The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association

Jun /July 1991

Welcome to another year! The Association is now in its sixth year and we hope to go on for a good while yet. A lot has happened since the last newsletter so I'll get down to business.

THE COMMITTEE: The new I.S.F.A. committee, accepted by the Annual General Meeting in May is as follows: Chairman & Editor of 'Stargate' - Pearse Mooney

> Secretary, Treasurer & Editor of the Newsletter - Brendan Ryder Publicity Officer: Sharon O'Doherty Librarian: Mary Gallagher

Also on the committee are Bridget Anthony and Faddy O'Connell but as these were unavailable recently no post has yet been allocated to them.

The above members were the only ones to be nominated by a very low turnout at the A.G.M. and we would ask members to remember that, of all the meetings in the year, the A.G.M. is by far the most important - so let's see a full turnout next year! A vote of thanks is due to the outgoing committee members for their work in the Association - Eoin Bairead, Rita Meehan, and P.J. Goode. All left due to other commitments.

RECENT MEETINGS:

<u>June</u>: this meeting had a quiz as the main attraction. It went down rather well, with Frank Koche winning the first prize of £5.00 and David Lass coming second with Sharon O'Doherty third.

July: was not quite what we had hoped due to the main attraction being called away. A demonstration game of 'Dungeons and Dragons' was planned and eventually this did take place. For anyone who's interested there will be a game in The Parliment inn next month. Contact the committee at the August meeting.

Upcoming meetings:

This year will have some interesting meetings and we look forward to a large attendance at all of them. At the moment the meetings until christmas are planned but ideas are most welcome for the January to April dates. The meeting for May should be the presentation of the awards for the 'Aishling Gheal' short story awards, entries for which are now using accepted.

<u>August</u>: This will feature a talk by the writer on my 'experiences' at the upcoming Aucon '81, to be held in Coventry at the end of August. To allow for this, the meeting has been moved to the <u>following Sunday</u>, in the same place and same time. To show the members who haven't been to a convention what they're missing, a slide show will also take place of photographs I will take at the con.

<u>September</u>: This is the month the Space Shuttle is due to go into space for the second time, and to acknowledge this there will be a talk given by a member on the implications

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possibilities opened up by the spacecraft. Again, there will be slides shown.

The rest of the year will have the following exciting (!) items: a talk by each of our patrons, Harry Harrison, Anne McCaffrey and James White; a Book Auction; a Quiz; a play (possibly around Christmas if there is enough interest) and anything else we can think of!

<u>Video Club</u>: We hope to start this very soon. It will be once a month, probably the second Sunday in The Parliament Inn. It will feature a Science Fiction film of some sort - we will not know which one until it arrives in the post due to the organisation of the club which we are joining. However, any members who have left their phone numbers with us will be notified. The films which we will be getting are: Superman, Star Trek- The Motion Picture, Alien, Saturn 3, Logan's Run etc. More info. next n/1.

<u>MEMBERSHIPS</u>: There are a lot of renewal notices going out this time and we look forward to recieving your renewed support. Don't forget the long standing offer to non-committee members - get five new members and recieve your annual dues back! No-one has yet taken advantage of this so now's your chance to go into the I.S.F.A. history books as the first!

ON THE AIR

TELEVISION:

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Dr. Who is back, starting on 3/8/81. BBC, Mondays. Cosmos, with Dr. Carl Sagan, a really excellent programme is available on both RTE and BBC, Tuesday and Wednesdays respectively. The 'Battlestar Galactica' series is being shown on RTE 2 on Sundays and it really isn't as bad as you might imagine. Star Trek, amazingly, isn't on <u>but</u> it should return very soon with a NEW series. SF on television is pretty scarce at the moment but should pick upin the winter months.

RADIO:

A really excellent adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's 'Lord Of The Rings' is now on BBC Radio 4 on Sundays, repeated Wednesdays. It takes a while to get used to the accents of the characters but in the end it's worth it as the sound effects are very realistic. The voice of Collum/Smeagel especially is perfect.

