

# newsletter

## The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association



October-December 1980

Sorry for the month's delay in getting out this newsletter; the problems, involving all sorts of shennanigans, were insurmountable. But, on the more positive side: it does give us a chance to bring out the next issue in January, rather than December, thereby looking forward with hope and expectation to a great new year, and not forlornly gazing back over one just gone. (loud choruses of BULLSH.... less of that, this newsletter may be read by parents!)

The amount of news is surprisingly small, considering that we have been three months without a newsletter. It must be a factor of the time of year. I don't really want to talk about various well-known and long unemployable ISFA members managing to actually get jobs with PAY, he has enough troubles as it is since November 4th. And apart from that, there really isn't anything.

Anything there is that's new is covered in the other sections of the newsletter, so I'll leave it till then.

One last thing. I've included a Crossword in this issue. The compiler has sent us a couple, and I've been meaning to use them for some time. I think we'll give a book token to the first correct entry received by the Secretary, and another to the first correct entry from a junior member.

ANNOUNCEMENT  
AISLING GHEAL 1980

Entries are invited for the AISLING GHEAL competition for 1981. This is the premier short story competition of the Irish Science Fiction Association, and the first prize is a perpetual trophy, and a cash award of 25.00. Second, third and fourth prizes will also be awarded. The following are the rules of the competition:

- 1) The competition is open to all persons who are members of the ISFA or living in Ireland or of Irish birth.
- 2) Short stories must be less than 12500 words in length.
- 3) They may be written in English or Irish.
- 4) They must be typewritten on standard size paper, with double spacing and wide margins.
- 5) The closing date for entries is 1st February 1981.
- 6) Entries will not be returned.
- 7) Copyright for entries will be held by the ISFA.

The entries will be read first by a selection committee chosen by the ISFA Committee. A shortlist of stories will be made by this committee, and these stories will be submitted to the judges for their final decision. It is hoped to have a final result in April.

Send entries to: Brendan Ryder,  
18 Beech Drive,  
Dublin 14.

## MEETINGS

I wasn't at the August meeting, which had a most excellent quiz, compiled by the committee. The winner was Sean Morahan, who won on a tie-breaker with David Lass, both having answered the same number of questions correctly in the competition proper. Congratulations are due to them both, and I hope Sean got SOMETHING for his trouble.

The September meeting was one of the best we have ever had. To a packed room Dr Dave Fegan of U.C.D. gave a talk on the search for extraterrestrial intelligent life. Using an overhead projector to fine effect, he first sketched the factors which could lead to sentient life. These factors, which included the existence of habitable planets of favourable suns and the development of life-forms sufficiently complex to have meaningful communication, were examined each in turn, and a probability was assigned to each one. When the resulting probabilities were multiplied, the final probability that there WAS other sentient life was quite large, indeed it seemed likely that there were several stars in our Galaxy which had inhabited planets.

Dave showed how the vast majority of the 'flying saucer' stories could NOT be extraterrestrial in origin. There simply weren't enough stars to account for them.

Dr Fegan finished up by talking for a short while on postulated particles called tachyons which would move faster than light. He showed how, if such particles existed, they could be used to communicate in a practical way beyond the solar system. He pointed out that even the closest star would require several years for a signal to reach it at the speed of light, 300,000 kilometres per second.

All in all, a great evening.

The October meeting was addressed first by Paddy O'Connell and John McCarthy on the recent WORLDCON meeting in the USA. They appear to have had a wonderful time, with the Science Fiction taking a definately second place to the crack. Paddy says that he is going again next year, and anyone who wishes to accompany him will be welcome.

The 1982 conference will probably be held in Scandanavia, and this may provide an opportunity to those who feel that they cannot make the States. It is possible that an ISFA contingent may go there, and the committee would appreciate feedback. Paddy brought back details of this years HUGO awards, and, since Graham Andrews sent me the list of the 1980 Nebulas, I'll give them at the end of this section.

After the talk by Paddy and John, Brendan Ryder spoke of this years Star Trek conference in England. Although the only Irish person there, Brendan enjoyed himself hugely.

