

newsletter

The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1977

NUMBER 13

Here we are. We're a couple of weeks later than promised owing to the fact that we didn't take our printer's holidays into account. However, to try and compensate for this, we've added a few more pages. O.K.?

The first two meetings of this year went well at the Falcon Inn. In June, Bobby MacLaughlin's book auction went very well and we had a lot of response from members who brought along books to sell and also to buy. Moira Harrison came along with some books donated by her Dad since Harry was suffering from an attack of Hay Fever. Hope its passed, Harry. One visitor to the meeting was the writer Alun Llewellyn who has since joined the association. The auction went so well that Bobby hopes to organise one again, later on in the year.

In July, Anne McCaffrey joined us for the evening and chatted merrily along about writing SF. We were also entertained by a song from the lady who, at one time, worked on opera in the States. We hope to have a report on this meeting in the next issue of Stargate. Thanks Anne. See you again soon, we hope.

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+++ Our meeting on Sunday August 28th., will give us a chance to meet +++
+++ Mr. Alun Llewellyn who will deliver a talk entitled 'Time, Ladies +++
+++ and Gentlemen, Please'. Mr. Llewellyn is the author of 'The +++
+++ Strange Invaders' recently republished by NEL at 88p. This was the +++
+++ book which Brian Aldiss claims inspired him to write SF. In fact, +++
+++ 'The Strange Invaders' is part of the Aldiss/Harrison SF Master +++
+++ Series. Mr. Llewellyn is a most knowledgeable and interesting +++
+++ speaker and it should turn out to be a very stimulating evening. +++
+++ Some of you may have read his recent letters to the Irish Times +++
+++ under the heading of Astro-Archaeology. In our library we have a +++
+++ copy of 'The Aryan Path' for Oct/Nov '69 (kindly donated by Mr. +++
+++ Llewellyn) which contained his essays on 'Man and Mind: Space and +++
+++ Time.' +++
+++
+++ Sunday September 25th., should also prove most interesting when +++
+++ Ian McAulay will talk to us about 'Patterns in Science Fiction'. +++
+++ This will be about early illustrations for SF and Ian will be +++
+++ illustrating the talk with slides. +++
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+++ Both meetings will, of course, be in the Falcon Inn and will start +++
+++ at 7.30 pm. Please try and get along on time. +++
+++
+++ Do remember to join in and ask questions. Both of our speakers +++
+++ would welcome them. +++
+++

HARLAN ELLISON.....

Moira Harrison recently met Harlan Ellison on our behalf and a letter from Mr. Ellison to the members of the ISFA appears on page 15 of this bulletin.

THE POWER OF THE SERPENT by Peter Valentine Timlett. London: Corgi Books, 1976. (In the ISFA Library).

This novel is the second in a planned trilogy, of which the first was THE SEEDBEARERS (also in the ISFA Library). The latter describes the occult legend of Atlantis and how it was overthrown by the corrupt priesthood, with only a few survivors left to carry on its traditions.

The second novel, which refers directly to this Atlantis background on p.116 and p.135, recounts the history of the survivors who created the new civilization in Egypt based on the pyramids and worshipped the Sun god. This in turn helped to cause the rise of the Druidic religion in ancient Britain between circa 2000 - 1000 B.C., which maintained close links with Egypt.

In this novel, the Druids are fighting the degenerate Wessex priesthood, whose leader plans to incarnate a Dark Spirit in his daughter and ensure everlasting dominance over the kingdom of Britain. His attempts are thwarted by the Druids, with the assistance of members of the Egyptian priesthood, in a clash using various forms of magic, astral and occult powers, as well as action on the physical plane.

It is extremely well written, invoking the Atlantis legend, doctrines of reincarnation and linking the lines of power from Glastonbury and Stonehenge to an early mystical definition of magnetism, centred on the Great Pyramid of Egypt, as illustrated on pp66-71 by appropriate diagrams.

Finally, I would say that this is one of the best novels in the fantasy-supernatural genre to have been written in recent years and should be read by every interested ISFA member.

TETRASOMY TWO by Oscar Rossiter. London: Corgi Books, 1976. (ISFA Library)

This is the first novel by the author, who uses a pseudonym, to conceal his real-life identity as an American practising doctor, thus explaining the authentic background atmosphere of the state mental hospital, where most of the action takes place.

The title means an abnormality in the regular 46 chromosome cell count, in this case that of the patient who is the subject of the novel, E. Peckham, who has two extra chromosomes. The plot revolves around mysterious telepathic messages from this mental patient who has been in the same state for 25 years when the novel opens.

Although the psychiatric details are quite well written, the final explanation that the patient has a supernormal intelligence and has links with similar aliens on other worlds, who became pure mind-beings by causing their planets to go 'nova', is rather abrupt and unconvincing. With a minimal genuine SF content, the novel is somewhat disappointing and could well be ignored by most ISFA members.

REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION: a collection of critical essays, edited by Mark Rose. London: Prentice-Hall, 1976. (Spectrum)

This book includes a critical survey of the following three aspects of SF; the backgrounds, theories of writing and the literary approaches to SF and related genres.

The authors comprise some of the most distinguished SF writers and critics

from Britain and the USA, such as Kingsley Amis, Robert Conquest, Robert Scholes, Susan Sonntag, D. Kettner, with a contribution on the time-travel story by Stanislaw Lem, the well-known Polish SF writer.'

There is a useful critical introduction to the current trends in SF by the editor, as well as various definitions of SF as an autonomous literary genre in its own right.

Each of the essays has full annotations referring to its source of original publication, whether a book or journal, so that the interested reader may follow up the background in more detail.

Other useful features are a chronology of parallel tables of important dates in SF writing and scientific discoveries, followed by a selective bibliography of recent writings on SF.

Altogether, this is a most valuable collection of informative essays which, every serious SF enthusiast in the ISFA should read - preferably after it has been added to our own library book collection, either by donation or purchase.