FILMS

There are plenty of good films around at the moment in Dublin, which makes a pleasant change:

'Clash Of The Titans' (Adelphi) 'Time Bandits' (Adelphi) 'Altered States' (Adelphi)
'Raiders Of The Lost Ark' (Carlton) 'Excalibur' (Carlton) ' Superman II' (Carlton)
'Star Wars' (again!) (Classic, Harold's Cross) 'Spider-Man Strikes Back' (Classic, H.C.)

Of these I can recommend 'Superman II' and of course the classic 'Star Wars'. 'Clash of The Titans' isn't bad but I thought there was something lacking. 'Raiders Of The Lost Ark' isn't strictly SP but it's done by the George Lucas studios and has some SF ideas in it. The rest I haven't seen yet. However, if anyone wants to write a review of any of the aforementioned films, send the results of their labour to any of the committee and we'll put it in the next newsletter or 'Stargate'.

NEWS - NEWS

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<u>CARL SAGAN</u>: is presently at work on a film similar to the classic "Close Encounters....." It is about the well worked theme of Mans first contact with an alien life-form, but nonetheless, if it's anything like 'Cosmos' should be well worth waiting for. The book publishers who have recently offered Sagan 2 million dollars for the book rights certainly think highly of it! It should be in the cinemas by 1983.

<u>RAY BRADEURY</u>: too, is working on a film. He is doing the screenplay for the re-make of Robert Wise's classic 'The Day The Earth Stood Still'. There is a rumour that Wise may do the re-make himself.

<u>ANALOG</u>: published the results of their readership poll in their April 27th issue and they made interesting reading. Briefly they were: 75% were malo, 25% female; 70% were college graduates; close to 50% of those who had attended college had a major in one of the 'hard' sciences such as Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry or Biology. Of those that had degrees, 8% were in Computer Science. Fiction was preferred to hard science articles in the magazine. <u>D&D</u>: A film of this game is being planned at the moment. The title for it will probably be 'Dragon Maze' and the director should be Eric Karson.

LARRY NIVEN: was asked recently what the best advice he had ever recieved was. He replied: "On my 21st birthday my father said: 'Son, here's a million dollars. Don't lose it...' " THE HITCH HIKERS CUIDE TO THE GALAXY: won a 1980 UK Radio Award for best 'Programme/Series for young listeners'

<u>DAVIS PUBLICATIONS</u>: who publish Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine, plan to do 'Science Fiction Digest', a magazine similar to Readers Digest which will appear three times a year. H.G.WELLS:once said: "The crisis of today is the joke of tomorrow".

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINCER: once said: "I once wanted to make small talk with a physicist by asking 'what's new in Physics?' but then I remembered that I don't know what's old in Physics."

<u>ARIEL 6</u>: the British satellite has a weird problem. Every time it passes over British Columbia or the Caspian Sea on a sunny day it switches itself off: 'Nature' reports that two of the three power packs turn off when it passes those points but never the third. Scientists on Earth have found that they can immunise the satellite against these shutoffs if they beam the main command signal to it just before it passes over the spots. <u>1984</u>: first a book, then a film now George Orwells classic has been turned into an album by that keyboard maestro Rick Wakeman. Available from most record shops on the Charisma record label.

<u>ROHERT HEINLEIN:</u> The winning bid for Heinleins new novel "The Number Of The Beast" was a record breaking 500,000 dollars - the highest ever advance in the science fiction field. <u>PIERROT PUBLISHING</u>: who published books such as Harry Harrison's 'Planet Story' and 'Great Balls Of rire' has gone bankrupt with debts of over £300,000.

ISAAC ASIMOV: had a celebration to mark the publication of his 200th book recently. It was held in Manhatten and many publishers were present to ask strange and impertinent questions of the Good Doctor (and no doubt to ask for the rights to his <u>next</u> two hundred books!)

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If you have any items of news for this page, give them to a committee member.

In reply to the review by John McCarthy of Alfred Bester's 'Golem¹⁰⁰' in Stargate:

<u>Colem¹⁰⁰</u> - by Alfred Bester. (London; Sidgwick & Jackson, 1980, £6.95 hdb. 384 pages) The title of this novel represents a combination of the "Golem" legend (Hebrew word meaning "clay") which was based on the creature raised to life by Rabbi Loewe, head of the Prague Jewish Community in the early 17th Century, to protect them against Christian persecution, together with the theme of "Dystopia" in contemporary SF writing.

