



Fantasycon 2021



the british fantasy society

September 24th - 26th 2021
The Jurys Inn
245 Broad Street
Birmingham B1 2HQ



Fantasycon 2021 Programme Errata

Please see the following corrections to the printed programme.

Page 24

Fantasy Readings - Friday 7pm (Reading Room)

David Allan, Simon André Kledtke, Anna Smith Spark

Page 26

Fairytales and Folklore - Saturday 9.00am (Panel Room 1)

Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), Teika Bellamy, Charlotte Bond, Lucy Hounsom

Cautionary stories we tell children, lingering local legends of monsters, rites and dark gods, hungry for sacrifice. Our continual fascination with myths from the past is a constant source of inspiration for writers. Our panel will discuss their favourite fairy tales and folk lore, exploring what works on them as readers and what they can use in their stories.

Page 27

Medieval Books by Jess Hyslop - Saturday 2.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Jess Hyslop

What does a Medieval book actually look like? And what is the difference between parchment and vellum? This talk by writer and book conservator Jess Hyslop will introduce you to the main materials, structures, and features of European Medieval books, with a view to helping fantasy writers avoid some common misconceptions.

Page 29

Mythic and Fairytale Readings - Saturday 5pm (The Reading Room)

Ai Jiang, Tamanna Dhuppad, Steve Walsh

Page 31

Tales from the Dark with Kit Power - Saturday 10.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Kit Power (Moderator), Laura Mauro, CC Adams, David Watkins, Marian Womack

Late night horror short stories in the dark from a selection of horror writers, presented by Kit Power. Be prepared to be scared!

Page 32

Guest of Honour Interview: Ian Whates Sunday 10.30am (The Main Room)

Ian Whates, Allen Stroud

This Interview is unfortunately cancelled.
--

Additional updates will appear on the HWS Events website and at our registration desk.

'The British Fantasy Society and Fantasycon, its annual convention, are two of the main reasons I'm in this position, doing the job I love. There can be no better way for young writers, artists and editors, starting down this path, to meet and interact with other writers, artists, editors, publishers – in fact, I would urge anyone hoping to make their living within the fantasy and horror genres to join. At once.'

Jo Fletcher, Publisher, Jo Fletcher Books

the british fantasy society



Join the British Fantasy Society to receive:

- **BFS Journal**, a twice-yearly magazine of articles, interviews and other non-fiction
- **BFS Horizons**, a twice-yearly magazine of fiction, poetry and art
- A monthly members-only bulletin
- Special publications (occasionally!)
- A discount on FantasyCon tickets
- A vote in the British Fantasy Awards
- Free entry in the BFS short story competition

But it's not just what you get,
it's what you become!
A member of a society
dedicated to the
things you
love!



See www.britishfantasysociety.org for more details

Welcome to Fantasycon 2021!

We brave people emerge from a time in hibernation. After lockdowns, social distancing and all necessary and appropriate measures taken to ensure the health of as many people as possible, it is perhaps, finally the moment. ***Fantasycon returns!***

For us, as event organisers, this has also been a period of uncertainty. HWS Events runs Lavecon every year and both 2020 and 2021 have had to be online events. In the moments where you aren't sure whether gatherings are permitted or when some of the experience is restricted, conventions become difficult to manage. There are so many moving parts that need attention. Clarity is essential in these situations, particularly when people put their livelihoods on the line.

In that regard, HWS Events is committed to running Fantasycon 2021 and bringing as much of the business as usual Fantasycon experience back to a community that has been in sore need of a chance to celebrate success, achievement and mark the loss of friends and peers. When we are together, we affirm and support each other. We share ideas, we are inspired, we meet new people and renew our acquaintances with old friends.

All of this is essential and human.

This weekend will be special, perhaps because of its excellent participants, the new books, the wonderful contributions of guests of honour, the awards, and all such things that transpire. But it will also be special because of its absence. We have missed this. We have missed each other.

As part of the arrangements for Fantasycon 2021, we do have acknowledge the lingering shadow that remains. The pandemic is still here, Coronavirus is still here and that will mean different things to different people. Do take care to respect people's boundaries and understand the precautions that they take. Whether you do the same, or not, acceptance and patience is crucial. Many of us are still struggling with the idea of being in crowds and amongst. We all need time to adjust.

That said, we have wonderful attendees, excellent and knowledgeable panellists, exciting book launches, awards, Guests of Honour, a full reading schedule and everything else associated with a Fantasycon. We really hope you enjoy it.

Allen Stroud.



The last couple of years have been up and down, I think that is true for everyone. It's been a strange time.

Fantasycon is a time for the community to come together, we hope this is even more the case this year. Seeing people after so long will be lovely and perhaps the signal of a start to return to "normal". Having said that we are so concious of the empty places at the table, both those who have passed away and those who, for many sensible reasons, were not able to make it this year. We will no doubt raise a glass or two with friends in person and in honour of those who are absent.

As usual thanks are due to the many people that help to bring an event like this together, the wonderful Redcloaks, the dealers and publishers and all the programme participants. We appreciate you, thank you. We at HWS literally could not do this without you.

Going forward we have a big project on the horizon, that we hope you will all be a part of. We would like to invite World Fantasy Convention to the UK in 2025. The details are still being worked out and there is a bidding process to go through so no guarantees, but it would be great if it comes together. We think that the Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction of the UK are worth celebrating on a world stage. We hope you agree.

The last few years really help to solidify what is important in our lives, what is worth fighting for, what we miss and what we should let go of. I think the community that comes together at Fantasycon is worth keeping and worth celebrating. So, thank you for being a part of it.

Karen - HWS Coodinator

<http://www.hwsevents.co.uk/blog>



We love all things creative, especially related to Fantasy, Science Fiction and Horror. We run events, publish books and have all sorts of projects.

We now have a blog and mailing list to keep you up to date with everything we are doing, but also reviews, discussions, and information for writers.

Come join us at: <http://www.hwsevents.co.uk>

Where To Eat in Birmingham

Birmingham has a wealth of fine dishes to choose from, from the famous Balti to Chinatown's Triple Roast. The Jury's Inn is well-situated for culinary explorers, especially those with dietary or mobility restrictions, with a range of cuisines on offer within five minutes' walk. Those on a budget will also find themselves catered for, with lunch options and cheaper chains all within walking distance.

Please note:

- Most, if not all, of these restaurants require a mask to enter.
- While there are plenty of options available, flexibility is key, as we found some popular restaurants were closed or only open for delivery/collection at the time of writing.
- Cat fans wanting to visit Kitty Café (see 37) should book as soon as possible.

We'd like to thank to all those who made recommendations on the BFS Facebook and elsewhere, including AC Baker, Farah Mendlesohn, Edward James, Tiffani Angus, and Carol Goodwin.

Restaurant and Café Areas

Before we get into the detailed recommendations, here are the four top food areas near the Jury's Inn (or a wee bit further afield). Most of our recommendations can be found around these areas.

1) Brindleyplace

Brindley Pl, Brunswick St, B1 2JF
<https://www.brindleyplace.com/>

Five minutes' walk from the Jury's Inn, Brindleyplace (yes, that's how it's written) is full of enough bars, restaurants, and other shops to keep you going all weekend. Whether you want Italian (Zizzi, Pizza Express, Piccolino, Cielo), Thai (Siamais), Japanese (Wagamama, OKO), Argentinian (Pulperia), or good old pub food (Slug & Lettuce), there's a range of chain and independent options for you. For a budget lunch, there's also Boots, Sainsbury's Local and SPAR, as well as a range of café chains.

2) Bullring & Grand Central

B5 4BU

<https://www.bullring.co.uk/dine>

Located just above Birmingham New Street Station, this pair of essentially merged shopping centres was recommended to us for Pho (currently only doing takeaway – sorry!) and Lebanese (Comptoir Libanais) – as well as the Kitty Café! With a good list of chains and smaller restaurants, treats include two bubble tea shops, bubble waffles, two Nando's, and many more. Note the shopping centres themselves are usually open until 8pm, though the restaurants are open later.

