologer Ali-jon Gribn, who is known to have worked in and around al Wasikh Asbu Akher Madinat Bisahil al Bahr (literally, The Dirty Week End Town on the Sea Shore, i.e. the modern Brighton).

Among the manuscripts is a hitherto unknown prediction by Ali-jon of a major destructive earthquake that was supposed to take place in 1482 as a result of an unfavourable aspect of the planet Jupiter. A subsequent manuscript on the same subject contains an apology and a revised date of 1582. These important manuscripts are evidently the origin of the tradition that is carried on by descendants of Ali-jon, who repeat the prediction and apology every 100 years.

Also found in the gravel pit were a number of skeletons clutching buff envelopes. "They seem to have been victims of some kind of ritual sacrifice," said team leader Dr Bob Fossilbury. Full details of all these discoveries, including the remains of an early Egyptian supermarket trolley, are to be published in the Journal of the BAA (Barely Anything Astronomical).

Thatcher sinks Argentine Meridian

by Nigel "Scoop" Deadline

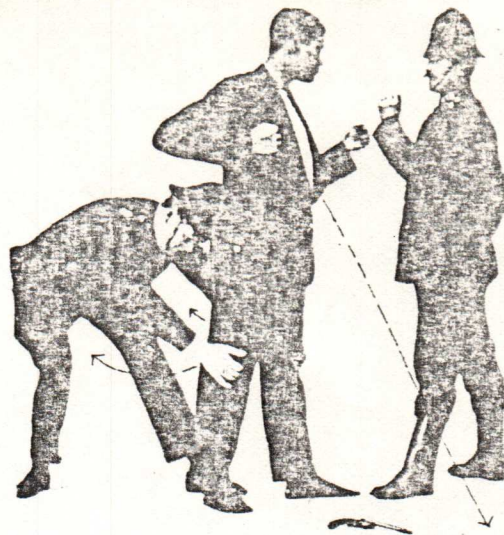
Secret documents obtained by Not! Gemini reveal that the British government deliberately ordered the sinking of a new meridian being built by Argentina in the south Atlantic. The purpose of the meridian was, it is believed, to cut Britain off from the Falkland Islands by placing them in a different hemisphere.

But Labour MP Tam Dalyell claimed that the sinking was unnecessary because the meridian, being built by the O'Galtieri Brothers, had already altered course so that it would not pass near the Falklands. Speaking on the Jimmy Young show on Radio 2, Mrs Thatcher said that the course of the meridian at the time it was sunk was unimportant. "The point is that it presented a hazard to shipping," she declared.

New Security Regulations at RGO

In the light of the recent Conservative defeat in the Eastbourne Council elections, it is clear that the very fabric and stability of our society is in danger. Certain measures will be taken to tighten the security of the Observatory.

It has been pointed out that Russian spies are often attracted to scientific institutions with the express purpose of stealing two commodities unavailable behind the Iron Curtain: (a) Pocket calculators (b) Soft toilet paper. All staff must declare possession of calculators for inclusion in the General Office inventory, and in future they must be kept in locked desks and used only with the blinds drawn. All calculators in regular use should have an RGO sticker on the underside (purchaseable from the exhibition shop for 50p). Any calculator seen unattended will be removed immediately and detonated. As to toilet paper, after much discussion it was decided that conversion back to the hard variety is perhaps too great a sacrifice, but our Disinformation Officer (Richard Brazier) will circulate a memo announcing such a change.



Well trained Messengers tackle a Libyan terrorist in the RGO car park.

We are taking the problem of toilet bombs very seriously. To plant a bomb, a terrorist needs at least a few moments of guaranteed privacy. A possible method is the replacement of water in the pan with liquid TNT which will explode at the first disturbance. Henceforth all valid staff and visitors will be issued with a "toilet user" card which will have to be inserted in the new electronic doors. The small metallic strip is for identification purposes. Eventually the various security systems will be rationalised in a smoothly functioning whole, including the SLR satellite link to GCHQ and the Car Registration computer in Swansea.

In the event of chemical warfare, RGO staff will be provided with gas masks. Regular exercises in the use of these will begin soon. They are stored in oblong boxes, in the old 1903T area. After exercises they must be replaced carefully - for reasons of stability they should be stored upside down. To clarify this, the TOP of each box is marked BOTTOM.

In the event of nuclear attack, brown paper bags will be distributed.

We hope staff will comply promptly with the new instructions, which are to protect your freedom. In order to protect your right to work, membership of the IPCS will be banned.

RGO Wine

In an attempt to help make the Castle pay for itself, plans are being drawn up for the production of an observatory wine.

Herstmonceux is in the heart of the wine producing area of England with vineyards at nearby Alfriston and Lamberhurst and by planting out the Castle grounds with vines we shall be able to produce the only genuine Chateau-bottled wine in this country.

It is anticipated that, like RGO itself, the finished product will be light and fruity, with just a hint of bitterness.

It has also been proposed that the overhead wires that the vines are hung on may be utilized as a low-frequency radio telescope.

The idea of using RGO facilities for broader purposes is not a new one: a recent suggestion put forward was that the GALAXY measuring machine and STARLINK ASPIC routines could be used for verifying "Spot-the-Ball" and "Spot-the-Difference" competitions respectively.

A rumour that the Equatorial Group is to be used for observing has been denied.

DJ SAYS RELAGS!

From our roving reporter D J Stokesparameter

Well this'll be the last time you'll be hearing from me - and not a moment too soon, I hear you say. Reptiles. Anyway, after the fiasco reported in the last issue I had a feeling the knives might be out for yours truly, and indeed palace rumour did suggest that I might be one of the lucky few invited to seek employment elsewhere. Well one day I was sitting in the office ruminating over the Observatory magazine vacancies supplement when there was a sudden commotion in the corridor and as I looked up a bunch of villainous characters burst in. I just had time to glimpse the chloroformed handkerchief and hessian sack before the angels were warbling and I floated off into the vasty empyrean, as the poets say. One of my assailants was a pale bald geezer with a beard (bloody unnerving viewed upside-down), and there was a diminutive jerk in horn-rimmed glasses I shan't forget in a hurry. Anyway the next thing I knew was when I awoke in an unfamiliar room about twice the size of the old office, very light, clean and airy, pile carpet, fair acreage of desk, ergonomic bloody VDU screen winking in a deferential manner, faint hissing of Bang and Olufsen coffee percolator, plus sighed photograph on the wall of some bloke called Geoff Manning. Having taken stock of my immediate environment, as it were, I stepped gingerly outside into a corridor thronged with youths in white coats who loomed up and vanished at the speed of light. Feeling about 97 I staggered along, fell down some steps and fetched up in a kind of foyer. Totally empty, by God, with some fancy inscription on the wall, lines from Milton or sumink. Opposite, a burst of giggles betrayed a reception point staffed by females. I wandered over but before I could speak was addressed by a stunning blonde with a smile like freeze-dried tissue paper.

"Good morning, Dr Stricklade", she began briskly. "Welcome to RELAGS, the Rayleigh-Eddington Laboratory And Ground Station. I hope you like your new office. I'm sorry it's a little poky but it's all we could find at short notice - the shower unit should be plumbed in any minute now but you may have to wait a day or so for the drinks cabinet - we're having dreadful trouble with rosewood inlay and the central heating - the differential expansion -"

"Yeah, well, daresay I'll manage", I conceded magisterially. "Now who's my Division Head, I suppose I ought to -"

A fresh burst of girlish hysteria. Miss Kleenex 1984 grinned even more broadly.

"Your Team Leader", she cooed, "is Dr Dynamo-Brown, RI01. Through the door, past the Fermi Wing, over the concourse, left across Eddington Plaza, under the Non Event Radiation Detector, and it's the block directly ahead of you. Third floor."

Cabinet Reshuffle

In a surprise move Bob Greenslack, debonair director of Britain's largest fun palace, has completely reshuffled his cabinet, creating some new departments and axing others. The move likely to excite most controversy in establishment circles is the meteoric rise of Hak Scraper to Acting Head of the new Pantomime Division. Always a problematical figure, Scraper has often stepped out of line by advertising his penchant for typists in black lace stockings; but has nevertheless won the acclaim of the Herstonceux theatre-going public for his annual achievement in getting successive Directors of RGO up on the stage to make fools of themselves in public.

By forming this amateurishly run, minimally funded division Greenslack hopes to build on this success by giving the fans all the year round what they have so far only been able to enjoy at Christmas. Scraper faces the daunting tasks of orchestrating the Forward Look (next year the Sideways Look, followed by the Backward Glance) for meetings of the ASR Board and convincing our international partners that our Cinderella role is deeply rooted in our cultural heritage and all will be well once the fairy godmother arrives, if we can still afford to buy the pumpkin.

Another startling development has been bringing in Egon Ronay to head the reorganised and much expanded Catering Division. Dynamic Leader Greenslack, well known for his trenchant views on trencherman, has once again cut through the red tape, steamrollered the stultifying bureaucracy and turned a blind eye to his advisers in making this imaginative appointment. "Like so many of my most electrifying efforts" admitted the modest mastermind "it was entirely due to a chance meeting in the corridor

RI01 sounded pretty ominous, but to cut a long story short I found myself some time later in the presence of the Man, or rather boy, must have been all of 29.