The scene is set in a U.S. megacity along the East coast in the year 2175 A.D., when an elite class live in luxury protected by high technology, with the mass of people oppressed by poverty and disease. Eight ladies who meet once a week to play games in order to relieve their lives of boredom, decide to invoke the Devil by using an ancient ritual formula obtained from old books of magic.

As the magic incantations progress, they serve to release the forces of the 'Id' in each of the women, that unconcious sorce of instinctive energy which demands savage animal satisfaction, according to the Freudian definition. The author expresses it in the equation '8XId Colem¹⁰⁰,' which emerges as a polymorphous quasi-entity, fulfilling in real life crimes all their most primitive sub-conscious desires, without their being aware of it.

This theme was used already in the celebrated SF film "Forbidden Planet" (1956) through the 'Monster of the Id' of Dr. Mobius' sub-conscious mind. However, Alfred Bester develops it on a much wider scale, with a range of remarkable characters from all social classes in the 22nd century.

The novel has two outstanding features apart from its SF qualities, namely a detailed account of the magical invocations listed in English, Latin, French, and Hebrew, within a framework of musical notation; also an extraordinary wealth of illustrations in the text which cause the artist Jack Gaughan to appear on the same level as the best SF & Fantasy illustrators such as Frank Frazzatta, Hannes Blok etc.

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These are integrated into the text, in the best tradition of the adult fantasy comic artist, and add greatly to one's enjoyment of the book.

It is by no means an easy read, but I would unhesitatingly recommend it to the serious ISFA member who wishes to broaden his/her horizons, with a mind-blowing piece of fiction, combining both traditional fantasy and modern SF elements.

Reviewed by: David Lass, MA., Dip.Lib.

(Hon. Librarian, The Bram Stoker So.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT

HEY'LL BE PLAYING A BIGGER AND BIGGER PART IN OUR LIVES IN THE FUTURE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A GENIUS TO LEARN HOW THEY WORK AND HOW TO PROGRAM THEM.

THERE IS A PART-TIME COURSE STARTING IN THE AUTUMN THAT CAN BE ADAPTED TO SULT YOUR PARTICULAR NEEDS.

THE COURSE IS IN BASIC AND THE OPERATION OF THE APPLE COMPUTER. RING: DECLAN BRENNAN 886834 FOR DETAILS

Clone by Richard Cowper. (London; Pan 1972 £1.50)

Basically this book satirises the old style science fiction novels. It even has a touch of Frankenstein in that the clones are a lot different from what their creator had expected. However there is a fairly original story involved, too. The four clones Alvin, Bruce, Colin and Desmond were seperated and not told of each others existance just after they were born. They all turn out to be telepaths, on their own they cannot accomplish much but when together

The book is filled with amusing incidents and one-liners such as "It's enough to make a saint fornicate." You will also notice the author's numerous similes which involve food or the human anatomy. It is now on sale under the Pan Label (first published 1972) and well worth the £1.50 or so you would pay for it here.

Reviewed by: Frank Duignan.

Islands in the Sky by Arthur C. Clarke (London; Puffin Books 1975 £0.45 approx.)

A not too exciting book by Clarke from '54. The book is entertaining nevertheless, as there is little wasted space. It would also help if you have read 'The Sands Of Mars' by the same author. The story concerns a Roy Malcolm, a teen-age boy who is obsessed with aeroplanes and space ships. He wins a competition run by 'World Airlines' and the prize is a trip to a space station which orbits the Earth. While there he befriends various apprentices and they have a few mis-haps and exciting moments.

The space station and various satellites are described in detail and this adds to the realism of the story. This could also explain why there is no big sinister plot involved. I mean, such things do happen in real life, don't they?...

Reviewed by Frank Duignan

Of Time and Stars by Arthur C.Clarke (London; Puffin Books 1976 £0.50 approx.)