As promised in the last Newsletter, here are the full details of the.....

GOLLANCZ AND PAN/PICADOR £3000 FANTASY COMPETITION.

There is a growing demand for novels and stories that escape the intractable muddle of daily life and take off into the dark or utopian yonder of fantasy. Defying exact definition, the genre is best represented by some of the work of writers like Swift, Poe and Lovecraft, and in our time, Peake, Ballard, Marquez, Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Le Guin.

To stimulate writers, both new and established, to venture beyond the here and now, and the known, Victor Gollancz Ltd and Pan Books Ltd are offering £3000 for the best novel or volume of stories submitted. The prize money will take the form of an outright payment of £1000 to the winner and, in addition, two sums of £1000 each to be paid as advances against royalties on contracts for publication of the winning entry by Victor Gollancz Ltd (in hardcover) and Pan Books Ltd (in softcover). The conditions are as follows:

1. The competition will be run in collaboration with the GUARDIAN and is open to any writer provided that he or she is free of any contractual commitment that would preclude publication either by Victor Gollancz Ltd or by Pan Books Ltd. The stories must not have been previously published.
2. Pseudonyms are acceptable but real names must be given when submitting entries and will be treated in confidence.
3. Entries should be addressed to
FANTASY COMPETITION
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD., 14 HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON WC2E 8QJ
and should arrive not later than 31st March 1978. Scripts should be typed in double spacing and postage enclosed for their return. They must not be less than 50,000 words or more than 100,000 words in length.
4. The competition will be judged by W.L. Webb (Literary Editor of the GUARDIAN), Liz Calder (Editorial Director of Victor Gollancz Ltd), Sonny Nehta (Editorial Director of Pan Books Ltd) and Caroline Lassalle (Editor: Picador). The judges' decision shall be final and no correspondence will be entered into with regard to it.
5. The name of the prize-winner will be announced in the GUARDIAN of 28th September, 1978.

MORE BOOKS.....

Recent additions to the ISFA Library are as follows:-

ASIMOV (Isaac)	Fantastic Voyage; Early Asimov Vol 3
ANDERSON (Poul)	Time and Stars; Trader to the Stars; Agent of the Terran Empire
AVALLONE (M.)	Beneath the Planet of the Apes
ALDISS (Brian)	The Interpreter
ALDISS/HARRISON	Hell's Cartographers
BRADURRY (Ray)	Dandelion Wine; Something Wicked this Way Comes; Golden Apples of the Sun
BEAUMONT (Charles)	The Fiend in You
COHEN (Larry)	The Autumn Accelerator
CONKLIN (Groff)	Five Odd
CARNELL (John)	No Place Like Earth
DICK (Philip K.)	Flow My Tears The Policeman Said
DAVIS (Brian)	Best of Murray Leinster
DUNN (Saul)	Steeleye - Waterspace
DERLETH (August)	When Evil Wakes; Dark Mind, Dark Heart
GEORGE (Peter)	Dr. Strangelove
HERBERT (Frank)	Tomorrow's Alternatives
PISERCHIA (Doris)	Star Rider
SILVERBERG (Robert)	Needle in the Timestack
STURGEON (Theodore)	Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea
SMITH (E.E. 'Doc')	Subspace Explorers
THOMSON (C.C.)	Not at Night
TUEB (E.C.)	Lallia
VAN VOGT (A.E.)	The War against the Rull
WOLLEHEIM (Donald)	Terror in the Modern Vein
WILHELM (Kate)	Nebula Award Stories 9

Magazines - Fantasy and SF October '74; Worlds of If April '72; a GALAXY collection called SIX FINGERS OF TIME; Analog - Science Fact and Fiction, April 1977 and the first issue - Spring 1977 - of the new magazine edited by Isaac Asimov, entitled not surprisingly, Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine. This is of a high quality, reflecting Asimov's own tastes in 'hard' SF. David Lass suggests that the latter two magazines should be borrowed together since, the April 'Analog' contains a detailed review of the first issue of I.A.S.F.M. and it may be interesting for members to compare this with their own judgement.

The above books and magazines were donated by Martin O'Connor, Freda Smith, Tony Cafolla and David Lass.

NEW FACES.....

If you see a strange face at any of our monthly meetings do you think you could bottle up your shyness and say 'hello'? Remember, you know you're among friends. However, to the visitor, we probably appear as quite a formidable crew. So, for strangers, what do we do? Yes, that's it - we SMILE!!

THE WORLD'S SHORTEST SF STORY.....

The last man in the world was sitting by his fireside when a knock came at the door.

No prizes for guessing who remembers that from his youth. (He was, however, able to explain himself satisfactorily.)

HARRY HARRISON'S PRIZE.....

In the last Newsletter I forgot to mention that the short story idea for Harry's £10 prize competition should HAVE AN IRISH FLAVOUR (and that does not mean soaking the post card in bog water!) Sorry if I've inconvenienced anyone by my gross ineptitude. Don't forget, you have until the end of August to send in your ideas.

WRITERS' WORKSHOP & PEN-FRIENDS.....

Are any of you budding writers? Do you think that discussion groups might help you with your work? If so, Anita Woods would like to hear from you. Anita would like to organise a group of members interested in comparing notes and where possible, helping each other out with their writing problems.

Anita would also like to hear from anyone interested in writing to SF fans in other countries. If you would care to become involved in either activity you can contact Mrs. Anita Woods at 6 Homeville Terrace, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Telephone: 960685.

Letters.....

Peter McEvoy

Portlaoise

I have just finished reading STARGATE. My verdict, I thought it was very good. Congratulations to all concerned. It was a nice piece of work.....In the Journal is mentioned a Convention to be held in Glasgow in 1978.....I certainly would be interested in more information about it. So do please let me know. I think it is a great idea.

(Thanks for the congrats, Peter. More Faircon info in this issue. R.)

