

newsletter

The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association

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NUMBER 18A

AGM SUMMARY

The second Annual General Meeting of the ISFA was held as scheduled on 28th May at Buswell's Hotel. While the turnout was less than hoped (about 16 showed up), a good bit of business was gone through.

The reports of the 1977-1978 Committee were all accepted unanimously. In addition to the reports contained in the April/May Newsletter, Paddy O'Connell gave the financial statement. This was prepared for inclusion with the June/July Newsletter, but (as has happened before) the entire mailing was swallowed by the P&T. A new financial statement will be sent out with the October/November Newsletter. Paddy did point out that we still are holding some £18 belonging to people who paid for the abortive 2001 showing and have not yet claimed their refunds.

Next discussed were amendments to the ISFA Constitution. The changes, which were all adopted unanimously, were as follows:

- i.) Add to Article 17: "However, individuals must have been a member of the ISFA for at least two months preceding an Annual General Meeting, subject to the verification of the Committee."
- ii.) Article 20 (entirely revised): "The first order of business at a General Meeting shall be the presentation and verification of proxies. The total amount of proxies outstanding shall then be announced to the meeting at large. Votes may be given personally or by proxy; in the event of a vote by count of hand, if the sum of the number of minority votes cast plus the number of proxies presented exceeds or equals the number of majority votes cast, a poll shall automatically result. Therefore a count of hand votes must be announced."
- iii.) Article 24 (entirely revised): "No member shall be eligible for membership on the committee unless such member has been a member in good standing at least through the calendar year preceding the date of the AGM, except when there is a unanimous poll vote in favour of extending special qualification to a member who might not meet this criterion."
- iv.) Article 25: strike out the "and" before "(e)" and insert the following: "when so determined by a majority vote of the Committee, or".
- v.) Article 28: insert after "desecration": "and with the consent of those so co-opted" and strike out the last sentence. Insert at the end: "Those co-opted shall have no voting power upon the Committee, unless they are so co-opted to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation or removal of a Committee member."
- vi.) Article 42: Strike out "The auditor" and replace it with: "When an auditor has been demanded by a majority vote of an AGM or EGM, such person".
- vii.) Article 44 (entirely revised): "The Committee may not refuse the application of a new member without good reason which must be given to the applicant in writing. This refusal may be overruled by a majority vote at an AGM or EGM."

The next order of business was the nomination and election of the 1978-79 Committee. T.J. Goode, as Librarian, did not have to stand for reelection as provided for under Article 36. For the five vacancies thus available, we

had six nominees: John Mahon, John McCarthy, Paddy O'Connell, Brian Redmond, Brendan Ryder, and Fred Woods. All were elected save Brondan Ryder. Votes received were 10, 14, 13, 14, 5, and 12 respectively.

Votes of thanks were then proposed and passed for the active outgoing members of the former Committee, (Rita Meehan and Bobby MacLaughlin), and a special vote was passed both for former Chairman Robert Lane and for P.J. Goode in recognition of his excellent work and dedication as evidenced by the new state of our meeting room in the Parliament Inn.

Immediately after the AGM, the new Committee held a responsibility apportionment meeting and the following offices and functions were assigned:

John McCarthy: Chairman and Publications

Paddy O'Connell: Secretary and Treasurer

P.J. Goode: Library

Brian Redmond: Patron Liaison, Public Relations, Alchemist's Head Liaison, and Cabdsman

Fred Woods: Writer's Workshop Subcommittee and Meeting Coordinator

John Mahon: Fund Raising Subcommittee and Function Secretary

Needless to say, many of these responsibilities overlap and it is expected that the various Committee Members will feel free to call on their fellows to accomplish the aims of the ISFA.

A proposed calendar of events for the year 1978-1979 was also prepared. With the understanding that meetings will be held in the Parliament Inn until further notice, our schedule is somewhat as follows (The dates for outside guests such as our Patrons must be considered extremely tentative, so we are announcing only what the activities are after the September meeting):

AUGUST 27: The poster contest which was mentioned in the last newsletter. Submitters should bring along their creations for a show-of-hands judging.

SEPTEMBER: The Long Awaited Book Auction to help raise the funds needed to reimburse P.J. Goode for his out-of-pocket expenses for the work in the Parliament Inn.

Other activities: The staging of a Ray Bradbury Play,
Talk by Anne McCaffrey,
Talk by James White,
Talk by Harry Harrison,
Another Book Auction in the spring,
Talk by Peter Costello (Author of the new Jules Verne biography),
Continuation of Alun Llewellyn's talk,
AGM.

Recent Meetings

The 28 May meeting was a rather informal get together of the membership, as was planned. The idea was to talk over the plans for the coming year's planned activities. It was also the first public display of P.J. Goode's handiwork to the General Public. It should be mentioned that several ISFA members helped out in the work in the easy parts.

The April meeting held on the 30th was the long-awaited debate concerning the relative merits of Fantasy and Science Fiction. The motion was as follows: "Resolved: that Science Fiction fulfills a greater social need than does Fantasy?" Chairing the meeting was Brian Redmond. The negative view was represented by John McCarthy and Fred Woods. Speaking in favour were Paddy O'Connell and Rita Meehan.

The first speaker was John McCarthy. Basing his arguments on a fairly stiff

definition of SF, H.G. Wells's Rule, John attempted to show that SF was essentially the taking accepted human or explicable alien reactions to new situations to create the conflict upon which the plot would be based. Fantasy, on the other hand, would take known situations and superimpose some sort of strange reactions or beings to build the story. By condemning apocalyptic SF as only marginally entertaining, he said that any positive benefits would be overshadowed by the lack of escapist release. This would, he concluded, show that SF could have a negative effect upon society, and thus prove the negative's contention out of hand.

Needless to say, the first speaker in favour, Paddy O'Connell, did not agree with the above exposition. Speaking entirely extemporaneously, Paddy claimed that since Fantasy deals with things we know to be impossible, it gives us no chance of trying to predict (and thus avoid) the effects of technological developments upon human society. This would imply that Fantasy would wield the greater detrimental effect upon society, by failing to prepare us adequately for the future.

