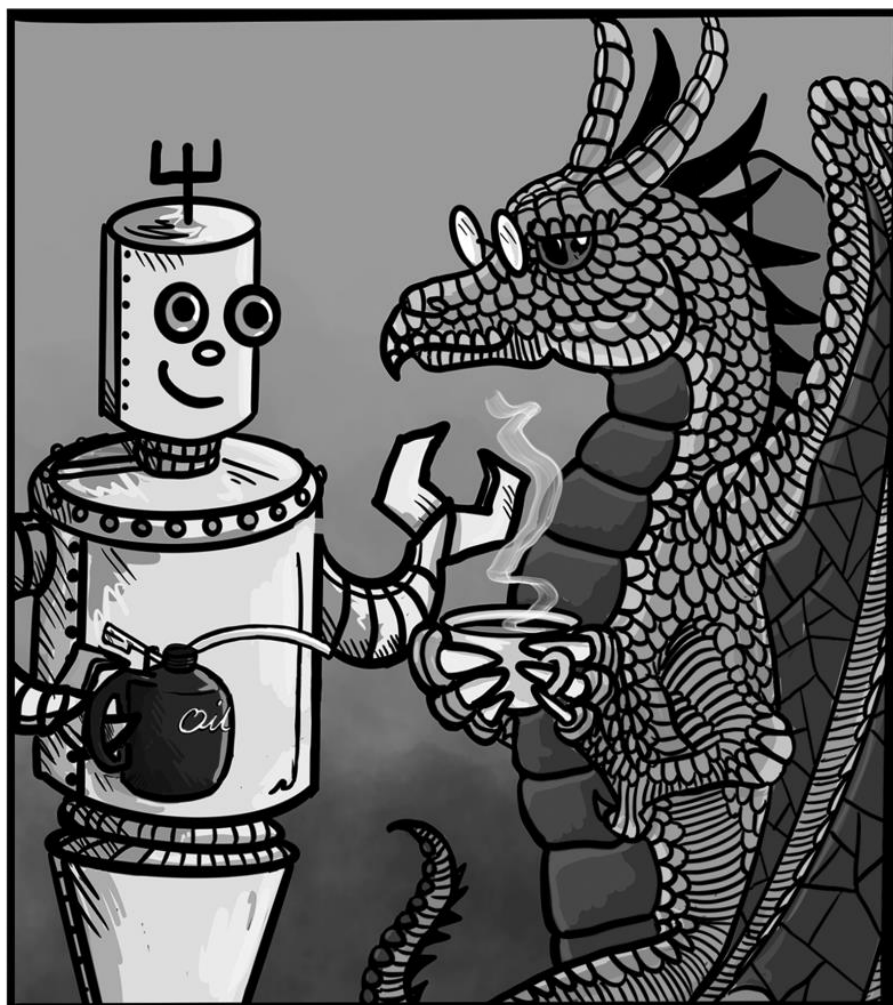


# CONVERSATION



**EASTERCON 2023**

7-10 April 2023

**Programme guide  
(larger print)**

# Conversation 2023 programme guide

This booklet provides a copy of information found in our online programme guide, provided via ConClár; we are offering this to members who prefer to use a paper version of this information. In line with our sustainability policy, we have not provided a copy of this paper guide automatically to all onsite members. A larger print version of this guide will be available at the ops hub for those who would find that useful.

We have prepared paper grids for the daily programme schedules to enable you to keep track of the items you'd particularly like to attend; ConClár also provides this functionality online for those who are able to use it, and has the advantage of being updated with any changes to the schedule or programme participants since this booklet went to press. You can view the online guide on your phone or in a web browser at <https://guide.conversation2023.org.uk/>

Our programme features all our Guests of Honour and many other creators and fans both on site or online. Programme items are arranged here by date and time. Each entry includes a brief description (this might have been elaborated in the online guide) and the type of item, as well as the confirmed participants; where relevant, moderators are marked as '(m)'. The list of participants, as well as the timing and onsite location of any item, is subject to change. Information about specific changes will be available in the newsletter and on Discord.

There are some workshops, table talks with the Guests of Honour and other programme items with limited places for which sign-up (sometimes for online as well as onsite members) is required in advance. The process for doing that is explained on page 35 as well as in the Read Me.

Programme begins on most days at 9AM (noon on Friday, with the formal opening ceremony at 3PM) and closes by 10.30PM except on Monday, where the closing ceremony at 3 PM concludes Conversation's programme. Items have been scheduled in 90-minute slots, with the intention being that most will last for around an hour, leaving plenty of time for people to move around the site and for rooms to be reset before the next item. Times are UTC+1 (British summer time).

Children are welcome at all items unless stated they are not allowed; some items carry a content warning for 'parental discretion', and parents/guardians will want to consider the specific content for their children on that basis. All children under 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult, which includes remaining with them during programme items and in lounges/workshop rooms.

You will recall that our policy on Covid-19 and other infectious diseases encourages members to mask, for the protection of yourselves and others, when in public and convention spaces (other than when eating and drinking). Due to these programme items allowing refreshments, including some exertion, and/or taking place at least partly outside, you will not be asked to wear a mask while attending them; they have been noted as 'mask optional' in this guide.

**Cover art by Sue Mason**

# Thursday 6 April

4.30 pm

## **So... You're Here Early!**

It's Thursday, and here you are! You've arrived early for the con: whether you're a regular or brand new, here's what you can expect (and how you can help). Join us in the main bar or hop on Discord to see what's up!

# Friday 7 April

Noon

## **BSFA presents: Journals, anthologies, and more! (talk/lecture – Wellington-Salisbury)**

A look at the BSFA's many publications, and some of the BSFA's favourite external magazines.

*Stew Hotston (m), Allen Stroud*

## **Eastercon kids' meet: Friday (craft lounge; for children)**

For children and younger teens, and their grown-ups, a family meetup in the craft room to talk about all things Eastercon!

## **Hey, you! Pay me! (panel – Balmoral)**

Even the most experienced authors sometimes find invoices unpaid. Our panel talk about the art of valuing your work, and getting what you deserve – and some of the barriers to that.

*Wendy Bradley (m), Mike Brooks, John Jarrold, Juliet E McKenna*

## **Luna Press launch (Pavilion; parental discretion; mask optional)**

Kick off Eastercon with a launch party from Luna Press – an aperitif to whet your appetite for the whole weekend ahead! Luna's fantastic creators will be launching: Anna Smith Spark with her new novel, *A Woman of the Sword*; Tiffani Angus and Val Nolan with their non-fiction, *Spec Fic for Newbies: A Beginners' Guide to Writing Subgenres of Fantasy, Science Fiction and Horror*; Francesco Verso at last launching his SF novel, *Bloodbusters*, after the original 2020 launch was cancelled.

## **Readings: Adults miscellaneous (Queens; parental discretion)**

No sex, some violence, and some dark, disturbing themes.

*Garth Nix, Gillian Polack, Edmund Schluessel, Anna Stephens*

## **SF in antiquity (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

The strange and wonderful SFnal origins of the genre from bronze men in Greek myth to telescope viewings of men on the moon.

*Chris McCartney (m), The Fossil, Clare Goodall, Cheryl Morgan, Marcus Rowland*

**1.30 pm**

## **D&D One, or Five Point Five? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Is this really the new – and last – edition of the infamous RPG?

*Esther, Ed Fortune ( @ed\_fortune), Omar Kooheji (m), Martin*

## **Fibrecraft for the fidgety (craft lounge)**

An informal crafting meeting to trade fibrecraft secrets, learn new skills, and share knowledge about all things fibrecraft.

*CL Gamble, Lola Third Vault Yarnie*

## **How to write in public (round table – Gladstone-Churchill)**

A round table and quasi-workshop to help current and aspiring authors develop useful skills in capturing an audience with your live reading, knowing when to disengage online, and the art of being criticised.

*Trip Galey, SJ (Sarah) Groenewegen, M V Melcer (Mel), David Wake (m)*

## **Illustration for narrative (panel – Queens)**

Matching pictures with words.