3) China Town *Recommended*

B5 area

Starting from the Southside exit of New Street station, China Town stretches down to Pershore Street, Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street. Birmingham's China Town is celebrated for its Triple Roast, particularly that of Look-In and Peach Garden.

4) Balti Triangle

Ladypool Road and surrounding streets, B12

Think Birmingham cuisine, think Balti. Unfortunately, the Jury's Inn lies some distance from the Ladypool Road area, where most of the best balti restaurants can be found. The fastest way to get there is by taxi (about ten minutes total) or walking for ten minutes to Frederick Road and catching the 8A Inner Circle Bus to Ladypool Road (another ten minutes by bus).

Brindleyplace Restaurants

Note that Brindley place has a huge selection of restaurants, so we've only presented a few here.

5) Bank Restaurant *Recommended*

Four Brindleyplace, B1 2JB

<https://www.brindleyplace.com/tenant/bank-restaurant/>

0121 633 4466

Seasonal British cooking with specially-selected Brit-

ish beef.

6) Pulperia
3 Brindleyplace, B1 2JB
<https://pulperia.co.uk/>
0121 546 0594

Michelin Guide-listed Argentinian cuisine, offering some cuts otherwise unavailable outside of London.

7) Siamais
6 Brindley Place, 7 Oozells St, B1 2HS
<https://siamais.co.uk/>
0121 643 3993

Thai food. Note this has a separate bar area serving cocktails, if you're not in the mood for food.

8) Las Iguanas
The Waters Edge, B1 2JB
<https://www.iguanas.co.uk/>
0121 827 9977

9) Perios
The Waters Edge, B1 2JB
<https://www.myperios.com/>
01216656542

South American and Mexican chain restaurants.

10) Pizza Express
The Waters Edge, B1 2JB
<https://www.pizzaexpress.com/book>
0121 643 2500

11) Gourmet Burger Kitchen
The Waters Edge, B1 2HL
<https://www.gbk.co.uk/>
0121 643 7715

12) Slug & Lettuce
The Waters Edge, B1 2JB
<https://www.slugandlettuce.co.uk/birmingham>
0121 633 3049

13) Wagamama
The Waters Edge, B1 2HL
<https://www.wagamama.com/our-menu>
0121 643 7656

Note there are also branches of Wagamama on Spiceal Street opposite St Martin's Church and at 98 New ST.

14) OKO
11 Brindleyplace, 2 Brunswick Square, B1 2LP
<https://nuvobar.com/our-menu/>
0121 631 1600

Dim sum, sushi and sashimi – but only open Wednesday to Saturday.

Bullring & Grand Central Restaurants

Note that a number of the more popular places like Five Guys and Pho are only offering delivery/collection only at present, so do check before you go.

15) Vietnamese Street Kitchen (GF)
St Martin's Square, B5 4BW
<https://vietnamesestreetkitchen.com/>
0121 679 8872

With the highly-recommended Pho only offering delivery/collection right now, Vietnamese Street Kitchen might help you get your sit-down fix. Gluten free menu available.

16) Nando's
B4100, Unit R2, Bullring & Grand Central, B5 4BP
<https://www.nandos.co.uk/restaurants/birmingham-bullring>
0121 632 6866

17) Tapas Revolution
Ground Floor, Grand Central, B2 4XJ
<https://www.tapasrevolution.com/menus>
0121 643 6381

18) Thai Express
Unit 36 Grand Central, 50 Stephenson Street, B5 4AH
<https://thaiexpress.co.uk/>
0121 439 3250

19) Comptoir Libonais *Recommended*
Unit 29 Grand Central, Stephenson Square, B2 4BF
<https://www.comptoirlibanais.com/restaurants/birmingham>
0121 667 3160

Lebanese home cooking, with all-day menu.

20) Café Rouge
Unit SU744, Upper Mall West, Bullring, B5 4BG

<https://www.cafrouge.com/bistro-brasserie/birmingham/bullring>
01217 961 882

21) Tasty Plaice
Unit 35 Grand Central, B2 4XJ
www.tastyplaicesignature.co.uk

Pioneers of the Black Country special, Battered Chips. NB. Closes at 7pm.

Chinatown

Birmingham Live recommends the following.

22) Chung Ying Cantonese
16-18 Wrotesley Street, B5 4RT
<https://www.chungying.co.uk/>
0121 622 5669

The oldest restaurant in Chinatown, they offer a Hong Kong Brunch with a choice of 26 dim sum and bottomless Chinese tea.

23) Dezhou Style Braised Chicken restaurant
Arcadian Centre, 70 Hurst Street, B5 4ST
<https://www.facebook.com/dezhoustyle/>
0121 622 3283

Fresh noodles made on site! Now open again after closing during the pandemic.

24) Ken Ho
41-43 Hurst Street B5 4BJ
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/KenHoBham/>
0121 622 1323

Another Dim Sum recommendation.

25) Look-In
6 Ladywell Walk, Birmingham B5 4ST
<https://www.facebook.com/lookinrestaurant/>
0121 666 7587

26) Peach Garden
34 Ladywell Walk, Birmingham B5 4RX
0121 666 7502

Both recommended for Birmingham's celebrated Triple Roast.

27) Caffe Chino

Unit B107, Arcadian Centre, 70 Hurst Street, B5 4TD
<https://caffechino.com/>
0121 622 1144

Chinese cakes and bubble tea for dessert!

The Balti Triangle

Below are the top recommendations from Andy Munro, who gives tours of the Balti Triangle. Please note the celebrated Al Frash closed in 2019.

28) *NB. Possibly closed* Adil's
148-150 Stoney Lane, B12 8AJ
<https://www.facebook.com/OfficialAdils/>
0121 449 0335

In any other time, this would be a must-visit for Balti fans, as the site where Mohammed Arif invented the dish. However, Google suggests it's temporarily closed as of the time of writing, so do have an alternative ready if you're heading down.

29) Shababs
163-165 Ladypool Road, B12 8LQ
<https://www.shababs.co.uk/>
0121 440 2893

30) Shahi Nan Kebab House
353 Stratford Road, B11 4JY
<https://www.just-eat.co.uk/restaurants-shahi-nan-kabab-birmingham/menu>
0121 772 2787

Recommended not just baltis, but also for their street food menu kebabs.

Vegan Specialities

While many places offer Vegan options (including JuJu's), here are some additional recommendations from BFS members, most within 15-20 minutes' walk of the Jury's Inn.

31) Plant and Pulse
Unit 9 The Minories, Birmingham, United Kingdom, B4 6AG <https://plantandpulse.co.uk/>

Seasonal, sustainable foods, including falafel, wraps, pakora, kimchi and more. Also available on UberEats and Deliveroo.

32) The Vegan Kitchen
26 Great Western Arcade, Birmingham B2 5HU
<https://www.thevegankitchen.co.uk/>
0121 294 3156

Burgers, hot dogs, dirty fries and so on, with some delicious-sounding cheesecake dessert options.

33) Yo!
Birmingham Grand Central
Unit MK9, Grand Central, Stephenson's Place, Birmingham, B2 4BQ
0121 227 4394
Birmingham Selfridges
Selfridges, Upper Dean Street, Bullring, Birmingham, B5 4BP
0121 271 0217
<https://yosushi.com/>

Two separate branches here in the Bullring & Grand Central hopping centre, offering the usual fare of small plate sushi and other Japanese dishes.

More Restaurant Recommendations

Here are a few favourites of BFS members within a short walk of the hotel.

34) JuJu's *Recommended*
Watermarque, Canal Square, 100 Browning St, B16 8EH
<https://www.jujuscafe.co.uk/>
0121 456 3384

A great selection of full English (including Vegan and Veggie) for a tenner, as well as classic British fare and Sunday Roast just ten minutes' walk away.

