

# newsletter



The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association

January 1981

First things first - a nappy new year to all our members !

Next. The news.

The most important happening in the last two months was undoubtedly the wedding of our most respected member of long standing - and ex-committee member - Moira Harrison. We wish herself and Ed lots of happiness.

The short story competition for this year seems to be better than ever. The closing date is the 1st of February, so those of you who intend entering and who have not yet done so had better hurry. Remember the rules.

ISFA members/Irish residents/of Irish birth  
< 12,500 words  
typewritten with margins & double spacing

Copies of the ISFA calendar are still available - from Pierce or Art - and I strongly recommend those of you who haven't yet bought one to do so quickly - they really are excellent.

Fortcoming meetings:

January - Science Fiction & Art by Colm Lavelle

February - An exhibition of Computer Games. We hope to have a number of games available at the meeting.

March - Book Auction. It's been several months since we last held an auction, so we decided to get some more much needed money for the Association. Bring along any books you no longer need. All donations gratefully received.

April - A talk by an as yet unknown guest speaker. We have asked one of the most popular speakers of the past few years if a new talk would be possible, and we await hopefully a favorable reply.

May - Awards dinner & meal.

June - ??????????????????????????????

One last thing. I have been asked by David Reed to let people know that he has a FUBB set of Dragons & Dungeons, and he is interested in finding people to play with him. For people who don't know, D & D must

be just about the ultimate board game; addicts tend to become hooked for life.

David's address is:

73 Mount Anville Park Estate,  
Stillorgan,  
Dublin 14.

Mount Anville Park Estate is just off the Lower Kilmacud Road, up a little from the Stillorgan Shopping Centre, on the left.

#### Meetings

The November meeting was given over to the launching of the ISFA Calendar. We were fortunate not alone in having the three patrons present for the launching, but also in having Bob Shaw along. It was a pleasure for all who were there to meet a man who is not alone one of science fiction's best authors, but who is also one of the nicest people involved in SF.

Pierce and Arthur sold whatever copies they could, and gave several away in the hope that, like the sower's seed, they would bear fruit a hundredfold. There are still some of the calendars left - interested prospective purchasers could contact the artist or producer.

The December meeting, held on the Sunday after Christmas, very nearly didn't happen. There was severe understaffing at the Parliament Inn. The young barmen in charge, however, did great work in running the entire show, and we had not a bad wee party. That is what the 'meeting' consisted of - a party. Crackers were provided, as well as cakes and other goodies. Those who did not turn up missed a grand evening.

There are only a few months left till the AGA/Aisling Gneal awards. The intention is to carry on as we did last year, with a buffet-supper in the Parliament Inn for the awards, and the AGM is planned, as always has been the case, for Buswells Hotel. TENTATIVE dates for these two are:

Aisling Gneal Awards - Saturday, 30th May,  
in the Parliament Inn.

AGM - Sunday afternoon - 31st May in Buswells Hotel.

As we do every year, we ask you, the members if any of you have brighter ideas on these two events. If you have - pass them on.

#### Crossword Answers

Across	Down
1) The Seeds of Time	1) & 7) The Time Machine
3) Mentor	2) Entreat
9) Moon Rock	3) Earth Trip
10) Tired Horse	4) Dimorphic people
11) Isis	5) Ozone
12) Neuter	6) Torsion
14) Heronsey	13) UFO
17) Slow Epic	15) Radiogram
20) Deters	16) See
23) John Wynnam.	18) Leopard
24) Trefoliolate	19) see 23 across
25) wasneup	21) Pricorn
26) Kooten	22) Rotters
27) Odd masterminds	24) Tides

The Restaurant at the End of the Universe  
Douglas Adams -- Pan

DON'T PANIC! The sequel to The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy is now in the Library. Although it lacks some of the impact of its predecessor, since it is not now unique (the humour is in the same vein) the novel is a delight. Arthur, the expatriate (explanitate?) from Earth whom we met in the first book, manages to get a cup of the best tea from the ship's computer, with devastating repercussions to the rest of the ship's vital functions. Marvin the Paranoic Android further develops his unpleasant personality - he is my favourite character. After a number of indescribable (so I won't) adventures, Ford Prefect and Arthur Dent land on Earth some two million years in the past, and finally discover the question to the ultimate answer (42), which question, as you may check with your pocket calculator, is not a misprint.