Fred Woods then resumed the negative side's attack. He pointed out that Fantasy was the source of all civilisation, for it was through the imagining of a better way of life that man's creative efforts were directed into labour-saving devices such as brooms, wheels, fire, and medicine. Fred then pointed out that the one willing suspension of disbelief allowed in SF (H.G. Wells's Rule again) was in fact an element of Fantasy. Given the negative potential of SF, this subcategory of Fantasy could not help but wield a smaller social benefit than Fantasy could as a whole.

Rita Meehan concluded the expository presentations with the second favouring speech. Rita stressed that SF has one virtue which Fantasy could never have, i.e. an awareness of change and its relationship to ourselves as people. She defended this argument with several examples of the nature of interpersonal relationships. Given the advance of the Future Shock theory, clearly one must learn in advance what the future could demand of us. This is the real social need which faces us all and which Fantasy cannot handle.

Both sides then took a break to prepare rebuttals. These concluding statements were remarkable for their coloured rhetoric and near-libellous denunciations. In the voting, the team of Rita and Paddy won both the decision and the best speaker award. There followed a lively discussion from the floor.

The June meeting was held, somewhat unusually on a Wednesday night. This was because the John W. Campbell Award dinner was held on the night of the usual meeting. The Committee was able to get Joe Haldeman and his wife Gay to attend to talk informally with us about anything that came into their heads. It was a very good time for those who attended. Phone calls were made to all the people in the Dublin area whose phone numbers are up to date in the Committee's records.

The July meeting was mainly occupied by the playing of some tapes made at Harry Harrison's convention in Dun Laoghaire; some interviews were made with the authors and publishers present. It is expected that transcripts will be published in a later newsletter.

The new booklist of the ISFA Library is now being distributed, but believe it or not, there are already some additions you should make on your copy when you get it:

COOPER (Susan)
DISCH (Tom)
FARMER (P.J.)
HEINLEIN (Robert)

Mandrake
One Hundred and Two H-Bombs
The Gate of Time
The Door into Summer
The Puppet Masters

Film Review:

Space Cruiser, Directed by Yoshinobu Nishizaki; Chief Animator: Noboru Ishiguro

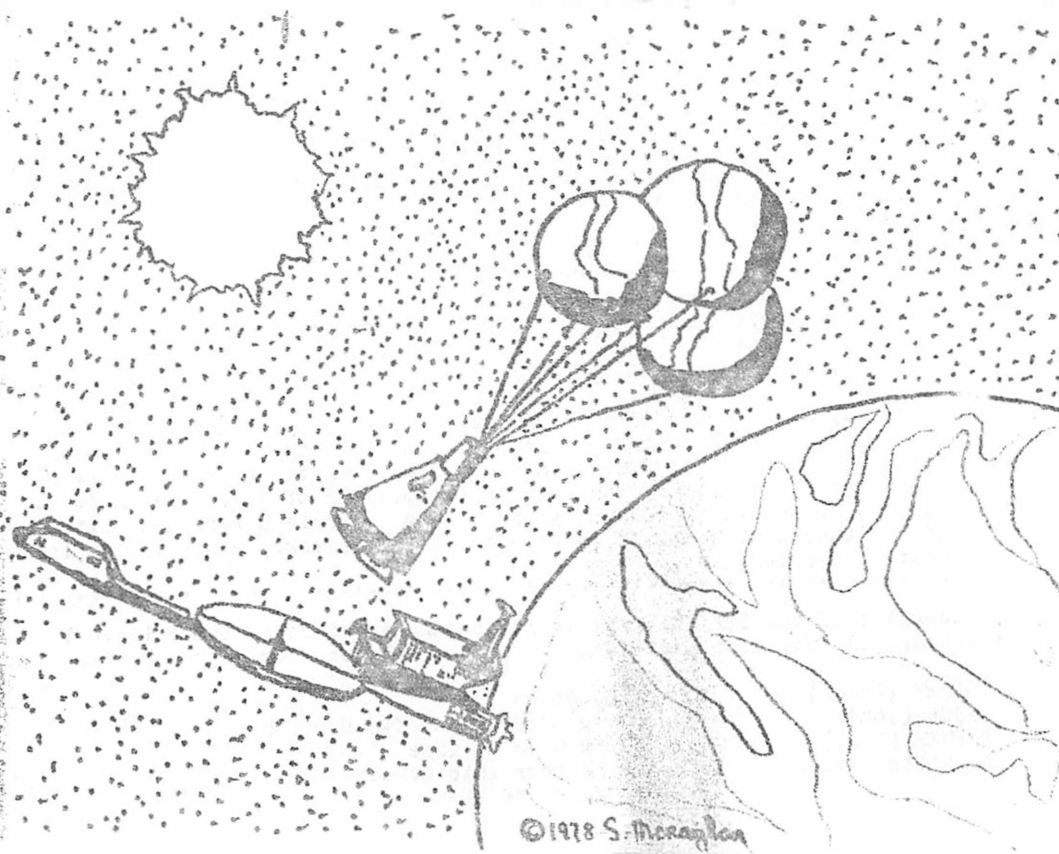
War rips the galaxies, Queen Iscandar's forces are being defeated by the fierce Gorgons, and Earth has been struck by radiation blight. This sequence sets the theme for Space Cruiser, a new animated space adventure based on the exploits of the warship YAMATO. This melee of adventures starts when Queen Iscandar sends forces to Earth (2199 A.D.) to help fight the radiation disaster and in return for her services, Iscandar gives Earth the plans for a time-warp rescue ship to help in the war against the Gorgons.

The YAMATO, a World War II battleship, is secretly raised from the sea-bed to fulfill a new mission, re-equipped with the time-warp. The ship is re-armed and carries an enormous cargo of mini-spaceships in its interior, which can be sent on small trips going and returning through the gaping hole in the front of the huge spaceship. Inside, the ship is packed with rockets, spaceships, anti-Gorgon guns, and extensive maintenance areas. 148,000 lightyears away the Gorgons wait. The hero of this animated feature is a young flier, who is actively engaged in the adventures which follow and who finally takes command of the warship.

The animation is "different" but exciting and shows itself well when the enemy makes a triple-pronged attack on the YAMATO. This scene displays Ishiguro's animatory qualities and makes up for the weak start that dogged the film.

For Science Fictioners, it is a film worth watching and it might be another Star Wars-like success.