35) The Indian Streatery *Recommended*
21a Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5QP
<https://www.theindianstreatery.co.uk/>
0121 643 5334

Reasonably priced street-style Indian food about 15 minutes' walk away. Quite small, so book in advance. Otherwise, there's also a pop-up on the Top Level of the Bullring & Grand Central.

36) The Ivy (Temple Row) *Recommended*
67-71 Temple Row, Birmingham B2 5LS
<https://theivybirmingham.com/>
0121 725 2110

"Sophisticated and friendly" dining, with afternoon tea, cocktails, a la carte dining and a separate Vegan & Vegetarian menu.

Café Recommendations

37) Kitty Café *Recommended*
Unit 12, Grand Central, Stephenson Place, B2 4BF
<https://www.kittycafe.co.uk/locations/birmingham>
0121 3898587

Booking in advance highly recommended for this cat café on the second floor.

38) Yorks Café at Ikon *Recommended*
Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, B1 2HS
<https://yorkscafe.co.uk/>
0121 828 5060

Ikon is the free contemporary art gallery only five minutes' walk from the hotel, but it's the attached café we're recommending with its range of brunch/lunch and cake options.

39) *CLOSED* Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
We received a number of recommendations for the café here, but sadly the building is closed until 2022.

Brindleyplace offers additional options just by the Jury's Inn.

40) Baguette du Monde
Brunswick Arcade, Brunswick St, B1 2JF
<https://www.loc8nearme.co.uk/west-midlands/birmingham/baguette-du-monde/333705/>
0121 643 8629

41) Costa Coffee
10 Brindleyplace, B1 2JB
<https://www.costa.co.uk/>
0121 643 8629

42) Pret A Manger
Unit 5 Brindley Place, B1 2JB
<https://locations.pret.co.uk/birmingham/unit-5-brindley-place>
0121 643 1071

43) Caffé Nero
4 Brindleyplace, B1 2JP

<https://caffenero.com/uk/store/birmingham-brindleyplace-598/>

0121 643 4572

You can also find many of these chains and two branches of Starbucks in the Bullring & Grand Central, along with these:

44) Mee-cha

Kiosk 19 Lower Mall, Bullring, B5

<https://mee-cha.com/>

Ice cream and bubble tea from the physical home of the online store.

45) Joe and the Juice

Grand Central, B2 4XJ

<https://www.joejuice.com/menu-2-0/uk>

Sandwiches and juices. Worth a try just for the pun-worthy titles, including Beet It and Peas of Mind.

Budget Lunch Options

Brindleyplace and Bullring & Grand Central offer a range of cheaper restaurant chains. If you're after a lunch deal or snack between panels, here are some

suggestions

46) Boots

2 Brindley Pl, B1 2HJ

<https://www.boots.com/stores/1028-birmingham-brindley-place-b1-2jb>

0121 643 4872

47) Sainsbury's Local

10 Brindley Pl, B1 2JB

<https://stores.sainsburys.co.uk/4078/brindley-place-local>

0121 643 6132

48) SPAR Brindleyplace

Unit 1a, Brunswick St, Brindley Pl, B1 2JF

<https://www.spar.co.uk/store-locator/afb61300-spar-brindley-place>

0121 643 5502

49) Greggs

Lower Level, Bullring & Grand Central, B5 4BU

U12 New Street Station, B2 4QA

<https://www.bullring.co.uk/dine/greggs>

0121 643 6951

Found Treasures

by Allen Stroud

The smell seduces me, lures me on. I am at the door. Darkness shrouds what lies within. There is a flicker of movement, but then silence. Nothing.

The match is in my hand. I strike it against the side of the box. Flame illuminates my prize.

Plastic wrappers, torn paper. The remains of meals. Furred chicken bones, the cartilage, skin and scraps left behind. Apple cores brown and grey with mould. Green bread, like stubbled skin. All the rich stains of habitation in confinement.

The remains of a life.

Whitened flesh. An arm. Fingers. Nails broken flesh torn and decomposed. Dead eyes reflecting the light. A feast...

Fantasycon Through The Years

The first Fantasycon was convened in 1972.

Detailed below is a list of the details of each Fantasycon from 1972, to the present convention. Many names may be familiar to you. Some have left us and we are much poorer for their passing.

Many of those who have put their energies into the organisation, continuance and development of the convention have gone on to create, write, edit and publish an array of fantasy, horror and science fiction. They remain an integral part of the Fantasycon community. For those attending their first event, it is worth asking some of the book sellers, panelists or other attendees about their memories of Fantasycon. There is an incredible wealth of knowledge and a powerful behind the event.

My first Fantasycon was 2015. When I chaired Fantasycon Peterborough in 2017, I was very aware of this lineage. In some respects, I was wary of it as I knew the approach I would bring to the event would be different in some ways to what I had seen before. That caution was wise and tempered with a need to be open and to listen. Wiser heads than mine have tried different things and learned what works and what doesn't.

Allen Stroud

1972

The first BFS AGM was held at Chessmancon (the BSFA Eastercon). The August Derleth Fantasy Award (ADFA) was won by Michael Moorcock for *The Knight of Swords*. A BFS President was elected, subsequently becoming an honorary title.

1973

(18 November): Beyond the Horizon, a one-day fantasy fayre, part of the Space Exploration Festival, Ceolifrith Arts Centre. Speakers: Kenneth Bulmer, Ramsey Campbell, Richard Davis, George Locke and Hartley Patterson.

1974

Part of BSFA's Tynecon (Eastercon). Keith Walker announced the ADFA winners.

1975

Fantasycon I (22 February). Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Dave Sutton, Sandra Sutton, Jim Pitts and Dave Riley. Speakers: Richard Davis, Hugh Lamb, George Locke, Ramsey Campbell, Adrian Cole, Keith Walker. Programme Book: A5, 16 pages, edited by Dave Sutton. Cover Art: Stephen Jones. Notes: A one-day event with 41 pre-registered members; 60 actually attended. The AGM was held in the morning, the speeches in the afternoon

1976

Fantasycon II (28/29 February). Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Dave Riley, Dave Sutton, Sandra Sutton. GoH: Robert Aickman. MC: Ken Bul-

mer. Programme Book: A5, 24 pages, edited by Dave Sutton. Cover Art: Stephen Jones. Notes: Fantasycon was designated from thence onward as a forum for writers, artists and editors to meet fans, for the BFS to present its Awards, and a venue for its AGM.

1977

Fantasycon III (26/27 February). Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Jon Harvey, Stephen Jones, Brian Mooney, Jim Pitts, Keith Walker. GoH: Basil Copper. MC: Ken Bulmer. Programme Book: A5, 28 pages, in card cover edited by Keith Walker. Cover Art: Stephen Jones. Notes: The Programme Book is a mix of articles and information concerned with the weekend's events: AGM, buffet, panels, talks, films and... folk music (well it was 1977). A list of attendees shows a number of stalwarts still attending to this day, such Ramsey and Jenny Campbell, Sandra and Dave Sutton, John Carter, Steve Jones, Peter Coleborn, Adrian Cole, Mike Chinn.

1978

Fantasycon IV (24/26 February). Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Steve Jones, Jon Harvey, Dave Sutton, Sandra Sutton, Jim Pitts, John Heron, and Adrian Cole. GoH: Stephen King (fell ill and could not attend.) MC: Ramsey Campbell. Programme Book: A5, 28 pages, edited by Steve Jones. Cover Art: by Jim Pitts (based on Salem's Lot). Notes: The attendee list is almost twice the length of its predecessor. A bigger list of events shows a rise in interest and a strengthening of the Fantasycon phenomenon.

1979

Fantasycon V (23/25 February). De Vere Hotel, Coventry DeVere). Organisers: Dave Sutton, Jean Sheward, Mike Chinn, Keith Walker and Jim Pitts. GoH: Karl Edward Wagner. MC: Dave McFerran. Programme Book: A5, 22 pages edited by Dave Reeder and Ro Pardoe. Cover Art: David Lloyd Notes: The tried and tested panels, but with a predominance of film in the Saturday evening programme. The buffet/banquet was ditched for a GoH speech and the AGM settled at its honoured spot of Sunday morning. Plenty of lady speakers this year, with Louise Cooper, Pat McIntosh, Jessica Yates and Terri Beckett.

