

# newsletter

## The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association



JUNE/JULY 1977

NUMBER 12

Well, the ISFA has done it!

One year under our belts and all set for number two!

These Newsletters will be coming out every two months from now on and - all being well - they should arrive at the beginning of a month thereby giving you plenty of notice for the following two members' meetings. (This issue is late owing to the increase in the amount of material. However, future issues will be on time.) One member, in fact, has voiced the opinion that the Newsletters used to arrive too late for him to slot meetings into his diary. Did anyone else experience this inconvenience? If so, I can only apologise and say that the new Bulletin format will hopefully suit everyone.

The members' meetings, for the present, shall continue to be on the last Sunday of every month. However, there have been several requests for a change of night and some time in the near future we will try out a Friday night. But, don't worry. You will receive plenty of notice.

If any of you have opinions on this topic (or any others, in fact) do please drop Robert a line since, he would like the Newsletter to become a more personalised publication in which the members of the ISFA can express their suggestions, ideas, likes and/or dislikes, etcetera.

With that over, let's move on to more interesting topics.....

THE SHAPE OF MEETINGS TO COME.....

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+++ Sunday 26th June. +++  
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+++ Harry Harrison has come up with the suggestion that every member +++  
+++ should bring along a book or two to this meeting so that we can hold +++  
+++ a fund raising auction. Please don't feel that you are being press- +++  
+++ ganged into bringing books. If you can manage it, the proceeds will +++  
+++ be put towards the Association. Harry, himself, has started the ball +++  
+++ rolling by offering a couple of titles from his own shelves so, do +++  
+++ come along and join in the fun. (Speaking of 'balls' - no, I'll keep +++  
+++ that bit of news until a little later.) Bobby MacLaughlin will be in +++  
+++ charge of the proceedings and keeping us amused to boot. +++  
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+++ Sunday 31st July. +++  
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+++ Anne McCaffrey will be travelling up from the wilds of Co. Wicklow +++  
+++ to visit us and during what will, no doubt, be an interesting chat +++  
+++ she will be telling us about her career to date, the books she has +++  
+++ written and what the future might hold in store. By the way, Anne +++  
+++ has just finished writing WHITE DRAGON. Maybe we'll be able to coax +++  
+++ her into giving us an idea of what to expect before it reaches the +++  
+++ shelves. +++  
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+++ The meetings shall, of course, continue to be in the Falcon Inn, 25 +++  
+++ Upper Camden Street, and shall begin at 7.30 pm. +++  
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The first Annual General Meeting of the Irish Science Fiction Association was opened by the Chairman, Robert Lane, at 6.30 pm on the evening of Sunday May 29th. The venue was Buswells Hotel. After welcoming the 30 members present, Robert went on to give a brief run-down on how the Association was formed.

As many of you will know, this occurred after Richard Gallagher had placed a letter in the press stating that he would like to meet - in the lounge bar of Powers Hotel - anyone who was interested in forming an SF association. The first people to come along formed themselves into the provisional committee and set about enlisting members. They were also very pleased to accept the patronage of Harry Harrison and Anne McCaffrey (James White joining the patron ranks later on). A number of the early workers have fallen by the way side for various reasons and those appearing before the members at the A.G.M. were the hard core who still have a very keen interest in SF and the ISFA.

The proceedings of the meeting were recorded on tape and what follows now is a brief transcript condensed from nearly three hours of discussion.

Michael Gardner was the first Committee member to address the meeting and he said a few words about the design work he has been involved in on the ISFA's behalf and also how he will be looking after the publication of the STARGATE Journal from now on. In fact, he is looking forward to forming a special sub-committee to help with production.

In his capacity as Functions Organizer, David Norman told us briefly about what he had done in the afore-mentioned area and also in other ISFA areas such as - designing the covers of the first two STARGATE Journals and writing some copy for the Newsletters. (David will be off to Germany soon and on behalf of the members and committee, I would like to thank him for all the work he has done and wish him well. R.)