Entertaining, though slightly dull in some parts. It is a collection of 18 stories with an introduction by the renowned J.B. Priestly. Generally the stories were good but in my mind four stood out.

'The Nine Billion Names of God'. It is about a bunch of Tibetan monks who believe that the sole purpose of the human race is to find the true name of God. Once accomplished they believed that the human race would have no purpose and be destroyed. To help them they have a computer which meant that a couple of service men had to live up on a rock in Tibet for two months. The story concludes in a quiet and almost ironic way.

'No Morning After' is a humorous story about the destuction of the Earth.

'If I Forget Thee, Oh Earth' is about how man copes with his last refuge - the moon after armageddon.

'Hide And Seek' is a cat and mouse chase in that a spy is trying to escape in a tiny ship while the enemy'e fastest battlecruiser is hot on his heels. An enjoyable book and we are likely to see many more collections of this sort as he has worked out that he can have a possible 20,772,773,124,605,000,000 other combinations using his other short stories.

The Dragon Lensman by David A. Kyle (Corgi)

This book takes the characters and situations made famous by E.E. 'Doc' Smith and continues their story. As I have not read the original Lensman stories I am at a disadvantage in reviewing the novel as I cannot compare the novel and the series which it is legally plagiarising, in effect. One would think that a talented writer would have the courage to tackle the problems involved in inventing a world of his own, rather than taking over a ready made science fiction universe, and famous at that. Still, it is not without precedent: witness the many others who wrote 'Star Trek' stories for T.V. and later novels connected with the television series.

Be that as it may, the 'Dragon Lensman' is a middling-good book which starts off with Worsel (? ed.), the Dragon Lensman of the title, discovering a machine intelligence on Pok, the planetoid of knowledge. The potential for conflict which this machine intelligence represents is, however, cut short towards the middle of the book by it's abrupt expulsion from the story. This is a pity, as the rest of the book is not nearly so interesting. To the author's credit, however, is the fact that the book is so readily understandable without reference to the books of the earlier series.

'The Dragon Lensman' is strictly an action and adventure story: you won't find any new philosophical concepts or ideas here. There is, however, a place for pure story telling in the field of SF and if you want an undemanding good read, 'The Dragon Lensman' will do nicely.

Reviewed by: Mary M. Gallagher

Death Watch by D.G. Compton (Magnum)

This book is a story which contains two victims: the hunter and the hunted. A man is fitted with cameras in his eyes which makes it possible for the television station which employs him to record everything he sees as a television broadcast. He is assigned to do the story of a woman who is about to die in order to do a television series on her last days. As the book starts off, the television employee is seen as the hunter after a good story, and compassion be damned. Katherine Martenhoe, the woman about to die, is his prey and anything that can be done to her to improve the story is fair game. But the man with the television eyes is human too and as he begins to sypathise with the woman we see that he too is a victim of the television station's greed for a good story, and also a victim of the unreasoning public whose appetite for sensation has made him into a hunter for this sensation.

The characterisation in this novel is strong. We see Katherine in a third person narrative and also through the television employees' first person account which alternates with Katherine's. The television employee reveals himself through his first person narrative. As the book progresses the enormity of what is being done to the two protagonists becomes very clear. Neither of them is to escape from this situation; and the television employee, who at the beginning is seen as an emotionless cruel man-muchine, is shown to be as vulnerable and wounded as the dying Katherine. There is some fine writing in this book - don't miss it!

Reviewed by: Mary M. Gallagher.

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The following section is one which we had a while ago, and a couple of members requested it's return so here it is. If YCU have anything you want to sell, buy or swop send the details to me or any of the committee and we'll put it in the next issue.

WANTED: (by John Kenny)

Marvel Comics: any American Colour comics or black and white magazines. D.C. Comics: Any Detective. Batman or grave and Bold comics.

Anything by Jack Kirby especially New Cods, Forever People, Jimmy Asen and Mr, Miracle. Anything by Neal Adams, any Swamp Thing's. Charlton Comics: Any Doomsday&l or E-Man's

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Atlas Comics: Anything in this line.