1980

Fantasycon VI (3/5 October). Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Steve Jones, Peter Coleborn, Mike Chinn and Carl Hiles. GoH: Ramsey Campbell. Guest Artist: Jim Fitzpatrick. MC: Karl Edward Wagner. Programme Book: A5, 34 pages edited by Steve Jones and Jo Fletcher. Cover Art: Jim Fitzpatrick (heroic fantasy with a Celtic flavour). Notes: This convention was dedicated to the memory of Dave McFerran (1954-1980), a long-time member of the Society who sadly passed away in that year. The now familiar Awards statuette designed by Dave Carson was used for the first time this year.

1981

Fantasycon VII (10/12 July). Centre Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Peter Coleborn, Mike Chinn, Ramsey Campbell, Carl Hiles, Ken Cowley, Dave Reeder and Jim Pitts. GoH: Peter Tremayne. Artist Guest: Alan Hunter. MC: Karl Edward Wagner. Programme Book: A5, 36 pages edited by Stephen Jones and Jo Fletcher. Cover Art: Alan Hunter. Notes: The programme is film heavy and we see a return of the buffet, plus Adrian Cole's songs and sonnets.

1982

A convention to include GoH Tanith Lee and Eddie Jones, and Anne McCaffrey as MC, sadly did not happen due to internal BFS problems. The con was taken over by others and named Mythcon.

1983

Fantasycon VIII (14/16 October). Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Steve Jones, Jo Fletcher, Mike Wathen, Di Wathen, Mike Chinn, Nic Howard, Carl Hiles, Dave Sutton, and Peter Coleborn. GoH: Gene Wolfe. MC: Ken Bulmer. Programme Book: A5, 44 pages edited by Stephen Jones and Jo Fletcher. Cover Art: Bruce Pennington (Fantasycon attend-

ees received a glossy colour version; non-attendees received a monochrome version). Notes: Programme of panels, films, plus... the RAFFLE. Yes, this is the onset of an institution that survives to this day.

1984

Fantasycon IX (14/16 September). Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Steve Jones, Jo Fletcher, Mike Wathen, Di Wathen, Peter Coleborn, Kim Newman, Dave Sutton and Dave Carson. GoH: Charles L Grant. Special Guest: Tanith Lee. MC: Ramsey Campbell. Programme Book: A5, 48 pages edited by Steve Jones and Jo Fletcher. Cover Art: Andrew Smith. Notes: A secondary cover from Fantasy Tales was inserted inside the official cover of the Programme Book.

1985

Fantasycon X (6/8 September). Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Steve Jones, Jo Fletcher, Mike Wathen, Di Wathen, Peter Coleborn plus others. GoH: Robert Holdstock. Special Guest: Diana Wynne Jones. MC: Charles L Grant. Programme Book: A5, 96 pages edited by Steve Jones and Jo Fletcher (first of the A4 format-sized programmes). Cover Art: David O'Connor (in full colour). Notes: The guest speakers list goes on for ever! This Con saw the rise of publisher's parties and signings.

1986

Fantasycon XI (26/28 September). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Stefan Jaworzyn, Di Wathen, Mike Wathen plus others. GoH: Dennis Etchison. Special Guest: Jody Scott. MC: Samantha Lee. Programme Book: A4, 68 pages edited by Stefan Jaworzyn, Carl Hiles and Steve Jones. Cover Art: JK Potter. Notes: This was the first Fantasycon to be staged in the Midland Hotel. There's one illustration to note: a photo-montage by JK Potter of Jo Fletcher and Steve Jones in full monster mode.

1987

Fantasycon XII (4/6 September 1987). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Stefan Jaworzyn, Steve Jones, and a host of others. GoH: M John Harrison, George RR Martin, JK Potter. MC: Douglas E Winter. Programme Book: A4, 70 pages edited by Dave Sutton and Steve Jones. Cover Art: Jim Burns's Other Edens (courtesy Unwin/Hyman) in full colour. Notes: A JK Potter photographic portfolio was included in the Programme Book.

1988

Fantasycon XIII combined with the World Fantasy Convention (28/30 October/Halloween). Ramada Inn, London. Organisers: The Worldcon Committee. GoH: James Herbert. Artist Guest: Michael Foreman. Special Guest: Diana Wynne Jones. MC: Clive Barker. Programme Book: Hard cover programme book edited by Stephen Jones and Jo Fletcher. Notes: This was the first time the WFC left North America. The theme of the convention was Gaslights & Ghosts.

1989

Fantasycon XIV (6/8 October). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Mike Wathen, Di Wathen, Peter Coleborn, Sylvia Starshine. GoH: Thomas F Monteleone. Stephen Laws. MC: Brian Lumley. Programme Book: A4, 68 pages edited by Di Wathen and Mike Chinn. Cover Art: Martin McKenna. Notes: Back to the Midland Hotel.

1990

Fantasycon XV (14/16 September). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Mike Wathen, Di Wathen, Robert Parkinson, Peter Coleborn. GoH: Joe R Lansdale, Stephen Gallagher. MC: Stephen Laws. Programme Book: A5, 52 pages edited by Di Wathen and Mike Chinn. Cover Art: Steve Pawlett. Notes: Some interesting and extensive guest notes (very long guest list).

1991

Fantasycon XVI (15/17 November). Ramada Inn, Earls Court, London. Organisers: Di Wathen and Michael Arft. GoH: Dan Simmons, Jonathan Carroll. MC: Brian Lumley. Programme Book: A5, 52 pages edited by Di Wathen and Mike Chinn. Cover Art: Steve Pawlett. Notes: Guest list even longer than 1990!

1992

Fantasycon XVII (2/4 October). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Di Wathen and Robert Parkinson and others. GoH: David Schow, Lisa Tuttle and R Chetwynd-Hayes. MC: Adrian Cole. Programme Book: A4, 56 pages edited by Di Wathen and Phil Williams. Cover Art: Bob Covington. Notes: David Schow did not arrive due to pressure of work.

1993

Fantasycon XVIII (1/3 October). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Peter Coleborn, Mike Chinn, and Sylvia Starshine. GoH: Peter James, Tad Williams, and Les Edward. MC: Dennis Etchison. Programme Book: A5, 56 pages edited by Phil Williams.

Cover Art: Les Edwards.

1994

Fantasycon XIX (30 September/2 October). Midland Hotel, Birmingham. Organisers: Peter Coleborn, Mike Chinn, Sylvia Starshine. GoH: Katherine Kurtz, Brian Lumley. MC: Graham Joyce. Programme Book: An unfamiliar, almost square, format, 60 pages, edited by Dave Hughes and Seamus Ryan. Cover Art: Clive Barker. Notes: The Programme Book's unconventional format caused much comment at the time.

1995

Fantasycon cancelled through lack of organisers, but Fcon regulars gathered instead at Welcome to my Nightmare in Swansea on the Halloween weekend (27/29 October). The event was staged as part of the UK Year of Literature and Writing 1995.

1996

Fantasycon XX (4/6 October). International Hotel, Docklands, London. Organisers: Peter Coleborn, Mike Chinn, Jan Edwards. GoH: Chris Fowler, Tom Holt. MC: Kim Newman. Programme Book: Peter Coleborn. Notes: Marks the 25th year of the BFS.

1997

FantasyCon XXI (running with World Fantasy Convention). International Hotel, Docklands, London. 30 October - 2 November 1997. GOH: Iain Sinclair, Joan Aitkin, Bob Eggleton, Hugh Cave, Ron Chetwynd Hayes, Doug Bradley, Robert Holdstock. We're not absolutely sure who organised it, but we think it included Steve Jones & Jo Fletcher, and probably Peter Coleborn, Jan Edwards & Mike Chinn. Any further info will be very welcome!