*Dawn Abigail, Jackie Burns, Jennell Jaquays, Ursula Vernon, Gareth Worthington (m)*

## **Read the subtitles! Beyond English language in genre TV and film (panel – Balmoral)**

What are you missing if you don't get beyond the one-inch barrier of subtitles? What new worlds might you open up? And what the problems might be. Also, the pros and cons of dubbed versions.

*Ruth EJ Booth, Zen Cho, Anne-Louise Fortune, Gillian Polack, Anna Raftery (m)*

## **Readings from Elsewhen (Pavilion; parental discretion; mask optional)**

A quartet of Elsewhen Press authors read from their works. Enjoy excerpts by *Andy McKell, Juliet Kemp, Judith Mortimore and Penny Hill*, accompanied by refreshments.

## **Where does history end and fantasy begin? (panel – Sandringham)**

Can fantasy be historically accurate? Can history ever escape the fantastical? A look at the ways that history is impacted by myth and popular imagination, and how fantasy in turn creates its own idea of history.

*David Green, Kate Heartfield, Kari Sperring, David Stokes – Guardbridge Books (m), Sandra Unerman*

**3 pm**

***(All panels will start around 15 minutes after advertised start time to minimise clash with the opening ceremony.)***

## **The adaptable Gaiman (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

*Neverwhere, Sandman, Good Omens, American Gods* – what an adaptable author! Our panel discuss what exactly makes Neil Gaiman such a well-regarded author and share some of their favourite aspects of his storytelling style.

*Randee Dawn, Trip Galey, Alexander Glass, Kate Towner (m)*

## **The last five years: new SFF (panel – Balmoral)**

Reviewing recent works: those we expect to have staying power, works which have gone tragically overlooked, and newly emerging talent.

*David Green, Stew Hotston (m), Abigail Nussbaum, Gareth Worthington*

## **Opening ceremony (event – Queens)**

Welcome to Eastercon! We've snuck a few preview sessions before our official opening ceremony so you've had a little time to see our convention... now, let's welcome you in and get this started!

*Zen Cho, Niall Harrison, Jennell Jaquays, Caroline Mullan (m), Kari Sperring, Adrian Tchaikovsky, Ursula Vernon*

## **Queer pirates (panel – Sandringham)**

A discussion including fandom and canon of *Our Flag Means Death* and other series such as *Black Sails*.

*Ryann Fletcher, Kate Heartfield (m), RB Juliet Kemp, F. D. Lee*

## **Rockets matter: listen to me (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Should space travel be owned by private firms? Should rockets be recycled? And what about the people and ecology of the Earth-side launch zones?

*Jackie Burns, E.M. Faulds, Bill Ray (m), Allen Stroud*

4.30 pm

**Adventuring as an older protagonist (panel – Sandringham)**

Who says the Chosen One has to be under 30? Our panel have a chat about their favourite characters who enter the narrative with a few more years under their belt. From Stede Bonnet to Esme Weatherwax, who are your favourite older protagonists?

*Kate, Catherine Sharp (m), Sandra Unerman, Virginia, Susie Williamson*

**Beyond human intelligence (panel – Balmoral)**

Animal sapience, collective intelligence, alien minds and uplifted futures.

*TJ Berg (m), Stew Hotston, V Anne Smith, Danna Staaf, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

**Climate fiction: a very current subgenre (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

The drivers behind climate fiction and whether it can help us save the planet. What's happening in climate fiction: is it all doom and gloom or are there some positives? Does activism make for good fiction? Where has the genre been done well?

*Vincent Docherty, E.M. Faulds (m), Ian Green, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Ian McDonald*

**Desert Island Books (interview – Queens)**

Join Guest of Honour Niall Harrison as he tells us all about his foundational reads.

*Niall Harrison, Dan Hartland, Roz Kaveney, Graham Sleight, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

**Eclectic Dreams launch party (Pavilion; parental discretion; mask optional)**

*Eclectic Dreams*, the new anthology from Grimbold Press, is launching here at Eastercon! Chat to editors about this array of works by Milford creators. This collection is published to support the Milford Bursary Scheme which provides funding for writers of colour.

*Tiffani Angus, Jacey Bedford, multijimbo, Pete W Sutton*

**Life drawing class (craft lounge)**

A guided class for drawing a clothed figure.

*Eira*

**No simple binaries (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Characters and settings who've just said 'no' to gender binaries. From Martha Wells's *Murderbot* to Ursula Le Guin's *Gethenians* and Mary Gentle's *Ortheans*: a look at the history and future of non-binary characters (and where the human non-binary characters are).

*Sandra Bond, Mike Brooks, Juliet Kemp, Cheryl Morgan (m), Edmund Schluessel*

### **Tarot (workshop – Sussex; parental discretion)**

Jan Siegel presents this workshop on Tarot skills, including discussion of her new book in collaboration with Pat Cadigan. Requires sign-up (see page 35).

### **Your first Eastercon? (discussion group – Tea Lounge)**

Is this your first time at Eastercon? If so, welcome! We're so pleased you've chosen to join us, and we understand that this convention might look and feel a little different to other sci-fi events you've attended. Come to this session to gain valuable insight into how Eastercon works, what you can expect from the event, and to ask any questions that you have.

*Fiona Moore (m)*

**6 pm**

### **The magical city of Birmingham (round table – Wellington-Salisbury)**

We didn't just pick this place because it has a nice train station! Birmingham has a tremendous degree of history and potential, but is often overshadowed by megacities like London and New York in fiction. We argue to redress that balance!

*Dawn Abigail (m), Farah (Levitation), David Wake*

### **Meet the artists (Monarch – art show)**

Come and meet the artists in the art show and see the amazing art!

*Jackie Duckworth (m)*

### **NewCon Press launch party (Queens; parental discretion; mask optional)**

Come and join the wonderful authors of NewCon Press, including our very own Guest of Honour Kari Sperring, as they launch this year's magnificent new offerings.

*Kari Sperring, Ian Whates*

### **Putting yourself on the page (round table – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Marginalised people have long headcanoned / fanoned their favourite franchises that otherwise left them out. Is this still necessary in an era of increasingly diverse publication?

*Tim Knight, Jess Meats, Angeli Primlani (m), Marcus Rowland, Heather Valentine*

### **So bad it's great (panel – Sandringham)**

What's so bad it's good, what's so bad it's bad, and what could have been great if only something hadn't gone wrong? Why we love the sincerely hamfisted in sci-fi film and TV sometimes more than the soullessly immaculate.

*Fran Dowd, Elliot, Dave McCarty, Fiona Moore (m), Tlanti*



### **Tea! Beyond the brew (panel – Tea Lounge)**

Tea is much, much more than a refreshing drink. It has medicinal purposes and can be used as a cooking ingredient, as a cultural touchstone, and even as a currency! Join us for a chat.

*A.Y. Chao, Aliette de Bodard, Anne-Louise Fortune, Omar Kooheji (m)*

### **Writing about game universes (panel – Balmoral)**

What are the joys, drawbacks or challenges of writing within a specified universe for games? And how should it be achieved? From TTRPGs to computer games, our panellists discuss playing by someone else's rules to create new and meaningful art.

*Sarah Cole, SJ (Sarah) Groenewegen, Kate Heartfield (m), Jennell Jaquays, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

**6.30 pm**

### **The Dark Room (event – Pavilion)**

Join in the world's only live action interactive video game!

**7.30 pm**

### **A brief history of feminist SFF imprints (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

The Women's Press in the 1980s and 1990s published SFF, old and new. In 2020, GoldSF launched as a new intersectional feminist SFF imprint. The panellists will give a short history and talk about why such an imprint is needed now.

*SJ (Sarah) Groenewegen, Kate Heffner, Paul March-Russell, Lucy A. McLaren (m), Susie Williamson*

### **Conlangs and you (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Our panel look at a history of deliberately constructed languages in both fiction and real life, and how, when, or if you should use them in your fiction.