Reviewed by Seán Moraghan



TV Review

SF CN TV --- Robert Lane's review of 1977-1978

The Autumn and Winter seasons on TV seem to bring a fair sprinkling of SF and Fantasy films. Since there was only one spoken objection to my review of last summer's offerings, I shall now take a look at the films which the five stations have telecast since the middle of July last year. BBC 2 comes up with the prize this time. They ran seven films for us: the SON OF FRANKENSTEIN was followed in sequence by GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, and HOUSE OF DRACULA. The Hammer films EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN (which was reviewed by Jim Ivers in an earlier Newsletter) and SHE followed. These were then followed at Christmas by the curious DARK STAR. The big treat was the rebroadcast of the television play 1954 that brought Peter Cushing to the notice of film producers. BBC 1 gave us BREWSTER McCLOUD, OMEGA MAN, PROJECTED AN ATLANTIS THE LOST CONTINENT, and SILENT RUNNING. The Sky at Night programme on December 16th had Arthur C. Clark as its guest and they ended up with FLASH GORDON CONQUERING THE UNIVERSE for Christmas. UTV repeated the CRACK IN THE EARTH which Harlech had shown in the summer, before taking us on the FANTASTIC VOYAGE, masterminding the ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES, exposing us to the ANDROMEDA STRAIN, introducing us to the BODY STEALERS, and treating us to a round trip of Ray Harryhausen's MYSTERICUS ISLAND. RTE have tried to improve their output, but with the exception of DEVILDOLL, the quality was not up to much. FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON was too long; nobody really cares when the EARTH DIES SCREAMING, an although it was animated, JACK THE GIANTKILLER was disappointing. To round off the spectacle, Harlech (before my set decided not to pick up the station anymore) put on the NIGHT CALLER and Hammer's REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

The Universal Frankenstein series was becoming a little jaded by the time GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN came on the market. Lon Chaney Junior took over the role from Boris Karloff and was resurrected from the now solidified sulphur pit by Bela Lugosi's Ygor who, curiously, was also still very much alive after being shot by Basil Rathbone. Destruction by fire answered the old question --- how to get rid of the monster? In 1943 they made FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN. Bela Lugosi donned the heavy make-up which he had refused to wear in 1931 (much to the eventual delight of Boris Karloff). The monster was not enough for movie fans so the wolfman Larry Talbot joined him in the mayhem only to be drowned with him in the finale...HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN had both of the characters returning with Count Dracula and a hunchback in tow. Glenn Strange and Lon Chaney Junior continued as Frankenstein's misshapen creature and his furry cohort and were to be seen again in the followup HOUSE OF DRACULA. The Count was played by John Carradine (father of Kung-fu's David Carradine). The series was almost over and except for one meeting with Abbott and Costello, Universal decided to dismantle the monster. Resquecat in Pace.

(Continued on page 6)

More additions to the Library: (Continued from page 3)

PRIEST (Christopher)	Fugue for a Darkening Island
POHL (Fred, w/ Kornbluth)	Gladiator-At-Law
SHAW (Bob)	Nightwalk
VANCE (Jack)	Fantasms and Magics
ZELAZNY (Roger)	Lord of Light

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TV Review

MORE SF ON TV---

...As most of you will know, Hammer Films have revitalized Frankenstein and a small army of creations since 1956. The third in their series was **EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN** made in 1964. The plot in this film was rather plastic and the use of Eastman Colour did not help with any atmosphere the producers might have been hoping to achieve. The monster was a poor recreation in the old Universal mould and played by wrestler Kiwi Kingston. The horrors were all unconvincingly explicit and even the British censor took exception to the scene in which the monster thrusts a pointed iron-grill bar through hypnotist Peter Woodthorpe. Nasties abound and reach a climax when the monster mistakenly drinks ether for alcohol. It goes mad (naturally) and blows the laboratory sky high, taking a screaming Baron Frankenstein with him. Most unconvincing of all was the exploding model of the castle with the flicker of flame licking around it at the end. A boring movie, unfortunately...In 1965 Hammer Films produced the second remake of H. Rider Haggard's novel **SHE**; the story of a woman who had lived in the lost city of Kuma under the shadow of the Ethiopian Hills. Here, Ayesha-She who must be obeyed-ruled over her army of Romanesque soldiers and a horde of black slaves. Her immortality had been endowed by walking through the Flame of Eternal Life and now she waits for the reincarnation of her dead lover to come along so that he too may benefit from the sacred flame's life magic. So, along comes Leo Vincey played by John Richardson and he is soon besotted with Ayesha's beauty and thoughts of wealth unimaginable. Peter Cushing plays his friend Major Holly, and Christopher Lee, Bilali, the high priest in love with Ayesha. The film moves well and is an entertaining piece of escapism with this Ursula Andress appearing in a number of exotic, revealing gowns. Poor Mr. Richardson didn't stand a chance. Finally, as the slaves revolt, Ayesha takes him into the flame. Unfortunately, she isn't aware that on a second trip through, the flame takes back its gift. Ayesha is 5000 years old and in a twinkling (of good special effects) she ages horribly and crumbles to dust. Poor old Leo has to wait for the flame to return before he, too, can find peace. Sequel material? Yes, sir! But that's another story...1974's **DARK STAR** is a very strange film to say the least. BBC2 kept it for Christmas and had to put out the statutory warning that the flashing lights in the film might have an adverse effect on some people. Many critics (and some members of the ISFA) thought it a terribly funny satire on spacemen, space movies, companionship and steely nerves under pressure! The ship is on a path through the universe to destroy unstable planets and clear the way for Earth colonists. The film began as a \$5,000 student project in 16 mm and finally ended up as a \$60,000 commercial proposition. Personally, I found the film indescribably boring and cannot understand the present ideas of some SF critics and film makers. Now, I know that some of our members liked it so why don't you write a little review from your point of view.