"Stuckload! Dynamo-Brown. Call me Tim. Super to see you. Brilliant. Now for your first assignment I'd like an essay on the role of plasma parameters and the Kelvin-Helmholtz instability in a viscous interaction of solar wind streams, oh, no more than 9000 words. Next Friday, please, floppy disk on my desk by 0900. OK? Fine. Know you'll love working with us."

I turned to go but was hailed once more.

"Anything you want, old man, no hassle. Micros, floppies, graphics, conference fees, page charges, air fares, online searches, blotting paper, ha ha, say the word: OK? Great."

Well all that's history now, and I don't mind telling you I'm sitting pretty now I've found my feet, to mix a metaphor. Must admit to some fear and trembling when I copped out on Dynamo-Brown's bloody plasma flows and instead sat back and wrote me old favourite, "Long-term monitoring of Epsilon Aurigae". He pored over it for ages, rocking back and forth, tapping a pencil against a gold tooth and making little humming noises. Then suddenly he was on his feet.

"Got yourself a winner here, my boy. Spare a sec? Must give Fiscal a bell".

And sure enough two minutes later I found myself walking out the office with a chit for £87K. The contractors are moving in tomorrow to clear the only bit of green field not as yet occupied by office blocks or the burgeoning NERD, and I reckon there's just room to swing a nice little 36-inch plus all mod cons. So there you are, it's an ill wind, as they say, there's a happy lining to every silver spoon or whatever it is. You chaps want to come over here, six different kinds of quiche in the canteen, they're so laid back, shekels flowing out their bloody ears. After all, in the last analysis there's worse things than living in clover, as any bunny rabbit will tell you.

Adieu, seething multitudes

yer old mate

Dave

D J Stokesparameter

- in this case the corridor of a British Rail Buffet coach - where the great "ER" was sampling the marmite and peanut butter sandwiches (best before October 1985) and a cup of the world famous British Rail coffee (best be forgotten). At once I knew I had met a kindred spirit and offered him a job in our tea shop straight away." It is expected that Ronay will come to Herstonceux in the New Year, brimming with ideas gleaned from his recent analyses of catering standards in transport cafés and cross-channel ferries.

Inevitably expansion in some areas has meant contraction elsewhere. First to suffer will be the Facilities Division under Moris Krime. It has long been argued in SERC that facilities at RGO are too lavish: now, with the expected rundown of staff over the next five years, the requirements will be sharply diminished and in preparation, Krime's manpower is being slashed to two in order to manage the remaining two facilities, the "Gents" next to the reception and the "Ladies" immediately above. Krime commented wryly "A typical engineering career: an initial flush of success, the middle years straining to maintain output, and now this. I'll be talking to Egon Ronay as soon as he arrives - I would quite like to cultivate a sideline in convenience foods."

Perhaps the cruellest blow was dealt to greying Paler Jaws, head of the Aging and Arthritic Division, and comes about as a direct result of the Willess Panel recommendations. The manpower devoted to traditional aging is to be redeployed elsewhere, much of the A&A budget is to be absorbed by Greenslack's Disneyland fund and the residue of the arthritic Staff will find

themselves engaged in a bid to improve RGO's creaking image in the community at large.

Practically the only senior manager to keep his division intact is R P Laudinum, of Operations. With queues in the public sector lengthening all the time, pressures to take some private clients have been mounting year by year. But trendy guy Greenslack has resisted change and shown his confidence in the current scale of operations by leaving Laudinum's budget untouched. This means that smooth operator Laudinum's plans to move slowly out of Phase I protection and drugs into the more respectable gambling, computer crime and undercover operations of Phase II will go ahead on schedule. Cuddly godfather Greenslack is confident that with Scraper and Ronay fronting the legitimate business, the less publicised but more lucrative activities can continue unobserved with himself firmly at the helm.

Local Order No. 2001

Owing to the cut backs currently being implemented at the RGO, astronomers will henceforth be requested only to observe objects within 100 kpc of the Sun. As a result of these measures all those making research studies of quasars, clusters of galaxies, etc will be put on a transfer list to observe objects in the Magellanic Clouds or the Galaxy. Anyone contravening this Order will be asked to take VPR (Variable Programme Research).

STAFF WHAT MATTERS

The increasingly frequent appearance of visitors or members of staff from overseas at RGO has been nowhere more evident than in La Palma Computing, where Ralph Martin's little team has been swollen by the arrival recently of Jan Smid, Willem Luptun, and Filipp Taalle. What is the effect on a close-knit community? We asked our own Dr Lois Jeans if there was a language problem.

"Yora 'n haed moruydd blaenan", he replied. "Mae y rhos cegin bach ffestiniog Uyn-dyu cymru ..." (contd. page 94)

For Sale/Exchange/Wanted

Wanted Dirty books, papers, the contents of your shelves and filing cabinets. Box JD

Overweight? Your problems are our concern. All excesses cut to manageable proportions in 5 years with minimum of fuss. Contact P Willmore in confidence.

Exchange Chas Parker for Norman Walker? Contact "Fifi".

Exchange baby grand piano for demon Wurlitzer. Box DB.

Xmas gift Novelty for the scientist who has everything - the new, reliable pocket supercompass by ASRB. Not only tells you where you've been, where you are now and (unerringly) where you're going, but is waterproof, shockproof, astigmatic, anti-clockwise, fire resistant and impervious to the most penetrating advice. Fun for all the family. Buy now whilst budgets last.

Holidays Get away for a winter break; forget all those office worries, the Forward Look, the Sussex weather, those miserable colleagues - take a Palomar Tour. Ring 3201 for a free brochure.

Exchange Chas Parker for D J Stokesparameter? Contact "Cuddles".

Exchange 4 nights on AAT (practically unused) for 1 on Steavenson - contact "Desparate" Box CRJ.

Despatch Rider available all hours, all weathers. Ring 3407.



"The face that launched a thousand trips"

Shy, soft-spoken Ena E Rodent-neck of the RGO Bingo and Travel Section. A familiar telephone voice to a galaxy of fans, Ena is a reticent creature preferring to hide behind the anonymity of her tinted lenses. This rare glimpse of our shrinking violet gives little hint of the vibrant personality known only to her closest friends. "I come alive at weekends" the lady told our dynamic photographer Ace T.D. Drival, "At the moment I'm into hang gliding, reincarnation and genetic engineering - it makes a pleasant change from the General Office".

Wanted Ford Cortina Estate car - offer well-used MK10 Jaguar in part exchange. Box AB.

Exchange Chas Parker for B Greenslack? Contact Mrs Greenslack.

Loans For that extra cash just to finish off your current project, build the telescope of your dreams or again know the luxury of paper clips, contact K Pounds and his friendly staff for advice. Easy terms, easy come, easy go.

Father Christmas with a difference. A down-to-earth, no nonsense approach to the festivities ensures that no-one goes away from your party with an over-optimistic view of the future. Quiet spoken but funny voices a speciality. Ring 3280 and ask for "Gorgeous".

Exchange Chas Parker for anyone! Contact "Brown Owl".

Handsome, virile man (mid 40's) into beards, yachting motorcycles, public speaking, crochet and shaggy dog stories would like to meet lady (or preferably ladies) with diametrically opposed interests with a view to misunderstanding and (possibly) marriage. Apply to the Editor.

Minor Bomb Scare at RGO

In a routine announcement from the Directorate yesterday it was mentioned in passing that another attempt had been made to blow up playboy director Bob Greenslack. In the last 12 hours, the Herstmonceux and Swindon switchboards have been inundated with calls from persons claiming the credit for planting the bomb. Interviewed by our roving reporter shortly after the incident, Greenslack, dapper and smiling as ever, brushed aside all thought of changing his jet setting, devil-may-care, life style. "When you don't make the sort of life and death decisions that I am supposed to make" he said "you must expect people to try and blow you up - it happens all the time". Then with a dazzling grin and a wave of the hand I was dismissed and the imperturbable astronomer went back to scanning one of the many wallpaper pattern books which littered his office.

In the quiet of the outer office I spoke to ashen faced Angela Dranard who had witnessed the incident. "It all started as quite a normal afternoon" she confided "there was a queue of people waiting to see the great man about a number of important decisions like the menu for next week's conference, and I was just changing his flight plans again. Then there was an awful commotion in the corridor and this muffled figure rushed past carrying a large round object labelled "BOMB" with a lighted fuse fizzling away rapidly at the top. The intruder dumped the device on the Director's desk, shouted "so perish all technical whizz kids" in a heavily disguised Eastbourne accent, and departed leaving us all rooted to the spot, open mouthed. To my amazement, the Director hardly noticed but glanced at his watch, asked if it was time for tea and went on reading Dale Carnegie as if nothing had happened while the fuse spluttered and died."

So, undaunted, our hero continues his efforts to drag RGO into the age of Christian Dior, Robert Carrier and Laura Ashley while Sussex police search for a bearded wierdo in floppy jersey and jeans who has some, but not much, technical background and who may bear a grudge against Greenslack for some long-forgotten slight. The search is not expected to last very long.



Robert Laing with his new pointing model for the INT.

