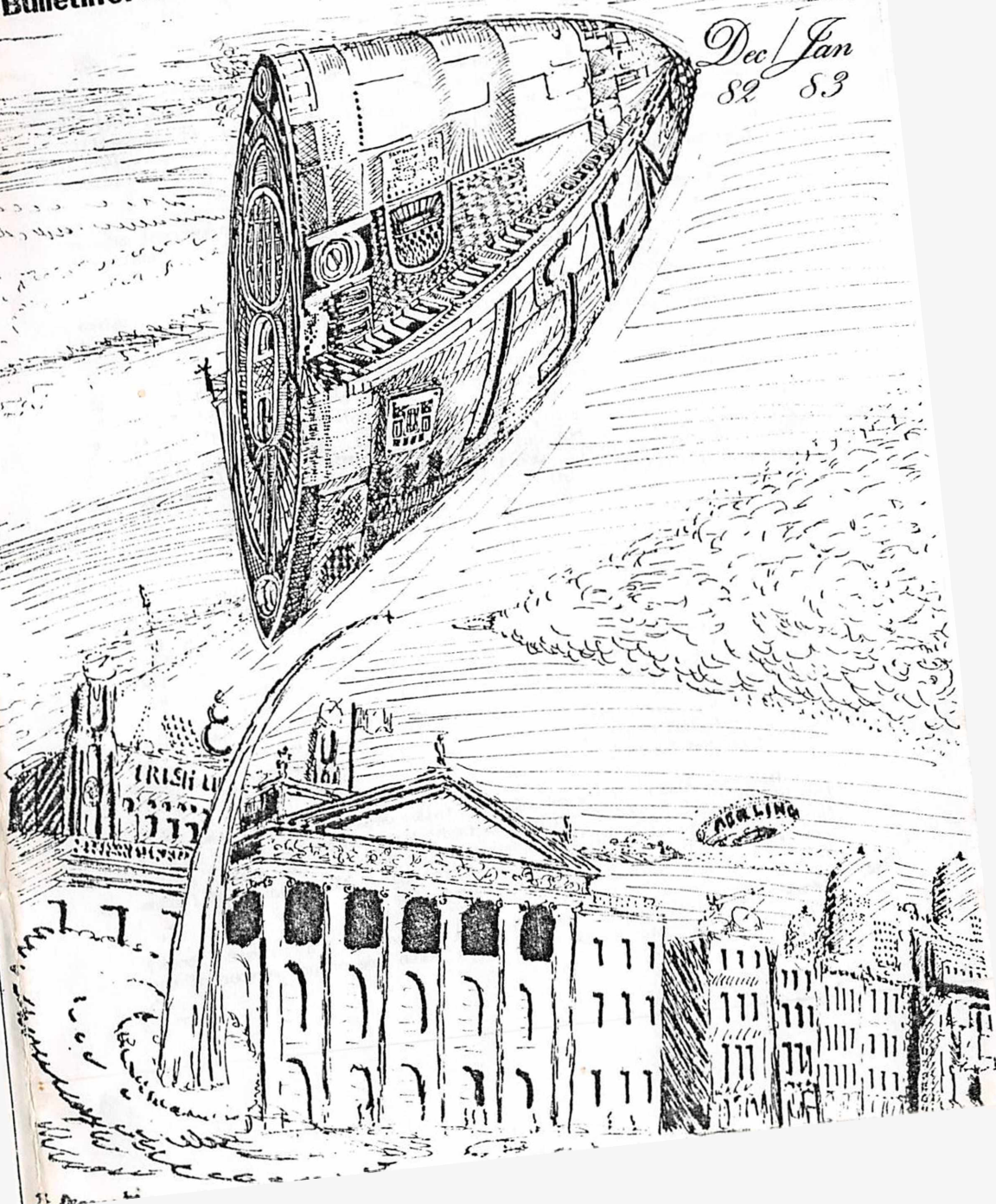


# newsletter isfa

The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association

Dec / Jan  
82 83



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We live in a time of changes, as Robert Silverberg once said. HE must have been referring to Brendan Ryder's engagement (scheduled for Jan 23, 1983) and subsequent relinquishing of the post of newsletter editor to yours truly, Hugh Deasy, of 24 Vernon Grove, Rathgar, Dublin 6. Don't panic, however! Brendan is still the super efficient secretary of this outfit.