In 1970, Robert Altman directed Bud Cort and Sally Kellerman in a delightful mystery/fantasy about a boy who desired to achieve unaided flight. **BREWSTER McCLOUD** finds himself being coached by a de-winged angel and eventually getting his wish although there were complications. People who tended to get in the way were got out of the way-rather messily, too...Boris Segal tried to give Richard Matheson's **I Am Legend** script a new look in the **OMEGA MAN**. Charlton Heston was one of the last men alive and immune to the virus which was causing widespread death all over the world. People who caught the virus either died immediately or became victims of a hideous slow, rotting death that makes them shun the light and hate those who are not afflicted. The Family, as one horde of these "Vampires" is called, wishes to destroy Charlton Heston and his serum cure. In the hectic climax, Mr. Heston is struck by a spear and falls back into a fount-

ain. Always one to bring in heavy religious overtones, he is seen at the end of the movie lying in the water Pieta-style. It would be too easy to say "Oh, Christ!"--so I won't...1966 saw the release of the PROJECTED MAN, cheap thriller along the lines of the FLY. Bryant Halliday is the scientist who makes the matter transmitting machine. However, in this variation he comes through scarred on one side of his face and with a deadly handshake. He has been so altered in the process that his very touch electrocutes. Plenty of work for the pyrotechnics department...ATLANTIS, THE LOST CONTINENT was a very neat little coloured drama set in ancient times and directed by George Pol (of TIME MACHINE and WAR OF THE WORLDS fame) in 1961. The might of Atlantis is beautifully shown in some quite spectacular shots. The advanced civilisation has developed atomic power and submarines as well as atomic surgery which turns their slaves into animals--or rather manimals. However, Atlantis is rotten and in the end the good element which wants to bring their knowledge to the outside world has to destroy the side which wishes to conquer the rest of the world. The destruction also spells curtains for Atlantis and in some excellent special effects the lost continent sinks beneath the waves. A very good movie if you can catch up with it...Do any of you remember the special effects genius on 2001-A SPACE ODYSSEY was one Douglas Trumbull? Well, after completing Mr. Kubrick's film, he went on to plan and direct his own spfx film for Universal. Set in the not-too-distant future we find three enormous space ships orbiting Saturn. In specially constructed glass houses on each ship are samples of every type of plant and tree from Earth. Why are they being tended in space? Earth can no longer support them. When the order comes to destroy the forests--because the cost of maintaining them is too high, one of the pilots (played by Bruce Dern) decides to take matters into his own hands. He kills his fellow gardeners and with the aide of three robot "drones" nicknamed Huey, Ducey, and Loey he takes the ship through the treacherous rings of Saturn and there finally commits suicide. Rescue is on the way and he cannot face discovery. After releasing the forests and leaving the two remaining robot drones to tend them, he destroys the mother ship. The film is an absolute delight for effects fans and is a fine example of ecological concern for the future. However, it lost some of its spectacle by reduction for TV...The final Flash Gordon series made in 1940 was screened for the junior audience over 12 mornings last Christmas. All the usual goodies and baddies were there and this time Fearless Flash saves a thankful world from Ming's Purple Death Ray.

In 1966, Richard Fleischer directed the FANTASTIC VOYAGE. Recently, while researching some films at the B.F.I., I came across the startling piece of information that in fact Yul Brynner and Telly Savalas worked on this film. Well, now, they aren't credited, but I have it on very good authority that together they occasionally stood in for Miss Raquel Welsh. Joking aside, however, it was an interesting film about miniaturisation. A group of medics were reduced to minute proportions and injected complete with submarine into the body of a scientist suffering from brain damage. The only way he can be saved is for the trouble to be cleared from the inside with a laser. All sorts of problems beset our tiny heroes as they travel through the patient's heart, lungs, and ear before reaching the brain. Of course, one of the crew is a saboteur and he is finally dispatched by anti-bodies in the blood stream when the submarine begins to return to its normal size. The rest of the crew escape in a tear drop at the corner of the patient's eye after completing their mission. It's good fun, really!...Unfortunately, the ANDROMEDA STRAIN--based on Michael Crichton's novel--got very bad screening in the cinema when it came out and it was nice to see it on TV. Based on the "virus-brought-back-from-space-in-crashed-satellite" idea, it had some really chilling moments even though so much of the action takes place in the underground laboratory where scientists are trying to isolate the virus and find a cure. The tension is increased by the fact that the lab is rigged to an atomic

bomb which will destroy it if the problem hasn't been solved by a certain date. The tension is marvellous. If you haven't seen it, do try to sometime. ...Usually, the second sequel to a popular film is even worse than the first but not so with ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES. It turned out to be quite an exciting film because it brought back two talking Apes (Cornelius and Zera) to present day Earth. A third Ape was killed by an unfriendly gorilla while the visiting astronauts were quarantined in a zoo. Escape is a very amusing and moving film. Zera finds herself pregnant and since man is worried about apes taking over the planet, she and her mate are hunted down and finally killed. The baby is adopted by a circus owner and so the whole saga really begins with the first speaking ape among men. As the circus wagons roll away to their winter quarters, the baby ape cries "Mama!". Sequels 3 and 4 still have to be shown on the box so we must wait and see how the script-writers develop the plot towards ape supremacy...George Launders led the British Army against the BODY STEALERS in 1969. How could parachuting airmen suddenly disappear midfall? Well, the answer is told in a rather boring movie in which special agent Patrick Allen falls in love with an alien who takes on the form of a beautiful woman (she would not be physically acceptable to him otherwise). The only interesting moment is when the U.F.O. materialises at the end of the film. Why were the men disappearing? Do you really want to know? Well, on the alien planet the men were killed off by a plague and so Earth men were required to keep the women happy etc. Cunningly enough, if our alien lady would turn Mr. Allen off in the flesh, what about the missing parachutists?... As many of you know, I am a Ray Harryhausen fan and one of his films I like most of all is the MYSTERICUS ISLAND. Based on Jules Verne's sequel to 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, it is a fine adventure story involving some soldiers escaping from a prison camp in Civil War America. The observation balloon they use is carried away by a storm. Finally they are thrown into the sea off the coast of a small Pacific island. As well as picking up a few female survivors they also run into an enormous variety of crab, oyster, bee, and 'chicken' (many people thought this to be a chicken but it really was supposed to be a prehistoric bird). They then come across Captain Nemo and his defunct Nautilus. Nemo has found a way to breed creatures to enormous size to feed the growing populations. The island is about to blow sky high because the dormant volcano decides to wake up. How will they all escape? Well, I don't want to give all the plot away but it does also involve a pirate ship and a giant nautilus squid on the sea floor. It is great fun and a special effects delight.