Here are the award details:

HUGO Awards

<u>Best Novel</u>	The Fountains of Paradise	Arthur C. Clarke
<u>Best Novella</u>	Enemy Mine	Barry Longyear
<u>Best Novelette</u>	Sandkings	George R.R. Martin
<u>Best Short Story</u>	The Way of the Cross & Dragon	George R.R. Martin
<u>Best Non-Fiction of 1979</u>	The Science Fiction Encyclopedia	ed. Peter Nicholls
<u>Best Dramatic Presentation</u>		ALIEN
<u>Best Professional Artist</u>		Michael Whelan
<u>Best Professional Editor</u>		George Scithers
<u>Best Fanzine</u>	Locus	ed. Charles Brown
<u>Best Fanwriter</u>		Bob Shaw
<u>Best Fan Artist</u>		Alexis Gilliland
John W. Campbell award		Barry Longyear
Gandalf Grand Master of Fantasy		Ray Bradbury
First Fandom award		George O. Smith
Pat Terry award (humour in SF)		Douglas Adams

Nebula Awards 1980

<u>Best Novel</u>	The Fountains of Paradise - again!	Arthur C. Clarke
<u>Best Novella</u>	Enemy Mine	Barry Longyear
<u>Best Novelette</u>	Sandkings	George R.R. Martin
<u>Best Short Story</u>	giANTS	Edward Bryant

We now give the HUGO nominations for the shorter fiction, together with where they were first published.

## Novella

The Battle of Abaco Reefs; Hilbert Schenk; F & SF 6/79  
 Enemy Mine; Barry Longyear; IASFM 9/79  
 Ker-Plop; Ted Reynolds; IASFM 1/79  
 The Moon Goddess and the Son; Donald Kingsbury; Analog 12/79  
 Songhouse; Orson Scott Card; Analogue 9/79

## Novelette

Fireflood; Vonda McIntyre; F & SF 11/79  
 Homecoming; Barry Longyear; IASFM 10/79  
 The Locusts; Niven & Barnes; Analog 6/79  
 Palely Loitering; Christopher Priest; F & SF 1/79  
 Sandkings; George R.R. Martin; OMNI 8/79

## Short Story

Can these Bones Live ?; Ted Reynolds; Analog 3/39  
 Daisy, in the Sun; Connie Willis; Galileo 11/79  
 giANTS; Edward Bryant; Analog 8/79  
 Unaccompanied Sonata; Orson Scott Card; OMNI 3/79  
 The Way of the Cross and Dragon; George R.R. Martin; OMNI 6/79

Graham Andrews sent us the following 'letter'. He says he found it in a waste paper bin in his hotel room at a recent Con. We know better!

Mr. Jack Ripley,  
Mr. Ivan Zarkoff,  
Rip-Off Productions, Inc.,  
Hollywood, California.

Dear Guys,

I am riting this letter to you personal-wise, and hope you-all will xcuse any errors in speling, gramar, punktation, etc., as you avta remember I'm a riter not a sekertary.

Natchurally that's why you hired me in the 1st place, on akkount of hov I've been knocking around the Movie Industry long enuff to dig reel story values - ee.gee., what will make a picture that has b.o. (Box Office) apeal - and also sneek past the censors, which let us not fool areselfs is always a problem.

But I will not waste your time with filosophey whan what you want is a report on the big-screen possibilitys of these two propretys you sent me.

Strait off let me asure you that you are on the rite trek. There is no sense laying out X-thousand bucks for story rites when you gotta make lots of changes anyway to bring in a shooting script. Just grab some oldies like these you showed me that are in the public dough-main and take a little more time whipping them into shape.

I have red the two books you sent me, which as they stand now they stink in spades, moviewise. But I've mebbe figgered out some angles that will turn them into Oscar-tipe material.

Ist off - Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain. Heer is a good xample of what I meen - this Mark Twain dude is even worse on gramar and all that crapola than I am, but you don't have to reed more than 100 pages without seeing he is a Riter. This Huck Finn cat is a grate sinematic caracter and I think he will play for laifs - only you gotta be kerrful about a cupple of miner details.

Like, for instance, just when the plot gets rolling, Huck drifts down the Mississippi on a raft with a negra named Jim, and rite there the book gos up the creek sands paddle. Like nothing happins. I meen, how are you going to get good filmic values out of this turkey - partikularly when you can dig the censorship problems same as me?

But hold the fone - all is not loused, as I got to thinking about this can of worms and the solootion struk me like a bolt in the blue. This is a Deep South-type story, so why not play it for reel? I meen, like it was ritten by Tennessee Williams, Gardner F. Fox, or somebody else who's hip on the Old South.

So it's as easy as ABC-TV. All we gotta do is, we kick the negra off the raft and substitoot insted this lush little 16-year-old white chick - whose running away from the orphanage just like Huck is running away from his dipso father. Now we got areself's a set-up the oddience can buy, these two randy kids alone together on a raft in the midle of the river at nite. Like - will they or won't they? I'm shure you can dig the drama.