+ + +

Laoisheach Nic Mhathúna

Dublin 13

I would be very interested in contributing to STARGATE in any way I can. On the (re-application) form I mentioned the possibility of crosswords or quizzes. Now, to be frank, I've never done anything like that before, but it's an idea someone might like to take up, or to let me take up....Finally, are there any members interested in 'Star Trek' at all? I am a keen fan of it. In one of the previous Newsletters it was mentioned as almost the 'abhorred outcast' of SF. Perhaps, I'm taking it up wrongly. However, to me SF and Star Trek are highly complimentary and I feel no schizophrenia about being highly interested in both. I'd love to know other people's opinions on that.

(If you or anyone else would like to come up with Newsletter or Journal material in the forms that have been mentioned in the letter, please do so. Michael Gardner and I are crying out for copy so, Laoisheach, if you would like to help, please go right ahead.

Let's see if your words about Star Trek get any response. If any comes in I'll print it in following Newsletters. R.)

FAIRCON '78.....

In response to enquiries, here are further details of the proposed Convention to be held in Glasgow over a weekend in July 1978.

The Hotel Ingram has been chosen for the Con venue since they have come up with very competitive rates. Convention membership will be £3.00 (but, this may have to increase slightly before next July) and the cost of a single room with breakfast @ £9.00 + VAT and a twin room with breakfast @ £11.60 + VAT. These are 1977 prices and can be expected to go up in 1978. Would any interested parties please contact the committee as soon as possible as we would like to get together an Irish contingent.

A recent letter from James White told me that the Friends of Kilgore Trout (the crew who are organising the Con) have asked him to be the Guest of Honour. James has accepted and is wondering how many other ISFA members will make the effort to get to Glasgow.

I have made some enquiries about both air fares and boat and rail fares which might, at first sight, seem very expensive. Both come within the range of £50 - £60 return. In fact, the difference between the two is very little when one takes into account the time saved by flying, the relative discomfort of travelling boat and train at night and also that one would tend to spend more on the latter mode of transport in the way of refreshments etc.

Now is the time to start thinking about the Convention and if you would like to go, you have a year to save up the fare and other expenses.

Let's show them that the ISFA means business!!

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

These are lean times for new publications as book publishers tan money-belts on Mediterranean beaches - but, here goes -

Panther kick off with MAN ALONE by Colin Kapp and THREE EYES by Stuart Gordon. Mayflower are presenting THE END OF ALL SONGS - the 3rd and final volume of the trilogy 'Dancers at the End of Time' by Michael Moorcock. Collins have four for the shelves.....DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH a novel by Robert Silverberg, not previously published here. ACROSS A BILLION YEARS is a juvenile novel again. ALIEN EMBASSY is a new novel by Ian Watson and WHO GOES HERE is new from Bob Shaw. Wellington bring this section to a close with ELLISON WONDERLAND by Harlan Ellison. This is a collection of Ellison's tales never before published over here and they are a typical display of this writer's special genius. The book contains some of his most memorable work and marks an important stage in his evolution as a writer from fairly straight forward SF to deeper and more disturbing aspects of human nature.

Ellison (now one of our patrons) has published over 30 books, scripted half a dozen motion pictures, two dozen TV scripts and is THE MOST HONOURED WRITER IN SF TODAY, with 6 Hugos and 2 Nebulas to his name.

WHAT SECRETS LURK IN THE INNER DEPTHS OF EXOTIC RATHGAR?.....

That was the title of an article about the ISFA by Irish Press reporter Maire Crowe. The article, which took up a third of a page and sported an uncredited illustration, appeared on Friday July 15th after a three hour interview on Wednesday 6th and was basically very disappointing. Bobby MacLaughlin, Paddy O'Connell and I gave our visitor a lot of (what we felt was) worthwhile information about the ISFA, our patrons, our aims etc., and SF in general. What eventually appeared in the paper was a great disappointment to all of us. The article was so disjointed that we must give Ms Crowe the benefit of the doubt that she wrote a lot more than was printed and that an editor was responsible for trimming the work to suit

the space available. What was printed was the incidental chit-chat that went along with the more formalised part of the interview. None of the material which we felt was to the point was used and we hope that none of our members who might have seen the article, are under the impression that we are not trying to do a proper job at representing the Association. However, we did get a couple of enquiries out of the article so - like they say in the business - no publicity is bad publicity.

AN ISFA CHRISTMAS??.....

I know its early days yet but, do you think you the members could be trying to come up with an idea or ideas for our Christmas entertainment. What would you like to do for a special Christmas meeting (please keep ideas clean. Remember, this is a family association.)? Last year we held an evening at Annabel's Disco which wasn't exactly a fantastic success. This was mainly due to the fact that not enough time and thought was put into the preparation of the event. (Let me also state that this was through no fault of David Norman who got the thing together.) However, we need a special sub-committee to sit down and prepare the evening well in advance. So, all of you ISFAers who are only just dying to lend a hand, let's be hearing from you.

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

Important news for all Asimov fans.....

Starting on Saturday August 13th at 10.00 pm on BBC Radio 4, is the first episode of an eight part adaptation of Isaac Asimov's FOUNDATION TRILOGY. Each episode is one hour long and they begin the Foundation with programme one entitled 'Psychohistory and Encyclopedia.' First broadcast in 1973, this series is well worth listening to if you don't have other ideas for your Saturday night. Patrick Tull has adapted Asimov for the radio and the sound effects are produced by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop.

RADIO & TV.....

Do we have any budding radio listeners and TV viewers among us, bar myself? Although I like to try and keep up with all the programmes I find that this is not possible all the time. I also feel that we ought to write some form of critical appraisal on all SF and SF associated events broadcast on the air. So, please help. Come on - write a few words (you'll get your name in print - if you don't search after higher things)!!