The DEVIL DOLL is about a fugitive from Devil's Island (played by Lionel Barrymore) who turns a man and woman into tiny dolls and has them murder the people who had him sentenced to Devil's Island. The effects are beautifully handled, showing the manikins going about their horrible work. Directed in 1936 by Tod Browning, it was a good example of movies trying to get away from the purely horror image...FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON was again based on a Verne novel. Peter Lorrie's eyes popped left right and center. Fabian looked pretty and a monkey stole nearly all the scenes in this movie about a strange balloon trip across darkest, slave-trader ridden Africa. OK for a wet afternoon!... Terrence Fisher, exponent of many excellent horror films, made a botch of the silly little SF tale the EARTH DIES SCREAMING. A strange gas comes from the sky and everyone is killed except a few who miraculously escape, i.e. the hero is under an oxygen tent in a hospital. Another, a high-flying pilot using tank oxygen. Aliens are the cause and it only takes the cast 62 minutes to work out how to combat them and then set out to unite with other survivors. Strangely enough, this piece of rubbish was made in 1964. Dennis Price is about the best in the cast, playing a nasty human...In 1958, Ray Harryhausen made the SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD for Morningside Productions. So popular was this animated film that another company took the plot and some cast and created an-

other film called JACK THE GIANT KILLER. However, they didn't use Mr. Harryhausen and the film suffered as a result. The plot was also rather poorly written, involving hero Jack rescuing the pretty princess from the evil magician. The monsters had a plastic, unfinished look about them and were an insult to Harryhausen's painstaking work if nothing else.

Harlech came up with the NIGHTCALLER, an interesting little idea about aliens taking women to their home planet for such the same reason as the BODY STEALERS. Some good special effects and a brutal murder or two heightened the action until the alien was forced to withdraw and leave the planet--however, not before a few starlets had disappeared never to return. Maybe the film industry can breathe a little easier as a result...In 1958 Hammer Films got Terrence Fisher to continue the tale of Frankenstein and with Peter Cushing going on on from his imminent execution in the CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN we find him exacting the REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN. Michael Gwynn is his unfortunate creature--almost perfect this time but when he is savagely beaten up his new brain is damaged and he becomes--a cannibal. In those early days a lot was left to the imagination, thank God. One of the most frightening scenes involves Mr. Gwynn jumping out on a helpless victim--egg white dripping from his lips. The film is a good follow up to an original--since usually sequels are poorer. You should also see it for the mechanical brain which Mr. Cushing demonstrates to his assistants.

Well, there you are. It wasn't as painful as all that, was it? I'll leave you alone for another six months or so, now. However, if you don't like my approach to movies on TV maybe you would like to have a bash.

Book Reviews:

Golden Apples of the Sun by Ray Bradbury (St. Alban's; Panther Books, 75 p.1977)

This is a reprint of a collection of short stories originally published in a hardback edition in 1953, and contains some of Bradbury's best known works.

They include stories from several genres, those of science fantasy, occult and supernatural, and a few straight SF ones. Amongst them are stories taken from Bradbury's series of novels entitled The Martian Chronicles, which describe the problems of Earth colonists settling on Mars, and how they adapt and react to the Martian environment.

Since the author has been one of the best known SF writers in English since the 1950's, it is unnecessary to discuss these stories in detail, except to mention that in their delicacy, freshness of touch, and sensitive portrayal of characters, they illustrate Bradbury at his highest quality as a writer in various types of SF themes.

This is a highly recommended collection to ISFA members, both for those who have not yet read any of Bradbury's works (if any such exist!), and for those wishing to renew their acquaintanceship with a master of contemporary SF writing.

Reviewed by David Lass

The Mystery of Atlantis by Charles Berlitz (St. Albans; Panther Books, 1977)

This book presents a factual survey of all the ancient legends concerning Atlantis, and discusses how far modern scientific discoveries can be said to have vindicated them. It was originally published in New York in 1969, and hence ignores the latest developments in the field of Atlantean studies during the last decade.

However, it is worth consulting, since the author gives an impartial survey of the evidence from the original Platonic sources, down to the most recent undersea excavations of the Bermuda coast. He gives detailed quotations from these authorities followed by his own explanatory notes, and the book is well illustrated with maps, photos, charts, and diagrams.

His tentative conclusion is that an Atlantean Empire did exist, and that further scientific evidence will serve to confirm this. Finally, he includes a selective bibliography of the best known works on Atlantis, that makes it useful to any ISFA member wishing to do research on the subject.

Reviewed by David Lass

Gateway by Frederik Pohl (New York; Ballantine Books, \$1.95, 1977)

WINNER, 1977 John W. Cambell Award as the best SF novel of the year

It is extremely difficult to write an adequate review of Gateway, for the simple reason that it is such a great book. No review can do justice to the work. As a result of this fact of life, we decided to write two reviews and to print them together.

As it happens, both your reviewers were present at the dinner where the John W. Cambell Award was presented, and heard a fairly good summation and review of the book by Brian Aldiss. We will try to avoid repeating what he had to say, not because we want to avoid plagiarising his speech, nor because we might disagree with him (we don't), but because his comments were directed at an audience which consisted largely of other writers and other professionals in the trade; our comments will try to give impressions directed at readers instead.

The first point is the impression the book makes on the casual shopper in the Alchemist's Head. I will have to confess that I saw Gateway there several weeks before the SF Convention in Dun Laoghaire; I picked it up, read the blurb on the back, and wasn't particularly impressed. Then I opened it up and read a rave review by Ben Bova, formerly Editor of Analog. If Ben Bova liked something, I usually don't, and vice versa. Look at all my short stories he refuses to buy! Ben's comments were enough for me: back on the rack it went.

Then I listened to Brian Aldiss talk about it at the dinner. I became intrigued. By the end of the dinner, I knew I had to read it.

I guess I really haven't told you much about the book yet. It is physically a three-tiered story: there is the main action framework of the story, a series of flashbacks with a common thread, and interspersed documentary flashbacks. The main thread is the protagonist (Bob Broadhead) talking over the sequential flashbacks with his computer-analyst Sigfrid von Shrink. The flow of the flashbacks is broken up with a very interesting group of extracts from lectures, mission reports, contract blanks, classified advertisements, and casualty figures, which all spice the scenes very effectively. My own favourites are the mission reports and the lecture extracts.