P.J. Goode - the Custodian of the growing ISFA library - next gave a run-down on the workings of the library and paid tribute to Philip McDermott Ltd., (agents for Transworld) who provided the best response to enquiries. We have also got favourable response from Granada, Victor Collanz, Millington and New English Library. With material from those publishers and from other sources P.J. is able to prepare the Booknews section of every Newsletter. On our behalf, P.J. has made contact with the British Fantasy Society, the North Down Science Fiction Association and the British Science Fiction Association. One of the issues which the new committee will be discussing is the possibility of trying to find a permanent home for the library as an alternative to bringing it to every meeting.

Pearse Mooney has been responsible for the film side of the SF world and he tried to make contact with cinema managements in the city as well as with the film distributors themselves. They were not a very communicative bunch and only Mr. Gerry Duffy of Twentieth Century Fox has been of any real help. One of Pearse's hopes was that films of a science fiction nature could be shown to ISFA members on a regular basis. There were many pitfalls and obstacles but with any luck these have now been overcome and film viewing will hopefully become a regular ISFA activity. As Pearse was unable to attend the first half of the meeting, Robert gave a report on his behalf. Since Pearse was unable to go forward for election, we must also thank him for all the work he has done for the ISFA over the past year.

Following Richard Gallagher's resignation at the beginning of this year, Paddy O'Connell agreed to being co-opted onto the committee and since that time he has been acting as treasurer for the Association. As treasurer, Paddy gave an account of the financial records kept by Richard Gallagher and by himself since Richard's resignation.

Robert next turned to the topic of the draft constitution and explained that it had been drawn up as a safeguard for the members of the Association. It was a document which would - when completed - set out the order in which the business of the Association should be carried out. When asked what the safeguard was for, Robert explained that it offered the possibility for members to step in and take over if something went wrong on committee level. If the committee are not working properly on the members' behalf or are working against the aims of the organization or are giving the members a bad name by their own actions then, the Constitution offers - for all intents and purposes - a legal document whereby the members can take control in order to safeguard their interests - their subscriptions.

Before taking the draft constitution point by point, Robert requested that the order of the meeting be reversed so that members could propose candidates for election to the committee.

After a break, voting took place for next years committee. There were eight names put forward. Four of the existing committee - Michael Gardner, P.J. Goode, Robert Lane and Paddy O'Connell - were offering their services again while, from the membership in general, the names of Penni Campbell, John Mahon, John McCarthy and Bobby MacLaughlin were proposed. Since there were six places on the committee, the members were asked to write down the names of the six they would like to see in office. The two committee members not going forward for re-election were proposed as Tellers and while they were counting the votes, the discussion of the draft constitution began.

All of the amendments will be printed below and if we receive sufficient requests, the complete amended constitution will be circulated to members.

The amendments were as follows:-

- 3(c) The provision of a Newsletter every two months.
- 4(d) is scrapped since membership, unless renewed, will terminate after the 12 month period.
- 4(a) now becomes 4(d).
- 5 The ISFA shall in each year hold a General Meeting of members as its Annual General Meeting and not more than twelve (12) months shall elapse between the date of one Annual General Meeting and that of the next. The Annual General Meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Committee shall appoint.
- 7 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened by the Committee or by written request to the Secretary, of twenty (20) members of the ISFA.
- 9 No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum of ten (10) members be present.
- 12(b) by at least one (1) member present in person or by proxy, and, in the case of a poll, the Chairman shall appoint Tellers, nominated by those present at the meeting from among their number.
- 19 No objection to the qualification of any voter shall be made except at the meeting at which the vote is being cast. The chairman of the meeting shall decide finally and conclusively on the validity of the objection subject, to a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present.
- 21 Since each member of the ISFA will be offered the use of an instrument whereby they may appoint a proxy, the instrument shall only refer to the singular.

- 24 No member of less than twelve (12) month's standing shall be eligible for election to the committee of the ISFA.

Between Paragraphs 27 and 28 the following title shall be inserted.....  
POWERS OF COMMITTEE.