Altogether, the book is required reading, especially for any of you who may secretly believe that the Earth is the centre of the Universe. After all, that notion used to be doctrine. Readers of The Restaurant at the End of the Universe know better.

Mary K. Gallagher

Moreau's Other Island

Brian Aldiss - (Cape £4.95 + + (ndbk))

The author is well known as one of the most distinguished and prolific S.F. writers, not to mention his collaboration on editing anthologies with Harry Harrison.

His most recent work is, as the title implies, an attempt to update the classic S.F. novel by H.G. Wells entitled "The Island of Dr. Moreau", first published in 1896.

The scene is set in 1996, when nuclear war has broken out on Earth, and a space capsule returns from the moon. The capsule contains the U.S. Under-Secretary of State, and when it crashes in the Pacific - due to sabotage - he survives to reach a remote island in which a Thalidomide victim scientist is performing a series of experiments duplicating those of Dr. Moreau. The doctor apparently visits the island, using the name Angus McMoreau, and describing himself as "an Edinburgh Surgeon".

The plot is extremely well constructed, with realistic descriptions of the medical experiments, the Beast People and of the impact of the Super-Powers on the life of Moreau's 1996 imitator - Mortimer Dart.

Any BSFA member who has read H.G. Wells, and who would like to see how he can be successfully revised in order to fit into a late 20th century context, is strongly recommended to read this novel, which I found to be a most stimulating and thought-provoking S.F. work.

David Lass M.A. Dip. Lib.

The Penguin Science Fiction Omnibus  
edited by Brian Aldiss - Penguin. £1.95 + vat + post

Because of the number of stories involved (30), the reviewing of this book is very difficult. The only realistic way of doing it is to take a random selection of those stories.

The first story - "Sole solution" is particularly good. It's about a person who lives in total darkness. He becomes so lonely that he decides to do something about it - and, boy! does he find a solution. Even though I've read this type of theme before, the ending still managed to catch me off guard.

The next story - "Lot" is about a family making their way into the hills and safety after a nuclear holocaust. The story revolves around the journey through the many traffic jams between their home and the mountains. The story was quite boring, but then, in a way, that may have been what the author intended, in order to convey the true feeling of being in a traffic jam. What kept the story alive was the "forethought" of the father - his ingenious plans and calculations before the journey. However, the ending came as a disappointment. A sort of unexpected unexpected ending.

"The Short-short Story of Mankind" was very amusing. It shows up the hypocrisy of society and has a very useful message at the end of it. This may sound serious to you, but the author puts across his message in a very funny way.

"Skirmish" by Clifford D. Simak revolves around a newspaper reporter who discovers that machines - including his own typewriter - are coming alive. It's all part of a plot by alien machines to free our machines from slavery. The interesting point about this story is the analysis of the aliens' motives, and it concludes that they are quite right in what they are doing!

"Poor Little warrior", by Brian Aldiss, is about a man from the technologically advanced 22nd century who wishes to escape his dull life by travelling back in time to the Jurassic period in prehistory in order to hunt big game. He shortly realises that this is only a temporary escape. The story ends when he finds total escape - of a kind.

"Grandpa" is all about discovering. It's about a 15 year old member of a survey team, annoyed by the restrictive nature of the regulations. Grandpa is a large floating animal on the world they're surveying. When the team decide to take a ride on Grandpa, things begin to go drastically wrong. The young hero finds himself discovering all about the natural life of the world, but in a very frightening way.

"The Half-pair" is a nice simple predictable story about a man and his wife on board a space craft. The man loses his cuff link, and discovers it floating about in space. He goes outside to retrieve it, and things go haywire from then on.

"Command Performance" deals with telepathy. Lisa waverly finds herself being made to do things by a certain Kenneth Grearly. They are both telepathically linked, and Ken has definite plans in mind for Lisa. She objects, and the conflict begins. One of the best stories in the book.

"Track 12" by J.G. Ballard was another good story, but I was a bit disappointed by "The forgotten enemy" by Arthur C. Clarke.

Overall, this book was one of the best I've read, and, indeed, if a definitive anthology is possible, this could be it.

John Kenny

Agent of the Terran Empire  
Paul Anderson - Coronet

This is a collection of connected short stories relating to Flandry, who started life as an Ensign, and is now a super-spy. The stories have a remarkable similarity with one another, except that the girl changes each time. Paul Anderson can write much better than this; The Star-Fox and Guardians of Time are both superior.