As new editor, I welcome all reviews, articles (on current SF on TV, for example), news, artwork, suggestions or whatever. Just send them to the above address.

September's meeting was a quiz, chaired and prepared by Stephen Walsh and won by Brendan Ryder, with Michael Fitzgerald second. And a great time was had by all.

October's meeting was a booksale at which I seemed to do most of the buying (you missed some great bargains, oh non-attending members). Enough cash was raised to pay for the rent of the joint, with a little left over for our sorely depleted coffers. Speaking of which: If we don't get more cash, but quick, the next Stargate, all typed up and ready for the printers, won't be published till at least January. So get your friends to join!

An extraordinary meeting of the ISFA was held on the 14th of November when association patron Harry Harrison gave an extremely witty and typically uninhibited discourse on everything from Scandinavian alcoholism to frogs in the far west. During the talk, liberally interspersed with funny stories from his peripathetic past, he described how his latest projects are going. These include his soon to be published "Stainless Steel Rat for President", three copies of which were dispensed at the meeting by lottery, a forthcoming blockbusting epic to be called "West of Eden", and the possibility of the original "Stainless Steel Rat" being made into a film. A boardgame based on the Deathworld books is underway, and Harry said he might get one for the ISFA, which we may use on some month's second Sunday.

However, the main thrust of the talk dealt with fandom, both foreign(!) and Irish(?). A bewilderment was expressed at the lack of fanact (fan activity) in this country. The genesis of Irish fandom was nostalgically recalled, and descriptions of the rewards of fandom in Brazil, the U.S. and Europe vividly portrayed.

\*\* Anyone interested in putting together a comic book? (artwork, stories etc.) Get in touch with me or any member of the committee.

\*\* Anyone interested in some fanact at Albacon2, held in Glasgow?  
Admission Fee: £8.00 or £10.00 after December (includes films, lectures, fancy dress etc.)

Dates: April 1st-4th

Venu: Central Hotel, Glasgow.

Quest writers: James White (one of our patrons, as if you didn't know) and Tanith Lee.

Cheapest single room: 12.50

Double room: 10.00

The address to write to is:

Albacon2, c/o Doug McCallum,  
 B/L 8 Highburgh Road,  
 Glasgow G12 9YD

#### Space News

The new 1 meter telescope at La Palma, in which Ireland has a 10% share, is due for commissioning in 1983. Astronomers may never have to perform the tedious chore of actually going to the Canaries to operate the facility, as it is intended to install a remote control capacity.

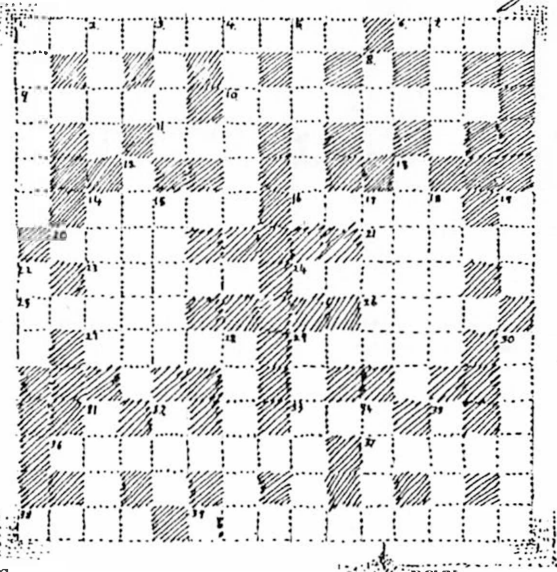
IRAS, a cryogenic satellite scheduled for launch late this year, will perform the first infrared survey of the celestial sphere.