=ν α ποθτινε αννοθνωμεντ φομ τη Διπεωτοπατε ξεοτεπδασ ιτ ωασ μεντιονεδ ιν ρασινυ ηπατ ανοτηετ ατεμπτ παδ βρεν μαδε το βλωθ θρ ρλαξβοξ διπεωτοπ φοβ Γρεενσλακ. =ν τησ λαοτ 12 ποθσο• τησ ~εποτιμονεθχ ανδ Σωινδον σωιτηηβοαποσ ηαυε βρεν ινθυδατεδ ωιτη ααλλα φομ ρεπσονα αλαιμιυη τησ ~πεδιτ φομ ρλαντινυ τησ βομβ. =ντεπειωεδ βξ οθπ πουιη περοπιεπ σηοπιλεσ αφτεπ τησ ινωιδεντ• Γρεενσλακ• δαρρεσ ανδ σηιλινη ασ ευεπ• βηθσηεδ ασιδε αλλ τηοθγητ • ~ηαγινη ηιο ψετ σετινυ• δευιλεμαξεαπε• λιφε σιξλε• Νηεν ξεοθ δοντ μακε τησ σοπτ οφ λιφε ανδ δεατη δεωσιουνο ηπατ = αμ σθρροσεδ το μακεν ηε σαιδ Νξεοθ μθστ εχρεωτ ρεορλε το ηξ ανδ βλωθ ξεοθ θρ + ιτ παρρενο αλλ τησ τιμεν• Ιηεν ωιτη α δαζζλινη γην ανδ α ωαυε οφ τησ πανδ = ωασ διομισσεδ ανδ τησ ιμρεπιθβαβλε ασπινοομεπ ωεντ βασκ το σσαννινη ονε οφ τησ μαξωαλλραρεπ ραττεπν βοοκσ ωηιηη λιττεπεδ ηιο οφφιωε•

=ν τησ εθιετ οφ τησ οθτεπ οφφιωε = οροκε το ασπεν φοσεδ Αυγελα Δηαναποδ ωπο ηαδ ωιτνεσσεδ τησ ινωιδεντ• Νετ αλλ σταπεδ ασ εθιετ α νομπαλ αφτεπνοονν σηε πομφιδεδ Νηεωε ωασ α εθεθε οφ ρεορλε ωαιτινη το σεε τησ γπεατ μαν αβοθτ α νθμβεπ οφ ιμροπταντ δεωσιουνο λικε τησ μενθ φομ νεχτ ωεκετσ πομφεπνεωε• ανδ = ωασ ψθοτ ~ηαγινη ηιο φλιγητ ρλασ αγαιν• Ιηεν ηηεε ωασ αν αωφθλ πομμοτιον ιν τησ ποσπιδοπ ανδ ηηιο μθφφλεδ φιγηθε ηθσηεδ ραοτ ααπηξινυ α λαπηε ποθνοδ οβψεωτ λαβελλεδ Ν/ε#ν ωιτη α λιγητεδ φθσε φιζζλινη αωας παριδλεσ ατ τησ τορ• Ιηε ινιπθδεπ δθμρεδ τησ δευιωε ον τησ Διπεωτοπσ δεσκ• σθοθεδ Νσο ρεπιση αλλ τεσηηιωαλ ωηιζξ κιδοσ ιν α ηεαυιλεξ διογησιεδ λαστβοθνηε αωεντο• ανδ δεραπτεδ λεαυινη θσ αλλ ποοτεδ το τησ οροτ• ορεν μοθηεδ• Ιο μεσ αμαξεμεντο• τησ Διπεωτοπ παρδλεξ νοτιωεδ βθτ γλαωεδ ατ ηιο ωατωη• ασκεδ ιφ ιτ ωασ τιμε φομ τεα ανδ ωεντ ον πεαδινη Δαλε ααπνεγιε ασ ιφ νοτινιη ηαδ παρρενεδ ωηιλε τησ φθσε ορλθιττεπεδ ανδ διοδ•7

Ιο• θνδαθνηεδ• οθπ ηεπο ποντινθεσ ηιο εφφοπησ το δωαγ ΠΓΞ ιντο τησ αγε οφ ~ηηιστιαν Διοπ• Ποβεπι ααπηιεπ ανδ Λαθηα Ασηλεξ ωηιλε Εθσοεχ ρολιωε σεαπηη φομ α βεαποδεδ ωιεποδ ιν φλορρεξ ψεποσεξ ανδ ψεαυα ωπο ηασ σομε• βθτ νοτ μθωη• τεσηηιωαλ βασκγποθνοδ ανδ ωπο μαξωεαπ α γηθδγε αγαινατ Γρεενσλακ φομ σομε λουγφομγιοττεν ολιγητ• Ιηε σεαπηη ιο νοτ εχρεωτεδ το λαοτ νεπξ λουγ•

Forthcoming Talks

1st RGO Christmas Lecture

M.V. Penston:

"The Variability of the Gravitational Constant" and "Powers of Ten"

Following a misunderstanding earlier in the year, Dr Penston will also be delivering this talk to the local branch of the Office of Trading Standards (Weights and Measures Department).

In spite of the cancellation of this years pantomime due to the Pantomime and Recreation Unit (PRU) overspend this year, plans are well in hand for the 1985 production.

Entitled "The Hitchhikers guide to Herstmonceux" it tells the story of Alec Dent who wakes up one morning to find a team of bulldozers about to demolish his home Herstmonceux Castle. In desperation he lies face down in the moat in an attempt to stop them.

Unbeknown to Alec, the SERC is also about to be disbanded, but he is whisked away in the nick of time by his friend and constant companion, Mini Couper.

In the exciting adventures that follow Alec teams up the unpredictable two-headed Zaphod Boksberg (played by Mike Penston) who has the ultimate chat-up line at a party: "Hi doll! Why not come and talk to me for a while - I weighed a black hole!" [and got it wrong! - Ed.]

With an all star (groan) cast it's bound to be fun and frolics for all the family.

Cast

Alec Dent
Zaphod Boksberg
Marvin the Paranoid Android
Trillian Gibbs
Dead Rock Star
Compere in Restaurant
Slartibartfast
Mini Couper

Jon Hutchins
Mike Penston
Bernard Yallop
Herself
Phil Rudd
Chas Parker
Bill Nicholson
Nigel Henbest

RGO Video

Rush released just in time for Christmas this year is the new RGO video "Give My Regards to Bodle Street". It tells the story of Joseph Bokseday and his wife Adella who are on their way for the 1984 census to Herstmonceux by donkey, having lost their official car and chauffeur as a result of the spending cuts. There being no room at the Lamb they are forced to spend the night in a draughty castle whose inhabitants have mysteriously disappeared, leaving behind only a pile of crumpled buff envelopes. They snuggle up in a corner and Adella sings "Let's get strophysical". Suddenly a sign appears in the sky above the castle, looking remarkably like Halley's comet. A pool of light falls on a miniature photon counting device nestling in a Sussex trug basket. Three wise men turn up from Swindon bearing grants, and suddenly the castle begins to hum again with life and happiness.

Available in VHS and Betamax.

Film Review

LINDIANA SMITH AND THE ROTTEN RENAULT 5

Pulsating sequel to LINDIANA SMITH AND THE ROTTEN RENAULT 4, in which our heroine yet once more comes to grips with the forces of evil in the shape of rusty wheel arches and quietly decomposing suspension. (I particularly liked the horrific encounter with the sordid secrets of the subframe). The climax, a maelstrom of nauseating violence in which you actually see the corroded back chassis members finally yielding and the rear section wrenched away from the rest of the vehicle, is not for the squeamish.



Bob Greenslack and his Amazing Dancing Teeth!



VACANCY NOTICE

Applications are invited from mobile non-industrial staff for the post of:

CHAS PARKER

for the period 1985 February-July, while the present post-holder is on maternity leave having kittens in Tenerife. No discrimination will be exercised on the grounds of race, creed, colour, gender, sexual proclivity, physical handicap, competence or ability.

He/she will be expected to be bearded, experienced, married or about to be married (or both), over 30 and painfully conscious thereof, and in the possession of a small commercial vehicle of not more than 1/4 cwt (unladen) or 825 cc, whichever shall be deemed to be the more piffling. He/she will report directly to at least three different people while simultaneously pursuing his/her own interests, but may at a moment's notice be expected to undertake several arduous and unpleasant tasks including:

a) liaising superfluously between the Transport Officer, the Castle Manager, the Director, the Director's wife, someone called Peter Andrews, the Exhibition Secretary and the Senior Photographer, on any points, matters or subjects of any or no relevance whatsoever to anything;

b) answering the 194th telephone query about life on Mars with the same unflappably off-handed contempt as the first;

c) enduring prolonged orgies of food and drink at the Sundial with sundry sets of jet-setting piss-artists AT LEAST once a week WITHOUT succumbing to either:

(i) fatty arteries: or,

(ii) the temptation to shout out the punch-line to the Director's only joke when he's halfway through telling it;

d) providing a form of light entertainment around Christmas time, to be termed "The RGO Pantomime", WITHOUT help, succour or assistance from any other person whomsoever; [NB This does NOT affect the post-holder's statutory obligation to entertain, amuse and divert all RGO staff for the rest of the year anyway];

e) getting on really well with a wide variety of hacks from the New Scientist, Guardian, Sussex Express, Ditchling Beacon, BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Parachute Pictures, Nature Conservancy, Rank-Hovis-McGonagall, Adrian Mortimer PR Systems, Info-Massage (UK) Inc., British Astronomical Association, Junior Astronomical Society, Eastbourne Astrosoc, and many others too nauseating to mention.

Salary will be in the range £3948-£6025 depending on degree of resemblance to the original, but may rise to upwards of £13,499 for hours or even days at a time, depending on the personal whim of the Director, RGO, to whom applications should be made in triplicate by the day before yesterday.