Gold Key: Any Star Treks.

Battle: these are not numbered so dates are given.

No.'s 1-48 8th March - 7th February 1976; 50-85 21st February 1976 -23rd October; 87-90 6th November 1976 - 20th November 1976; 92&93 4th & 11th December 1976; 95-100 25th December 1976 - 29th January 1977 102-107 12th February 1977 - 19th March 1977; 109-116 2nd April - 21st May 1977; 118-148 4th June - 31st December 1977. Annuals: 1978, '79,'81 Warlord: 1,6-10,14,17,18,27-30,170,216,218,219,221,222,224,231,239,243,245,263,

295,296,325,336, Annual 1979

2000 A.D.: 1,4,6,7,10-13,17-21,28,30-33,35-38,40,42,43,45,47,48,50,53,55,71,72,

76,95-97,99,100,104,105,120,122,135,136,149

Any annuals: 1980, Judge Dread Annual 1981, Dan Dare Annual 1979 Summer Special 1977 1978

Starlord: 22, last issue, Any annuals.

Tornado: 5,6,13-17,19,20,22,23

Titans (weekly) : 5,7,8,11,12,14,17,19,21,23,24-26,30,35,36,44,50,52

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Captain Britain: 4,9-12,14,15,20,21-23,28,29,31-34
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Hulk Weekly:4,7,10-13,17-21,25-27,30,33-40,43-46,48,49,52,53,55,56-62
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MAD: 105,107-109,111,113,115,117,118,120,129-131,138-140,142,144,145,158,170-173

177,178,181,192,199

Starburst:8

World War II: 29-31,33,34,36,38,40,46-51,53-57,59

Freak Bros. : 1,2,

Elfquest: 1,3-7,

First Kingdom: 1-13

Spirit: 1-5,8,9,11-16,18,19,21

Heavy Metal: 2 May '77, 4 July '77, 6 Sept. '77,10-46 Jan. '78 - Jan.'81 Books

Robert E. Howard:Black Vulmer's Vengence, Almuric,The Sowers Of The Thunder, Tigers Of The Sea, The Incredible Adventures of Dennis Dorgan, A Gent From Bear Creek, The Vultures Of Whapeton, Skull Face Omnibus Vol. 1 & 3, The Jark Man Omnibus Vol. 1, Robert Weinberg: The Annotated Guide To Robert E. Howard's Sword & Sorcery

Any issues of Amre.

Cood Prices Paid. If you have anythingon the list and wish to sell it, bring it to the . next I.S.F.A. meeting.

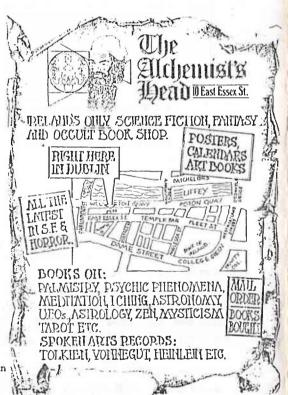
Wanted: (by Brendan Ryder) Any issues of the D&D magazine 'White Dwarf'. Wanted: (by BEM) A FIL arive. Required urgently - reply to: BEM, Box No. 42. (! ed.)

<u>Science Fiction Conventions</u> STARCON - September 19th & 20th Dragonara Hotel, Leeds. This is a T.V. & Film con, with guests Paul Darrow & Cary Kurtz

Scouse-Con One - February 13th & 14th 1982. Centre Hotel, Liverpool. A media con., of special interest to I.S.F.A. members as Anne McCaffrey is one of the guests, the other being Dave Prowse.

Shore Leave '82 - 2nd-4th April, 1982 Ingram Hotel, Glasgow City Centre. This is a Star Trek convention and looks interesting as there are three seperate programmes, all running continuously. You're guaranteed NO sleep there!

DENVENTION II - the 1981 Worldcon. Denver Hilton, Denver, Cloerado, U.S.A. 2nd - 7th September 1981. Guests: C. L. Moore & Clifford D. Simak. THE convention to gr to!



If you are interested in any of the above conventions, write to the Secretary and enclose a S.A.E. for more details.

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