The Canadian Research Council and American universities have failed to repeat their earlier success in punching a large hole in an aurora with a water bomb.

The universe may be rotating, according to observations on the distribution and shapes of galaxies made at Jodrell bank and reported in a recent issue of Nature. The consequences for Mach's principle and hence general relativity and cosmology could be profound. Watch this space (on second thoughts don't: you might get dizzy).

Recent issues of the L5 News have described the idea of a 'skyrail', a rotating annulus in a low orbit which would keep trollies stationary above points on the equator without having to put them into geosynchronous orbit.





CLUES ACROSS

DOWN

1. Second book of C.S. Lewis's interplanetary trilogy. (10)
6. Sorting out a pest would be one in the right direction. (4)
9. The second planet plus x by Theodore Sturgeon. (5)
10. See 3 down.
11. Trinitrotoluene. (3)
14. She was the creation of this Haggard Horseman. (5)
16. Arthur? In the east at any rate, a King. (5)
20. Miss West did with 500. (4)
21. DNA is one of the nucleic ones. (5)
23. Swahili Sir (5)
24. Sounds emitted by Canis Major? (5)
25. Path of planets (5)
26. Nothing in the bar! How swinish! (4)
27. The ethereal juice in the veins of the gods. (5)
29. Deep murmur. (5)
33. "A sunny pleasure dome with caves of-" (3)
36. & 22. down: Invisible square container belonging to Sue-Lynn. (created by Zenna Henderson) (8,3)
37. Antigone, Wyndham's troublesome lichen, prevented this. (5)
38. According to Fred Hoyle, October the First was too. (4)
39. Seen from the moon at night. Title to Arthur Clarke's novel of a fantastic and exciting contest of arms. (10)
1. Keith Robert's historic dance about Corfe Castle. (6)
2. "One - to bring them all and in the darkness bind them." (Tolkien) (4)
3. & 10. across: In John Boyd's story it was Jesus who went from earth on this. (4,8)
4. A son of the king of Pylow, the only one of twelve left alive by Hercules. (6)
5. Ralph Hodgson says it has moons. (6)
7. Commonly a voyage. (4)
8. Cleopatra's Murderer. (3)
12. The village of the damned..... (7)
13. ... And the birds found there.? (7)
14. Detailing a cony to find a doctor of the law. (5)
15. It was brought to many by the Eleventh Plague. (5)
17. Greta. She wanted to be alone. (5)
18. Agave fibre is made with salt. (5)
19. Extra Sensory Perception in short! (3)
22. See 36 across.
28. Redbreast's mate? (6)
29. "Ye quenchless stars! So eloquently -" (Robert Montgomery) (6)
30. Surname of the author of "Turning on" and "Off Centre", editor of 25 across. (6)
31. A parsec is one for the measurement of the distances of stars. (4)
32. Consumed in 38. (3)
34. This nobleman is in a real muddle. (4)
35. ... as is this in 30 down having lost a little height. (4)



# REVIEWS

BOUND IN TIME by D.F. Jones (Granada, 1982; GB£1.75)

Apart from an appallingly trite opening few chapters, Bound in Time is a quite enjoyable book. Jones has succeeded in portraying the descendants of some of our current cultures in a skillful and entertaining, not to say convincing, manner.

The story opens with the induction of a young medical doctor as the world's first human time traveller, the induction being partially occasioned by his terminal heart disease. He is fired off into the future, where he finds that, unsurprisingly, things have changed, and not always to the better by modern standards. The Earth itself has been devastated by a series of biological trauma (plague, mutation of predators, etc.) and the survivors are a rather hand-to-mouth lot. There is a stable, uncompetitive post-Soviet culture at 15, and an extreme fascistic state under the surface of the moon.