*Mike Brooks, Jude Roberts, Catriona Silvey (m), Anna Smith Spark, David Stokes – Guardbridge Books*

### **Readings: Adult orientated and the fantastical (Balmoral; parental discretion)**

Reading slot for writers: adult orientated and fantastical/mythological.

*Sandra Bond, F. D. Lee, Juliet E McKenna, Wole Talabi*

### **Storytelling in maps: dungeon design (panel – Queens)**

Designing dungeons for engaging gaming: what is it about maps that makes the game world more real? And what are some of our favourites?

*Michael Cule (m), Penny Hill, Jennell Jaquays, Omar Kooheji (m), Martin*

### **Why should you join a Society? (panel – Sandringham)**

The BSFA is a key part of Eastercon: why should you join it, or groups like it?

*Ali Baker (m), Emily Inkpen, Shona Kinsella, Allen Stroud*

**8 pm**

### **Glasgow 2024 presents: Gin24 tasting (workshop – Pavilion; children not allowed, mask optional)**

Taste the delicious custom Glasgow 2024 gin with the Glasgow Worldcon team!

*Lizzzz, Meg MacDonald @megintransition (m)*

**9 pm**

### **Adaptation-a-go-go (panel – Sandringham)**

*Sandman, She-Hulk, Good Omens II, Rings of Power...* A chat about adaptations, tie-ins, unlikely sequels, and all the big IPs dominating our screens.

*Jon Evans, Anne-Louise Fortune (m), David Green, F. D. Lee, Catherine Sharp*

### **The dark heart of childhood (panel – Balmoral)**

SFF children's books often contain a kernel of horror or revolve around tragedy. Why is that, and what do children get from it?

*Fran Dowd, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Lucy A. McLaren, Judith Mortimore (m), Garth Nix, Ursula Vernon*

### **Fanzines in perspective: art, archive or ephemera? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

The growth of fan archives like fanac.org have demonstrated the value of fanzines as the history of our community, but what does that mean for fanzine producers today? Who are they writing for, is it art, and do they want to be in an archive?

*Tommy Ferguson, David Hodson, Jerry Kaufman, Clarrie Maguire, Geri Sullivan (m)*

### **Fearlessly spineless: invertebrates in SFFH (panel – Queens)**

Depictions of invertebrates in fiction through the ages. Be it giant squid, sentient spiders, or baby xenomorphs, fiction has a long history with spineless creatures. Authors and experts discuss their fears and favourites of this boneless bunch.

*TJ Berg (m), Dr Bob, Marcus Rowland, Danna Staaf, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

### **Gig (economies) in space (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

The gig economy, with all its precarity, remains a fact of life in this century; how does SFF see gig working, or does it engage at all?

*Elliot (m), Stew Hotston, Nick Hubble, RB Kelly, Edmund Schluessel*

### **SF now: South America (panel – Pavilion)**

State of the genre: South America. What we are missing? A look at the current gems in South American SF publishing that aren't making it to the UK/US/Australian market.

*Gustavo Bondoni, Fabio Fernandes, David Stokes – Guardbridge Books (m)*

# Saturday 8 April

## Before 9 am

**parkrun (Babbs Mill course; gathering location/time to be decided; mask optional)**

Run to start at 9 AM, gather beforehand at the hotel to travel together.  
*Christina Lake (m), James Shields (LostCarPark)*

## 9 am

**Hard to pin down: why we love weird fiction (panel – Queens)**

Slippery to categorise, a joy to read: let's talk about fiction that is hard to define! What elements can go into a weird story? Why do we love it? Who is writing it well? And how do you know if you want to be a weird fiction writer?  
*Gustavo Bondoni, Meggie, Tim Mendees, E. Saxey (m), Pete W Sutton*

**Pros and cons of writing groups (panel – Sandringham)**

Thinking of writing but finding it tough going it alone? Find out more about writing groups in their different forms. Critiquing skills, being held to account, and more.  
*Charlotte Ashley (m), Kat Kourbeti, Brian (Munchkin) Milton, Kari Sperring, Rebecca Zahabi*

**SF, ethics and science (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Debating ethical issues in science through SF.  
*TJ Berg, Alexander Glass, Stew Hotston, Stephen Oram (m), Jude Roberts*

**When I am old I shall wear purple (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Discussion about how fans can remain personally happy and socially valuable after retirement.  
*Wendy Bradley, Fran Dowd, Penny Hill (m), Geoff Ryman*

**Why did you build it that way? (panel – Balmoral)**

Questionable engineering choices in fiction: do you really need spinning death blades leading to the engine room? Dodgy engineering choices as both a dramatic choice and a design horror.  
*Aliette de Bodard, Elliot, Jess Meats, Tim Rowe, Richard Stephenson (m)*

## **Writing collaboratively: how to write all alone together (panel – Pavilion)**

How do you approach another writer with the idea of working on a project together? How do you set up rules/guidelines? What are the benefits and drawbacks, and what happens when things go pear-shaped?

*Tiffani Angus, Trip Galey, Becky James, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Gareth Worthington (m)*

**10 am**

## **Qi Gong exercise class (location to be confirmed; mask optional)**

Gentle exercise to start your day out right.

*Allison Ewing*

**10.30 am**

## **Contract skills (workshop – Sussex; children not allowed)**

Francesca Barbini of Luna Press hosts this informative workshop to help you develop essential skills in reading, understanding, and negotiating your publishing contracts.

## **FANAC fanzine scanning station 1 (round table – craft lounge)**

Drop in and find out more about the FANAC fanzine scanning project, and bring along old fanzines to scan (permission from editors required).

*Joe Siclari, Edie Stern*

## **Feedback (discussion group – Pavilion)**

Queries, questions, concerns or compliments about the convention? Come and voice them in the feedback session to let the con committee know.

## **Independent treasures: small press (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Independent publishing: small press, unusual imprints, and even DIY.

*Sandra Bond, David Stokes – Guardbridge Books, Pete W Sutton (m), David Wake*

## **Readings: Fantasy works (Balmoral)**

Reading slot for writers: fantasy with a historical bent.

*Trip Galey, Ian Green, David Wake, J.L. Worrad*

## **SF Now: Africa (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

State of the genre: Africa. What we are missing? A look at the current gems in African SF publishing that aren't making it to the UK/US/Australian market.

*Oghenechovwe Ekpeki, Geoff Ryman (m), Wole Talabi*

## **Wanted undead or alive (panel – Sandringham; parental discretion)**

Necromancers, ghosts and the undead through the ages, and how speculative fiction handles the impermanency of death.

*Zen Cho, Stephen Deas, Meg MacDonald @megintransition (m), David Thomas Moore (he/him), Garth Nix*

## **Noon**

### **AI and SFF creativity: can AI create original art anyway? (panel – Sandringham)**

Machine-generated art (in its widest definition) is grabbing the headlines. Publishers have been under fire for AI cover art that used work from human artists without specific permission. An onslaught of AI-developed material has led to the closure of open submissions to SFF magazines. Our panel of experts discusses what 'AI' is, and isn't, and its impact on SFF.

*Lilian Edwards, Alexander Glass, Clark Seanor (m), Ursula Vernon, David Wake*

### **Books On The Hill launch (Tea Lounge; mask optional)**

Join Books On The Hill for the launch of James Bennett's latest title in their dyslexia-friendly line! Have a cup of tea and find out all about this amazing line of books.

*Booksonthehill – Alistair Sims (m)*

### **Disinformation: how to spot it and help stop its spread (talk/lecture – Balmoral)**

Disinformation is rife and threatening democracies. This presentation looks at practical methods everyone can use to identify it and help to curb its spread.

*SJ (Sarah) Groenewegen*

### **GoH interview: Kari Sperring (Queens)**

Guest of Honour Kari Sperring is interviewed by Juliet McKenna.

### **Isolation horror: small town shivers (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Folk horror frenzy in a tiny, isolated village in Cornwall? Weird goings-on in a mid-western town in the USA? Why are small settlements a favourite setting for Stranger Things to happen?

