

# i4is' Science Fiction Anthology and Book Club

## Rob Swinney

The Science Fiction genre has been both inspired by the dream (and, later, the reality) of space travel and inspiring to space technology - notably from the 'Golden Age' of Asimov, Clarke and Heinlein and comic heroes like Buck Rogers and Dan Dare.

We recount our 2024 outreach to the genre at the 2024 SF WorldCon elsewhere in this issue. Here our Deputy Director, Rob Swinney, introduces another way in which we bring together imagination and reality, our upcoming anthology and regular book club.

For more than a year, members and friends of i4is have come together to read and write science fiction (SF). The initial spark for writing came from people volunteering to contribute to a new i4is SF anthology of short stories on the interstellar theme, a collection that will be published in due course (see below for details). Associated writing workshops are run by our very own experts Sarah Margree and Jean Asselin, with two in-person classes already completed, and an ongoing online one. In order to stimulate interest in reading SF, also to show our writers the scope of the genre, Sarah suggested running an online Book Club, which meets regularly on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

We've just finished reading the 36 short stories in *The Road to Science Fiction Vol 3: From Heinlein to Here*, a volume that covers the period from 1940 to 1975, from the 'Golden Age' to the 'New Wave'. Thoughtfully selected by author and scholar James E Gunn, the stories illustrates the different styles of story that evolved over the period, with each text introduced by a very enlightening short essay/preamble that situates the author and story within the SF genre. The consensus by the Club members is that this is a particularly entertaining book.

We've typically been selecting two stories from Volume 3 to read each time, and last month we completed the final story of the volume, 'Tricentennial' by Joe Haldeman. An interesting story published in 1976, it involves an interstellar spacecraft called Daedalus sent to 61 Cygni. This prompted a discussion of whether it had been influenced by the naming of the renowned Daedalus

Interstellar Star Probe Study carried out by the British Interplanetary Society between 1973-78. Daedalus and the subsequent Icarus study are close to the hearts of many members of i4is and BIS!

Finally, we are still inviting volunteers to try their hand at writing original SF stories for consideration for the i4is anthology. Science fiction is all about the consequences of introducing changes in the world, such as voyages to stars that have beckoned since the discovery of stellar parallax in the mid-19th century. This is an opportunity to expand the ideas at the heart of i4is' endeavours. To quote Arthur C Clarke, "The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible".

For more info on the anthology, the writing workshops, or the Book Club, contact [info@i4is.org](mailto:info@i4is.org).