Then these two weerdos show up - the King and the Dook or whatever Twain calls them - only insted of being a pear of hambones like in the book, I sugest we do a Lance Horney and make them reel preverts. Like they escaped from some loony bin and they're out to get the girl. And it's Huck's job to save her from the old statunary rape routine. We can have some grate steemy scenes in there - all that sick Southern decedance which the critics eat up.

And just when Huck gets rid of the two sex-mad sikeos, mebbe the negra - why don't we call him 'Rastus'? - cood clime back on the raft and run amuck. Like, he tries to kill Huck and molest the chick - tho not nesissarily in that order. All that controversial misskegination shoold recly get the oddience horned-up.

Also, we gotta play Huck for about 19 or 20 - the way I see him he cood mebbe be taking a geetar with him which gives us a legit xcuse for a cupple of numbers between the hevvy drama scenes. Why not pass my ideas to Donny Osmond and see how he likes them? Incidentally, Huck is a lousy name for a hero - I sugest we change it to 'Chuck'.

So - lastly but by no means leestly - we have the sekkund book, which is The Bible, by King James.

Now I know that when it kums to critisizing the Bible I am tredding on dangerus water, on akkount of the reverince tied up in it by Cecil B. de Mille, Lew Grade, and other awthoritys. Besides, de Mille has alreddy used the best parts and his estate cood easy snarl us up in a lawsoot.

But at the risk of stikking my nekk out, allow me to say that this is not an easy sort of propety to do in the 1st place and I was kinda surprized to find out how hard it was to reed, arter all the bildup. No harm to King James, but I do not think he wood have ritten it in the same stile if he was alive today (he is dead).

After doing a sinopsis on both halves of the book I can only find one sektion in each part which has reel spektakle possibilitys for us.

In the 1st sektion (The Old Testament) we've got the Flood caper. O.K., so one of you old-timers will tell me, "Yeah - but didn't Darryl F. Zanuck make Noah's Ark way back in '28?", and this I have gotta consede. But that shood cawse us no sweat - not if you follow my thinking. Which is to take the same situation and the same dramatic values which I gave you on my treetment of Huckloberry Finn.

Only this time, insted of one chick and one stud on a cockamamie raft, we have one chick and mebbe 9-10 fullgrown men trapped together on an Ark in the Flood. To say nothing of a whole boatload of wild animals, which if some nut turned them loose, would massacre everybody! You see how this situation cood bild? The Ark Adventure - how's that for an original, catchy title?

Thinking sekkundly, mebbe the other section is better becawse nobody has used it yet. This peece kums at the very end of the book and it is called Revelations. Reeding it was a bitch for it is ritten in one of those zudo-intelektual stiles like The Hobbit, and there is no reel story-line. Just this end of the world spiel.

But I don't have to tell youse guys that trend-wise we have something very big heer with this end of the world, kataklism deal. Look at 2001, Star Wars, Alien, and all the other sci-fic flics which have broken box-office rekords. (Mebbe even Huckleberry Finn cood be adopted to fit this new sci-fic sikel. Our hero - Chuck, or mebbe 'Duck'? - is drifting down the Milky Way in a busted spaceship, with a lush 16-year-old princess, a crazy robot, and a cupple of weerd ailiens. I'll send a sinopsis to George Lucas - he mite be on the lookout for another directing job.)

We cood run it as a big rodeshow promotion in Cinerama and Sensurround - film it abroad with dub-ins, and play up the special effects. Also monsters. Not to mention a Big Name Cast. (What's Troy Donahue doing these days?) Mebbe even a movie tie-in novel (Ron Goulart?), comic books, and a spin-off TV series. The title cood be a problem, how about Revelations - the Movie, or - better still - Apocalypse Now.

Kum to think of it, this is probaby the most commercial propriety in the bunch, and I rekomend you check to make shure the rites are cleer, just in case, and then get a cupple of 1st rate riters on it to give you a classy treetment. Mickey Spillane and Harold Robbins woud be a shurefire combination.

Let me know when you start planning the sequil.