- 28 The Committee may, at its discretion, co-opt, on a majority decision, not more than four (4) persons to its membership - to serve until the following AGM. Those co-opted shall have no voting power within the Committee.
- 29 The Committee may at its discretion, appoint (subject to the person's or persons' agreement) sub-committees for specific purposes. Any such sub-committees shall continue in office until dissolved by the Committee, and shall conform to any regulations that may be imposed on it by the Committee and may co-opt to its own membership subject to the approval of the Committee. Sub-committees so formed shall keep records of all business transacted and shall submit reports to the Committee for presentation to the Annual General Meeting.
- 30 The Chairman shall be, and a Committee member may be, ex officio, a member of any sub-committee formed under Section 29 above.
- 32 The quorum necessary for the transaction of business of the Committee shall be no less than three (3).
- 33 As soon as possible after each Annual General Meeting, the Committee shall meet and shall elect from its number a Chairman who will be the Chairman of the ISFA.
- 36 The Chairman, Secretary and Financial Controller shall serve for one year and the Librarian for two years and all four shall be eligible for re-election to the Committee on the expiry of their offices. All other Committee members, including those who may have been co-opted, shall retire after being in office for one year but, shall be eligible for re-election.
- 38(a) Access to all records of all committees, sub-committees, AGMs and EGMs of the ISFA shall be available only to members of the Committee who shall treat such records as wholly confidential. (For the purposes of this article 'records' shall be taken to mean all correspondence, minutes of Committee meetings and any document in the possession of committees or sub-committees of the ISFA whether written or recorded electronically or by any other means.)
- 38(b) A financial statement shall be printed in every second issue of the Newsletter.
- 41 A copy of every balance sheet, report etcetera as in Section 40 above shall be sent not less than twenty-one (21) days before the date of the Annual General Meeting to every member entitled to receive such.
- 42 The auditor shall be a qualified accountant requested by the Committee, on behalf of the members of the Association, to certify the accounts of the Association.
- 44 The Committee may refuse to accept an application for membership.
- 45 Honorary Life Membership of the ISFA shall be offered subject to the approval of the majority of the members present at an AGM.
- 46 The Library shall be administered by the Librarian subject to his discretion and with the approval of the Committee.

With the above amendments, additions and subtractions, the Constitution was accepted by the members present at the AGM.

At the AGM, it was voted unanimously that Honorary Life Membership of the Association be offered to Peter Szabo and Peter Kuozka - in Hungary - for the interest they have shown in the ISFA.

The membership also voted that the subscription for new members would be raised to £5.00 per annum. Members re-joining for the year 1977/78, will pay £3.00. However, as and from the 31st May 1978, the annual subscription for all members will be £5.00 per annum.

With the main business of the meeting concluded, David Norman announced the names of the six people who will form the new committee. They are Robert Lane, P.J. Goode, Michael Gardner, Paddy O'Connell, John McCarthy and Bobby MacLaughlin.

John McCarthy proposed a vote of thanks to Pearse Mooney and David Norman for the work they have done for the Association. This was seconded by Robert Lane.

With the time approaching 11.00 pm, there was no time left to discuss the ideas which had come from members at the two previous meetings. These, however, will be discussed by the Committee and reported in the Newsletter.

With that, the first AGM of the ISFA was drawn to a close.

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#### HARRY HARRISON

Our patron was able to attend the meeting and at one stage during the AGM we took a short break during which he said a few words.

First of all, Harry made an announcement about a competition for ISFA members. There will be a '£10 prize for an SF idea for an SF short story. Post the idea on a postcard (preferably) or in pink ink on a goat skin (not preferably) - but, if you must, the goat should be dead. - By August 31st., the idea must be posted to the ISFA and then the winner will be chosen by a panel of authorities (namely Harry). The prize of £10 will go to the best idea and you never know, it may get written up and eventually published. Thanks for the generous offer Harry.

The SF Writers' Conference will be back again next year. The final dates haven't been settled yet but it will most likely be in late June. Harry hopes that ISFA members will offer to help out again. One idea for the formation of an International Science Fiction Professionals Association was put forward at the Conference last year and at present, Harry, Brian Aldiss and Fred Pohl are looking into its construction. If it is formed successfully, it means that writers from behind the Iron Curtain would have a legitimate reason for attending conferences.

Harry put forward the suggestion that we hold a book auction to help raise funds and then went on to talk about two new books which he will have out shortly.

The fourth Stainless Steel Rat book is being typed up at present and it will reach the shelves under the title of THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT WANTS YOU!

