

SKYRACK

5TH ANNISH Newsletter



"Of course being a fan as well as a pro you'll realise why I called your book 'Furgh Crud' in my fanzine review of it."

This is SKYRACK number 66, a fifth birthday issue dated 4th April 1964, and published by Ron Bennett, 17 Newcastle Road, Wavertree, Liverpool 15, England. 6d per copy. 2/6d for 6 issues. 35 cents for six issues in the USA (70¢ for 6 issues sent airmail) where subscriptions may be sent to Robert Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Indiana 46992. News of interest to sf fans always welcomed, as is the return of Arthur "Atom" Thomson with the heading and cartoon this issue.

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A TIE

IT'S NO USE. I've tried hard, but even after counting the ballot forms three times, I've got to admit that the unlikely event of a tie for first place in the Best Fan Publication section of the Skyrack 1963 Poll has indeed occurred. Skyrack and Hyphen are joint leaders with 191 points each, though I've tried hard to slip in a few extra points for Sky here and there!

The actual return was disappointing. 29 worthy fans voted, a slightly larger number than last year, but it should be remembered that over 200 forms were distributed this year, the OMPA mailing being circulated in addition to Skyrack's mailing list of 160 plus. The top three fanzines were in the lead from the first ballot papers in, though the actual lead changed hands several times. The 28 good people who voted, apart from myself, were: Brian Aldiss, Jill Adams, John Baxter, Sid Birchby, Redd Boggs, Terry Bull, Ken Cheslin, Buck Coulson, Tony Dupla, John Foyster, Colin Freeman, Keith Freeman, Phil Harbottle, John-Henri Holmberg, Terry Jeeves, Eddie Jones, Ethel Lindsay, Jhim Linwood, Ken McIntyre, Archie Mercer, Michael Moorcock, Ella Parker, John Roles, Dick Schultz, Norman Shorrock, Peter Singleton, Charles Smith and Desmond Squire. Special thanks are due to Sid Birchby, Ethel Lindsay, Ella Parker and Norman Shorrock whose names have been on this listing for every one of the five Skyrack polls.

The actual meagre return forces one to ask the question, "Is there any point in continuing with the poll in future years?" and opinions are solicited on this matter.

SKYRACK first appeared on 4th. April 1959, following the BSFA con held in Birmingham.

It was the intention, following the clean sweep in former ballots of Bastion covers carrying the Best Cover section, to announce that Bastion 4 had won the same section this year too, despite the fact that the magazine made no appearance in 1963. The temptation was resisted.

THE 1963 SKYRACK POLL, covering the field of British fan activity during the entire year, January - December, 1963.

THE BEST BRITISH FAN PUBLICATION OF 1963

1. HYPHEN (Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast 4, N.Ireland. 1/- or 15¢. Irregular) 191 points. 2nd last year.
THE SKYRACK NEWSLETTER. 191 points. 1st last year.
3. LES SPINGE (Dave Hale, 12 Belmont Rd., Wollescote, Stourbridge, Worcs. 1/-. Irregular but frequent) 148 points. 6th last year.
4. SCOTTISHE (Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey. 1/9 or 25¢. Quarterly) 96 points. 5th last year.
5. VECTOR (Official organ of the BSFA. Edited last year by Jimmy Groves and then by Archie Mercer) 95 points. 7th last year.
6. SCRIBBLE (Colin Freeman, Ward 3, Scotton Banks, Knaresborough, Yorkshire. 6d or 10¢. Infrequent of late) 68 points. 8th last year.
7. POT POURRI (John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast 4, N. Ireland. Published for SAPS) 64 points. 15th last year.
8. ZENITH (Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31. 1/- or 20¢. Very frequent). 59 points. Unplaced last year.
9. SQUEAK (Tony Glynn, 144 Beresford Street, Manchester 14. Unpriced. One issue only) 56 points. Unplaced last year.
10. TENSOR (Lang Jones, 36 Winscombe Crescent, Ealing, London W.5. 1/- or 15¢. Irregular.) 51 points. Unplaced last year.

Out of last year's top ten are Eric Bentcliffe's and Norman Shorrocks' Bastion, Ella Parker's Orion and Parker's Peregrinations and Bobbie Gray's OMPazine, Vagary.