Yours cinsereely,

M---y H-----n



Bored of the Rings  
Harvard Lampoon - \$1.50

If you have quasi-religious feelings about 'The Lord of the Rings', of which this is a parody, don't read 'Bored of the Rings'. It will make you cry. In fact, it will probably make you cry anyway, because it could have been so much better. A parody should be at least as good as the original in order to be effective; this book simply makes cheap jokes wherever possible, and begins with a scene where a 'voluptuous elf-maiden' (sic.) attempts to seduce Frodo, here Frito, in order to gain the ring (or the Ring). This scene does not occur in any form in the original, and is in fact no more than a rather crude come-on. The book is actually rather funny in places (Gollum becomes 'Goddam', which seems quite appropriate), but it isn't so much a parody as a hastily written take-off which any college student could improve on after a few drinks. I say 'college student' because the humour has a typically undergraduate flavour.

As 'Bored of the Rings' purports to be a parody of a book which is not Science Fiction, or even Science Fantasy (I would classify 'Lord of the Rings' as a fantastical epic romance), I am not sure why I was asked to review it. This is supposed to be the Irish Science Fiction Association, and Tolkien's little (! ed.) scholarly doodle, let alone a parody of it, is not typical of the material here reviewed. But SF readers read other things than SF (I nope), so maybe some of them will enjoy this book. Borrow it from the Library - DON'T buy it.

Mary Gallagher.

APEMAN, SPACEMAN  
Penguin - £1.25 + taxes

No, it's not another sequel to Planet of the Apes. But that is not to say that it wasn't put together by a band of bored, illiterate baboons. (No reflection on our esteemed patron and coeditor of the book I'm reviewing)

There is very little to drag this book up from the depths of the monkey-home. Hilarious cover illustration of intelligent simian wearing Flash Gordon leotard (with tights to match, no doubt), and cutaway goldfish aquarium. None of the stories are particularly memorable. They all have that sort of pulp magazine image about them.

The book isn't as much fun as a barrel full of monkeys, I'm afraid, but your pet orangutan or chimpanzee might find it amusing reading.

Sammy Steiger.

THE EARTH BOOK OF STORMGATE  
Poul Anderson - NEL/Times Mirror

This is a series of short stories built around a common theme, namely man in the far future, as seen from the viewpoint of a strange and alien race. The stories are of variable quality, but seldom approach the high standards we have come to

expect of this author.

Some of the earlier stories dealing with an alien outlook on humankind are intriguing, but the later ones dealing with space piracy and intergalactic trade border on the purile.

D. Anthony.

BLOODHYPE  
MISSION TO MOULOKIN  
Alan Dean Foster - 90p. +

'Bloodhype', according to the blurb, is 'the fourth and final book in Alan Dean Foster's brilliant sequence featuring Flint of the Commonwealth!' I would have to argue with the 'brilliant', but the books, all of which I have read except the first, are certainly competent and interesting.

The Commonwealth features two main species; human and thranx. The latter are metre high intelligent insects. The joint civilization is known as 'humanx', a neat condensation of words. In 'Bloodhype' there are two suitably horrific menaces to overcome, the Vom and the drug known as 'Bloodhype'. The Vom is a bloodthirsty alien being which survives by invading a planet and systematically devouring every living thing on it, then waiting until a spacefaring race turns up so it can overpower them and be transported to another planet, there to repeat the process. However, fifty thousand years before the story opens, the Vom encounters a race which manages to confine it to one planet, leaving a 'Guardian' in a state resembling suspended animation to prevent it from leaving. As the story opens, a minor alien race (not humanx) is allowed by the Vom to take it in their spaceship to their enclave on Repler on the outskirts of the Commonwealth. They are followed there by the Guardian, now awakened and intent on reneutralising the Vom.

Bloodhype is an addictive superdrug with such revolting effects that you wonder why anyone would ever take it, but then people get addicted to heroin, which differs from Bloodhype only in degree. It has been banned, but the traffic has resumed clandestinely.

Both of these menaces are overcome, with scant help from the two agents sent to investigate the Bloodhype trade, by a maneuver which effectively cancels them out against each other. The agents, who include an attractive human woman called 'Kitten Kai Sung' and an alien called 'Parsupah' who resembles an 'oversized, portly racoon', are quite well characterised. There is also a sadistic playboy called Russel Kingsley, and, of course, 'Flint of the Commonwealth'.

The story is well worked out, and the denouement is satisfactorily neat. However, Flint etc. has a relatively small part in the story, which is a pity, because he has an attractive personality, revealed in the two other books of the series I have read. Also, his presence on the obscure planet Repler is never explained. That aside, 'Bloodhype' is well worth reading, and I shall certainly read the other book in the series, which I missed.