Our doctor has several interesting adventures, meets a friend from 1982 who travelled later but not so far, and meets somewhat of a cheap ending. In between, though, the portrayal of changes in attitudes toward sex, cannibalism, murder, slavery, and so on make the book worth reading. It is almost real enough to make us glad that we are living in the 20th century, which one must admit is no mean feat of writing accomplishment.

All in all, I would recommend this book, but with a warning --- I'm not entirely sure it will appeal to a casual reader.

Reviewed by John McCarthy.

## FANZINE REVIEW:

"Wallbanger 5" (October 1981). Available from Eve Harvey, for the usual or 14p in stamps at 43 Harrow Road, Carlshilton, Surrey, SM5 3QH, England.

This fanzine was one I picked up at the Eastercon in April. Every day of the 'con' I went into the fan room, looked for anything free, grabbed it, and looked for anything else worth spending actual money on. This was one of the better looking fanzines and although 'you can't judge a book by its cover', this one didn't let me down.

The issue is directed by Eve Harvey, with some help from her husband John. It is a humorous 'zine in parts but does comment on some serious matters in SF today. Eve Harvey, in her article 'Alive! and recuperating?' mentions that she is glad to see that fanzine fandom is becoming active again, after a dull period just following Seacon(1979) 'when, perhaps, faneds(sic.) overstretched themselves'. Unfortunately, here in Ireland, the fanzine scene never really took



off the ground (with a couple of notable exceptions in the North) and so we are dependant on Britain for 'zines. She says that, however, the resurgence is being led by the 'old guard' and she looks forward to seeing some of the new fans producing their own 'zines.

Roy Macinski does the second piece, telling of how he got involved with the fandom side of SF, by tuning into Capitol Radio, hearing Chris Priest giving an interview and mentioning Season. From there on it just progressed, until he is now very involved in the fan scene (fan zine?-ed.). He ends the piece by saying:

'I cannot help but wonder about the hundreds, possibly thousands, of people that are wandering the streets of this land who would be similarly, or possibly even more enriched by fandom than I have been. I cannot help but feel a little sad that we will never have the opportunity of meeting these people.'

The third piece, called 'Urban Renewal', is by Martyn Taylor. It's a humorous piece, telling of the author's encounter with a 'Skin....chewing casually on a coke can'!

The Letters of Comment make up a sizable section of the 'zine, mostly talking about articles in the previous issue of the 'zine, but one, which is given some room, is called 'The Hex in the Equation' and describes a photograph of three fans in some detail, theorizing on the possible reasons for one of the fans having his mouth open at that particular moment in time!

An interesting little 'zine then with some fascinating articles and showing the lighthearted side of SF fandom.(what other side is there?-ed.)

Reviewed by Brendan Ryder.

FILM REVIEW: Conan the Barbarian (Dino De Laurantiis claimed responsibility).

It is not often that I am right. When I saw Dino's name connected with Conan, I was sure it would be awful. What a surprise! Conan is awful. Incredibly bad.

The blame cannot really be attached to the actors, headed by Austrian Bodybuilder Arnold Schr...Schweinmenger...Schwaziland..Schezekshneanderthal... Arnold something in the title role. It is probably more the pathetic script, which goes something like this: When he was a child, Conan the masochist sees his parents murdered and he becomes the driving force behind the magic roundabout. For fifteen years his body grows but his brain does not. Conan the moron is then sold into slavery for no apparent reason and becomes an all-in wrestler. He is taken to the east to be taught how to read and pose but they give this up as a bad job.

Conan the neanderthal is set free and becomes a thief, when he can get out of bed, and he goes to bed with the strangest of people, but I'm giving the plot away! He then goes in search of the

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murderers of his parents, and for once tries to use his cunning. Bah! What a joke. They crucify him. It was at this point that I was hoping he would die and the film would be over. No such luck, he is rescued by his whore. Not much remains but the obligatory orgy, blood bath and emotionless death. And a ridiculous couple of scenes with demons and the whore-spirit at the end. The credits were the best bit in the whole film.

So, my final judgement: worth missing. A must not see.