The Astronomer Royal announced this week that Christmas Day next year would fall on December 25 as usual.

Director of the RGO (Reinterpreting Genesis Organization) "King" Bob Greenslack commented: "This is an amazing coincidence. It's been like this for nearly 2,000 years now. The record can't last much longer."

EDITORIAL

Well it certainly doesn't seem like a year since the merry team were together producing the last issue of Not! Gemini - how time flies when you're enjoying yourself. We never intended to let twelve months go by before the third issue appeared but one thing led to another and, well you know what it's like.

Seriously though, 1984 hasn't been the best of years, what with "Big Brother" materialising in the form of buff envelopes inviting specially selected people to make the ultimate sacrifice "for Kingman and country", and the usual uncertainty about the future for those left behind.

Indeed, when we at NG first heard that RGO was going to have to slim down we assumed that it meant we were all going on a diet in order to train for the 1985 La Palma Marathon, and we immediately set about producing our own keep-fit publication entitled "Chris Hebson's Work-Out Scheme" (with music by Mama Cass-Cluster and a reggae version by Rastus Scan); but this, like so many good ideas these days, died the proverbial due to lack of proper funding (our sponsors, the Catholic Contraceptive Company, pulled out at the last moment).

Undaunted, we soldiered on and toyed with the idea of forming a new rock band and donating all proceeds from record sales to a "Save the RGO" fund; we were going to call ourselves "Davie goes to Rutherford" but felt it was a bit unsubtle.

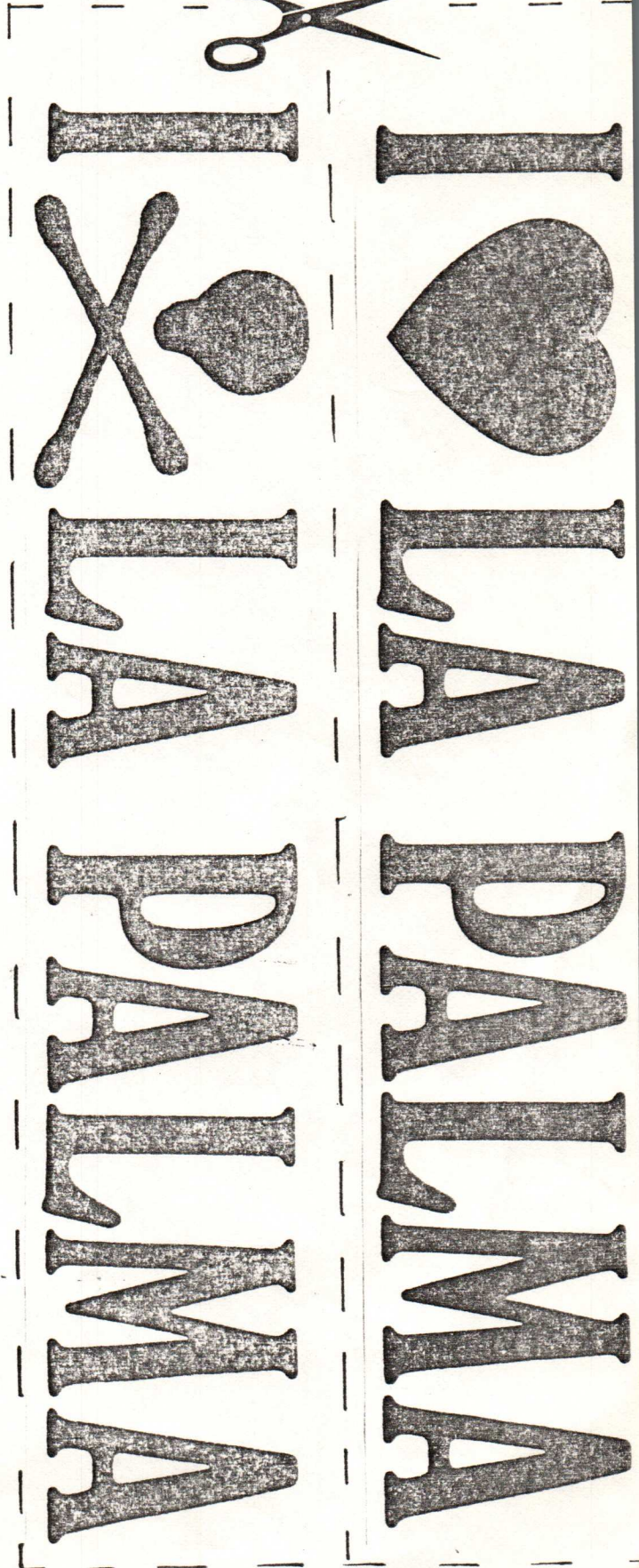
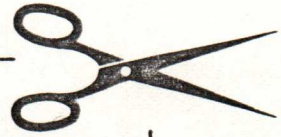
So with Christmas nearly upon us we simply decided to extract the old digit and get on with NG3 - and here it is. We hope you like it and that this time next year you'll be reading NG4 or even 5. And after "show 'em the door in '84" how about making next years motto:

"Keep RGO alive in '85!"

Merry Christmas to one and all.

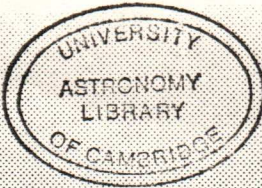
Sue Dennin

Cut out and prominently display the sticker of your choice.

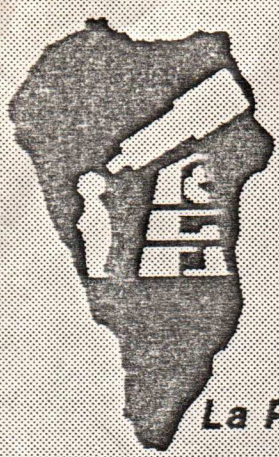


Published by Not! The Royal Greenwich Observatory Hailsham, East Sussex, UK.

Printed by Snuffit and Died, Eastbourne, East Sussex, UK



NOT!

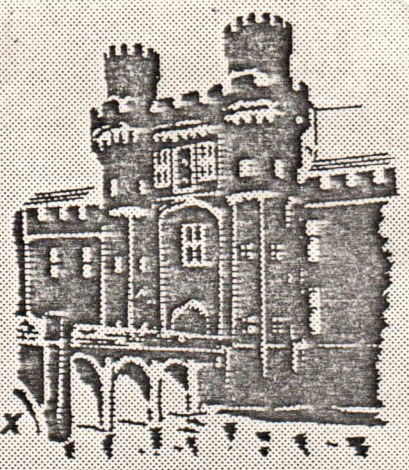


GEMINI

A REVUE OF 1985

La Palma

Herstmonceux

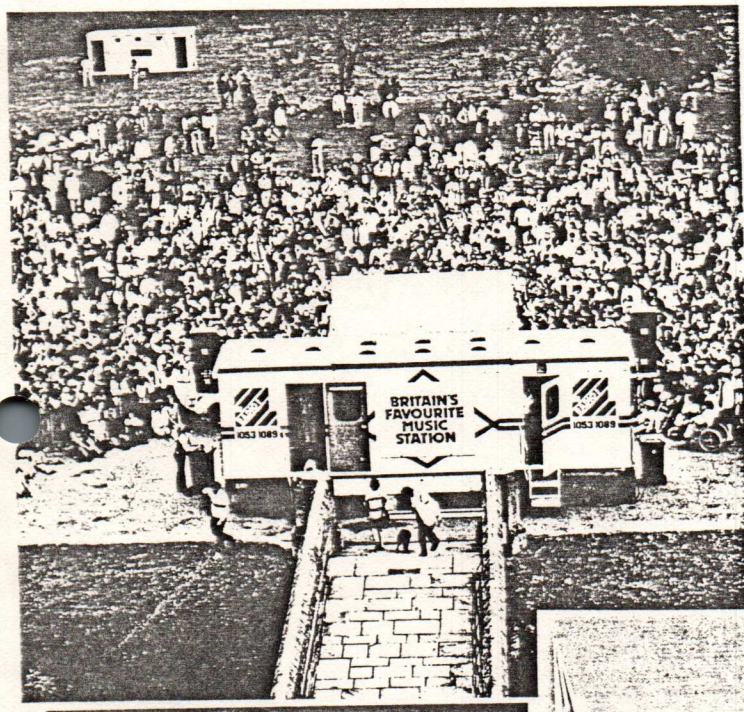


Newsletter of the Royal Greenwich Observatory

Number 4

January 1986

ROQUE & ROLL EXTRAVAGANZA!