*Hildur Knútsdóttir, E. Saxey (m), Anna Smith Spark, Neil Williamson*

### **Originals on screen (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

In the age of the tie-in, what hope is there for original sci-fi and fantasy on the big and small screens?

*Ed Fortune ( @ed\_fortune ), Emily January (m), M V Melcer (Mel), Abigail Nussbaum, Gareth Worthington*

### **Reading aloud for public performance (workshop – Pavilion)**

Writers often have to read their work aloud in front of people. But how do you deal with lights and mics and still make your work captivating? Sign up for tips and tricks and a chance to practice a reading! You will be provided with some short readings (around 100 words), or bring your own.

*T.H. Dray, E.M. Faulds (m)*

### **SFF presents: Critical skills masterclass 1 (workshop – Sussex)**

The Science Fiction Foundation is pleased to present this masterclass in SFF criticism, led by Paul March-Russell and facilitated by Tony Keen. Requires sign-up (see page 35).

**1.30 pm**

### **Andor: Star Wars for adults? (panel – Sandringham)**

Is *Andor* the future of the Star Wars franchise? Is it as good as everyone says?

*Stephen Aryan, Mike Brooks, F. D. Lee (m), Fiona Moore, Ryann Fletcher, Russell A Smith*

### **Book launch: Niall Harrison (Queens; mask optional)**

A launch event for the book from one of our Guests of Honour, *All These Worlds: Reviews & Essays*, including an interview by Nina Allan.

### **Do genres have boundaries? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

How do you define a genre? Where are the boundaries where one ends and another begins? Let's talk about borders of genre, the difficult work of defining them (if it's even possible), and the joy of infinite subgenres.

*David Green, Roz Kaveney, Chris McCartney (m), Jude Roberts, Rebecca Zahabi*

### **Eastercon kids' meet: Saturday (craft lounge; for children)**

For children and younger teens, and their grown-ups, a family meetup in the craft room to talk about all things Eastercon!

### **My first contract (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

What to watch out for in your first publishing contract.

*Tiffani Angus (m), Francesca T Barbini – Luna Press Publishing, Randee Dawn, Garth Nix, David Wake*

### **Recycled jewellery craft (workshop – Sussex)**

Join CL Gamble to learn ways that you can rescue, reuse and remake all sorts of things into jewellery in this DIY workshop. Requires sign up (see page 35); donation suggested on the day to cover material costs.

### **Roamers: a solarpunk launch party (Pavilion; mask optional)**

Come and join the party with Flame Tree Press as we celebrate the launch of *Roamers*, the exciting new Solarpunk novel from Francesco Verso!

### **The Lady and the Octopus (talk/lecture – Balmoral)**

A talk from Danna Staaf on the subject of her new book: Jeanne Villepreux-Power, a revolutionary 18th century woman who invented the modern aquarium and forever changed our understanding of marine evolution.

**3 pm**

### **Alternatives to currency (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

What else is there? Envisioning societies that don't rely on card, hard cash (or SFnal credits): what are the alternatives, and what can these societies look like?  
*Stew Hotston, Juliet Kemp (m), Fiona Moore, Gillian Polack, Jesper Stage*

### **Erie River joint launch party (Tea Lounge; parental discretion; mask optional)**

Rachael Boucker will be reading from her new book, *Shades Of Night*, along with fellow label author David Green from his latest novel, *Path of War* – join them both in the tea lounge to celebrate the launch of these fantastic works!

### **Film analysis skills (talk/lecture – Balmoral)**

*Zoe Burgess-Foreman (m)*

### **Gateway to fantasy: YA writing (panel – Sandringham)**

Authors and the worlds that have been a gateway to fantasy for a whole generation: Tamora Pierce, Seanan Maguire, Patrick Ness, and more!  
*Becky James, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Lucy A. McLaren, Susie Williamson*



### **Hay Lecture (Queens)**

The hitchhiker's guide to healthcare: what science tells us sickness and dying will look like on a dangerously hot planet. The Hay Lecture is presented by the Science Fiction Foundation, and this year will be given by Dr Colin Carlson of Georgetown University with an introduction by Graham Sleight of the SFF.

### **John Brunner (talk/lecture – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Ian Millsted gives an interim report on his research on Hugo Award-winning SF author John Brunner, and some of the research challenges he faces. Introduced by Ian Watson.

### **Living dystopia: is the real world worse? (panel – Pavilion)**

Dystopias are a long-time mainstay of SFF. Many reflect aspects of the real world in which they were produced and were created as dire warnings. This panel seeks to understand the nature of the real dystopias that more and more of us are living in.

*Fran Dowd (m), Oghenechovwe Ekpeki, RB Kelly, Nige, Stephen Oram*

### **Table talk with Adrian Tchaikovsky (Sussex; mask optional)**

Join our Guest of Honour, Adrian Tchaikovsky, for an hour of cosy and casual conversation! This fully hybrid item has limited places and requires sign up whether you join online or in person. See page 35 for sign-up details.

**4.30 pm**

### **Archiving fandom (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Preserving lost websites, zines from the '50s, and long out of print film is something that often falls to us rather than any official body. How does fandom archive its history and genre history as a whole, and what are some of the benefits and drawbacks?

*Sandra Bond, Kate Heffner, Dave McCarty, Ian Millsted (m), Joe Siclari*

### **The art of the edit (panel – Queens)**

The ins and outs of editing.

*Ruth EJ Booth, Anne Charnock (m), Oghenechovwe Ekpeki, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Pete W Sutton*

### **BFS pub meet (bar; mask optional)**

Come and join the British Fantasy Society for a social chat in the hotel bar!

### **Book launch: Rhapsody of Blood volume 5 (Pavilion; mask optional)**

Roz Kaveney's extraordinary Rhapsody of Blood series reaches volume five, released this month. Join us to celebrate the launch.

### **Designing the future (panel – Sandringham)**

How design in our lives can be influenced by the fantastical to make reality from fiction – and how it can feed back.

*Andrew Armstrong, Oliver Langmead, Clark Seanor (m), Smuzz*

### **Imagining reproductive futures (talk/lecture – Balmoral; parental discretion)**

As long-duration spaceflight becomes a reality, it becomes urgent to address the health risks faced by astronauts sent on long missions and the issue of human reproduction in space. Is it ethical to have babies in space when we don't know the risks for them or the parents? What if people become infertile in space? How can technology be used to help humans reproduce in adverse conditions? In this talk, we showcase how science fiction and scientific data can be combined to model relationships about reproduction in space, develop predictive models for novel scenarios, and respond to some of the pressing questions we have about our future far from Earth.

*Emily Finer, Lara Jost (m), Nick Simonetti, V Anne Smith*

### **Metal clay (workshop – craft lounge; parental discretion)**

Create metal clay silver jewellery in this hands-on workshop led by Helen Foster Turner of London Metal Clay. This item requires sign up in advance and has a fee for materials. See page 35 for sign-up details

### **Readings: PG/12A rated SF (Gladstone-Churchill; parental discretion)**

Reading slot for writers.

*Gustavo Bondoni, John Dodd, Russell A Smith, Gareth Worthington*

### **Table talk with Kari Sperring (Sussex; mask optional)**

Join our Guest of Honour, Kari Sperring, for an hour of cosy and casual conversation! This fully hybrid item has limited places and requires sign up whether you join online or in person. See page 35 for sign-up details.

## 6 pm

### **Anarchy or bust! (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* offers one of the best known anarchist societies in SFF, but are there others? How do we imagine societies without bosses?

*Fabio Fernandes, Nick Hubble, Juliet Kemp, Stephen Oram (m), Edmund Schluessel*

### **Approaches to sustainability (panel – Balmoral; parental discretion)**

What does a sustainable future look like, and what does sustainability mean? Our panel discuss personal lifestyle changes like solar panels and insulation, affordability, what can be lobbied for to make changes at national and international levels, what we can expect to see if we don't make these changes...

*Christianne, Elliot, Becky James (m), Jonny Nexus, Warren Philips*

### **Badly written disease (panel – Pavilion)**

Panellists discuss examples of where writers have given terrible descriptions of medical conditions.