Pierot Press, in England, asked Harry to write the text for a publication on the history of sex in science fiction illustrations and it is to be called GREAT BALLS OF FIRE. (The editor of Pierot Press is Philip Dunne who also has written under the pen name of Saul Dunne. One of his books STEELEYE - WATERSPACE is mentioned in STARGATE 2.)

Harry has offered to try and get copies of GREAT BALLS OF FIRE exclusively



for members of the ISFA and sometime towards the end of the year we'll be holding a signing party at one of the monthly meetings. So, keep your fingers crossed. The book which is being printed in several languages, will be card bound and in addition to 100 black and white illustrations, it will have about 50 colour plates.

Many thanks Harry.

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In future Newsletters, it is hoped that members will come forward with reviews of books they have read - either new or old - and give us an idea of what interesting pieces there may be lurking on book shelves behind the titles.

Fred Woods has very kindly started the ball rolling by taking a look at MACHINERIES OF JOY by Ray Bradbury.

Here is a collection to delight all Bradbury fans. The book contains twenty-one stories and, though none fit strictly into the SF genre, all are gems of imagination. In this, Bradbury combines good writing with imagination excellently.

"The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" is a beautiful pen picture of a General who takes the trouble to ease the fears of a young drummer on the night before battle.

"Death and the Maiden", to my mind the best story in the book, (though I'm sure there will be arguments about that), tells of an old lady who does not want to die and how she is tempted by the promise of twenty-four hours of youth.

Have you ever wondered what the world would be like without radio and television or any of the other means of communication we take for granted? Read "Almost the End of the World" for one possible answer.

"Boys! Raise Giant Mushrooms in your Cellar." has the familiar theme of an alien life-form subtly taking over humanity. This one has a rather horrific ending which, should satisfy even our esteemed Chairman. (This story was televised on either an Alfred Hitchcock Show or The Twilight Zone, a number of years ago. R.)

Members of the ISFA will be pleased to know that Dublin is well represented by no less than two stories. Bradbury seems to have enjoyed his stay in Dublin, if his stories are anything to judge by. (Any chance of enticing him back, I wonder?) The first of these stories "The Beggar on O'Connell Bridge" is a very funny account of how he was affected by the less-well-off members of Dublin's population. This story may change your approach to beggars for the rest of your life. Having given one handout, Bradbury puzzled for weeks over the beggar's parting remark 'There's only a few of us left.' He eventually decided that the man meant real humans who care.

His second story with a Dublin connection "The Anthem Sprinters", is even more hilarious. This describes a rather lunatic competition apparently played in Dublin cinemas. I particularly enjoyed the idea of handicapping a man by applying two large swigs of liquor. One quick quote that I love from this story 'Sure its money makes the world go round, but its music that holds down the friction.'

I can tell you, Ray, that good stories also go a long way towards holding down the friction. Keep up the good work and don't forget - There's only a few of us left.

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The ISFA has a bone to pick with the afore-mentioned Mr. Bradbury but, we shall talk about that in a future Newsletter.

## THE CHARIOTS OF THE GODS

At the AGM it was decided that, since only eleven or so members would be free on the Bank Holiday weekend to see the film, it would be shown in Robert Lane's house rather than go to the expense of hiring a venue. Hopefully, no one was upset by the change of location.

About twenty people turned up to watch the film and this is what David Lass has to say about it.

This film was a documentary production based directly on the books of Erich Von Daniken - the contemporary West German writer - who has claimed that the development of human civilization has been significantly influenced by extra-terrestrial visitors.

The idea itself is not new since, it was started before World War II by the American writer Charles Fort, with his theories of alien influences on human events.

However, the evidence presented in the film, such as the various pyramids in Egypt and Mexico, the unexplained cave drawings which resemble spacemen; all seemed convincing to a certain extent, insofar that no orthodox scientific theory could account for them.

The film surprisingly made no mention of the Continent of Atlantis, whose existence thousands of years ago may well have assisted in the transmission of the Egyptian science of pyramid building and astronomy to the Maya and Inca civilizations of Central America. Furthermore, the film's commentary and musical background were somewhat out of keeping with the actual events being shown on the screen.

Apart from these faults, I would agree that the film provided a useful and informative purpose, by raising various questions about extra-terrestrial influence on Earth, that every serious-minded SF enthusiast (including the ISFA) should consider.