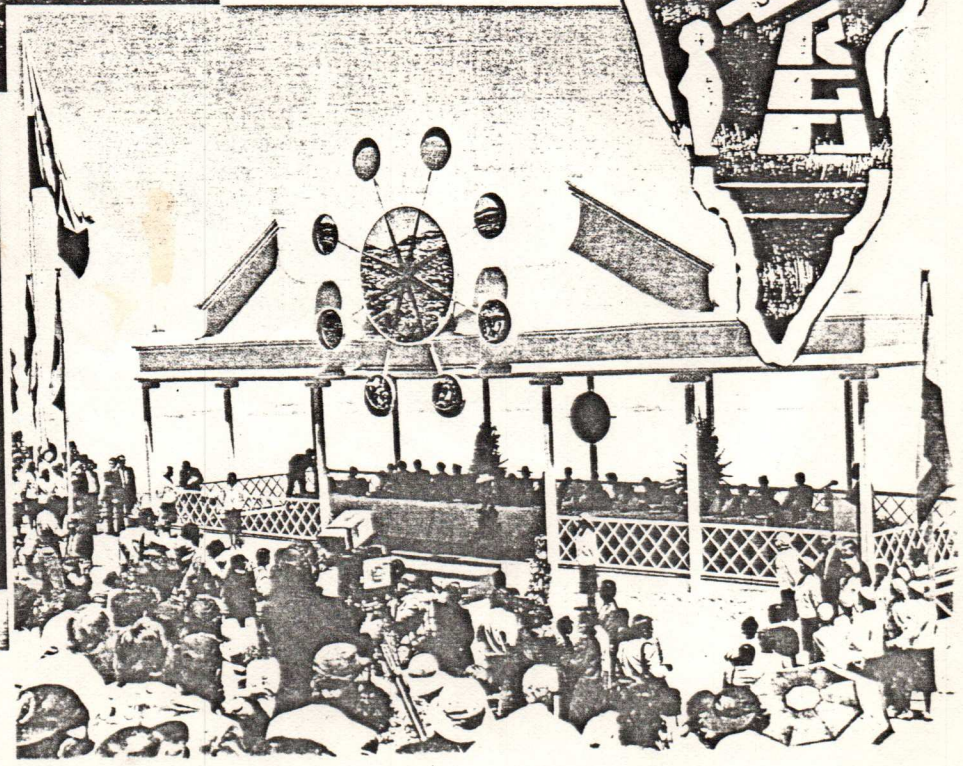


They called it the greatest event in astronomy ever staged - and they were right. In June 1985, simultaneous rock inaugurations were held at La Palma and at Herstmonceux in order to raise money for fund-starved astronomers, or "Lookers-Aid", as it has become known. The events were seen on television screens world wide and over 20 million people were packed into the Caldera on La Palma. "Lookers-Aid" is the brainchild of Bob Geldenberg, astronomical impresario of the RGO. "There are telescopes closing down at this very moment", said Geldenberg. "We need the money - now !" The concerts followed on from the success earlier in the year of the Moslem hit single "Do they know it's Ramadan ?", and included the much publicised appearance of the re-formed "Les Garçons de la Plage". Despite the success of the events, RGO staff were dismayed to find that Geldenberg had been left out of the New Years Honours List.

The "Lookers Aid" Logo



Geldenberg: "Give us the money !"



So Long And Thanks For All The Quiche

The fourth part of the Stokesparameter trilogy

Well, you can't keep a good man down, as they say, and all disclaimers notwithstanding here I am again like a bad penny. Main reason being of course to keep you abreast of the latest developments in this hell-hole. "After all, the work helps you relax between traffic jams" as I gaily quipped "twixt gritted teeth after the motor had blown its top two days running. Seriously though I'm laughing, and this is for why.....

Life here at the Rayleigh-Edd ain't a bed of roses for all concerned, I'll have you know. Not speaking for myself, mind, but the other day one of the eggheads confessed they haven't even got the readies to stick any instruments on the NERD, whereat yours truly, mindful of not dissimilar rumours drifting up from Sussex, fell prey to idiot laughter and eventually had to be helped from the room by two uninformed custodians [shouldn't that be 'uninformed'? - Ed.]. However things are just hunky-dory for ole Dave, so while I'm in a good mood I thought I'd let you in on some of the tricks of the trade at RELAGS, should any of you be so unfortunate as to be forcibly inducted into the place. One of the charms of it is of course the unalloyed pleasure to be derived from meeting up with chums who've gone before. Swipe me if on my first day I didn't run into Malcolm J. Malcolm, former apprentice pundit, while prowling warily round the canteen looking for somewhere to put my empty tray. Then that same afternoon who should I meet wandering round the library trying to figure out where they put the pre-1960 Ap. J.'s, but Chris Slide, looking pretty glum. He'd drawn the short straw and no mistake, jettisoned into Heuristic Informatics before you could say knife, but still had hopes of a spot of science on the side. But to return to "Malcolm" as we used to call him: turns out he gets more CPU time than he can eat for his esoteric simulations, plus (this in an undertone) they're actually paying him to smooth out other people's data four nights a week, cash in hand and free use of ATLAS coffee machine!! Now needless to say at this point the old ears started to prick up. Moonlighting's a gray train I've never been loath to board, so while the quiche was hot I put it to him fair and square. He confessed, still without moving his lips - God knows how he does it - that he had a Svengali, name of Bob Lichens. "What? Boring Bob?!" I cried in glee. "Me old mate from the halcyon days of Sir-Richard-Whom-God-Preserve?? Didn't know he was here!" Anyway (to cut a long story short), several introductions and a few snorts later I've now perfected

what I've come to think of as Doing A Lichens. Namely that half the time I do my own thing with Epsilon Aurigae - oh, you beautiful, tantalising bitch of a variable - and the other half I'm officially occupied with some crazy scheme to put a hadron collider in space or some such rubbish, called NOTSAT, which involves being wined and dined by a load of voluble Krauts in horn-rimmed glasses, flying off to Hamburg and so on. One of 'em whispered to me, giggling hysterically as we set about the seventh bottle of Moselle, that it stood for Nicht-Oft-Tuechtig-SATellit. Big smile from yours truly, all-comprehending nod, another forkful of blinis, buggered if I know what he's on about, stagger home as soon as poss, whip out the Cassell's and apparently it translates as Not Often Efficient Satellite. This I take to be Teutonic humour.

Such ordeals aside, I have to admit it's a decent berth, though the Reeperbahn was a severe disappointment (and nearly a terminal experience, but more of that anon - if you're lucky). The best thing about it however, and here I come to the point of this edifying tale, is that if young Dynamo-Brown (who, by the way, has missed a gear or two in the fast lane recently, but that's another story) - if he can't find me in the office or anywhere around he assumes I'm in the embryo NOTSAT Ground Control setup in R69, or even in Hamburg, and happily goes on his way, conversely if our German brethren can't get hold of me at either of the latter two localities, they assume I'm busy with humdrum astronomy.

And where am I?

Where indeed?

Back at dear old RGO of course, head down in the Observatory magazine office, dealing with the routine tasks of a hardworking editor, and loving every minute of it. There's always a warm welcome, Cuddles offering coffee and a sympathetic ear; Bushchat begging me to play cricket for the old firm, the little creep; Pikey sorting my correspondence into heaps on the desk he still bravely keeps for me. With all thy faults I love thee still, quoth the poet, and you can't say fairer than that. So watch out fellow pundits, for it is DJ who speaketh: I SHALL RETURN.
Till then however, here's grease to yer elbow.
Bye for now,

D.J. Stokesparameter

Visitors to RGO

- | | |
|--|---|
| July 22 - Peregrine Beanfeast visited the Archives to research a book he's writing about Halley's Comet. | July 29 - Patrick Moore visited the Library to see what he wrote about Halley's Comet the last time. |
| July 23 - Eileen Ridpath visited the Archives to research a book she's writing about Halley's Comet. | July 30 - Simon Mitton visited RGO to research a book he's writing about people who write books about Halley's Comet. |
| July 24 - Heathen Cooler visited the Archives to research a book she's writing about Halley's Comet. | July 31 - Mike Penston visited the Archives to research the forthcoming apparition of Halley's Comet in 1996. (Some mistake here surely? - Ed.) |
| July 25 - John Gribben visited the Archives to research a book he's writing about the end of the world. | Aug. 1 - Chas Parker visited the Library to try to find out what Halley's Comet is. |
| July 26 - Robin Scagell visited the RGO to find out why he's the only person he knows who isn't writing a book about Halley's Comet. | |



THE BULLETIN

OF THE SMUG OBSERVATORY, DUMFRIES

EDITORIAL.

Little time has elapsed since the last Bulletin (thanks again Jacqui), but events have moved with unaccustomed swiftness for a normally quiet time of year. Jane and Chris Belcher have been blessed with a boy in addition to a second-hand freezer, so the Golf GTI won't be holding you for long, Chris. Congratulations on helping to make SOD the most fertile observatory in the world. Meanwhile Ikeya Kawasaki, just back from a three-year exile in the Antipodes, is rumoured to have tried the ice on Blackfoot Pond and found it wanting. Ike hasn't been seen at a Christian Esperantists' meeting since February, but there's still hope. We hear that Dave Pettigrew, whose Duck a l'orange (see p.7) will be cherished by all UKIRT expatriates, has been extolling the virtues of hockey to an enthralled audience in the East-South corridor: we hope he cleans it up before Mike Maelstrom's return from UKSTU. IDPU usage is down by another 17% last quarter partly owing to Niall Smith's abandoning galaxy clustering for modelling AGNs at a place called RGO, whatever that is. Trish and the twins will follow in

AUGUST 1985

September, her formaggia alla breve a lingering memory on the palate. The SOD cricket team too will bemoan the loss of Niall's googlies, but Donald McDuck claims they should still win all twenty fixtures this year as usual.