'Mission to Moulokin' is the sequel to 'Icerigger', which I never read, and which I'll never read now because this is nothing but an Alastair MacLean adventure in a Science Fiction

setting, and I got tired of Alastair MacLean years ago. In fact this book lacks even the vigour and the pace of the best of Alistair Maclean's novels. The characterisation is minimal, which is excusable in SF if replaced by ideas - and this is not the case here. The natives of the ice-bound planet 'Tran-ky-ky' - known as 'Tran' - are interesting enough. They are humanoid in most respects, but their feet end in sharp claws called 'Chiv' which function as skates. They also have a fold of skin between trunk and arm to the wrist which when stretched forms a sort of personal sail which propels them over the ice. To move in this fashion is to 'Chivan'. This promising start peters out rather quickly, and the rest of the story falls short of maintaining an interesting pace. Another race is discovered - the 'Golden Shia' - which are found to be complementary to the Tran in a ten thousand year planetary cycle, but this theme is never fully developed. At one point a Tran overcomes and kills two human occupants of an advanced ice-skimming vehicle, and even manages to use its armament to devastating effect. It is inherently impossible that a supposodely primitive being could learn to operate a sophisticated vehicle without any kind of training. Even human beings have to take lessons to learn how to drive a car, which isn't all that sophisticated. (Try driving a car wearing ice-skates).

In short, 'Mision to Moulokin' is dissapointing, and never attains the high pitch of adventure which this sort of SF adventure requires. It is certainly not as good as 'Bloodhype' or the other books of that series. Alan Dean Foster can write, but here he seems to have missed his mark.

Mary Gallagher.

A YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE TO UFO'S  
Brian Ball - Granada 60p. + etc.

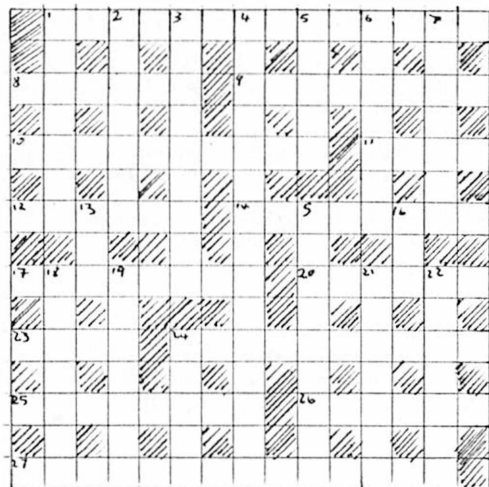
Be warned that this book is a young persons guide to UFOs, so don't expect too much of it. It can be read while half-awake.

Nothing really new in the field is offered - it basically documents various UFO sightings, past and present. There is also a chapter on UFO oriented films. Some of the photos in the centre are interesting. Also interesting is the Fill-in Form in the back of the book, in case you happen to have seen a UFO in your travels.

Well worth it for a child a budding curiosity about UFOs. So, instead of the usual Doctor Who or Blake's Seven, buy The Young Person's Guide to UFOs.

Also, keep watching the sky!

Sammy Steiger.



*Pádraigín*

## ACROSS

1. see 23. (3,4,2,4)
8. Wise Counsellor (6)
9. A Lunar Dance (4,4)
10. Boxer was one in Animal Farm (5,5)
11. Wife & Sister of Osiris (4)
12. An eft Fisher, by the sound of it. (6)
14. A Young Heron (8)
17. Interminable Story. The Ring Cycle, maybe.
20. Rested wrongly, it seems (6).
23. and 19 down. He planted 1 across and Triffids perhaps.
24. Triffids, perhaps. Shamrocks certainly (10)
25. Commonly one is when deprived of energy (6)
26. Triffids were not - they walked (6)
27. The Midwich Cuckoos not even Britain's Brains (3,11)

## DOWN

1. It was a 4th Dimensional and 7. Venicle (3,4,7)
2. Spanish in a free entertainment. I earnestly ask. (7)
3. The Opposite of a Moon Voyage (5,4)
4. Well's Time Traveller found these in 802,701 A.D. (9,6)
5. Protector from Ulreaviolet (5)
6. The Mobius Strip has this (7)
7. See 1 Down
13. Unidentified Flying Object (3)
15. Telegram by Wireless? Could be, if not for amusement. (9)
16. Observe that which is essential, by the sound of it (3)
18. Can he change his spots (7)
19. See 23 across
21. Triceratops was (7)
22. Rakes (7)
24. Along with time, they wait for no man (5).