*TJ Berg, D.A Lascelles (m), Pepper, V Anne Smith*

### **BSFA Awards ceremony (event – Queens)**

*Allen Stroud (m)*

### **Radical imaginings: LGBTQ+ liberation beyond representation in SFF (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Everyone loves to see themselves represented in the stories they love, but how can literature fuel liberation beyond the inclusion of diverse characters? How can we model ideal societies free of oppression in our fiction? What lessons from real world liberation can we use to create moving, aspirational narratives for audiences?

*SJ (Sarah) Groenewegen (m), Roz Kaveney, Chris McCartney, Susie Williamson*

### **The Dark is Rising (panel – Sandringham)**

Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series: why is it still so compelling?

*Janet Ellicott, Trip Galey, E. Saxey, Kari Sperring, Kate Towner (m)*

## 7 pm

### **We look amazing! (event)**

It's right after the BSFA awards ceremony, you're dressed in your very best... now it's time to show off! Meet up in the main bar with your fanciest or favourite clothing and accessories – capes, costumes, loud shirts, anything that makes you feel fabulous.

7.30 pm

**Anti-aging: is it possible? (talk/lecture – Balmoral)**

Is Lazarus Long possible? Will we ever have a Boosterspice or a Antigerone? Is becoming a corpsicle the best strategy? And why *has* Jean-Luc Picard lost his hair?

*William Bains*

**BSFA presents: Reaching Orbit (panel – Queens)**

BSFA Orbiter groups have been around a long time, helping new writers get started.

*Mark Bilsborough, Susan Oke (m), Allen Stroud*

**Complaints through history (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

From Babylonian copper to Birmingham hotel carpet, a panel of historians and fans discuss their favourite complaints throughout all of human history, and compare legendary complaints from conventions.

*Brian, Phil Dyson (m), Farah (Levitation), Kate, Soph Williams*

**Cricket Chronicles launch and wrap party (Tea Lounge; mask optional)**

Join author Ryann Fletcher for an informal party to celebrate *Era's End*, the final book in the Cricket Chronicles! Perfect for all you fans of sapphic sci-fi and found family space shenanigans.

**Glasgow 2024 presents: Ceilidh! (event – Pavilion; mask optional)**

Join the Glasgow 2024 team for a night of traditional Scottish culture with a ceilidh dance. Featuring two sets from a live band, and conveniently near the bar for refreshments in between, the dancing will start from 8 PM.

**The influence of Evangeline Walton (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Join our Guest of Honour, Kari Sperring, for this discussion panel on the thoughtful and eloquent fantasy works of 20th century writer Evangeline Walton and her unique relationship with mythology.

*Kevin McVeigh, Catherine Sharp (m), Kari Sperring, Freda Warrington*

**Interspecies romance: aliens, vampires and more (panel – Sandringham)**

How does romance (and sex) work if your partner isn't the same species as you?

*Zoe Burgess-Foreman, David Cartwright, Aliette de Bodard, Anna Raftery (m),*

*Ursula Vernon*

9 pm

**BFS presents: Short story submissions (panel – Queens)**

The British Fantasy Society present a panel on short story publishing: how to submit, how works are chosen, and all the behind the scenes on short fiction.

*T.H. Dray, E.M. Faulds (m), Shona Kinsella, Pete W Sutton, Neil Williamson*

**Down the virtual pub: fan groups in the time of Covid-19 and beyond (panel – Sandringham)**

Which groups have thrived? What are the challenges? Is it worth going back to the pub? What else has moved online (book groups, convention programmes, readings, games)?

*John Coxon, Fran Dowd, Marcin Alqua Kłak, Tim Mendees (m)*

**The how and when of intimate scenes (panel – Gladstone-Churchill; children not allowed)**

How and when to use sex scenes if you're not writing erotica.

*Angeli Primlani, Edmund Schluessel (m), Anna Smith Spark, Anna Stephens, J.L. Worrad*

**Monster movie night (Balmoral; parental discretion)**

Featuring: *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954). One of the most iconic monster movies in history, the Gillman has been tremendously influential on creature design throughout the decades since. Celebrate nearly 70 years of this classic, and join us for a chat afterwards about how it's been re-interpreted with works like Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water*.

*Tony Keen (m)*

**Multiverse magic (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Apart from the MCU, films like *Everything Everywhere All at Once* are exploiting the possibilities of many worlds. And many writers have also leaned into the implications and made multiple timelines work, despite the difficulties. We discuss our favourites.

*Stew Hotston, Emily January, Judith Mortimore (m), Catriona Silvey*

# Sunday 9 April

9 am

## **Carbon arc lamps (talk/lecture – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Before incandescent bulbs and LEDs, carbon arc lamps were the first practical source of electric light. But what went into making one? How common were they? Where were they used?

*John Holden*

## **Devouring history (panel – Sandringham)**

From ancient Egyptian bread to millennia-old honey, humans will eat just about anything – or try to recreate it if they can't. Our panel look at the foods they wish they could have tried, and discuss ways to recreate the taste of ages past.

*Gillian Polack, Sidsel (macthekat82) (m), Shana Worthen*

## **Future of Eastercon (panel – Balmoral)**

Fandom has survived the Plague Years, but in what state? A panel discusses the future of Eastercons, and what changes yet may come.

*John Coxon (m), Phil Dyson, Farah (Levitation), James Shields (LostCarPark)*

## **Morning stroll (outside; mask optional)**

A walk around the lovely pondside scenery near the hotel, guided by Bridget Wilkinson.

## **Overshoots and other anthropocene narratives (panel – Queens)**

Critics such as Adam Trexler, Erin James and Amitav Ghosh have variously argued that the form of the novel must evolve to adequately represent the world in the anthropocene. In an essay in *Strange Horizons*, Niall Harrison discussed one type of narrative structure that might meet this brief, which he christened an overshoot: a story that starts in the past, continues to the present and, by depicting ongoing changes in the world as well as in the human characters' lives, creates a sense of necessity for a future to be shown in order to fully resolve the narrative. This panel road-tests this new label by discussing examples of overshoots, and considers what other narrative structures might be particularly suited to depicting life in the anthropocene.

*Anne Charnock, Niall Harrison, Nick Hubble, Abigail Nussbaum (m)*

### **Poetry in SFF (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

A panel on our favourite uses of poems in science fiction or fantasy.

*Roz Kaveney, Oliver Langmead, Chris McCartney, Anna Smith Spark, Richard Stephenson (m)*

### **Sunday morning worship (event – Pavilion)**

An Easter Sunday Christian service of worship. Suitable for anyone of any denomination.

*Douglas Spencer (m)*

**9.30 am**

### **Cryptofiasco (talk/lecture – Wellington-Salisbury)**

From the author of 'Attack of the 50 Foot Blockchain', a delve into the undignified collapse of cryptocurrencies.

*Nigel Heffernan*

**10.30 am**

### **Be gay, do crime: the 'Magneto was right' panel (Wellington-Salisbury)**

Many real-world minorities find their very existences are illegal in many ways, in many places. Does this make it easier for LGBTQ+ individuals to sympathise with villains – especially one that are queer-coded or have very real, justifiable motivations for their actions? How does our experience with fiction square with the impulses for and against both assimilation and subversion in real life?

*Zoe Burgess-Foreman, Alette de Bodard, Roz Kaveney, Chris McCartney (m), Troo*

### **The colonial conversations of Predator (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

*Predator* has had some interesting conversations about colonial attitudes, either by aliens or humans.

*E.M. Faulds (m), Stew Hotston, Gavin G Smith, Russell A Smith*

### **FANAC fanzine scanning station 2 (round table – craft lounge)**

Drop in and find out more about the FANAC fanzine scanning project, and bring along old fanzines to scan (permission from editors required).

*Joe Siclari, Edie Stern*

### **Feedback (discussion group – Sandringham)**

Queries, questions, concerns or compliments about the convention? Come and voice them in the feedback session to let the con committee know.

## **GoH interview: Adrian Tchaikovsky (Queens)**

Guest of Honour Adrian Tchaikovsky is interviewed by John Coxon.