Review by David Brown.

"The Traveller's Guide to the Solar System" - Ron Miller & William K. Hartman (London; Papermac, 192 pages, 5.95 Sterling)

This lavish book comes to us at a time when information from the space probes Pioneer and Voyagers 1&2 is at a low. The two Voyagers are on their way to their next destinations, and with no major interplanetary missions planned for years this book is a good reminder of the beauty and wonders of space.

It is laid out in order of the size of the worlds covered - largest to smallest, which is unusual. Each world gets a couple of pages, with a short text and a piece of artwork. Naturally, some of the larger worlds (Jupiter and the other main planets of the solar system) get more coverage, and it is interesting to see what the artists (both of the authors) think will be the views from the various points in the system. Not all the pages are paintings, however, as the book does have a lot of stills (mostly well known ones) from the Vikings (on Mars), some of the early moon probes and the aforementioned Voyager and Pioneer spacecraft.

I'm not an artist so I'm probably not qualified to talk about the paintings, but I was very impressed with them, and if you're looking for ideas for stories then there's a lot in the paintings. The only fault I can find is that most of the paintings show the view from a surface looking up and with a satellite or primary hanging in the sky above. Thus there is a sameness about the pieces. Still, what has been painted has been done excellently.

The last few pages of the book are given over to a short glossary of the terms used (any SF fan would probably know most of them), an index and a summary of the vital statistics of the various worlds. It's certainly an interesting book, and if you're an art fan or interested in space it is a worthwhile buy. For SF fans it's also worth a look. It will be in the ISFA library should you wish to see it before buying it.

Review by Brendan Ryder.

THE CLOUD OF DESOLATION by Sam Baneham (Wolfhound Press, 1982, 302 page, £3.75)

This is the first novel by a Dublin born author, who now lives in Oldcastle, Co. Meath. It portrays a post-nuclear apocalyptic society, where the survivors, called 'Utopians', live underground in a

controlled existence, and observe the survivors on the surface, called 'Overlanders', on their TV screens.

There are several influences apparent in this work, such as H.G. Wells, E. Zamyatin, H. Ellison, Walter Miller, Brian Aldiss, all of whom have dealt with the theme of survival after a holocaust.

Although derivative in parts, such as the use of three letter prefixes for names followed by numbers, the author's style is both realistic and convincing in describing the underground world, and the reaction to those on the surface.

It is well worth reading by ISFA members as a first novel of high quality by an Irish author, whom we hope may soon be invited to address us at a future meeting.

HORROR AND SF FILMS, VOL. 2 by Donald Wilson (Scarecrow press, 1982, 474 page hardbk. (available T.C.D. Library))

This book is a sequel to the author's previous volume, published in 1972, which lists all the films in these genres released from 1971-81, as well as insertions of earlier titles omitted from the 1899-1971 period.

Taken together, these works are probably the best English language guides to SF films, which are listed in alphabetical order, with both English and original foreign titles, and various alternative screen titles.

The author includes selected credits, with times and critical comments, and sub-lists of Dracula, Frankenstein, Big Foot and Bermuda Triangle films. There is also an appendix of 'borderline case' films, and a useful list of reference sources, both from books and periodicals.

This should be consulted by any ISFA members who are horror and/or SF film enthusiasts!

THE GAS (MANCHESTER) by Charles Platt (Savoy Books, 1980. 166 pages, £1.50 (U.K.))

This novel was originally published by the Olympia Press, Paris in 1970, for the U.S. 'Essex House' series of erotic SF. The author has a distinguished career as one of the collaborators with Michael Moorcock on 'New Worlds SF', from 1965-70, when he emigrated to the U.S.A., and has become one of the leading writers of the 'New Wave' school, together with other authors, such as Sam Delany, Harlan Ellison, T. Disch, J.G. Ballard, John Brunner et al.