Time too to welcome a new batch of PhD students, those motley masters of mirth whose monopoly of the VAX causes regular sessions of teeth-grinding on the upper floors of the McGillivray (or Crumpled) Wing. CAROL SAWYER comes to us from Totnes via Plymouth Poly. where a year wrestling with energy distribution parameters for A stars should have inured her against the rigours of a northern spring. MARK M'WURDZ describes himself as "by Scott Fitzgerald out of Walt Whitman" but still has time to play the viola to Grade VII. He can be found attempting to kick COSMOS into life, or else D and D-ing with Jean-Jacques and Kelvin in their office on the North-West corridor. BRIAN ("Who killed my batch job?") PHIZACKLEA has already made a name for himself with a meltingly beautiful water-chestnut-and-rosemary creation which has [contd. p.Mc94]

SPECIAL OFFERS

RIPOV MERCHANDISE (UK) LTD.

PROUDLY ANNOUNCE THE "HALLEY LOO-JAR"

Specially designed for the storage of 'nick-nacks' in the smallest room, with authentic illustration of Halley's Comet on the side.



£ 135.99+ VAT

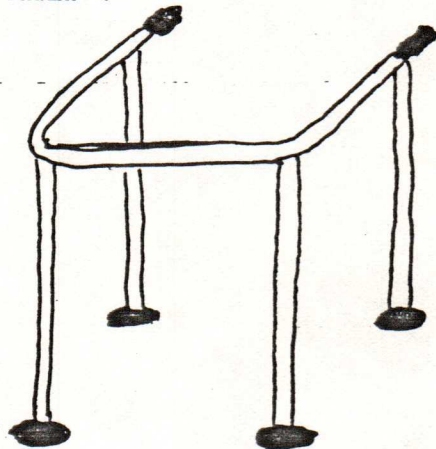
To the tune of The Flintstones:

Penstons, meet the Penstons,
They're the modern space-age family.
From the, town of Hailsham,
They're gonna have their place in history.

Driving two Cortinas round the block,
Dazzled by the light from Michael's socks.
Penstons, meet the Penstons,
They're the modern space-age family !

3

Not! Gemini Productions proudly present the "JACK O'BEANEY ZIMMER" !



£ 399.95+ VAT

This Christmas...beware of

GRIBBINS

Lovable, furry little science journalists that can turn into horrible monsters at the mention of the words "book contract"

BEWARE: Never get their books wet, or they multiply (viz. White Holes, Genesis, Time Warps, Spacewarps, etc., etc.)

They don't like bright light (e.g. as shed by illuminating book reviews)

And never, never read them after midnight.

With GRIBBINS comes much responsibility.

Are YOU ready for it ?

DR. DAVIES' DIARY

A LIFE IN THE WEEK OF...
AN OBSERVATORY SECRETARY *

* The incumbent of this post, on learning of the revelations contained in this article, hastily resigned.

MONDAY

Up early. Drive Lucille and Jeremy to school since my wife isn't feeling too well. Bloody awful traffic at that hour through Little Common. It's at times like this I bless the Sierra Ghia: the dashboard computer evaluates your performance over a specified time and displays the figures you have to meet over the next π miles in order to maintain pre-programmed journey times and the average mpg laid down in the specs. Very useful. Actually I think it's malfunctioning because I'm sure I didn't really need to do 157 *all* the way up Cooden Drive. Doppler effect on the stereo. Halted in Bexhill to extinguish tyres. Must get Jeremy to look at the system after homework tonight: good practice for him for O-levels.

Lunch with Director. I tried to explain that lilac walls are very restful per se, but when coupled with jade green carpets a non-linear resonance is set up which in the long term can cause imperceptible brain damage. He didn't seem to understand. You would have thought an astronomer would know about things like that.

Coffee lukewarm.

TUESDAY

Surprise call from Gow: will I address the Industrial Society on my view of the Macgregor Method? Good of Ian to think of me, but Hilary tells me the date clashes with the Strasbourg shindig (it's an ill wind...). Told him to try Bennet McOffice: he's got less on his plate than I have. By an odd coincidence who should materialise at this point but my predecessor Jacob McMarley himself, popping by en route to purchase a thermal windcheater in Debenhams, looking very relaxed and cheerful, obviously enjoying retirement. I sketched in a brief state-of-the-art report. "Aye, weel, it's nae a bed o' roses bein' a Secretary, ye ken!" he chortled, and with a blessing he took his leave. Would have liked to probe him on lateral staff mobility scenarios, but he wouldn't understand. His type are strictly pre-Drucker, though retaining a certain olde-worlde charm from the days when the Organisation was held together with goodwill and string. (Fascinating to hear him reminisce of early, fumbling applications of MbO).

Lunch with Director, Andrews, Pagel, Murray. Alec was talking in vague terms of reorganising A & A Division to exclude the Meridian Department. A tough nut to crack, but I swiftly slotted in a few off-the-cuff scenarios with sliding timescales, plus - cheekily I thought - a hidden but reversible rundown. Murray looked up from his stroganoff. "Oh I don't think they'd like that. Oh no. Why, good Lord. Ha Ha". I tried to explain the Taylor principles in simple terms but was met with cheerful derision. The old story - these people lead such a compartmentalized existence they won't see that scientific principles apply across the board. (Comte, thou should'st be living at this hour!) I offered to initiate feasibility studies but the Director seemed to have forgotten what he'd been talking about.

Coffee bearable.

Shirtsleeve afternoon, wires burning from here to Swindon. They must understand that my final report to the Committee on Infrastructural Manpower requirements 1990-1995 was in no way intended to reflect my own views or those of any individual in the Observatory, but was a maximum likelihood extrapolation from a Hartmann-Dyer model. I will admit the negative growth parameters were my own contribution, but after all that's what I'm paid for.

Hilary forgot the Rich Teas for the second day running. Why do I have to be surrounded by fools?

WEDNESDAY

To Garrick House for office automation meeting. Try as I will to steer the Chairman in the direction of networking he remains in the land of the multi-user micro despite the obvious dangers. Cranleigh Tattershall has more intelligence than most but he remains a civil servant at heart, with all that entails. A dispiriting lunch (Espresso coffee). By chance encountered Toby Zangwill who was with me on the old Methodology Task Force in our Cabinet Office days, and is now something very aloof in Procurements. We reminisced briefly until I had to catch the train home. He did let slip that Ferdie Mount was scouting for appropriate recruits to the policy group at Number 10. An intriguing tip.

THURSDAY

To Swindon for Standing Committee on Ulterior Motivation, of which I'm chairman. It's exciting to imbue a few like minds with fertile concepts and watch the thing grow....Instead of relying on a crude reward/punishment polarity, we must learn to assess an individual's psychological matrix and determine the optimal buttons to press in order to produce the desired effect - to cause the subject to perform a simple task like making the coffee, or to choose one observing programme rather than another, to resign at the appropriate time or not. Thus control can become complete yet invisible, as the subject thinks he is consciously willing whatever he does. Of course it's only an extension of what the most successful managers have always done from Niccolo Machiavelli downwards, but it has waited till today to be rationalised and codified into SERC policy. The whole thing is spawning subcommittees exponentially, and the only aspect I'm less than happy with (speaking as secretary of the SERC/NERC Joint Working Group on Committee Nomenclature) is the name, which I feel should be altered to Subliminal Motivation. I mentioned this to Andrews. He thought for a second or so then said it would ruin the acronym and chuckled away into his beard for the next five minutes. Sometimes I feel Andrews betrays a dangerous informality, as well as being a solecism on the organogram.

My Collins Gem dictionary doesn't seem to contain 'acronym'.

FRIDAY

"POETS day today, Dr. Davies" chirped young Hilary as she hung up my beige Aquascutum and telescopic umbrella, after shaking the raindrops into Andrea's in-tray. I merely contented myself with a curt request that she change the blotting paper. Friday is to be treated as any other day. It's perfectly possible to discover and adjust one's biorhythms to eliminate downswings and ensure uniform psychosomatic response. It's not as if we had hormonal changes on top of that to worry about, unlike the fair sex. When interfacing between senior and middle management, Division Heads, union and staff association representatives, Central Office Committees, review boards, ad hoc working groups, industrial tribunals and so forth, all of which have their own polarities and idiosyncrasies, you just can't afford to be anything less than a whizz-kid twenty-four hours a day.

A note from George Wilkins. He is seriously perturbed over the future of the Time Service. Time Service? Alec never told me we had one.

Lunch with Director, Wilkins, Dudley, Netzer. A motley crew. Netzer wanted to know if I'd signed the Official Secrets Act and had I ever visited Tel-Aviv? Very odd. Dudley is a charming woman who looks after our old files when the office begins to overflow. I sometimes wonder why Sadlier never profits by a working lunch with the rest of us? A young man like him could learn a lot. Instead he spends an hour sitting in his office with loosened tie, box of sandwiches and Catamaran Weekly, seems happy as a sandboy. But I *do* wish Alec would assume the optimum seat in a given configuration, instead of always sitting opposite the window "so he can watch the ducks in the courtyard". If I've told him once I've told him a thousand times - Anticipate, Seize, Maximise, Control. You simply can't allow aesthetic considerations to prioritize in close facial/verbal encounters such as a canteen lunch. Politics never sleeps. I wonder now if he ever read that Erving Goffman I got him for Christmas.

Home at last. Wife comes in complaining about PMT. I told her it was as valid a method of work study as any. She threw a spice rack at me and went upstairs.