BBC and RTE Radio sometimes produce SF plays and programmes with an SF flavour. Some of us must hear them, surely?

TV is the same. I missed ITV's 'Alternative Three' - the 1977 answer to Orson Welles classic hoax based on the 'War of the Worlds'. Will someone write something about 'Alternative Three' - it certainly caused enough controversy when it came out or, do we have to wait until it is repeated?

Can I call on some volunteer critics? Would someone like to write up 'The Sky at Night' every month? Come on - I know there must be someone out there who is just dying to help. - PLEASE.

HORROR MOVIE MAGAZINES.....

To help with his research, Robert Lane requires back issues of magazines such as Famous Monsters of Filmiland, Castle of Frankenstein etc., (not horror comics). If you think you might have some mags of interest and would like to sell them contact Robert via Paddy O'Connell.

STARGATE.....

There are still a few copies of STARGATE one and two available and if any new members would like to have these they can obtain copies from Paddy O'Connell at 35 pence each. Postage will be extra but, maybe, you could arrange to pick them up at a monthly meeting if you wished to save a few pence.

CORRECTION.....

An error in the last Journal has been brought to our notice and as of now the record shall be put straight. At the end of the review of 'The Man Who Fell to Earth' on page 34, the actual release running time should have read 140 minutes and not 104. Sorry. (Dyslexia Rules K.O.!)

THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY (BFS).....

An impression from David Lass.

This is the only group in the UK which covers the whole range of fantasy literature, from weird and supernatural tales, to swords and sorcery and science-fantasy, which is on the borderline with straight SF.

The BFS publishes a quarterly news bulletin and a literary journal of new fiction, the former including a wide range of news and reviews of recent trends in books, journals, films, art and music.

Having been a member myself for the last three years, I recommended to our Librarian P.J. Goode that we request reciprocal exchange of our publications, to which he agreed. The first issue of the BFS bulletin has been in our Library since April and I would strongly recommend any ISFA member whose tastes lie in the fantasy genre, to consult this bulletin. For those of you who would like further details, here is the name and address of the BFS Secretary: Brian Mooney, 447A Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 4ND, UK.

I would also be willing to show interested ISFA members past copies of the BFS Bulletin and Journal 'Dark Horizons' - from my own collection - at future ISFA meetings.

MICHAEL GARDNER WRITES ABOUT FACT THAT'S STRANGER THAN FICTION.....

Deep space is boring, and its the worst place in the Universe for motor-cycling. Don't let anyone tell you different. You have to be alert for any passing breath of excitement. So, when I saw this lady biker shoot through the time-warp clover leaf and head off down the infinity interstate on the weirdest looking motorcycle this side of the fourth dimension, I just had to follow on.

I mean, riding without a space helmet is enough to get the Interstellar Traffic Police onto you - riding with no clothes on, is something else entirely. What the hell kind of space-bike was that anyway, with a roof and windscreen wipers? And she was as gorgeous as a Venusian Scent Orchid..

I could hear the sirens wailing as I kicked my Honda Red Planet into life. By the time I'd hooked into the spaceway groove, I was already behind a phalanx of fuzz on their yowling Vendettas. The chase was on, and I felt the familiar surge of adrenalin as our gaggle of space-bikes weaved past a laggardly commuter on a breathless Gold Star, struggling to keep above the minimum speed-of-sound limit.

Poor girl, she didn't stand a chance with machinery like this chasing her. Our machines were the very best American/British/Japanese combinations available. The Japanese had retired to manufacturing motors alone, back in

the 21st Century sometime, and left the rest to the American Space Technologists and British styling and handling experts. She didn't have a chance....

Poor girl? Huh! She was waiting for us up ahead. Then, seconds before we were onto her, she gave a contemptuous flick of her head that sent her flesh trembling deliciously before zooming just out of reach.

She was playing games with us....hung around long enough for me to read the badge on the back of that unlikely space-bike before winding off into the next continuum. It read - QUASAR.

+ + +

At £3,000, the Quasar is a very serious motorcycle. With a roof, wind-screen and dart-like styling, you might be forgiven for thinking this to be a frivolous flight of futuristic fantasy, enacted by a science fiction fan and motorcycling enthusiast - and not necessarily in that order. Well that's how it started some years ago. It has since become a reality for inventor Malcolm Newell and engineer Ken Loanman in a garden shed style workshop off the back of Wilson and Sons Engineering Ltd., of Bristol. The last of the pre-production Quasars is completed, the part bins are beginning to fill up, and the first small production run of ten bikes is about to happen. The motive power is supplied by a slanted 850cc all-alloy four-cylinder engine, producing 41 bhp at a bare 5500 rpm. By the same token its endowed with abundant torque and four gears are plenty.

Wonder if it'll catch on here?

Thanks are due to Michael Scott of 'Superbike' Magazine and Malcolm Newell - creator of 'Quasar' - for the above information.

SF ON TELEVISION....

Television has recently been very kind to the SF-Fantasy fans among us by showing a number of films over the past few months. UTV have given us 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth', 'Journey to the Far Side of the Sun', 'The Curse of the Fly', 'Trog' and 'Crack in the World' while BBC 1 came up with 'Battle Beneath the Earth', the Hammer-dinosaur fantasy 'One Million Years BC', 'The Reluctant Astronaut' and the 1938 fifteen part serial 'Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars'. BBC 2 are presenting their usual Summer late-night horrors and have so far telecast the first three films in the Universal Frankenstein saga. The snow-ridden and faintly received Harlech certainly tempted me with 'It Came from Outer Space' and the Ray Harryhausen fantasy 'Jason and the Argonauts'. Let's hope that the latter two will get onto UTV or one of the clearer stations soon. RTD have still to be prompted to pamper to the whims of the SF film fan.