Although this edition is dated 1977, the stories were all originally written in the 50's. Two of them were reprinted in "Love Romances", which will give you some idea of their calibre. I blame myself for not investigating the book's printing history before I agreed to review it.

Mary K. Gallagher

Lord Valentine's Castle  
Robert Silverberg - Gollancz £6.95 STERLING (HARDC)

This is the most recent novel to appear from the pen of Robert Silverberg, one of the best known American S.F. writers. His career started in 1958 when he was awarded a Hugo as the most promising new author.

The present work was originally published in serialised form in The Magazine of Fantasy & S.F., and has now been revised for full-length publication.

It is a tale of epic proportions, divided into 3 books, and describes the adventures of Valentine, a youth on the planet Hajjipoor, and his attempts to regain his rightful kingdom, from which he has been exiled by an imposter.

The style has similarities to the long novels of Robert Heinlein such as "Time Enough for Love", and Frank Herbert's "Dune" series. It also has elements borrowed from the Science Fantasy and Sword & Sorcery genres, which are blended well together, so as to make up a balanced and exciting narrative.

Its Fantasy elements are supported by 3 maps, which provide a useful background to readers who might have trouble in following the highly complex and intricately plotted adventures that Valentine endures before he regains his kingdom.

All previous enthusiasts of Silverberg are strongly recommended to read this work, though newcomers may find it a bit heavy going at first. They might prefer to start with some of his earlier S.F. novels, such as "Tower of Glass" or "Dying Inside", both of which are available from the ISFA Library.

David Lass M.A., Dip Lib

Genesis  
W.A. Harrison - Corgi

"Genesis" is one of an increasing number of S.F. novels marketed for a mainstream audience. Too often these books rehash ideas long familiar to S.F. readers, but this is an agreeable exception. The book examines the problem of dro's, and suggests that they are, after all, of earthly origin. The story is satisfyingly long, well worked out, and the characters, particularly stanford, are carefully and meticulously made real. Like the best S.F., the plot relies on known fact. The evil scientist of the book is not mad; he is described, tellingly I think, as having had "his soul destroyed by intelligence".

"Genesis" rivals "1984" for a disasterous vision of the future; but although it leaves little hope for humanity, it concedes that the will to freedom of the individual is a need more powerful than life itself.

I should like to believe that this is indeed so, and I would recommend this book to those who also agree.

Mary K. Gallagher

The Encyclopedia of S.F.  
an illustrated A to Z

editor - Peter Nicholls - Granada 21b Sterling

This is by far the best English language S.F. encyclopedia available on the market, being much wider in its coverage of authors & topics than the other recently published one, edited by Robert Holdstock.

I have found it an invaluable reference source for my own researches, and since the format is in 3 columns per page, with only black & white illustrations, a truly comprehensive range of material is successfully included.

Davis Lass M.A. Dip Lit

Renaissance  
A.E. van Vogt - N.E.I.

"Renaissance" is a consummately silly tale, and is unworthy of van Vogt. I would have more easily believed it to be the first work of a sexist teenager.

Briefly, aliens contacting Earth have decided that men are the cause of all the problems of the human race (a simplistic view which contains, perhaps, a grain of truth) and have decided to put women in control (nominally).

In fact, both sexes are dominated by the aliens. The men are forced to take a drug which makes them shortsighted, and must wear chemically treated spectacles. The women are carefully indoctrinated after marriage to restricting sex for breeding purposes. (Does all this sound familiar?) The "hero" liberates 50% of the race - the men! - and settles down to enjoy life "with a loving wife and three grateful mistresses". The whole thing is a farce, and the title doubly so. The telephone book is a better read.

Mary K. Gallagher

The Starcrossed  
 Ben Bova - Majnun

This novel is so funny I forgive it for its minimal science fiction content. It concerns an attempt to rescue a sinking mass-entertainment company (I can't call it TV) by perfecting a new J-D process and applying it to a science-fiction series (loosely based on Romeo & Juliet. Everything in the series is rubbish except the actual technical processes, (does that sound familiar?), and the director finally draws the logical conclusion, and eliminates the drama element entirely. You'll have to read the book to find out the result; I can't deprive you of your fun.

This book is well worth reading. It also shows Ben Bova is more versatile than I thought; he also wrote "Colony", which is also good, though in a more serious vein, and "The Starcrossed" is in no way a repetition of that success.