SATURDAY

I always enjoy Sainsbury's in Langney. It's an exhilarating example of what can be achieved by the intelligent application of sound techniques of systems analysis to the twin flow of human consumers and of consumable *material*. The one refined to a high degree of precision by sophisticated real-time stock control methods, the other appearing haphazard, spasmodic, even chaotic, yet under patient scrutiny revealing inexorable laws of behaviour: the two combining in that commonplace yet somehow mystic transaction, the Purchase. By the yoghurts I stand, trolley drifting to a halt as the vision swells about me. Twin streams of input, never-ending, intertwining in the cosmic dance of commerce, under a providence beyond our ken. My eyes dim with something approaching ecstasy, and I almost seem to hear that music which is beyond sound, that cybernetic symphony. Sainsbury's: the ultimate Man/Machine.

Then someone rams me from behind and the vision is lost. Lunch with wife, children: Primula on Ry-King. Instant coffee.

The garden prioritizes on Saturday afternoons. By this I don't mean "gardening" per se: by the judicious selection of breeds and varieties, broad-based application of non-toxic organochlorines and so forth, the garden practically runs on autopilot, a demonstration-worthy model of the closed system. Visitors always claim to be delighted to be shown the garden, but seem to lose interest as I enlarge on the beauty of the conception. Obviously they can't be real gardeners.

SUNDAY

Frost tinges grey sycamore leaves silver as I pound the empty avenues of Cooden, Sibelius filling my head from the yellow box strapped to the waistband of my shorts. Hyperventilating I burn up Acacia Gardens, and deftly switch over to the Brahms with one fluid movement. Then across by Egerton Park for the home stretch. Clock strikes seven as I turn in through the gate, fielding one-handedly the two kilos of newspapers lobbed with unerring accuracy by our local BMX bandit. A rendezvous timed to the second: one of life's minor pleasures.

Breakfast. Celery rather soft.

Read the Observer. Read the Sunday Telegraph. See the Doctor's been axed, alas. Read the Sunday Times. Read Sunday Telegraph again. Read Sunday Times Weekly Review. Line Trinket's basket with Mail On Sunday. Read Observer Colour Magazine. Read Times Special Venezuelan Trade Supplement. Read Telegraph once more, this time *including* sports page retrieved, after systematic interrogation of entire household, from Jeremy's bedroom. Normally it takes no more than a couple of hours to complete the process of intellectual assimilation, but on this occasion I found my attention unaccountably wandering. Checked eye movements against standard chart but they seem normal.

Lunch. Fenella's tarragon roly-poly is always a treat!

Coffee perked to extinction.

Then at last, up to the loft, the Inner Sanctum, the Holy of Holies, and reverse the notice on the door behind which lies the fruit of seven years' labour. True, the double-o gauge is less fashionable nowadays, rolling stock more difficult to procure, materials less durable; but in the final analysis this merely enhances the rarity value of what lucky visitors to the loft have described as an "astonishing achievement". As you enter, the up line catches the eye and leads it through the cutting towards the rear wall where rise, whale-like, the Pennines (the rotating back-projection simulates a twenty-four hour celestial cycle). The station itself hugs the lower slopes, a granite outpost in a granite land, while below, the canal eternally flows through chipboard meadows. "Stalybridge 1908". My masterpiece. Trembling, I activate the microprocessor control and the coke train slowly pulls away from no. 4 signal. Again I ride the footplate, regulator throbbing in my hand.....

Hours (days?) later, I am startled by a rattle and thud. A mug of steaming Earl Grey and plate of Jaffa cakes thrust through the cat flap. Cartier shows 4.15. Pullman running late! Devour Jaffa cakes, exhausted by the strain of managing a railway.....

Relax with the Money Programme. Though Widlake tends, in my opinion, to emphasise Keynesian value theory at the expense of a true market hegemony a la Smith, his case studies are not without interest. (I was much taken with the Investment-Savers' Gambia Winterbreak).

Dinner. A functional salmon mousse.

And so to bed. Consoled myself as ever, at the end of a long week, with the luminous, inexhaustible Thoughts Of Chairman Macgregor, those cultured pearls of rare wisdom. I see *his* bonus is £25 per man. *Very* interesting.



A young Phil Rudd thrashes the mic stand during the "A Kiss, A Cuddle, and A Compound Fracture" Tour, 1968.

Guru in Takeover Shock!

News comes to us that a bid has been put in at the eleventh hour for the ill-fated Observatorio del Norma Walkieri by an eccentric British punter, Sir Norman Fockyer. Sir Norman has recently been styling himself the 'Maharishi Bukshee Kama Sutra Tandoori Fiorino Turbo Hashish' (which translates roughly as Scion Of The All-Wise Arthur Scargill) and has been causing something of a stir down at the Royal Greenwich Observatory in sleepy Sussex. Increasingly at odds with the astronomical establishment, the 'Maharishi' has been slowly gathering about him a group of like-minded pure spirits dedicated to life, liberty and the pursuit of photometric standards, and is now openly talking of a 'planned flight' from the confines of RGO to establish a community rooted in love, mutual admiration and world class photometry.

The 'Maharishi' himself is a highly impressive figure - handsome, leonine head, long flowing beard, bare brown legs - and his simple, sober lifestyle - unflinching courtesy, modesty, humility, photometry, complete sexual abstinence, battered Range Rover - have won him the respect of even his fiercest critics. But what is this isolated outpost to which he intends to flee?

The Observatorio del Norma Walkieri lies at around 11,000 feet in an inaccessible mountainous region of southern Spain. Founded in 1869 by the eponymous editor of *Naturist*, the observatory flourished for many years before being wrecked in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. The fact that the site is now six feet deep in weeds and rubble, ten miles from the nearest fresh water, subject to periodic landslides, cyclonic gales, summer snowfalls and a long-running legal battle over grazing rights, has not swayed this remarkable man's resolve to make it his new home. "I'll pay forrit wi' me own brass, I'll hitch-hike there on hands an' knees, I'll disembowel misen' wi' a blunt instrument on TV-am - anything just so long as I can 'ave me revenge on everyone who dun't realise I'm t'Saviour of British Astronomy".

Sir Norman Fockyer is 49.



Keep Politics Out Of Politics - Join The MJP!

THE MOTHER JOAN PARTY NEEDS YOU! [scream the posters]. Yes, you! If you live in the Herstmonceux, Ninfield or Pevensey area, May 2nd is the day on which You can seize the opportunity to build a better future for yourself and your family.

MOTHER JOAN

is your candidate for a better, brighter Britain. "We will combine a maximum of self determination for local folk with a firm centralised authority, thereby creating vast new bureaucratic structures offering unexampled employment opportunities to the articulate middle class" - she confidently proclaims.

But aside from all the electoral ballyhoo and razzmatazz, the ticker tape and the draughty village halls, what is the background of this forceful yet enigmatic woman? NIG's political correspondent Attila the Librarian sent us this report.

MOTHER JOAN FERRARO has lived in the area since 1962. She is President of Magham Down WI, knits booties for the starving in Ethiopia, has addressed East Sussex CND and Rotary groups on the need for a mixed economy, lectures on the history of local government for the Open University in Brighton two nights a week, clears tall buildings in a single bound, serves as secretary to the Herstmonceux Parent-Teachers Association, is known as Grey Owl to generations of local Brownies, grows "the best herb garden east of Michelham" (Peusner), cooks a first-rate lentil pie, catches bullets in her teeth and eats them, has won the Queens Award for Industry three years running, and still has time to edit and publish a scurrilous pro-Establishment *samizdat* entitled *Gemini*, and bring up five children with a stern yet tender hand. 6

Indeed the Ferraro household is a model of MJP policy, shining example of how to yoke together opposites in harmonious Alliance. "We have two cars", explains Mother J. crisply yet evenly, "one left-hand and one right-hand drive, to symbolise the fact that we favour neither Right nor Left exclusively. The twins we named Chuck and Iva for similar reasons. And my husband's penchant for wearing odd fluorescent socks in red and blue is too well-known to need further elaboration".

Less well known are rumours that Mother Joan's hopes to be seriously compromised by recent incidents involving her husband, "Mad Mike" Ferraro. Fellow scientists claim to have found "huge discrepancies - as much as a factor of ten" between some of his calculations and the results allegedly produced from them. Reports from a reliable source state that Mr. Ferraro is now claiming to be transfinite number, and has been removed for observation to an undisclosed locality in the vicinity of Hellingly. Investigations are continuing, but the scandal seems likely to scupper Mother Joan's hitherto meteoric career.

The results of the election will be as follows:

Sir Labrador FitzVolvo (40)	Conservative	5,6
Mother Joan Ferraro (37)	MJP	1,2
Fabian Molehusband (59)	Labour	7
"Widow" Twankey (41)	Herstmonceux Anti-Fascist Sisterhood	
Mr. E. Normal Walker (45)	T' Miners' Revolutionary Party	
"Mad" Max White (23)	Pro-Nuclear Carnivores For A Fortress Hailsham	

BOOK REVIEW

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF COURTNEY CRUDD:
Autobiography of an RGO Messenger
By Himself

A notable addition to this year's list of likely bestsellers, *The Life And Times Of Courtney Crudd* makes Barbara Cartland read like Enid Blyton. Beginning with a fascinating description of boyhood in Peckham during the Great War, the writer reveals for the first time that it was in stopping a runaway horse that he received the mysterious injury which in more recent years has forced him to give up carrying more than five transit envelopes, driving at more than 23 mph, or lifting heavy telephone-receivers. After a spell in the RAF (during which T.E. Lawrence - then masquerading as "A.C. Ross" - was one of his subordinates) he became chauffeur and pilot to Field-Marshal Montgomery (later Viscount Montgomery of Alamein), on whose personal recommendation he entered the Diplomatic Service in 1930. He met Cardinal Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII) at the time of the Holy Sec's Concordat with Hitler's Reich, and remarks that he seemed "a nice bloke but a bit, y'know stuffy": a fascinating verdict on one of the most controversial pontiffs of the twentieth century. About his role in the Munich crisis he is naturally somewhat reticent, but admits it was "not one of my greatest successes".