Twentieth Century Fox made 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' in 1959. Its a fairly simple fantasy based on the Jules Verne story and directed by Henry Levin. James Mason plays the explorer who is sure that there is a path beneath the Earth's crust. Pat Boone plays his assistant (and, of course, has to indulge in a song) and Arlene Dahl chucks up the female interest. However, most of the laurels must go to their travelling companion - Gortrud, the duck belonging to their Icelandic guide. Fantastic cave scenery abounds and the intrepid group even encounter dinosaurs on the edge of a subterranean sea. They also discover the remains of the lost city of Atlantis and the body of an earlier explorer before being catapulted up a volcano shaft to the surface again. Harmless entertainment.

'Journey to the Far Side of the Sun' presents us with a slightly more complicated tale. Scientists come up with the theory that there are other planets always on the far side of the sun to us, which keep the Solar System balanced. Everything on these planets is the same as their Earth-side counterparts except for one important factor - they are complete mirror images ie:- writing on Earth 2 is a reverse of our writing etc. Written and produced by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson (creators of the

Thunderbirds), in 1969, this story offered them the possibilities of mixing live action with their well-known and beautifully executed space vehicles and special effects. I found the plot a little trying after a while although the production team went to great lengths to keep all the details correct and give lengthy explanations for all the 'mirrored' problems when a spaceship from Earth sets out for the far side of the sun and since everything is mirrored another identical (but reversed) ship sets out for Earth at the same time. The pilots etc., are identical and when the Earth pilot crash lands on Earth 2, his 'colleagues' do not believe that he comes from the other side of the Solar System. (The space man is played by Roy Thinnes of 'Invaders' fame). The audience click to the plot long before the cast of scientists and this causes irritation and ultimate boredom. I suppose one could amuse oneself by trying to spot production errors in the mirror world. If there were any, I certainly didn't see them.

'The Curse of the Fly' was filmed in England in 1965 and is the least successful of the three films based on the short story by George Langelaan. Plot variations and the 'mistakes-in-the-matter-transmitter' theme were running thin on the ground by this stage and viewers were treated to yet another set of half man-half beast mix-ups. 'The Fly' of 1958 with Al Madison and Vincent Price is, without doubt, the best of the bunch and is well worth seeing if you get the chance although, Richard Hodgins in "Focus on the Science Fiction Film" tries to outline a number of incongruities in the plot. The exercise he indulges in is perhaps amusing to him but, fantasy in the cinema is basically an escapist art form designed in most cases to create a thrill for 'an hour or so in a darkened theatre' (Forrest Ackerman/Boris Karloff). Of course, one can pick holes in most film plots - and in fantasy more than other genre but, where would the enjoyment lie if we did that all the time?

Wrestler Joe Cornelius donned an excellent ape mask (designed by Charles Parker), and leather bathing trunks to become the Missing Link in the 1970 Freddie Francis film 'Trog'. The plot centres around the discovery of an ape-man living trapped deep in some English caves. Anthropologist Joan Crawford just happens to live nearby and she attempts to teach the creature how to behave in a social manner. Mind you, surely they didn't think that letting it play with dolls would help! However, nasty (as always) Michael Gough has it in for Trog and the army finally has to destroy him. Herman Cohen (a 'Z' flick producer like Roger Corman) had to have his moment of Hitchcock by appearing as the landlord of the local pub. This film is quite forgettable except for one sequence in which they take the ape man back into his past and treat us to a film rarity in the form of the dinosaur sequence from Irwin Allen's 'The Animal World'. This film seems to be locked up somewhere and the five minutes of O'Brien/Harryhausen animation special effects go completely uncredited. If you like Harryhausen, see it for the beautifully manipulated dinosaurs.

'Crack in the World' was directed by Andrew Marton in 1965 and tried to warn us against tapping the energy of the Earth's core. This has the effect of causing the title, Dana Andrews and Kieron Moore plan the salvation of Mankind while Janette Scott (who battled Triffids in 1963) makes the coffee. A second Atomic Bomb is used and this has the effect of completely severing a section of the Earth's crust which is then flung into orbit to become a second moon. Unfortunately, I missed the film when it was shown recently so maybe some kind hearted soul among my readers who did see it would pen a few words of criticism or otherwise.

I almost forgot 'Beneath the Planet of the Apes' - an unforgivable sin! Who could forget ETIPOTA - Anyone? - EVERYONE! I don't want to be cruel but the original film was so powerful that any sequels only make a mockery of it. Another astronaut has been sent out to find Charlton Heston and he finds himself pitting his wits against a warrior gorilla intent upon destroying the infernal humans who are gobbling up the

dwindling food supplies. Orangutan Zaius is against the idea of a trip into the Forbidden Zone for a crusade of slaughter and the apes find that they have bitten off more than they can chew when they meet up with the remnants of 'civilized' man. These mutants have developed thought transference to a high degree but, for the benefit of the visiting astronaut and cinema audiences, they will indulge in conversation if they must. The mutants are highly religious. They live in the sunken bones of New York City and worship in the remains of St. Patrick's Cathedral. (The sets were left overs from 'Hello Dolly'.) The object of their worship is an enormous Atomic Bomb - the Doomsday Bomb! The Apes attack and Charlton Heston finally gets to play God when he presses the fancy red button and blows the Earth to smithereens. If you thought this was lacking something then, I doubt if you will want to see any of the three films which were to follow. (Strangely enough, I did enjoy the TV series.)

'The Battle Beneath the Earth' was made in England in 1967 and starred Korwin Matthews (of Sinbad and Gulliver fame) battling against an army of fanatical Chinese outcasts who are bent on conquering the free world. They start with the United States! (They certainly don't think small.) How do they do it? Well, the title gives you an idea. They simply tunnel beneath the Pacific and before discovery and eventual defeat they have created a vast network of tunnels beneath the North American Continent. Although hinting at possibilities, it turned out to be a boring load of rubbish!