## **Jumping off the page: writing believable characters (panel – Balmoral)**

Getting characters from a sketch to a fully-fleshed out individual is an art in itself. But how is it done? Our panellists discuss techniques for making your favourite characters so life-like you can almost smell them.

*David Green, Anne Lyle, Lucy A. McLaren, Anna Smith Spark, Anna Stephens (m)*

## **Quaker session (event – Pavilion)**

A session for Quakers, and others who wish to join them in a meeting of friends.

## **Noon**

## **Does it have to be spaceships? (panel – Pavilion)**

Artists discuss their SFFnal themes and what they pick for Eastercon.

*Jackie Burns, Jackie Duckworth, Eira (m), Helen Foster-Turner – London Metal Clay, CL Gamble*

## **Eastercon bid session and business meeting (event – Queens)**

A chance to hear from the team for Levitation 2024 about how their planning is going. Then the committee for Belfast 2025 will present their bid, along with any other bids for that year.

*Farah (Levitation), Tommy Ferguson, James*

## **Epilogues and afterwords: finishing your work (panel – Sandringham; parental discretion)**

Wrapping up your story can really make or break the whole thing; how do you know when to finish, when to keep going, and how to end your story in a way that's going to satisfy both you and your audience? Our panel discuss the art of closure, from short stories to whole series.

*James Bennett, Anne Charnock, Roz Kaveney, Anna Smith Spark, Sandra Unerman (m)*

## **The fantastical cat (discussion group – Sussex)**

Cats are awesome: discuss. (Perhaps with reference to our favourite depictions of cats in SFFH as a thinly veiled excuse.) Please do not leave open containers of liquid on any flat surfaces.

*Hildur Knútsdóttir, Susie Williamson*



### **Non-European Middle Ages (panel – Balmoral)**

Eurocentric lore has been a goldmine for fantasy and historical fiction writers. But what was the rest of the world doing?

*Oghenechovwe Ekpeki, Stew Hotston (m), Cheryl Morgan, Gillian Polack, David Stokes – Guardbridge Books*

### **From Doctor Who to Doc Weir: what is British fandom all about? (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Fans discuss the history and culture of British fandom. What, if anything, makes it different from other fandoms? What aspects of British fandom do not translate well, or seem bizarre, strange or baffling to those outside Britain?

*Sandra Bond (m), Sofia Karlsson, Clarrie Maguire, Fiona Moore, James Shields (LostCarPark)*

### **What's not D&D? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Alternative TTRPGs for your dice-rolling cravings.

*Charlotte Ashley, Brian, Michael Cule (m), Elliot, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

**1.30 pm**

### **Alien ecology (panel – Balmoral)**

What would life on an alien planet look like? What could it look like? Where have you seen it imagined well?

*TJ Berg (m), Janet Ellicott, V Anne Smith, Smuzz, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

### **Debut spotlight (readings – Pavilion; parental discretion)**

A trio of new authors read from their debut works: join A.Y. Chao with *Shanghai Immortal*, M V Melcer with *Refractions*, and Lucy McLaren with *Awakening* as they give us a tantalising glimpse of these brand new tales!

### **Fantasy Book Swap live podcast (interview – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Ali Baker and guest Kari Sperring discuss children's fantasy fiction, based on a favourite book chosen by Kari and a complementary contemporary book chosen by Ali. Kari's choice is *The Silver Brumby* by Elyne Mitchell; Ali's choice is *Abyssinia* by Ursula Dubosarsky.

### **Sci-Horror! (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Two great genres that taste great together: science fiction and horror. Why do they go so well together, and what are our favourite examples?

*Zoe Burgess-Foreman, David Cartwright (m), The Fossil, Roz Kaveney, Hildur Knútsdóttir*

### **Mascot making! (craft lounge)**

If you haven't had a chance yet, drop by the craft lounge to have a go at assembling and customising your very own Conversation mascots! Do you want to create a robot, a dragon, or both? Children will receive an award ribbon for creating their mascots and putting them on display. And, while this item is in-person, the papercraft models will be available for online members to print and make their own at home and share on Discord, too!

### **Table talk with Zen Cho (Sussex; mask optional)**

Join our Guest of Honour, Zen Cho, for an hour of cosy and casual conversation! This fully hybrid item has limited places and requires sign up whether you join online or in person. See page 35 for sign-up details.

### **Thirty-four years, and an interim survey (panel – Sandringham)**

In 1989, Paul Kincaid surveyed working UK-based science fiction and fantasy writers, and wrote up the results for *Mexicon*. In 2009, Niall Harrison repeated the questionnaire, and wrote up the results for the BSFA, considering the changes in the SF field during those twenty years. We're not quite due another iteration, but this panel will ask some current writers to answer some of the questionnaire: why have you chosen to write science fiction or fantasy? Do you consider there is anything distinctively British about your work, and if so, what is it? What do you consider the major influences on your work? And what do you think have been the most significant developments in British science fiction and fantasy over the last fifteen years?

*Nina Allan, Anne Charnock, Niall Harrison (m), Stew Hotston, Juliet E McKenna, Neil Williamson*

### **TWP meet-up (discussion group – Tea Lounge)**

Informal gathering for members of TWP (*The Women's Periodical*), past, present and future. TWP was set up in the early 1980s to encourage women to write, create art and share the common experiences of being women in SF fandom, and 285 issues later it is still going strong. All women welcome.

*Christina Lake (m)*

**3 pm**

### **Adaptable Arthur (panel – Queens)**

As a canon written by many authors down the ages, Arthuriana is uniquely flexible in letting you choose which version of the canon you want, and how you want to adapt it.

*James Bennett, Gillian Polack, Juliet E McKenna, Russell A Smith (m), Kari Sperring*

### **Get recycling! (fabric workshop – Sussex)**

Join CL Gamble to learn some great ways to recycle your old fabric into useful and reusable every day items like make-up removing wipes, sanitary pads, and more! This item requires sign-up (see page 35), and has a suggested donation for materials.

### **Has fanfiction won? (panel – Sandringham)**

Once strictly forbidden, fanfic is now being publicly embraced. From ‘filing off the barcode’ and turning fanfic into original work, through reimaginings that would once have gotten the imaginers sued, all the way to writers and actors admitting to their favourite saucy fics. Has fanfiction won the war?

*Zen Cho, Anne-Louise Fortune, Emily January, F. D. Lee, Kate Towner (m)*

### **Hiking with hobbits: best fantastic walks (panel – Pavilion)**

Sam and Frodo, or *The Left Hand of Darkness*'s glacier trudge? Many SFF protagonists end up on long walks, so do we enjoy their travelogue or wish we could see the woods for the trees? And how can our own hiking experience influence the worlds we build and the journeys our characters undertake?

*David Green, Ian Green, Anna Smith Spark, Ursula Vernon*

### **Poetry read-around (reading – Tea Lounge)**

Poetry reading session with con members participating by bringing their own poetry.

*Dawn Abigail, Pauline E Dungeate, Chris Morgan, Richard Stephenson*

### **Readings: SF, dystopias and the near future (Balmoral)**

Reading slot for writers: sci-fi, dystopia, and near future.

*Aliette de Bodard, Oghenechovwe Ekpeki, RB Kelly, Stephen Oram*

### **SFF presents: Maureen Kincaid Speller retrospective (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

The Science Fiction Foundation presents this panel discussing the life and works of the legendary SF critic and editor, Maureen Kincaid Speller.

*Nina Allan, Tanya Brown, Dan Hartland, Paul March-Russell (m), Samira Nadkarni*

### **Who, why and what do we award? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

The role of awards in the fandom ecology and SFF economy.

*Niall Harrison, Nick Hubble, Cheryl Morgan, Nicholas Whyte, Gareth Worthington (m)*

4.30 pm

### **The case for cosy (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Comfort fiction: why fluffy, feel-good material, like a warm hug for the soul, is worth more to us now than ever. Previously put down as slight, or ‘girly nonsense’, maybe our perspectives have changed post-pandemic? We discuss our favourites and the growth of the genre. From *Legends and Lattes* to Becky Chambers, all cosy or low-stakes SFF is embraced!