The sequential flashbacks are really what the book is about. Bob Broadhead, a food miner, wins \$250,000 in a lottery. To break out of his rut, Bob gambles (in effect) his life that he can get more money by becoming a prospector for Gateway Enterprises. This firm, in reality an international apolitical organisation, runs Gateway. Gateway is a space station built thousands or millions of years ago by the Heechee, a race whose useless artifacts litter most of the caves of Venus. When Gateway was discovered, however, some useful remains were encountered, namely about 1000 spaceships in more-or-less working condition. The ships (in three sizes, able to carry 1, 3, or 5 humans) are capable of faster-than-light travel, and when the flashback opens with Broadhead arriving, Gateway Enterprises has already been exploring for about 18 years. Various useful artifacts have been brought back; another Gateway was found about 400 light years from Earth, for instance. But there are still some vital items missing from the loot which has been brought home, and some useful information is still being sought, like:

Where do the ships go? (Before someone tries a course setting, no one can tell. No charts, no keys to the instruments or the piloting computer.)

How do you know if your ship needs fuel?

What is the fuel?

How does the FTL Drive work?

Where did the Hecches go? And why?

Part of a subplot is involved with the generation of computer correlations to find out fuel status, danger of destination (only about 40% of the trips are successful. A trip is successful by definition when the ship comes back, even if the crew is dead or missing) and so on. It is a very big occasion when one ship brings back a tool kit. Every attempt to open an FTL drive unit with human tools has resulted in a blast on the order of a kiloton.

I could go on and on describing the technical detail, all of it very entertaining and important, yet all very smoothly inserted into the flow of the novel. But to get on with the story, Bob takes three trips after a good bit of hemming and hawing while building up his courage to go on a flight. He is only marginally successful (i.e. he earns enough to keep from being spaced for non-payment of the life-support tax on Gateway), and in the end strikes it rich only because of a huge danger bonus which was assigned to his third mission because of the anticipated danger. (Fortunately, small or less well armoured ships will reject some destinations as being beyond their capabilities automatically; thus it is known in advance when a given course setting is certain to arrive at a dangerous location.) Bob makes no major find, behaves reprehensibly, and later has trouble living with himself. This is why he is getting shrunk by a computer-analyst 16 years later.

I can really say very little else without going into more detail than a reviewer should. Mind you, the detail is what makes the book as enjoyable, self-consistent, and professional as it is. In fact, I had some difficulty identifying with old Bob, primarily, I think, because he is a rather disagreeable character. Where he hesitates and calculates possible financial reward to avoid further trips, I would probably head out on a new trip after each long weekend home, and forget the money. (Well, maybe not, with only a 40% chance they'll even see the ship again, and about a 75% chance of death...) But Bob does not sense in the slightest the thrill and the excitement of being a prospector, which Pohl has deliberately built into the general background of the story.

In this vein, I will make one more comment which will doubtless make no sense to you until after you have read the book. Pohl has designed a society based on things I could not begin to speculate on. Many of the reactions and personal relationships are fairly conventional. But in every situation, in every possible context, Pohl's society demonstrates with incredible consistency, an attitude towards RISK which is alien to anything I have ever known or experienced in other reading. He has fashioned something as new to us, and as difficult to appreciate completely, as our current acceptance of near-instantaneous worldwide verbal communication would have been to our ancestors in the early 1800's. And he has his own society accept this new attitude, to take it for granted, to such an extent that it is never explained explicitly in the course of the novel. The people live the belief, it is accepted by the reader, and this is how it should be.

If it isn't clear by now, I would recommend this book to almost anyone solely on its own merits. There is no doubt in my mind that it fully deserves the John W. Campbell Award. Though I have not yet seen the other review, I suspect that it will be similarly enthusiastic, though no doubt with different emphases.

Reviewed by John McCarthy

The Drought by J.G. Ballard (London; Triad Panther, 1978, 80 p.)

No doubt as part of an effort to build up a decent SF list, the relatively recently formed Triad Paperbacks (a combination of Panther and Mayflower) are in the process of reissuing a number of Ballard's books. So far, two of his earlier

novels have appeared, the Crystal World (a former Panther) and the Drought (a former Penguin; U.S. Title was the Burning World) May we hope for some of the now unavailable story collections, such as Low Flying Aircraft and the Overloaded Man?

The Drought, originally published in 1965, is Ballard's third novel, and can be seen as part of a loose tetralogy of ecological disaster novels. Of these, the Drought and its earlier opposite (in setting, at least), the Browned World, are in my opinion the most successful.

The ecological disaster that provides the stage for the Drought is of course that of the title. Industrial wastes, some of it radioactive, dumped into the oceans over a period of decades, cause a film of molecular thickness to form on the surface of the water, effectively preventing evaporation to form clouds. The rain cycle is interrupted and soon all land is turned into uninhabitable desert. The entire population huddles for the beaches, where the government, or what's left of it, sets up plants to distill drinkable water out of seawater.

With a setting like that, you can do one of two things: either you make a multi-million-dollar disaster movie, or you use it to explore a really interesting question. "Earthquake" being several years in the future, and Ballard being Ballard, made him opt for the latter. The Drought, then, offers a relatively fresh look at the old question of the relationship between the (physical) external world and the (mental) internal world. His treatment is closer to surrealist painting (see Ballard's article, "The Coming of the Unconscious" in the Overloaded Man) than to previous literature. In fact, the whole novel closely follows one particular painting, "Jours de Lenteur" (Days of Slowness), by Yves Tanguy. I will not spoil your enjoyment of the novel by tracing all the images and structural elements derived from that painting. Suffice it to say that the landscapes of "Jours de Lenteur" and the Drought are at times identical.