Hammer Films went out to the Canaries in 1966 to produce 'One Million Years BC' as a remake of the 1940 Hal Roach production 'One Million BC', with John Richardson and Raquel Welch replacing Victor Mature and Carole Landis in the battle against the elements and assorted dinosaurs. The special effects in this film were by that master of animation Ray Harryhausen and all-in-all it is very entertaining. Vague attempts were made at creating a social document by showing two vastly different tribes. The Rock Tribe are swarthy, dark, savage brutes while the blonde Shell People have developed along more acceptable human lines. In the end, after a cataclysmic and effective earthquake, the remnants of the two tribes are united and set out under one leader to people the world with brotherly love. However, the dinosaurs and their kith and kin steal the show. One sequence involving the briefly glimpsed Brontosaurus was dropped from the finished product owing to overlength. Many Harryhausen fans wish that some of the scenes involving the immaculately groomed and heavily made-up Miss Welch had been replaced with dinosaur material. Of course, we must bear in mind the fact that this film was a vehicle for the lady in question and that the dinosaurs were incidental, if not totally superfluous! (Don't worry, I haven't taken leave of my senses. I was indulging in a jest.)

As I lie prone on the psycho-analyst's couch, I ask myself 'Why, Robert? - Why did you watch 'The Reluctant Astronaut'? Answer comes there none! I am too ashamed to answer myself. At the risk of sounding rude and losing my vast following of fans I shall briefly say that this excuse for a comedy with possible SF overtones was a load of B... S... and, in the words of the prophet, should be shoved where the monkey keeps his nuts - praise his memory.

The Age of Innocence has momentarily returned. Every Saturday morning at 10.00 am on BBC 1, we can feel that old shiver of excitement as we spill our Cornflakes or Toasted Frosties and tag along with Dale and Dr. Zarkov on 'Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars'. Its still the same old cliff-hanger hoakum but its still fun. Ming the Merciless has lived through his flaming end in the first serial and has left Mongo to join forces with Azura, Queen of Magic, who lives on Mars. Let the veils of ignorance fall back into place and allow yourselves to remember those moments of delight as we used to sit sucking toffees in the six-pennies. God be with the days of the Saturday Matinee and the weekly 'Look at Life'. (That last piece was addressed to our older members. For the younger ones who don't know what I'm talking about - why not ask your parents if they remember Flash Gordon from the old days. A word of advice, don't emphasise the 'old'.) By the time you read this there will still be about seven episodes to go. Is 10.00 too early to get up on a Saturday?

In 1953, Ray Bradbury wrote a screen treatment "The Meteor" for Universal Pictures who were later to discard his script and rewrite it to become 'It Came From Outer Space'. Originally made in 3-D, this very neat film involves aliens of not-exactly pretty countenance coming to Earth. They bury their strange ship beneath the Arizona Desert and set about to effect their repairs. The one difference between these aliens and those portrayed in other films such as 'War of the Worlds' and 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' is that they don't particularly wish to stay here. In order to repair their craft, these aliens have to take over certain humans (not to mention the hero's girl). There are subtle changes in these characters which arouse the suspicions of hero, John Putnam, and he is finally able to persuade the townspeople that the aliens do exist. Just before the forecast showdown, Putnam finds out that the aliens will be leaving all as it was as soon as the ship is repaired and he finally seals the mine in which the craft is hidden and makes it possible for the aliens to escape from the angry mob. This is a very haunting film which, although it was made on a low budget, achieves many pleasantly shocking moments. Certainly a film to watch out for.

There are many arguments as to whether Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" is a horror story or a science fiction story. It is probably both. In the early thirties Boris Karloff played the monster three times for Universal Studios. He was created in 'Frankenstein', bubbled up from the mill pond in 'Bride of Frankenstein' and survived the apocalyptic explosion at the end of the latter to meet 'The Son of Frankenstein'. Nostalgia abounds and these films can be viewed over and over again with quiet delight. One interesting little point came to my attention while viewing 'Bride' - the theme music for Dr. Pretorius' bout of tomb robbing was also used to herald the materialisation of the Clay People in the aforementioned Flash Gordon. Oh, by the way, it is well worth seeing these films for Ernest Thesiger's extremely camp performance as Pretorius; the Monster and the blind man sequence and from the point of view of helping one to enjoy Mel Brooks' 'Young Frankenstein' all the more.

Since SF is being so very well catered for on TV, I could probably go on typing film reviews until the printing date of this Newsletter. In order to short circuit this, I will just do two more films and leave the rest for Newsletter Number 14 in October.

In 1952, Byron Haskin directed 'The War of the Worlds' for George Pal, based on the H.G. Wells' novel about invaders from Mars. The screenplay by Barre Lyndon transposed the action from England to the United States and introduced a rather heavily laden religious motif. However, even though the plot was slow in places, this was amply made up for by the superb visual special effects. One remembers with delight the landings of the huge guided 'meteors', the first appearance of the Martian War-Machines, the uselessness of the Atomic Bomb and the final collapse of the Martian forces after they had all but totally wiped out the civilized world as we know it. Excellent sound effects were also incorporated and the total film is well worth remembering and seeing over again and again. We were even given a glimpse of a possible Martian.

I am sure I am not Ray Harryhausen's number one fan but I'll get there some time. The expertise which he draws upon to create the animated special effects in his films are absolutely staggering especially if one knows any details about the techniques involved. Ray Harryhausen studied under Willis O'Brien - the man who made King Kong breathe - and after O'Brien's death he became a worthy successor. The techniques of incorporating a moving model and live action are quite complicated. The articulated models are usually no more than eighteen inches high in reality and that is very small when one takes into account the beautiful detail. Without any prompting, I can wax lyrical about the work of Mr. Harryhausen who in each successive film introduces more fantastic creatures and even improves on his own animation techniques (if that is possible) but, that would take me away from my reason for talking about Harryhausen in the first place.