*Anne-Louise Fortune (m), David Green, Kate, Bella Pagan*

### **Do the genre mash (panel – Sandringham)**

Mashing up genres (like sci-fi westerns, horror romcoms, or fantasy detective mysteries) is a popular method of drawing out new heroes and settings. Our panellists discuss their favourite joining of the different streams of fiction, and how to write it without going too far off the rails.

*A.Y. Chao, Trip Galey, Ian Green, Tim Mendees, Virginia (m)*

### **Exploring future(s) with the public using SF (talk/lecture – Pavilion; parental discretion)**

Speculative fiction influences scientists in what they research and technologists in what they invent. It can also enable the general public to consider the ethical issues around how science and technology might be used to shape their future(s).

*Stephen Oram*

### **Fountain pen meet-up (craft lounge)**

Join hosts Aliette de Bodard and Juliet Kemp to compare and chat about the most beautiful pens and exquisite inks around! Bring your own favourites to show off.

### **SFF presents: Sci-fi in education (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Why should learning be staid and dull? Our panel look at the ways that the exciting world of science fiction can be used to engage learners.

*Ali Baker, Paul March-Russell (m), Meggie, Jude Roberts*

### **Table talk with Niall Harrison (Sussex; mask optional)**

Join our Guest of Honour, Niall Harrison, for an hour of cosy and casual conversation! This fully hybrid item has limited places and requires sign up whether you join online or in person. See page 35 for sign-up details.

### **What is Milford, and why you should attend (panel – Queens)**

Regular attendees talk about the Milford Writer’s Workshop and the value of honest, constructive critique for developing as a writer.

*Jacey Bedford (m), Fiona Moore, Susan Oke, Russell A Smith, Kari Sperring*

6 pm

### **BSFA Lecture: Classical references in *Dracula* (Queens; parental discretion)**

The annual BSFA Humanities Lecture. In writing *Dracula*, Bram Stoker drew on his own classical education and an established tradition of classical references in vampire stories. He could expect his audience to recognise his allusions. Far from functioning as 'Easter eggs', accessible only to a privileged few, they would have resonated with readers steeped in classically-themed fin-de-siècle plays, paintings, poetry and fiction. As such, Stoker could deploy them to help root his title character in a remote and fantastical past and to advance three major themes: tyranny and imperialism; the monstrous and the supernatural; and sexual predation.

Content note: the final part of this paper engages with classical rape stories and vampiric predation as a metaphor for rape; listener discretion is advised.

*Penny Goodman, Shana Worthen (m)*

### **Conrunning history and future (panel – Balmoral)**

We have records of some of the earliest fan-run conventions. What's changed, what's stayed the same, and what does the future look like?

*Marcin Alqua Kłak (m), Dave McCarty, Tlanti, Suzanne Tompkins*

### **The final frontier: what LGBTQ+ stories can only SFF tell? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

LGBTQ+ stories are not new to myth, literature, or other modes of fiction. Many of these, however, are bound up in the material realities of life as we experience it now, or in the recent past. What ways can SFF tell LGBTQ+ stories that are unique to the queer perspective and also can only be told through a fantastical lens?

Where is the boundary between a hoped-for better future and fantastical fiction?

*Aliette de Bodard, Trip Galey, Emily January, E. Saxey (m), Troo*

### **Ian Watson's birthday launch (Pavilion; mask optional)**

Join Ian Watson and NewCon Press for a double party as Ian celebrates both his 80th birthday and party and the launch of a brand new collection of his works!

### **The pros and cons of self-publishing (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Why do people self-publish? Is it cool? How does it work? Disruptive technology has worked well for podcasts and music, but possibly less well for fiction.

*David Cartwright, F. D. Lee, Lizzzz, Jonny Nexus, Gareth Worthington (m)*

### **Table talk with Ursula Vernon (Sussex; mask optional)**

Join our Guest of Honour, Ursula Vernon, for an hour of cosy and casual conversation! This fully hybrid item has limited places and requires sign up whether you join online or in person. See page 35 for sign-up details.

### **Whose law is it anyway? (panel – Sandringham)**

A critical look at legal systems in SFF. Would it be more accurate to refer to Judge Dredd as Magistrate Dredd? Could a Faustian bargain be deemed unconscionable? And just what is 'Quintesson justice', anyway?

*Alexander Glass, Misha (m), Chris McCartney, Judith Mortimore*

**7.30 pm**

### **Comedy in SFFH (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Is it time for more than just Pratchett and Adams to grace the science fiction and fantasy humour section of our bookshops? And what about comedy horror books? We delve into new modern works that look on the lighter side of SFFH, and discuss why humour in these genres can be so hard to find in book format when TV and film frequently go there.

*Ali Baker, Gustavo Bondoni, Tim Mendees (m), Catriona Silvey*

### **Learning from romance (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Romance is the biggest selling of all fiction genres, with devoted fans and some very strict writing expectations; what can SFF learn from the behemoth that is romance?

*Anne-Louise Fortune, Judith Mortimore (m), Anna Raftery, Kate Towner, Ursula Vernon*

### **Members versus attendees: new ways of participating in fandom (panel – Sandringham)**

Has fandom gone from being a hobby to becoming a professional development opportunity? Are we still creating communities? Has fandom lost its core/ become too fragmented or is this the best era ever for anyone interested in SF to find out more about the genre?

*Brian (m), Marcin Alqua Kłak, Sidsel (macthekat82), Marguerite Smith*

### **Online pub meet (online spaces, to be confirmed; parental discretion)**

Couldn't make it to the hotel bar? Have a pint with friends from the comfort of your own home instead!

### **Readings: Fantasy and SF (Queens)**

Reading panel for writers: fantasy and SF.

*Zen Cho, Kate Heartfield, Andrew Knighton, Adrian Tchaikovsky*

### **Readings: PG/12A rated fantasy (Balmoral; parental discretion)**

Reading slot for writers: 12A fantasy.

*Randee Dawn, Jess Meats, Susie Williamson*

### **We can hear space (talk/lecture – Pavilion)**

From the corpses of dead giants to fingerprints of the Big Bang, to the monsters that lurk at the heart of the galaxy, radio astronomy has made amazing discoveries. Verity Allan walks us through the vast computers, building the world's largest radio telescope, and highlights women's contributions to the field.

**9 pm**

### **Fanfic open mic! (event – Gladstone-Churchill; children not allowed)**

Relax on the last night of Eastercon with this 18+ fanfic open mic night! Sign up and bring your best 5-10 minute readings to share aloud, or just come along to listen.

*Heather Valentine (m)*

### **Fan funds auction (event – Sandringham)**

The chance to acquire some quality merchandise (and some other things) and support the fan funds in an in-person and virtual auction. Fan funds exist to send delegates to conventions in other places and foster connections between fans around the world; when they come back, they raise money to enable future trips. Lots include items to read, watch, make, wear, eat, display or donate to a future fan funds auction.

### **Prison Biscuit (event – Pavilion)**

Donna Scott is bringing her comedy double act 'Prison Biscuit' to Conversation.

Read more about it on her website: <https://donna-scott.co.uk/>

### **Readings: Adults-only horror (Balmoral; children not allowed)**

Reading slot for writers: horror for adult attendees.

*Arthur Chappell, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Tim Mendees, E. Saxey*

# Monday 10 April

9 am

## **Cults and conspiracy theories (panel – Balmoral)**

Why they happen, how to counter them, and why they are so influential.

*Arthur Chappell, Phil Dyson, Nicholas Jackson (m), Pepper, Allen Stroud*

## **Fictional comfort and junk food (panel – Sandringham)**

Second breakfast. Deep-fried deliciousness. Floating fruit. A cup of klah. What makes a fictional world a cosy, welcoming place? How do you know fictional characters are home sweet home, based on what they're eating? This panel will look at what food tells you about fantastic and world-building fiction, especially with respect to making a world a home.