To get back to the terms of the novel itself, the two worlds, or in Ballardian terms, the outer and "inner landscape" (p. 148) are at first fairly well defined and separated. This may be seen as the "normal" or "sane" condition, the condition, that is, of Dr. Charles Ransom's (the protagonist's) mind. But slowly these two are seen to intermingle. This is cleverly done by a large number of parallels between the two "landscapes", usually when inner states of mind are compared to or expressed in terms of the actual, physical landscape. This becomes more explicit when "The unvarying light and absence of all movement [in a dried out river bed] made Ransom feel that he was advancing across an inner landscape where the elements of the future stood around him like objects in a still life, formless and without association." (p. 148) At the somewhat ambiguous end of the novel, Ransom "noticed that he no longer cast any shadow onto the sand, as if he had at last completed his journey across the margins of the inner landscape he had carried in his mind for so many years." (p. 188) While this could be seen as the complete intermixture, or if you like, reconciliation of the outer and inner landscapes, the fact remains that the absence of Ransom's shadow was caused by a cloud, bringing the first rain in more than ten years, which, incidentally, is an unusually hopeful ending for Ballard's standards, even if for Ransom all hope seems to be lost: "It was sometime later that he failed to notice it had started to rain." (p. 188)

All this, together with a careful, precise if slow style, an equally precisely built structure, and a cast of exhilaratingly eccentric characters, combine to make the Drought required and enjoyable reading for anyone interested in high quality SF.

Reviewed by J.J. Struben

There are over SIXTY previously unmentioned new books in the ISFA Library, so read your new booklist closely when it comes out!

Gateway by Frederik Pohl (Second Review)

Fred Pohl's novel Gateway, winner of the 1977 John W. Campbell Award, postulates a future society in which the human race discovers a working space station plus spaceships left by an advanced but now mysteriously extinct race called Heechees. No one understands exactly how the spaceships work or how they have been programmed to reach their appointed destinations.

Despite this uncertainty, mankind is willing to risk using the ships to find other Heechee artifacts whose rarity accounts for their high value. Most of the ships which go out never return or else come back with a dead crew. A few find something of value and retire to Earth as millionaires, the remainder manage to scrape a living, comfortable or otherwise, on Gateway.

The novel is concerned with the male central character Robinette Broadhead, who wins a sum of money in a lottery on Earth, enabling him to leave his secure but dull job and go to Gateway. There he hopes to become a successful prospector and strike it rich, although the odds against that are very low. It's much more probable that he'll end up dead.

The story of Broadhead's experiences on Gateway is told in flashback form, interposed between details of his consultation sessions with a computer psychiatrist on Earth. It becomes apparent that Broadhead has not only survived but also struck it rich. He lives a comfortable life on Earth and has all he ever wanted. The guy is a success. So what's his problem? We wonder.

Pohl uses the structure of the novel to build towards an impressive climax where Broadhead not only reveals his problem but also manages to face it. It is not the sort of smart ending which ties up all the loose ends and leaves the reader with a pretty package to admire, but one in which questions are still left open and unresolved.

Pohl's novel is deserving of the Campbell Award because this work exemplifies the heights which Science Fiction as a form of literature is capable of achieving.

Pohl portrays the people on Gateway as having become a scavenger species, living off the remains of a long-dead culture. Yet he does not make the mistake of casting the people within that society as scavengers also. They are still individuals, not cardboard copies of the society which produces them. They have individual reasons for doing the things they do, taking the risks they take. Is it greed which drives them to gambling with their own lives in the hope of winning large rewards? Or is it that human beings cannot be content with a safe, secure existence but have to press themselves to the limits of their abilities?

The novel also asks the questions but thankfully doesn't provide us with any short, simplistic answers.

The characters in Gateway have a more pronounced degree of realism than SF is usually credited with being capable of realising. Broadhead is not a heroic figure, neither strong nor brave nor all-conquering. We see him when he is at his weakest; pitting his wits against a computer psychiatrist which succeeds in manipulating him for his own good, running away from his own mistakes, avoiding the issues and responsibilities he isn't strong enough to face. Broadhead is, in short, scared, defensive, and vulnerable, characteristics which succeed in making him more human and real to the reader.

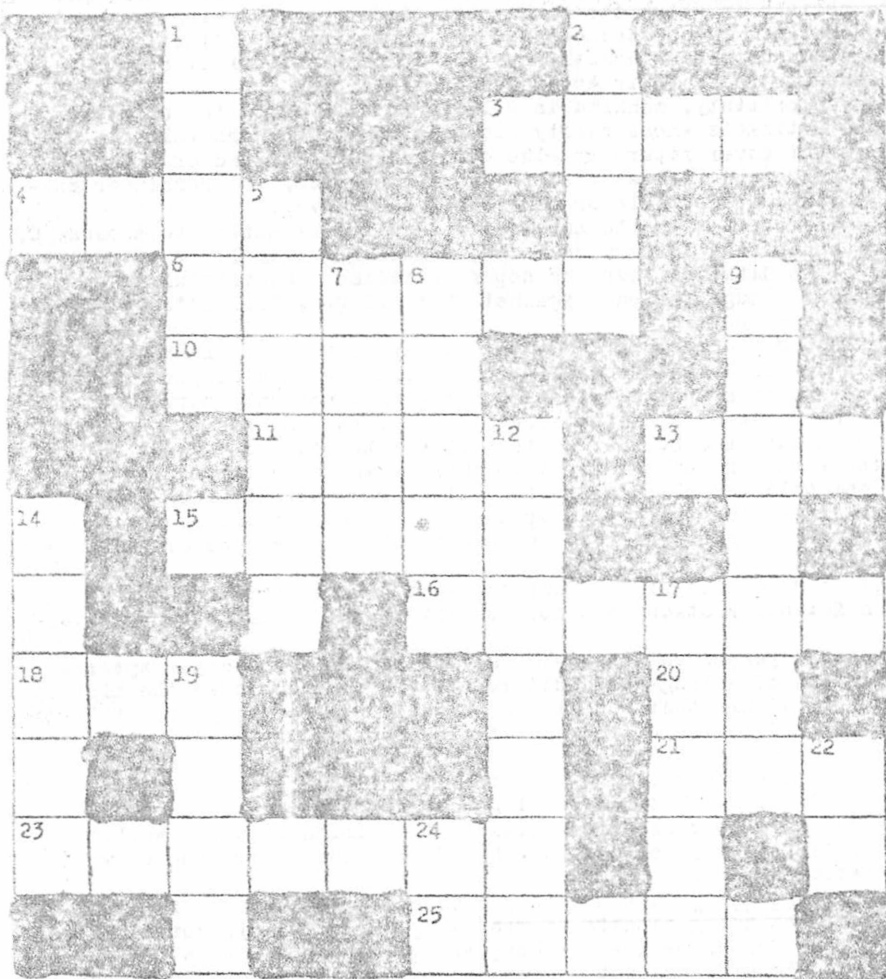
The one complaint I have with the book concerns not the content but the structure of the novel. Pohl gives us additional information about the Heechees and Gateway by scattering reports throughout the main narrative. The reports include details of Heechee remains and their culture, the survival rates of the Gateway missions, financial rewards earned, details of failed missions, etc.