Runners-up this year are: 11. ASTOUNDING CHECKLIST (Jeeves) and THE SCARR (Charters) each with 47 points, as is Hunter's OUTPOST, 14. THE PETERBOROUGH CONVENTION BOOKLET (produced by Eddie Jones) with 35 points, 15. Roy Kay's CHAOS with 29 points, 16. ENFOCADO (26 points), 17. POINTS OF VIEW/BEYOND (23 pts), 18. ROT (22 pts), 19. THE BSFA LIBRARY LIST (21 pts) and equal 20. ICARUS and THE JOHN RUSSELL FEARN APPRECIATION, each with 15 points.

It is realised that any fanzine which conducts a poll is going to have returns weighted in its favour, and accordingly this poll must be seen to be a moral victory, at the very least, for Hyphen whose publishing staff wins everyone's most deserved congratulations.

THE BEST INDIVIDUAL FANZINE FEATURE OF 1963

For the third year in succession, 13 different items were listed, though this year there was no tie in this section, the Willis' convention report The Harp Statesize, in Hyphen winning hands down.

THE BEST FAN COLUMN OF 1963

Now here there was a tie, as in 1960. Brian Varley's Machiavarley column tied with Walt Willis' Warblings, both columns appearing in Scottishe.

THE BEST FAN ARTIST OF 1963

Once again, the big three took the first three places, the section being won for the fifth year in succession by Arthur Thomson(13 points). 2nd was Eddie Jones(8 pts) and third was Jim Cawthorn (6 pts).

the best fanzine cover of 1963(yes, it should be capitalised)

Jim Cawthorn's illustration for the cover of Les Spinge ll won hands down.

THE YEAR'S BEST FANZINE REPORT

It should surprise no one to learn that Walt Willis' ChiCon report in Hyphen came in streets ahead of every other report, polling more votes than all other entries together.

THE BEST PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE OF 1963

The winner of the previous four polls was here pushed into second place, being beaten by its sister magazine. 1. SCIENCE FANTASY. 2. NEW WORLDS.

THE YEAR'S BEST PROFESSIONAL FEATURE

Once again this proved to be a popular section in the poll, with no fewer than eighteen stories and featured being listed. For the second year running, this section was won by the GUEST EDITORIALS in NEW WORLDS.

THE BEST PROFESSIONAL WRITER OF 1963

Brian Aldiss won this section for the second year in succession, polling twice as many votes as did his nearest rival, J. G. Ballard.

LEADING FAN PERSONALITY OF 1963

Again, hardly a surprise here, with "Doc" Weir Award winner Archie Mercer taking first place to Ethel Lindsay's second.

THE BEST BRITISH WRITER OF 1963

1. Walt Willis (75 points) Retains his first place of the last two years.
2. John Berry (44 points) Retains his 2nd place of the last two years.
3. Brian Varley (29 points) 5th last year, jointly with Colin Freeman.
4. Colin Freeman (24 points) joint 5th last year with Brian Varley.
5. Archie Mercer (22 points) 9th last year, jointly.
6. Fred Hunter (20 points) Joint 9th last year
7. Ethel Lindsay (20 points) 3rd last year.
8. Ron Bennett (11 points) unplaced last year.
9. George Locke (10 points) 7th last year. That's what prowriting does!
10. Philip Harbottle(8 points) Unplaced last year.

Out of last year's top ten ratings are those sadly missed ladies, Ella Parker and Bobbie Gray.

Once again, that's it for another year. And many thanks indeed to all who voted. Several of you asked for a complete listing of past winners, so briefly, here it is:

The best:	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
<u>Fanzine</u>	<u>Aporrheta</u>	<u>Orion</u>	<u>The Atom</u> <u>Anthology</u>	<u>Skyrack</u>	<u>Hyphen/</u> <u>Skyrack</u>
<u>Fan Feature</u>	<u>The Goon</u> <u>Goes West</u>	<u>How To</u> <u>Draw Curly</u> <u>Monsters/</u> <u>T.G.G.W.</u>	<u>How I</u> <u>See It</u>	<u>How I</u> <u>See It/</u> <u>Natterings/</u> <u>HYPHEN quotes</u>	<u>The Willis</u> <u>Con report</u>