1998

FantasyCon XXII. 11 - 13 September 1998. Birmingham. GoH: Freda Warrington, Jane Yolen. MC: Ramsey Campbell. Organised by: Debbie Bennett, Mick Chinn, Peter Coleborn, Jan Edwards, Lynn Edwards, Di Lewis, Pauline Morgan.

1999

FantasyCon XXIII. 17 - 19 September 1999. Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. GoH: Louise Cooper, Raymond E. Feist, Graham Masterton, Robert Rankin, Mike Tucker. Organised by: David Howe, Debbie Bennett, Mike Chinn, Peter Coleborn, Jan Edwards.

2000

ROBERT SHEARMAN

WE ALL HEAR STORIES IN THE DARK



BRITISH FANTASY AWARD NOMINEE
'BEST COLLECTION'

SEAN HOGAN



ENGLAND'S SCREAMING SEAN HOGAN

BRITISH FANTASY AWARD NOMINEE
'BEST NEWCOMER'



DANIELE SERRA



BRITISH FANTASY AWARD NOMINEE
'BEST ARTIST'

www.pspublishing.co.uk

FantasyCon XXIV. 8 - 10 September 2000. Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. GoH: Storm Constantine, Stephen Lawhead, Doug Bradley, Stan Nicholls. Organised by: David Howe & Debbie Bennett.

2001

FantasyCon XXV (Birthday Bash). 23 September 2001. Champagne Charlies Pub, London. GoH: Hugh Lamb, Simon Clark. Organised by: David Howe, Debbie Bennett.

2002

FantasyCon XXVI. 2002. Tappit Hen London &/or Champagne Charlies, London. GoH: Graham Joyce. Organised by: Debbie Bennett, Nicki Robson.

2003

FantasyCon XXVII. 2003. Stafford. GoH: Chris Fowler, Catherine Fisher. Organised by Debbie Bennett & Nicki Robson.

2004

FantasyCon XXVIII. 2004. Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall. GoH: Robert Holdstock, Muriel Gray. Organised by: Debbie Bennett, Nicki Robson.

2005

FantasyCon 2005 (XXIX). 30 September - 2 October 2005. Quality Hotel, Bentley Walsall. GoH: Mark Chadbourn, Simon Clark, Steven Erikson. MC: Graham Joyce. Organised by: Debbie Bennett, Vicky Cook, Marie O'Regan, Jenny Barber, Pat Barber.

2006

FantasyCon 2006 (XXX). 22 - 24 September 2006. Britannia Hotel, Nottingham. GoH: Neil Gaiman, Juliet E. McKenna, Ramsey Campbell, Raymond E. Feist, Clive Barker. MC: David J. Howe. Organised by: Debbie Bennett, Vicky Cook, Marie O'Regan, Paul Kane, Pat Barber, Jenny Barber.

2007

FantasyCon 2007 (XXXI). 21 - 23 September 2007. Britannia Hotel, Nottingham. GoH: Stephen Jones, Michael Marshall Smith, Terry Brooks. MC: Peter Crowther. Organised by: Jenny Barber, Vicky Cook, Marie O'Regan, Paul Kane, Pat Barber.

2008

Fantasycon 32 - Britannia Hotel, Nottingham. GoH: Christopher Golden, James Barclay, Dave McKean. MC: Christopher Fowler. The organising committee included Marie O'Regan,

Paul Kane and Vicky Cook.

2009

Fantasycon 33

FantasyCon 2009. 18-20 September 2009. Britannia Hotel, Nottingham. GoH: Gail Z. Martin, Brian Clemens, Jasper Fforde. Special guest: Sebastian Peake. MC: Ian Watson. Organising committee: Peter Coleborn (chair), Guy Adams, Jen Barber, Pat Barber, Debbie Bennett, Jan Edwards, Martin Roberts. The souvenir programme was A4, 52pp, edited by Peter Coleborn and produced and designed by Lee Thompson.

2010

Fantasycon 34

17 - 19 September 2010, Britannia Hotel, Nottingham

The Guests of Honour Garry Kilworth, Lisa Tuttle and Bryan Talbot;

MC James Barclay

Guy Adams Chair, Ranjna Theaker, Stephen Theaker Helen Hopley, Martin Roberts and Del Lakin-Smith.

2011

Fantasycon 35

30 September-2 October, 2011 at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton

Gwyneth Jones, John Ajvide Lindqvist, Brian Aldiss

MC Sarah Pinborough

Organisers: Marie O'Regan, Paul Kane.

2012

Fantasycon 36

27 - 30 September 2012, at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton.

Guests of Honour: Joe R. Lansdale, Muriel Gray, Brent Weeks

Special Editor Guest: Mary Weeks

Special Media Guests: Mark Gatiss, Robin Hardy

Master of Ceremonies: Tim Lebbon

2013

Fantasycon 37

World FantasyCon 2013 Brighton UK 31 October-03 November 2013.

2014

Fantasycon 38

The Royal York Hotel.

Guests of Honour: Kate Elliott, Charlaïne Harris, Toby Whithouse and Larry Rostant.

5th - 7th September

Chair: Lee Harris

2015

Fantasycon 39

Nottingham

October 23, 2015 - October 25, 2015

MC Juliet E. McKenna, guests – Jo Fletcher, John Connelly and Brandon Sanderson

Chair: Lee Harris

2016

Fantasycon by the Sea (40)

23-25th of September. The Grand Hotel and The Royal, Scarborough

Guests – Elizabeth Bear, M. R. Carey, Frances Hardinge, Joel Hill, Derek Landy, Scott Lynch, Adam L. G. Nevill, James Smythe,

Chair: Alex Davis

2017

Fantasycon 2017 – (41)

29th September to 1st of October. The Bull Hotel and Conference Rooms, Peterborough

Guests – Pat Cadigan, Nancy Kilpatrick, Ben Aaronovitch

Organisers: Allen Stroud (Chair), Karen Fishwick.

The programme was A4, 56 pages, edited and designed by Allen Stroud.

2018

Fantasycon 2018 - (42)

19th of October to 21st of October. The Queen Hotel, Chester.

Guests - Adrian Tchaikovsky, Clare North, Farah Mendlesohn.

Organisers: Allen Stroud (Chair), Karen Fishwick.

The programme was A4, 48 pages, edited and designed by Allen Stroud.

2019

Fantasycon 2019 - (43)

18th of October to 20th of October. Main Conference Hotel, Clydebank.

Guests - Paul Tremblay, Una McCormack

Organisers: Andy W Marsden (Chair)

2020

No convention.

2021

Fantasycon 2021 - (44)

19th of October to 21st of October. The Queen Hotel, Chester.

Guests - Jen Williams, Ian Whates, Marcus Gipps

Organisers: Allen Stroud (Chair), Karen Fishwick.

The programme was A4, 48 pages, edited and designed by Allen Stroud.

COMPLETE DARKNESS

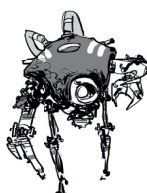
THE DARKNESS HAS TAKEN PHYSICAL FORM

COMPLETE DARKNESS is now both a novel and a comic.