*Fran Dowd (m), Emily Inkpen, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Gillian Polack*

## **Music's symbiosis with art (panel – Pavilion)**

Illustration, writing, painting, sculpting – visual and written artists often want music in the background. Our panel talk about what music means to their creative process.

*Charlotte Ashley, Jackie Burns, Lucy A. McLaren, Catriona Silvey (m)*

## **The past and future of Vector magazine (panel – Queens)**

Looking at the past and future of one of Britain's leading sci-fi publications, the BSFA's critical journal, *Vector*.

*Niall Harrison, Edward James, Stephen Oram, Shana Worthen (m)*

## **The Female Man (talk/lecture – Wellington-Salisbury)**

First published in 1976, *The Female Man* remains a rulebreaking, groundbreaking book. Through modern eyes sometimes problematic, the book is discussed and analysed by Farah Mendlesohn. An in-depth discussion of gender, storytelling, anger, and complex narratology.

10.30 am

## **Fantastic art: creating new landscapes (talk/lecture – Balmoral)**

Could you paint or draw a believable fantastical scene? And what tools might you use to create scenery that makes the viewer feel they are really there? Jackie Burns tells us some tips, tricks, and processes.

*Jackie Burns, Jenni Coutts, Jennell Jaquays, Judith Mortimore (m)*



### **Feedback (discussion group – Pavilion)**

Queries, questions, concerns or compliments about the convention? Come and voice them in the feedback session – not least for the benefit of the teams putting on the next two Eastercons.

### **Forbidden hues: sumptuary law in history and fiction (panel – Sandringham)**

Sumptuary law in history and fiction: this panel discusses the laws governing clothing and presentation in real history, and how and when to use them in building your fictional world.

*Farah (Levitation) (m), Penny Hill, Nicholas Jackson, Gillian Polack, Angeli Primlani*

### **My favourite Trek (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

What's your favourite iteration of *Star Trek*?

*Christianne, Dave McCarty, Edmund Schluessel (m), Catriona Silvey, Troo*

### **SFF presents: Critical skills masterclass 2 (workshop – Sussex)**

The Science Fiction Foundation is pleased to present this masterclass in SFF criticism led by Tony Keen – round two! Requires sign-up (see page 35).

### **Third Row Fandom, twenty years on (panel – Queens)**

How was the term 'Third Row Fandom' coined, who was involved, and how have they changed the science fiction scene – or themselves – in the years since then?

*Claire Brialety (m), John Coxon, Niall Harrison, Emily January, Abigail Nussbaum*

### **Writing music for your setting (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

Whether you need star-sailing shanties or folk horror ballads, our panel has you covered!

*Alexander Glass, Kate, Kat Kourbeti, Allen Stroud (m), Neil Williamson*

## **Noon**

### **The future of transport (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

A deep dive into developments in rail, electric cars, renewable options, changes we expect in our lifetimes, and more!

*Elliot, Jonny Nexus (m), Warren Philips, Richard Stephenson, Allen Stroud*

### **GoH Interview: Zen Cho (Queens)**

Guest of Honour Zen Cho is interviewed by Virginia.

### **House of Dragons: management perspective (talk/lecture – Pavilion)**

Have you ever wondered if you could sharpen your business acumen by studying George R.R. Martin's *House of Dragons*? If you did, you will get some great tips from Fiona Moore on how to cut your way through the competition.

### **Make your own fanzine (craft lounge)**

A get-together to make your own fanzine!

*Kate Heffner (m)*

### **Travelling fans (panel – Sandringham)**

Fans travel a long way to go to conventions, especially Worldcons. International exchanges help build fan communities, but how important are they in the virtual modern world? And how environmentally sustainable?

*Marcin Alqua Kłak, Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf (m), Cheryl Morgan, Angeli Primlani, Suzanne Tompkins*

### **Where did you get that potato? (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

Glorious anachronisms, real history, and aluminium Christmas trees.

*Michael Cule, Kate Heartfield, Andrew Knighton, Gillian Polack, Sandra Unerman (m)*

### **Zombies run – but do we? (panel – Balmoral)**

How do fans keep fit – if we even do – and why does it matter?

*Fran Dowd (m), Allison Ewing, Jean Thompson, Bridget Wilkinson*

**12.30 pm**

### **Life on Venus (talk/lecture – Pavilion)**

Among the clouds of Venus, amidst the fogs of sulphuric acid... could there be a glimmer of life?

*William Bains*

**1.30 pm**

### **Doctor Who at 60 (panel – Wellington-Salisbury)**

It's the good doctor's sixtieth anniversary; we look at the series' long history and ponder what's coming next.

*Janet Ellicott, SJ (Sarah) Groenewegen (m), Brian (Munchkin) Milton, Russell A Smith*

### **Fans as SF critics (panel – Sandringham)**

What do fans bring to SF criticism? Do fanzines offer something academic criticism cannot? And should audiences have more or less say in the development and reception of speculative works?

*Farah (Levitation), Tony Keen, Abigail Nussbaum (m), Clark Seanor*

### **Living with the algorithm (panel – Gladstone-Churchill)**

How do we live with algorithmically determined everything? The algorithm affects search terms, job applications, every aspect of life.

*Omar Kooheji, James Siddle, V Anne Smith, Smuzz, Wole Talabi*

### **Octothorpe podcast live! (event – Pavilion)**

Survived the convention so far? Unwind and enjoy a live recording of the hilarious Octothorpe podcast from right here at Conversation!

*Liz Batty, John Coxon (m), Alison Scott*

### **Rethinking the history of SF (panel – Balmoral)**

Is it time to rethink the history of SF? Rather than tell the same old stories of the Golden Age and the New Wave, which focus largely on US/UK male writers, can we identify broader social-historical-technological labels that reflect the impact of world-historical conditions and events, such as the First World War? Will this enable us to tell a more inclusive and diverse history of global SF that speaks to life in the 21st century? This panel will brainstorm some possible new labels, debate their utility, and more broadly consider how the writing of SF history has changed over time, and may continue to change in the future.

*Niall Harrison, Kate Heffner, Nick Hubble, Edward James (m), Paul March-Russell*

### **Ursula Vernon's garden (talk/lecture – Queens)**

Ursula Vernon leads us on a guided tour of her beautiful garden – weather permitting!

**3 pm**

### **Closing ceremony (event – Queens)**

*Zen Cho, Michael Cule, Niall Harrison, Jennell Jaquays, Caroline Mullan (m), Kari Sperring, Adrian Tchaikovsky, Ursula Vernon*

# Items requiring sign-up

A few programme items – including many of those taking place in the Sussex room – have only limited space available and require advance sign-up. Some of these involve working with materials or drinking and are not suitable for streaming. Where they are, some will also enable online members to participate, with sign-up; in other cases, any number of online members will also be able to watch live.

As also set out in the Read Me, in all cases you can sign up by using the online form at: <https://www.conversation2023.org.uk/signup>

(If you are on site but have no means of accessing the internet, ask for assistance at the ops hub.)

In order to make participation in the table talks with our Guests of Honour – which are limited to ten people each – as fair as possible, places will be drawn by lot from all the members (onsite and online) who have put their names down by two hours before the start.

Saturday, 4PM: Adrian Tchaikovsky

Saturday, 5.30PM: Kari Sperring

Sunday, 1.30PM: Zen Cho

Sunday, 4.30PM: Niall Harrison

Sunday, 6PM: Ursula Vernon

Three of the workshops (Metal Clay, Recycled Jewellery and Recycling Fabric), which will not be streamed, require payment of a fee to cover materials, all of which can be done at the relevant item on the day.

There has been an advance online sign-up for the Metal Clay workshop in which there might be some places left (click through on Saturday 8 April):

<https://www.londonmetalclay.com/booking-calendar/silver-clay-workshop>

Five places have been held for sign-up at the con, for booking through our form.

Places at the other workshops are also available to book through the online form, on a first come, first served basis. Tarot, Contract Skills, and the Criticism Masterclasses sponsored by the SF Foundation are all hybrid; Reading Aloud will be streamed for other spectators.