With the Second World War I felt the narrative slacken in interest. This episode in world history has been treated with greater depth and clarity by other writers, notably Churchill and Bryant. Nonetheless it was fascinating to hear of the author's single-handed capture of a machine-gun nest outside Monte Cassino, or a solo raid on a Japanese encampment in Borneo from which he returned with two severed heads and 50,000 yen in used notes. There is a tantalising glimpse of life with the partisans in Albania of which the author says: "the part I played can never be told until the world is once again made safe from democracy". But overall this part of the story lacks coherence.

After the war Crudd slips into murky waters, with only a veiled reference to possibly dubious demolition contracts in Sheffield. We know of his selection - "my Indian summer" - for MCC against the Australians in 1948, bowling Bradman twice in the Headingley Test - an incident which Wisden curiously fails to record. Most fascinating of all is his detailed description of the events leading up to the Suez crisis, a version which differs considerably from contemporary published accounts. There follows, predictably, disenchantment with the direction Britain was then going, and a period of spiritual stock-taking. Here for the first time we see

the inner man beneath the man of action, the soul beneath the skin. A short-lived but doubtless sincere desire for spiritual betterment leads him to the verge of embracing the priesthood, a step from which he is only dissuaded by the personal intervention of Archbishop Ramsey. In one of the most moving passages of the entire testament he speaks eloquently of "my encounter with the dark knight of the soul", and hints that it was only the selfless devotion of "my lady wife Freda" which warded off a possible nervous breakdown. The crisis past, his life takes on a new purpose as, burying himself amongst the common ruck of anonymous humanity, he takes on a job as driver to a firm of Newhaven ship-chandlers. Here for the next seventeen years we see him, in his own words, "like Cincinnatus at the plough, one hand on the steering wheel and the salt spray in my ears". Yet even here he is visited several times in a consultative capacity by the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson (now Lord Wilson of Rievaulx) - "a connexion I would fain deny". The move to Herstmonceux took place in 1976 in response to pressure from the then Director, Prof. F. Graham Smith (later Lord Graham-Smith of Jodrell), who had heard of Crudd's high reputation with his Newhaven employers. The author brings his story up to early 1981, and leaves us in no doubt that he sees his appointment to RGO messenger as the fitting climax to a lifetime of service to his country. His final words are worth quoting:

"Working at the Observatory I regard as a great privilege. I never cease to get a thrill knowing I employed in however humble a capacity at Britain's old scientific institute, a venerable monument which Majesty's Government, however misguided and mercenary will never neglect or destroy. The sense of security permanence, especially after a life like I have led, such that me and Freda can consider ourselves set up the twilight of our lives. The palatial Castle, beautiful grounds over which we may freely roam etc., can never prize too highly. As I was saying to Lord Falkender (formerly Marcia Williams) the other day, it not all beer and skittles but the rewards are immense. And with Prof. F. Graham Smith safely at the helm, there must be a great future in store."

The Life And Times Of Courtney Crudd is published by Snuffitt & Died, Eastbourne, at £34.99 (paperback £4.50). ISBN 0 606 0842 X.

*talk * poptalk * poptalk*
*poptalk * poptalk * popta*

To the mild surprise of everyone in the Poptalk office THE SURK are still supporting the hapless FINANCE PACKAGE, an albatross whose chronic tardiness and general misbehaviour must be embarrassing to say the least. Unhappily too, long-awaited heavy metal band MASSIVE SUBVENTION will not now appear to support The Surk on their celebratory 1985 Sod The Overspend tour, which is being staged to celebrate their 20 years in showbiz. Rumour hints the whole jamboree may be called off. Meanwhile revellers returning from a STAFFSIDE gig in Swindon brought the amazing news that fun band ARJEEOH are to merge to form a slimmed-down combo possibly to be called THE RELUCTANT BEDFELLOWS, whose home venue will almost certainly be The Institute. Poor Arjeeoh have been badly hassled recently, as regular readers of this column will not need reminding. Last week they lost their drummer, at nine feet tall a legend over the years, who always remained essentially a shadowy figure. Lead vocalist KEN SCALEGOBBER told our reporter that the group always knew if the drummer left it would be the end for them. Meanwhile see our next Poptalk column for an exclusive interview with Scalegobber who talks about his plans for the band, should they still be in existence.

Leading gender-bender VIVIEN has forsaken PVC and patchouly for lilac suits and lip gloss, but won't give us a clue to the reason for his new-found machismo; while at the other end of the rainbow LYNDA LOVELESS has been more than once spotted in Annabel's, romantically linked to a member of likable illiterate punk group THE KLINGONS. "Stewpot" Stewart of HACKERS UNLIMITED is said to be moving to join acoustic band GENERAL ADMIN, while after seven years yoked to a synthesiser ain't half so culture shock. News comes in that lovable Georgie croon Christine is quitting THE ISLANDERS: "I've been on the road for four years out of the last three", she moans "and I've gotta get out". IAN "PLUM" DURY, the Islander manager, was unavailable for comment.

Finally, the tiny but purposeful world of lap badges. It's noticeable that these days simply everyone following John Farouche - is sporting SAY NO TO SAA Brill, I thought, great gesture, so in the same spirit joined in with I SAW ESO - AND LIVED, and got the filthiest looks from the very same people! My dears, the inconsistency of fashion....

Ciao for now,

"Scanner"

STAFF WHAT MATTERS

Term at the Collegio della Santa Maria della Roque (for 4-12 year-olds) started on September 2. The new headmistress (replacing Miss Fertility Lay) is Miss Muriel McGoverness, who comes to us from the Edinburgh Home for Distressed Orphans. There are 94 children in school. The Roque Run will take place on October 3.

Children of Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Communist, atheist and agnostic parents will present themselves in the School Yard on November 5 with a sturdy pole 6" taller than themselves and a packet of firelighters. The Christmas Lecture this year, to be given by consultant paediatric psychiatrist Dr. Siggy Charlatan, will be entitled "Why Does Mummy Drink So Much?".

Attendance at all the above events is compulsory. No sick notes will be allowed.

TRAINING

The following courses are shortly to be made available under a new SERC training scheme:

- 1) Overcoming Peace of Mind
- 2) Guilt without sex
- 3) Ego gratification through violence
- 4) You and your birthmark
- 5) Manipulating the Permanent Department Head
- 6) Employee Alienation Scheme
- 7) Public Servitude as an alternative Life-style
- 8) Delegating Blame
- 9) How to maximise your coffee break
- 10) 101 ways to spend your superannuation
- 11) How to convert your telephone into a sex aid
- 12) Cultivating viruses in an Office refrigerator
- 13) Sinus draining in the workplace
- 14) Creative tooth decay
- 15) Exercise and acne
- 16) Tap Dance your way to Social Ridicule
- 17) Isometrics with a paper clip
- 18) Obtaining your OBE by appearing to do vital work

Editorial

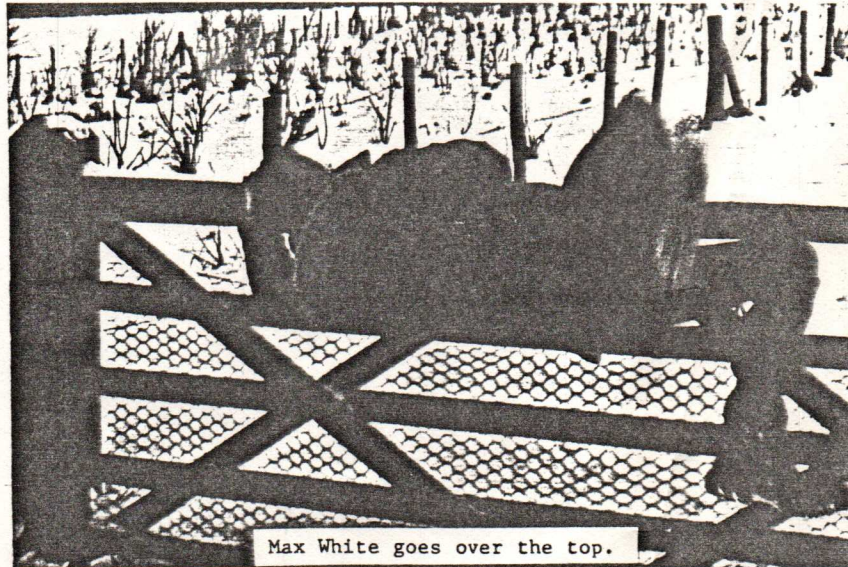
Apologies for the British Rail influence on this issue (i.e. the late arrival) but we've had trouble with the unions since going over to the new technology style letraset. We had enough material for nearly two issues so a lot has been held over - look out for NG5 within the next four months. In the meantime, happy nearly new year.

Sue Dennim

The case for hormone implants



Jon Hutchins fails his SAS entrance examination (camouflage section) by failing to impersonate a Begonia.



Max White goes over the top.