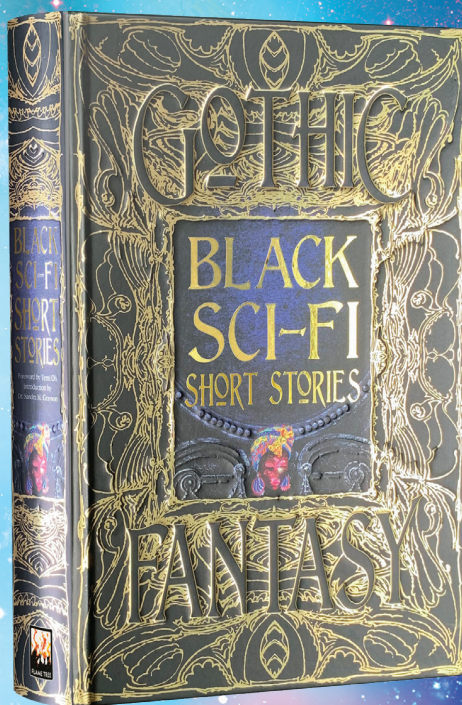
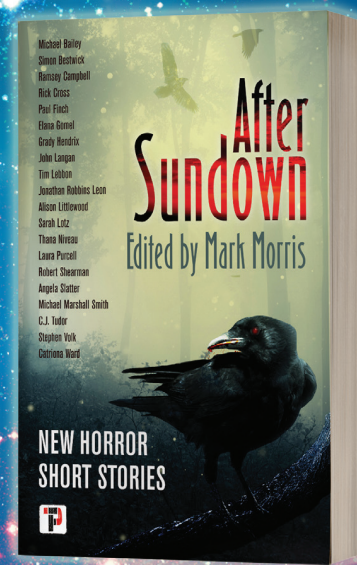
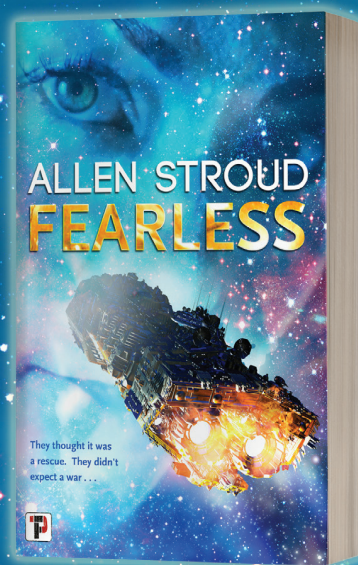
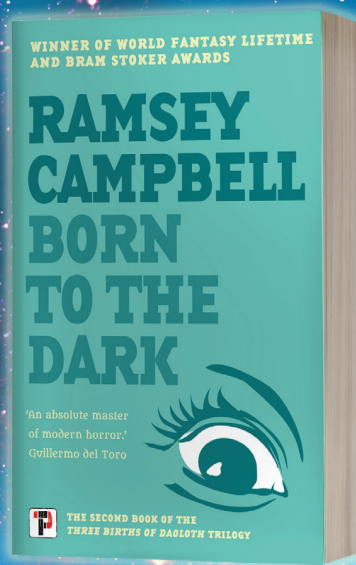
FantasyCon is the first place on the planet to get your copy of the comic - plus exclusive art cards, merchandise and pens.



STOP BY FOR A CHAT ABOUT THE NOVEL-TO-COMIC JOURNEY!?



www.completedarknessnovel.com








FLAME TREE PUBLISHING
Independent • Books • Gift • Calendars

flametreepublishing.com

Introducing Fantasycon 2021

Guest of Honour - Jen Williams

*Fantasycon 2021 is delighted to
announce Guest of Honour: Jen Williams*

We are very pleased and proud to welcome Jen Williams as guest of honour for Fantasycon 2021. Jen Williams is a fantasy author whose work has become a mainstay of the best of the genre in the last few years. Novels from her Copper Cat Trilogy were nominated for British Fantasy Awards in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively and she won the award for Best Fantasy Novel in 2018 and 2019 with the first two books from her Winnowing Flame Trilogy.

Reading Jen Williams

As a writer, Williams is a contrast of contemporary and traditional. Her work invokes the escapist imagery of the late twentieth century greats, but with a modern sensibility that makes her stories readable, familiar and refreshingly new. There is a sense in her work that she is very aware of what readers from these stories. Her characters and creatures are carefully assembled, appealing to the classic themes of the genre, but unburdened by the baggage that might be associated with them.

The themes and characters in her books create a social commentary in a subtle way, presenting views of fantasy society and individual characters that may contrast with the reader's view or the real-life society in which we live. In particular her characters are not all perfect young, good looking heroes; they are believable, with flaws and vices, as well as a range of ages and genders. She tends towards a large cast and complex plots rather than a single viewpoint character, but balances these well so the reader is not confused.

Williams' novels are vivid escapist experiences. Many are long, running to 500+ pages, but the action doesn't slow, or become bogged down in exposition. Whilst her website bio regards this tendency for writing long fantasy as a curse, readers devour the detail and immersive stories.

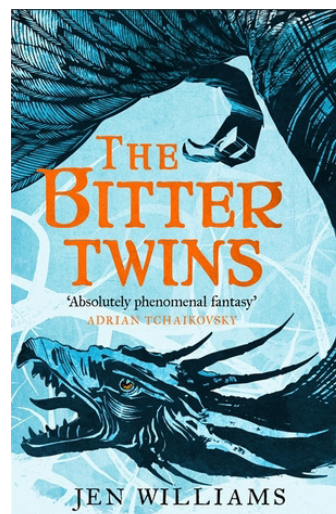


Williams is also prepared to experiment. Her most recent work, *Dog Rose Dirt* (also known as *A Dark and Secret Place* in the US) is a step into another genre - crime thriller.

When not writing, Jen works as a copywriter and in an independent bookshop.

Jen's website with all her work can be found at <https://www.sennydreadful.co.uk/>.

She is also very active on Twitter - @sennydreadful



Jen's Timetable:

Friday

5.30pm - Bringing Character

7pm - Welcome to Fantasycon

Saturday

10.30am - The Epic Fantasy Panel

3pm - Guest of Honour Interview with Julien Mushens

Sunday

1pm - British Fantasy Awards Banquet

3pm - British Fantasy Awards

Existentialism

By Allen Ashley

"I don't believe in them, they're not real." Betty continued exploring the bright yellow flowers.

"Well, I've seen them, I'm certain," Agatha responded. "You have to know where to look. And when."

"Sounds like a silly bedtime story to me. We ought to have grown out of that by now."

"My mother says we should be scientific about it," Agatha countered. "We don't see them because they experience time differently to us. I can't remember whether she said it was faster or slower. Quite an interesting explanation, though."

Betty fluttered her tiny wings, alighted the petals. "Believe in humans? Nah!"

(Previously published online at "101 Fiction")

Introducing Fantasycon 2021

Guest of Honour - Marcus Gipps

After ten years as a bookseller, Marcus Gipps joined Gollancz as an editor in 2011, commissioned his first two authors within three months, snapped up Saladin Ahmed's award-winning debut novel, and embarked on some innovative publishing. This included a first in publishing history: acquiring the publishing rights (to the computer game *Elite*) through Kickstarter; and a personal project, republishing Quentin Blake's much-loved and then out of print *Uncle* stories. He has become one of the most recognisable faces in SF and Fantasy publishing in the United Kingdom. In part, this is because of his commitment to taking part in the events and activities being run by different organisations, associations and societies.

Marcus was identified as a 2012 Bookseller Rising star and began to divide his time between working on classic SFF – including the complete update and republication of Michael Moorcock's body of work – and publishing original novels. He stepped up to become Editorial Director of the SFF Gateway, the world's largest digital SFF collection, in 2017, and again to become Publishing Director of Gollancz in 2020. He counts Andrzej Sapkowski (whose work is the basis of Netflix's *The Witcher* series), Joe Hill (whose work is the basis of Netflix's *Locke and Key* series), Stephen Baxter, Mary Gentle, Adam Roberts, Emma Newman, and his 2021/22 debuts Susannah Wise, Lucy Kissick and Rebecca Zahibi, among his authors. He published this year's Goldsmith Prize winner, *THE SUNKEN LAND BEGINS TO RISE AGAIN*, by M. John Harrison.