'Jason and the Argonauts' was filmed in England and Italy in 1963 and was

based on the Greek legend of Jason's search for the Golden Fleece - the fabled fleece that would cure all ills. The story of Jason's quest and the mythological creatures he met and dealt with provided excellent material for Harryhausen's art form. The animated treats were plenty and all delighted the eye. First of all, Jason visited the gods on Mount Olympus where they told him of his adventures to come. Then, incorporated into a fast moving and well-acted film were the fabled bronze statue, Talos, who guarded the treasure houses of the gods; a pair of shrieking Harpies; Poseidon, the god of the deep, who saved the Argo from the perilous Clashing Rocks; the seven-headed Hydra which kept watch over the Fleece and the seven avenging skeletons which rose from the ground when the teeth of the slain Hydra were sown in the sun-baked soil. Jason and his men survive all of these encounters and as they sail off into the sunset, Zeus tells us that he has not yet finished with Jason. This left us with the hope that another adventure would be forthcoming but, so far, this hasn't materialised. Maybe its just as well since Harryhausen has just finished the third Sinbad film and as was seen from the first sequel, the animation was superb but the actual story left a lot to be desired. This is OK for the Harryhausen fans but for most cinema goers, a film should be a complete all round experience. The title of the new Sinbad is 'Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger' so, watch out for it.

I am sure that after reading all of the above you are wishing that someone else would try their hand at the film reviews. Well, consider this as an open invitation to anyone who would like to pen their views on any film - old or new. I am also looking for volunteers to write about the occasional science or science fiction TV programme and also anything which we might catch on the radio. Any offers can be addressed to me at Paddy O'Connell's address.

THE ALCHEMIST'S HEAD....

ISFA member Penni Campbell has finally got everything together and she is pleased to say that Dublin's first SF bookshop will be opening in the first week of August. The shop will bear the above banner and apart from books, Penni will also be dealing with SF posters, an SF art gallery, SF discs, SF mail order and SF calendars. In fact, there should be something to interest every keen SF fan at The Alchemist's Head, 10 Essex Street, Dublin 2.

Penni is also very kindly giving card bearing ISFA members an introductory offer of 10% reductions. I think we will all thank her for this generous offer and wish her every success with the venture.

DUNSINK OBSERVATORY....

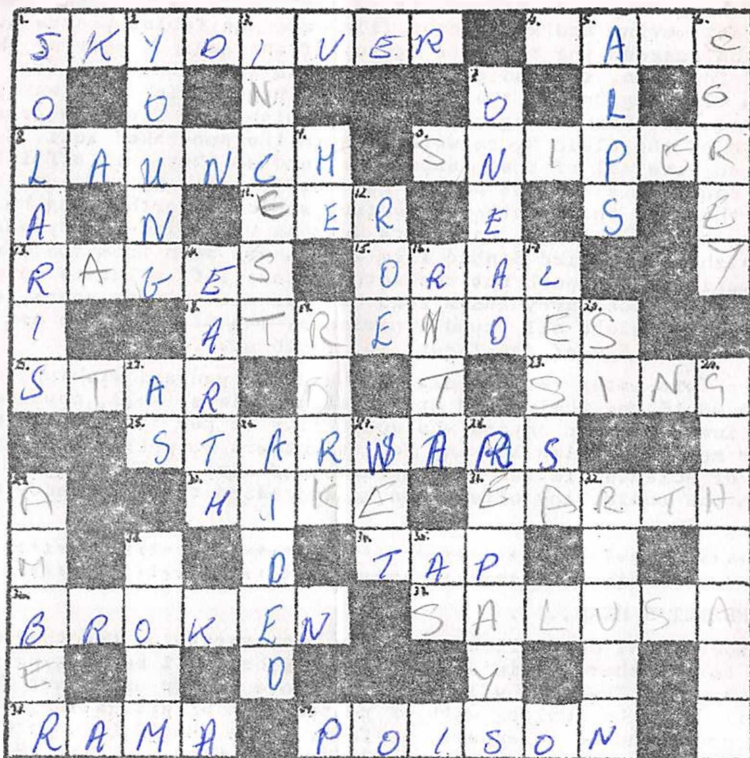
Would any members (and friends) who would like to see over Dunsink, some time in the near future, please contact Michael Gardner at 681540 (work) or 302556 (home). When he has an idea of numbers, Michael will make definite arrangements with Professor Wayman.

SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY....

P.J. Goode would like to hear from anyone who has issues of SFM for sale. P.J. would like to complete his collection of this now defunct magazine. Issues required are Volume 1 No. 2; Volume 2 Nos 4, 6, 7 - 11; Volume 3 No 1. Also required are the following numbers of NEW WORLDS - 173, 180 - 187, 193 and 201. P.J. will deal on a cash or exchange basis and can be contacted at telephone number 971391.

CROSSWORD....

Paddy O'Connell has been hard at work preparing this crossword and we now present the fruits of his labour. The answers will appear on page



CLUES DOWN

- 1) A film from Russia. (7)
- 2) "..... Frankenstein" a recent film. (5)
- 3) Unusual in SF. A lot of this occurs in 'Time Enough for Love' (6)
- 5) Mountains found on Moon and Earth. (4)
- 6) The name Corwin had leaving hospital. (5)
- 7) The first year of this era. (3.1.1)
- 9) ...-man; the usual SF hero is one. (2)
- 12) Fish eggs. (3)
- 14) 'The Dark Side of the' a Bester anthology. (5)
- 16) A girl's name. (4)
- 17) The heroine of 'Dragonflight'. (5)
- 19) The Avram Davidson book about giant spiders. (4)
- 20) The present international units of measurement. (1,1)
- 22) Part of Asimov. (2)
- 24) Resolutely brave. (7)

ACROSS

- 1) The ship that investigated the 'Neutron Star'. (8)
- 4) A very fine powder. (4)
- 8) A firing of a rocket. (6)
- 10) A marksman. (6)
- 11) Shortened ever. (3)
- 13) Fumes in anger. (5)
- 15) By mouth. (4)
- 18) 'Maud' Dib was one as was Alia. (8)
- 21) Alpha Centaurus for instance. (4)
- 23) What you would do to shape Ballybran crystals. (4)
- 25) Two robots star in this new SF film. (4,4)
- 30) Walk cross-country. (4)
- 31) 'From here to' by Sturgeon. (5)
- 34) Hit gently. (3)
- 36) This is how promises usually end. (6)
- 37) '..... Sgondis' where the Emperor's legion comes from. (6)
- 38) Something to rendezvous with. (4)
- 39) A chemical killer. (6)

Crossword continued....