Finally, I would like to thank our Chairman, Robert Lane, for his courtesy in providing his own home for showing the film and his usual efficiency in arranging the projection and screening facilities. (Blush! R.)

The film was directed by Dr. Harald Reinl in 1969, based on the novels CHARIOTS OF THE GODS and RETURN TO THE STARS by Erich Von Daniken. The music was by Peter Thomas and the commentary by Wilhelm Raggendorf was spoken by Bruce Johansen, Lee Pajan and Jean Fontaine with filmed assistance from C.T. Rodenstock, Professor Hermann Oberth, Thor Heyerdahl, Hans Downick, Alexander Kasantsev and Wlatscheslav Saitsev. The film which was in colour ran for 92 minutes.

## GOLLANCZ AND PAN/PICADOR £3,000.00 FANTASY COMPETITION

Victor Gollancz Limited and Pan Books Limited are offering £3,000.00 for the best novel or volume of stories submitted by 31st March 1978. Entries must not be less than 50,000 words or more than 100,000 words in length.

Full details will be printed in the next Newsletter but, in the meantime, if anyone wants more information, please contact Robert Lane.

Recent additions to the ISFA Library have been kindly donated by Martin O'Connor, Freda Smith, Tony Caffolla and David Lass. A list of the new titles will appear in the next Newsletter since, space is running out in this issue.

BOOK NEWS from P.J. Goode.....

From Gollancz we have DEUS IRAE a novel by Philip K. Dick and Roger Zelazny. THE WORLD IS LOST FOREVER is a long novella by Ursula K. LeGuin. GATEWAY comes from the mind of Fred Pohl and STOLEN FACES from Michael Bishop.

Millington are producing the excellent DEATHBIRD STORIES by Harlan Ellison and BOLO by Keith Laumer (Bolos are half-human and the most terrifying and effective weapons ever devised by man!) OUR LADY OF DARKNESS is by Fritz Leiber. This is an occult SF story which I have the feeling was serialised in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction under the title "The Pale Brown Thing".....could you blame them for changing that title?!!

Back to paperbacks and re-prints of re-prints etc. etc. Panther recently re-printed HIGH RISE, CONCRETE ISLAND and CRASH, all by J.G. Ballard but, strangely enough, not under the title of science fiction. Panther have also brought out MACHINERIES OF JOY by Ray Bradbury (with stories of Irish interest and reviewed by Fred Woods in this Newsletter), THE BOOK OF FRANK HERBERT, FAREWELL FANTASTIC VENUS - an Aldiss/Harrison co-production -, BUY JUPITER from Isaac Asimov, CATCHWORLD by Chris Boyce, THE MIND PARASITES by Colin Wilson (yes, that Colin Wilson!), I, ROBOT also from Isaac Asimov and finally more re-prints of 'Doc' Smith re-prints!!

New from Pan is STARBURST and DARK SIDE OF THE EARTH by Alfred Bester.

New from Penguin is Olaf Stapledon's STARMAKER.

And, finally, from Fontana we have WE CAN BUILD YOU by Philip K. Dick, TO LIVE AGAIN by Robert Silverberg and SQUARES OF THE CITY by John Brunner.

That's it!!

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Would all members who would like to form groups to look into various aspects of SF please contact the Committee who will put them in touch with each other. Several members have expressed interest in groups devoted to SF in music, SF in films, SF in art etc. If these groups get going, it is hoped that they will occasionally report to the members on their activities.

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THE NEW COMMITTEE

At the Committee meeting on Sunday 12th June, the offices were allocated as follows:- Robert Lane (Chairman), Paddy O'Connell (Secretary/Treasurer), Bobby MacLaughlin (PRO and Functions Organizer), P.J. Goode (Librarian), Michael Gardner (Publications and Design) and John McCarthy (Administrative Assistant).

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Items of interest in the next Newsletter will be Michael Gardner's report on the QUASAR; Dr. Werner von Braun - an Obituary; recent SF on television; the Rings of Uranus and, hopefully, lots more.

All enquiries regarding the ISFA should be addressed o/o the Secretary, Paddy O'Connell, 11 Templemore Avenue, Rathgar, Dublin 6. (SAE please).

If an X appears in this space ( ) your membership terminates with this issue.