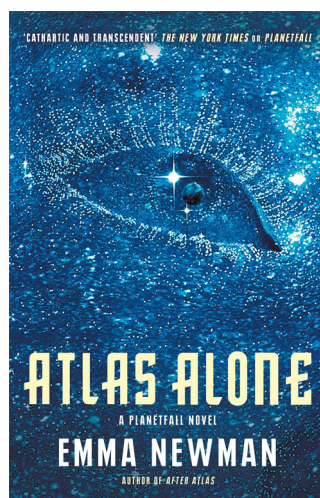
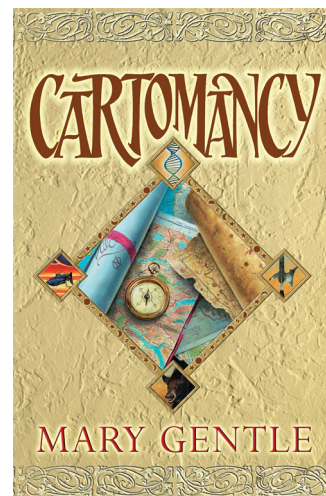
He now also curates the SF Masterwork list, with recent additions from Gwyneth Jones, Paul McAuley and John Wyndham.

A conversation with Marcus is always frank, honest and respectful. He is knowledgeable and courteous, supporting his writers whenever possible. He is a person with ideas and tries to make things happen. He listens, remembers, and is generous with his time. His experiences as a bookseller, an editor and publisher are many and his advice is always informed and valuable.



You can learn more by following @marcusgipps on Twitter.

Fantasycon 2021 is delighted to welcome Marcus Gipps as our guest of honour.



Marcus's Timetable:

Friday

7pm - Welcome to Fantasycon

Saturday

11am - Myths About Publishing

7.00pm - Guest of Honour Interview with Shona Kinsella

Sunday

11am - Past Autors on Present Authors

1pm - British Fantasy Awards Banquet

3pm - British Fantasy Awards

At The End

by Allen Stroud

I am walking in the park when they come for me.

It's all very cliched. A bright light shines down, illuminating the scene for miles. You hear the stories all the time. I wonder why no-one notices?

I stand still and look up, shielding my eyes. The light lifts me into bowels of the spinning circular ship. Long, thin silhouettes of aliens gather around the open hatch. I am deposited amongst them. I am the centre of attention.

"Have you come to take me away?" I ask.

"Yes, Mr Adams," a voice replies, "and, we have brought you a towel."

(First Published by Black Hare Press in 2019)

Introducing Fantasycon 2021 Guest of Honour - Ian Whates

One of the most prolific and diverse independent publishers in the United Kingdom and a highly successful writer of Fantasy, Science Fiction and all things in between, Ian Whates is appreciated by all who have the pleasure to spend time with him and to read his stories.

At first, Whates saw publishing success through magazines, but he quickly developed a strong catalogue of work with independent presses and now has more than eighty short stories published in a variety of venues. His City of a Hundred Rows novel trilogy published by Angry Robot and Noise sequence published by Rebellion/Solaris showcased his talents as a writer, while his editing of a number of collections for Solaris demonstrated his ability to work with other talented artists, bringing out the best in their creative endeavours.

However, the foundation of his own publishing company, Newcon Press, signalled a new direction for Whates, one that would come to benefit many of the amazing writers that he chose to work with. Anthologies, showcasing short work from a vast array of contributors, collected together on a theme, or a genre, all expertly edited, followed, including a volume that raised thousands of pounds in 2020, at the start of the pandemic, to provide PPE for frontline medical staff. Innovation in the concept behind each, allowed for imaginative interpretations by the writers. Established names, partnered with new discoveries allowed readers to discover just how rich and diverse the genres can be.

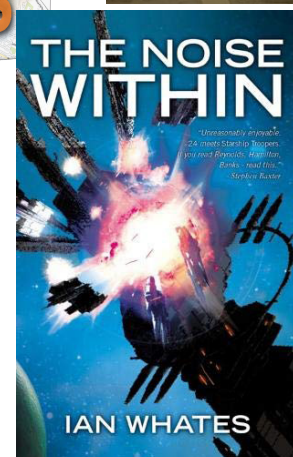
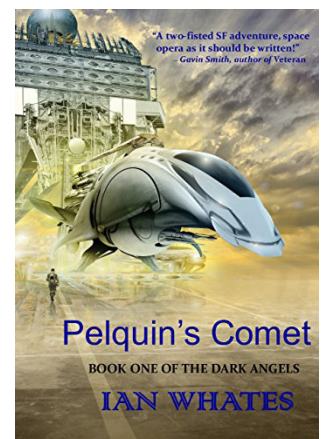
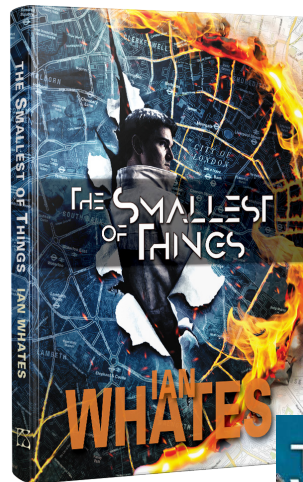
Whates' work provides a stepping-stone for those developing their careers in writing. NewCon Press has championed novels, novellas and collections by authors whose work might otherwise have escaped attention, many of whom have gone on to success with major publishers. Ian's generous nature has been shown time and time again, with Newcon Press authors winning recognition through nominations and awards, but he has not neglected his own fiction and continues to release shorts and novels through his



own company and in collaboration with others.

Today, Ian Whates continues to successfully balance a career as a writer, editor and publisher, with his Dark Angels trilogy of space opera novels earning new accolades and twice seeing him top Amazon sales charts. He and his wife Helen are an integral part of genre publishing in the United Kingdom.

Fantasycon 2021 is proud and privileged to have Ian Whates as a guest of honour for this year's convention.



Ian's Timetable:

Friday

7pm - Welcome to Fantasycon (streaming in)

Sunday

10.30am Special Guest Interview (Streaming in) with
Allen Stroud

3pm - British Fantasy Awards (Streaming in)

Thames Astronautics

By Allen Ashley

Thames Astronautics
have turned up in our solar system
to shore things up for the next
hundred years or so. Every
morning we hear their
rockets and launch craft
bursting the air and rumbling the earth
or see their huge cranes
allowing operatives to shine up the stars,
dust Saturn's rings
and read the mercury on Mercury.

Jupiter's Red Spot seems to be responding
to treatment and is shrinking perceptibly.
They've still not found life on Mars:
there's frozen water, trace elements,
carbon dioxide... and sand.

We have asked the site manager
not to fill in the holes on the Moon;
we like our craters just as they are.

(Previously published in *Focus* BSFA Magazine)

The Sand is Always Waiting

By Ian Hunter

A child is missing and I am afraid.
He is young. So very young. Barely a walker, but enough of one, it seems to be able to wander off from the village. No one has seen him. No one knows which direction he has taken. Already the seasons are changing, moving the sands and any young tracks have long since been obliterated.

I watch the skies for signs of the carrion birds, but none circle with eternal patience. I hope they are elsewhere and not on the sand, already feasting on his young flesh. Some hunters are searching the dunes, but I am not confident. The sand is moving, carried on the wind as if trying to claim our village. I hope it has not already claimed one of us, smothering our future and the bright spark of new life. But if not the sand then there are other dangers, too many for me to hold back and keep my people safe.

They recognise my failings, my people. I see them pass by as I sit in the shade, some divert their gaze, heads down, but others are braver, openly defiant as if they sense my time is coming to an end. But they are not the Three Who Make The Tally. Those Who Wait In Judgement are conspicuous by their absence, perhaps in deliberation, waiting for the boy to return.

They have found him, little Maves in the river. Not far. Not far, but enough. A little way downstream. His body wedged in the branches of a half-submerged tree. My people have gathered on the banks behind his parents, and I am with them, too acutely aware of how my absence would be regarded. His mother turns like a twisted, slippery knot in front of me, her anguished cries filling the air while her husband stands beside her, stiff as a rock. I watch as the boy is freed and passed from man to man to the shore as his mother rushes forward to embrace him, rock him, nurse him, whisper, beg, plead for him to wake up. In a story in my head he does. I turn and go home. My people part to let me pass. I feel their rage, hear their mutterings. I must hurry and practice my writing. There is not much time left.