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|---|--|
| 26) Helped. (5) | 32) Certain. (5) |
| 27) How Atlantis was as Wolff passed through. (3) | 33) There is one made for a dancer in 'A Rose for Ecclesiastes'. (4) |
| 28) Returns money. (6) | 35) The same as 22) down. (2) |
| 29) Zelazny had nine princes here. (5) | |

How did you get on?

HARLAN ELLISON.....

While on a recent trip to the States, Moira Harrison attended a large SF Convention and among other celebrities she met Harlan Ellison. On our behalf she asked Mr. Ellison if he would consider becoming a patron of the ISFA and this is what he had to say.....

To the Irish fans,

Goodevening and hello. Moira Harrison has dumbfounded me by suggesting that you might think well enough of my work to want me for a patron. On the grounds that a former Grand High (Lord) Mayor of Dublin was Jewish, I accept the honour of patronage. Having no idea what that entails, I can't in all good conscience accept total responsibility for whatever deeds and offices I am required to perform...but I'll do my damndest to get over next June for the big conference, and between then and now, if you need anything, ask Moira to write to me and I'll try to oblige.

Did I mention I am a great admirer of Bob Shaw and James White? No? Well, consider it said. And that extends to all Irish fans who, I'm convinced, are much more polite and intelligent than American fans.

Good wishes and Godspeed,

Harlan Ellison.

The committee will be in touch with Mr. Ellison and hopefully, if he does get over for the Second World Science Fiction Writers' Conference, we will all have a chance to meet him. So, keep your fingers crossed folks.

VANDALISM.....

On the night of Wednesday July 27th., a large group of people laid siege on the Dunsink Observatory and destroyed an eight foot high perimeter wall. Cables to a seismograph were then cut and damage done to apple trees on the property. Who could have done this and why? Professor Wayman, the director of the observatory has said that this isn't the first such attack. Stones have even been thrown at himself and his wife.

THE FATHER OF MODERN ROCKETRY.....

At the age of 65, Dr. Wernher Von Braun has died of cancer. The date, Thursday June 16th., and the place, Alexandria, Virginia.

Von Braun's interest in rocketry began early in life and after studying at Zurich Polytechnic, he went on to become the technical director of the German Peenemunde research centre. He joined the centre in 1935 and his talents were quickly recognised. His work on rocketry led to the development of the Nazi Vergeltungswaffe - Vengeance Weapon, shortened to become the V-1. In September 1944, the first of these rocket powered guided missiles fell on Britain. The V-2 were to follow shortly afterwards.

With the end of Germany in sight, Von Braun and 300 of his colleagues gave themselves up to the advancing Americans. Later, in 1945, at White Sands, New Mexico, captured V-2s were test fired by Von Braun for the American military. President Eisenhower saw no future in space travel so, Von Braun worked only on guided missiles.

However, when the Russians planted Sputnik in space, President Kennedy requested Von Braun to set up the Space Programme. The results of this are well known. October 1968, saw three men launched into space on a journey around the moon and then in July 1969, the first small step was taken.

There is no doubt that without the ingenuity and technical genius of Dr. Wernher Von Braun, the Space Race would not be as advanced as it is now.

By now, he knows whether his work will be beneficial or not. We can but wait and see.

DON VOYAGE.....

Two of our members are by now setting out on their chosen paths in foreign parts. Ex-committee member David Norman has gone to Germany and Tony Casella has crossed the Atlantic to study in America. Good luck, gentlemen. Don't forget us.

PAPER CHASE.....

On Tuesday May 10th., shortly after 11.00 pm, Harry Haerison and Ian McAulay sat opposite Patrick Gallagher in the RTE book programme studio. We were first given a look at a montage of illustrations from the Rottensteiner book and then in a few minutes Harry and Ian had to try and say why they liked science fiction. A few words were said about Bob Shaw's 'Orbitsville' and that was that. Let's hope that if RTE decide to do another piece on SF, they will spend more time on it. Incidentally, some of the committee only found out about the programme an hour or two in advance from Penni Campbell. Thanks Penni.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS.....

Across:

1)Skydiver. 4)Talo. 8)Launch. 10)Sniper. 11)E'er. 13)Rages. 15)Oral.
18)Atreides. 21)Star. 23)Sing. 25)Starwars. 30)Mike. 31)Easel. 34)Tap.
36)Broken. 37)Salusa. 38)Rama. 39)Poison.

Down:

1)Solaris. 2)Young. 3)Incest. 5)Alps. 6)Corey. 7)OneAD. 9)He. 12)Roe.
14)Earth. 16)Rita. 17)Lossa. 19)Hork. 21)SI. 22)As. 24)Gallant. 26)Aided.
27)Wet. 28)Repays. 29)Amber. 32)Spurn. 33)Poom. 35)As.

ISFA MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCES.....

To date we have 49 members totalling £169.00 in membership subscriptions. The book auction made £35.00. This totals as £204.00 in the ISFA account. Expenses for the months of June, July, August, September and October will appear in the next Newsletter as soon as the Journal has been published.

Newsletter 14 should hopefully contain more film news; a look at the BBC documentary 'Out of this World'; 'Durant Offerings'; Book reviews and lots of membership participation!!

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