This particular novel became a collector's item and caused the publishers to be raided by the Manchester police, for selling obscene, pornographic books under the U.K. 1959 Obscene Publications Act! (the whole background is explained in a letter by M. Moorcock to 'Interzone' vol.1 No. 3, 1982, a new SF quarterly, which should be in the ISFA



library).

The work disturbed the British censors because of its highly realistic portrayal of what would happen in Britain, if an experimental nerve gas from a weapons research centre was released, and affected the sex hormones, and brain control centres in the population's emotional responses.

This results in a breakdown of British civilization, with every sort of sexual act being committed, in a state of anarchy. It is an extremely explicit, powerful work, with a witty, satirical expose of the hypocracies underlying British morality.

Should it ever appear in Ireland, the Censorship Board would ban it immediately, unless a few copies slipped through to Eason's or the Alchemist's Head bookshops!

However, I would strongly recommend it to the mature members of the ISFA, who are not afraid of reading an excellent adult-rated SF novel.

Reviews by David Lass, M.A., Dip. Lib.

#### FILM REVIEW: "Blade Runner"

Although in recent years the tendency has been for SF films to be more notable for their special effects than for plot or characterization, some films try to go a bit further. "Blade Runner" is one film which makes the attempt to transcend this category. Indeed the subject matter being Philip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep", it would seem that Ridley Scott had an opportunity of fleshing out excellent effects such as those in his earlier "Alien" with themes and conflicts of a higher calibre than the skeletal plot of that film allowed.

However, while the illusion of a future subtly removed from our present is conveyed with all the consummate skill which the medium has acquired in the field of special effects, its failure to adhere more strictly to the original book is a failing which it does not quite manage to overcome. In particular, the attempt at aping a Philip Marlowe style voice over detective story does not come off, and results in diverting attention away from the main conflict of the android 'replicants'. That said, however, it must be admitted that some of the strange flavour of Dick's vision of the future is conveyed by the tremendous atmosphere and attention to visual detail. The climax is well handled, and even though at that stage there is little empathy left between the protagonists and the audience, it is still nerve-tingling stuff.

So, why not go and see it? -You could do a lot worse.

Review by Hugh Deasy

# LETTERS

Dear Mr. Ryder & Co.,

For the past year I have objectively watched the comings and goings of the association and the most important factor I noticed is the sense of apathy that hangs like a shadow over the committee, and thus the members (and vice versa - ed.). To paraphrase a statement used by our honoured secretary, "an apathetic committee means an apathetic association", so the progress of the organisation lies principally with its elected representatives. The ISFA may have come a long way since its meager beginnings in 1976, but it will not progress any further if something isn't done to dispel the indifference.

I believe the basic ethics of the society should be closely examined. According to yourself

"The Irish Science Fiction Association is a non-profit group seeking to promote the standing of science fiction in the country."

What the hell do you hope to achieve by being a 'non-profit' group? No organisation is a feasible proposition if it can't afford to maintain itself and secure its future. The term is called 'security' and even charitable organisations are quite mercenary in obtaining it. I hope the association hasn't already reached the stage where its funds have to be boosted out of somebody's pocket in order to continue supplying its quite informative newsletter.

.....if trying to break even is all one is attempting, that is all one will do, if lucky. If handled properly, 'Stargate' could be a source of income.....

...I have worked on a community magazine so I know what one is capable of doing...

Yours shocked,  
David McLoughlin.

Editor's reply: Well, really it all comes back to a word used by Harry Harrison on November the 14th.. "Gafiation", i.e. the continual process of committee members (and other soul-of-the-organisation members) departing and leaving a power vacuum behind. For instance I have just leapt into the vacuum left by Brendan's engagement, because I abhor vacua, and I may take a time to find my powers. So help me, ye members out there.

By the way, the association would dearly love to make a profit, but to do so we need more members and more effort. For instance, we could use someone like you, David, who's had experience on a magazine before.

Hello Brendan,

I see from the newsletter that the society might do a reading of the play. I enclose a stage version which is a bit less melodramatic than the radio one.