The information is welcome and adds depth to the novel but is rather distracting at times. I had to skip all the inserts towards the end of the book to avoid losing the flow of events and emotions leading towards the climax. It

(Continued on page 15)

SF Cross word

(answers on page 1)



ACROSS

3. SF artist (4)
4. Morsey occupation (4)
6. Nuclear power type (6)
10. Brother of dragonrider with flair (4)
11. Type of coal (4)
13. Paperback publisher (3)
15. Waxed and _____ (5)
16. Time unit in World of Ptavvs (6)
18. Gesture with head (3)
20. Chemical symbol (2)

DOWN

1. Matter (loosely speaking)(5)
2. Astrophysical status of Jinx (4)
5. _____ Makenzie (6)
7. In a short while (4)
8. Annoyed (5)
9. Cause of death in a spacing (7)
12. What Asimov and Scithers are (7)
14. Star (5)
17. Jacque Lafeyvre's job (5)
19. Type of yeast in Protector (4)
22. What most BEM's are (2)
24. Chemical symbol (2)

21. Madame (Ab.) (3)
23. "Slippery Jim's" middle name (7)
25. Employers of tools (5)

Review of Gateway (Continued from page 13)

might have been better to group these reports in chapters of their own rather than disrupting the main structure of the book.

Nevertheless, despite this flaw, Fohl has succeeded in writing a novel which could only have been created within an SF medium.

Gateway is as close to real science fiction as you'll ever get. The central theme is human not hardware, the plot is valid in itself, not just an excuse to show off imaginative technology. Instead, the technology creates a situation for the characters to live within and presents them with problems which test and expand their abilities.

In my opinion, that is what real science fiction is all about and Fohl's novel rightly deserves the award which commemorates the achievement of a man who helped to make SF more than just escapist literature.

Reviewed by Rita Keenan

Tower of Glass by Robert Silverberg (London; Pan Books, 70p.)

This novel is set in the year 2218, in an earth ruled by a World Congress from Geneva, when all national governments have disappeared due to the invention of the "Transmat", or an instantaneous matter transmitter.

The main character is Simeon King, a billionaire inventor, who has created a new race of androids to run both his won and other industries. When the novel opens, he has just started building a huge tower in the Canadian Tundra, in order to send replies by tachyon beam to a star in the Proxima Centaurus system, which has been transmitting signals to Earth.

In his portrayal of the androids' creation, Silverberg recalls Huxley's Brave New Worlds, especially in his description of the "Alpha", "Beta", & "Gamma" religion, based on the worship of their creator King, and the novel develops to a powerful tragic climax, when King brutally destroys the androids' faith in him, by describing them as mere animated tools, things without any rights, working for humanity's benefit.

Silverberg has partly disproved this view by showing earlier in the novel that alpha class androids are capable of human feelings, and that even King's own son has fallen in love with an alpha female.

This novel is a fascinating exploration in hard SF terms of the problems concerning human-android relationships, and I would personally recommend it to ISP members.

Reviewed by David Lass

UBIK by Philip K. Dick and The Early Asimov (Vol 1.) by Isaac Asimov

It is impossible to deny that Philip K. Dick has a fertile imagination. In a prolific career he has forced readers to think about the way we construct our "reality", especially that element of it we call "Time". This book, however, is not one of his best. He has taken several ideas: telepathic and countertelepathic business practices, life after death, time slips, and the ubiquitous pressure of advertising, and made them into a novel which I must confess I found sloppy. Any of these ideas could have been developed into a good book; collectively, they constitute a rather appalling bag of words. The failings of the book lead

inexorably to an ending which is undoubtedly weak, and which I thought was a cheat.

As if to show how unmeaningful it is to talk of "all science fiction", the second book was a total change. It is a collection of eight short stories written by Asimov in the years 1939-1941, none of which has yet appeared in anthology. This last is perhaps a telling point, as I think that all his good stories have been anthologised. It is also relevant that all except one of them were either rejected by Cambell, or considered unsuitable for sending to him (on the grounds that he would reject them). Yet the stories are completely readable. They are all "rattling good yarns", a form of writing not to be sneered at. The feature of the stories that I found most fascinating, given the well-known urbanity of the good doctor, is their naïveté. He really was terribly innocent. Apart from this, it is not at all evident from the writing that these were written by a totally inexperienced 16 year old. For anyone except the very best, these stories would be considered good. Even if they are still less than average by Asimov's standards, they are still eminently readable.

Happily I read the Asimov second. It made a delightful and refreshing change from the first.

Reviewed by Eoin Barrett

Deluge by Richard Doyle (London;Pan books, 80p., 1977)

This is a novel by the great nephew of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and is reminiscent of some of his SF works. It is written in the tradition of "disaster-catastrophe" type novels, and describes a hypothetical flood by the river Thames, caused by abnormal gales in the North Sea, and its subsequent effects of the city of London.

The scene is set in London of 1978, and the author describes the events with graphic realism, showing a detailed knowledge of the complexities of flood control, and urban technologies. Although lacking in individual character portrayals this is a well written, realistic SF novel, worth reading.

Reviewed by David Iass

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

3. Poss
4. Stud
6. Fusion
10. F'mor
11. Coke
13. Ace
15. Waned
16. Diltun
18. Nod
20. AU
21. Mme
23. Bolivar
25. Users

DOWN

1. Stuff
2. Moon
5. Duncan
7. Soon
8. Irked
9. Vacuum
12. Editors
14. Deneb
17. Tamer
19. Dole
22. ET
24. AU

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