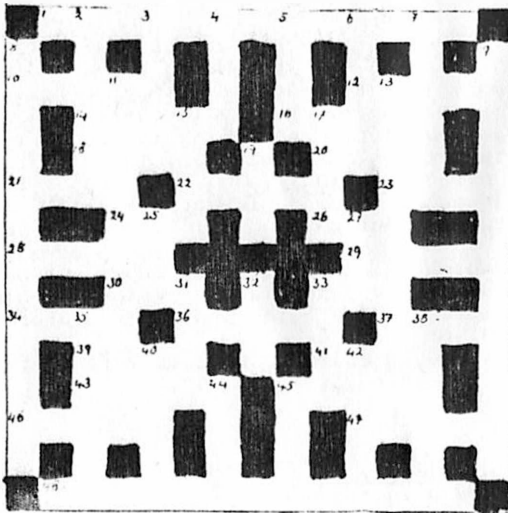
I prefer "Colony", but you could do well to turn off your TV set, and sit down to read "The Starcrossed".

Mary K. Gallajner

Lost: Fifty Suns  
 A. R. Van Vojt - Majnun

The title story, or rather novella, of this collection has only one fault - it could have been much longer. This is a refreshing change from the expanded short story/novella/novella phenomena; the story is bursting with ideas. Almost as interesting is a short story featuring Clane Linn, the hero of "Empire of the Atom" and "The Wizard of Linn". Unfortunately, the author insists on referring to Clane Linn throughout as the "mutation". Now, a mutation is something affecting a person, making him a mutant. A pedantic point, perhaps, but a professional writer should get these things straight. The other five stories are unremarkable, and I earnestly wish that van Vojt had devoted the entire book to "Fifty Suns". Who knows, maybe there are some short stories lurking somewhere which developed the themes touched upon in that on-so-compact novella. I hope so.

Mary K. Gallajner



Across

Down

- 1) The start of Hoyle's alphabet (1,3,9)  
 10) welcomes (5)  
 12) quietly rejoins? Oh!, Dry up (5)  
 14) Is Schiaparelli's canal area just this (5)  
 16) All Ships move (1,4)  
 18) Same, though entertaining when confused (4)  
 20) It is looked on with adoration when I make 50 (4)  
 21) Gumbo is the result of a muddled 24 (4)  
 22) Doggerel, not worth a dime. Much less in fact (5)  
 23) Pb32 (4)  
 24) Fabulous Bird (3)  
 26) Mars is the this planet (3)  
 28) It was mixed up with a politician ending in a morass (5)  
 29) Colloquially agrees on (5)  
 30) Over poetic (3)  
 33) Sounds lordly! Combined with hex no rules little folk (3)  
 34) He came out of the void (4)  
 35) A Big Dog and a Little Dog accompany him (5)  
 37) 'A stage where every man must play a part. And mine --- one (1,3)  
 39) Little Scouts (4)  
 41) It was impossible to make one on 5's surface (4)  
 43) The American ones are Century Plants (5)  
 45) willow (5)  
 46) Tibor was the principal one in Clarke's short story of animosity (5)  
 47) 'Leave not a -- in thine honour (5) (Ecclesiasticus)  
 48) wye-nan's telepathic pupae (5,10)
- 2) Ji was, more than anyone at that time (6)  
 3) Found in the Everest safari (5)  
 4) A fleet of spaceships might belong to one (4)  
 5) Commander Norton's rendezvous (4)  
 6) A spiritless cycle? (5)  
 7) 500 on a horse. A snady one (6)  
 8) and 35) Dapone's timely beach dwelling (3,5,2,3,6)  
 9) Was it the beginning of Hankind's majority? An Arthurian legend, like 1 across (10,3)  
 11) L.E.S. without the excursion (5,6)  
 13) Coney's winter's children lived on one (1,4,6)  
 15) Streakers haven't got one (4)  
 17) His house is still in fashion (4)  
 19) 'Consider her ways' (3)  
 25) ...And winking marybuds begin to -- their golden eyes (3) (dark, mark the lack)  
 27) The Listener gave it (3)  
 31) Patrick Wyatt's was Irish, but not from Tralee (4)  
 33) There is a divinity that snapes our -- (4) (hamlet)  
 35) If -- -- a falling star, I'll put it in my pocket (1,5)  
 38) See 6  
 40) Relating to 55 (5)  
 42) obsolete vinegar (5)  
 44) These wars were recently all the rage (4)  
 45) Muddled little brothers can be heavenly. Castor and Pollux maybe (4)

Reduction