There are fewer little ones at the morning storytell-

ing. I obviously have less power to protect them. One of the Three lingers in the street, listening to my story. A tale of warning to all children. Too late some would say, and the story is not worthy of me, more a list of dangers than a weaving of words. As always the children explode away from me, eager to get on with the rest of the day, their lives unshackled and I wonder if I have reached any of them. The one of the Three who listened is gone, and a deep part of me knows that I have outlived my usefulness, telling tales for my own selfish reasons rather than the good of my people.

I practice writing again, long into the night, until my limbs ache and my bones seem to twist inside me, craving rest. The writing is poor, but legible. I do not think I will have time to improve it.

The hunters have returned with a poor bounty and the season of the sand will be hard. They are not to blame. I am. I have failed my people. My skills of tale telling have lost their potency. Those who pass my home curse me, and make ill signs. The river gatherers do not look at me when I tell the tale of Elol, the first river gatherer and how he saved the village from starvation. They have no confidence in me, nor in themselves. I have taken that from them.

The bottle of sleep is waiting at my door when I go home. Those Who Wait In Judgement have judged. The tally has been made and my time as storyteller to my people is at an end. Again, I practice my writing, worried that sleep will steal from me all I have learned.

I sleep long as if the custom. Outside my people gather as I pack one small bag of belongings. Carrying it will not be easy, but it will not be opened. These things are mine, sacred. Hatred has turned to sorrow in the eyes of those who watch me as I step outside. They move apart to clear the way to the Stone. I walk between them, head down and stand before the Three. I slip the bag from my shoulders and lay it on the ground beside me and place my hands on the Stone. The Three crowd round, afraid that I will try and resist, but I know my duty. Two men step for-

ward, one carries a blade, the other a burning torch. My knees buckle as my left hand is severed but my people are there to hold me as the blade is brought down on my right wrist. Arms guide me back to face the sky as my head falls backwards, mouth open wide and one of the Three steps forward, tongs and knife ready. He pulls my tongue out and cuts it off and my mouth fills with all the stories that swell up inside me. All the black, evil, weak stories rush to get out and fill my head and eyes and the world.

The sand stings. I hold my arm up to try and protect my eyes. The sand is my world now, but I have heard

stories, told stories of other places that lie beyond the sand. My hands hurt even though they are not there, and my mouth seems full of stones that taste of blood. I have found a circle of trees, and a pool of dark water, but I will not drink from it. I have two bags now, one my people provided, with containers of food and drink that can be opened with difficulty by one who has stumps instead of hands. I use my teeth to pull open the other bag, my bag, and take out the writing instruments. With difficulty, I spread out the parchment and grip the marker with my toes. The sleep has not robbed me. I cry and smile at the same time.

The tales go on...



LESLEY JONES

Perfect the Word Lesley Jones, fiction editor

I am a line/copy and developmental editor specialising in fiction of all genres, but in particular fantasy, sci fi, spec fiction and thriller. I work with major publishers including Macmillan, Black Library, and Harper Collins, but most of my work is with indie authors. Entrust your project to me and I will not only polish your spelling, punctuation and grammar, but help you add an extra touch of style. Contact me for a free sample edit (up to 1,000 words) and a quote.

Polishing your prose; keeping it yours.



www.perfecttheword.co.uk email me: lesley@perfecttheword.co.uk

Find me on Facebook and Twitter @misslesleyjones

Event Schedule Friday

12 Noon: Fantasycon Reception Opens (Reception Area)

Pick up your goodie bag and ID card from our desk. registration will close at 8pm. After this, a phone number will be left on the desk for you to contact if you have any queries.

12 Noon: Traders Open

Browse our selection of publishers and grab yourself some excellent books.

New to Fantasycon - Friday 3.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Karen Fishwick (Moderator)

Is this your first time at Fantasycon? Been coming here a while? Pop along to our introductory session to meet new Fantasycon members.

Self Publishing Experiences - Friday 4.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Iain Grant (Moderator), Kevin Elliott, Heide Goody, Rachel McLean

Our experienced guests will be discussing their experiences in self publishing and debating the merits and flaws of the different aspects of this enterprise. There is a lot to learn for everyone in terms of getting self publishing right.

Fantasy Readings - Friday 5pm (Reading Room)

Susie Williamson, Clint Wastling, Teika Bellamy

Genre Splicing - Friday 5pm (Panel Room 1)

Allen Stroud (Moderator), Andrew Hook, Cheryl Morgan, Juliet E. Mckenna

Why can't you use the tools from a Fantasy Writer's toolkit in a story set in space? Why not bring nano-tech tech to a fantastical dark age? Our panel discusses the challenges and opportunities of bringing together different genre ideas in a new innovative mix.

Bringing Character- Friday 5.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Neil Williamson (Moderator), Jen Williams, Phil Sloman, Myk Pilgrim

Traditionally, genre fiction has been about the plot, but character plays a huge part in any writing and has always been undervalued by critics looking in from

the outside. Our panel discuss the intricacies of characterisation - making individuals who are convincing and realistic to the reader.

Readings: Horror (3) - Friday 6pm (Reading Room)

David Cartwright, Kat Dunn, Jason Whittle.

Representing Women - Friday 6pm (Panel Room 1)

Charlotte Bond (Moderator), F. D. Lee, Saara El-Arifi, Susan Williamson

Women as characters - inspiring to readers of all ages and any gender. Have the genres shifted, allowing for more women protagonists? Have we managed to banish all the sexist tropes to the past? Join our panel in a discussion of representing women in fantasy, horror and science fiction.

Writing Groups - Friday 6.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Allen Ashley (Moderator), Rachel Emma Shaw, David Green, Ian Hunter

Some new writers worry about keeping their ideas to themselves. But writing groups can provide invaluable assistance. Other writers are on their own path and can offer some advice or assistance and spot ways in which you can improve your work. Our panel discusses writing groups and how they can help.

Welcome to Fantasycon - Friday 7pm (The Main Room)

Allen Stroud, Marcus Gipps, Jen Williams, Ian Whates

Welcome to Fantasycon 2021! An introduction from the chair of the convention and introducing our guests of honour.

Fantasy Readings - Friday 7pm (Reading Room)

David Allan, Simon André Kledtke, Anna Smith Spark

Writing as a Business - Friday 7pm (Panel Room 1)

Iain Grant (Moderator), David Moore, Adrian Tchakovsky, Juliet E. Mckenna

There are more and more works being published. Opportunities for professional writers exist in many

mediums, genres and formats. However, few writers choose to give up their other work and focus solely on the writing profession. Our panel discusses their experiences of writing professionally and trying to navigate the industry.

Friday Night Poetry - Friday 7.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Allen Ashley (Moderator)

In what has now become a staple of Fantasycon, Allen Ashley will once again be hosting the “Poetry Round Robin”. Bring a couple of poems to share. No stars, no guest readers, we will get round and appreciate everybody.

For further details: Contact Allen on allenashley-writer@hotmail.co.uk

Horror Readings - Friday 8pm (Reading Room)

Neil Williamson

Jonathan Walker

Dan Coxon

Representing Gender - Friday 8pm (Panel Room 1)

Heide Goody (Moderator) Tej Turner, Kat Dunn, Arawalo

The depiction of gender in science fiction, fantasy and horror has always been an area of interest, whether through works like Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*, or more recently, Kameron Hurley’s *Mirror Empire* series. Our panel discusses gender, and how writers represent genders in their work.

Weird Fiction Readings - Friday 9pm (Reading Room)

Tom Johnstone

David Cartwright

David Hartley

World Horror - Friday 9pm (Panel Room 1)

Laura Mauro (Moderator), Jim Mcleod, Peter Mark May

Every audience has different fears. Are these fears common across cultural boundaries, or are they shaped and changed by the different life experiences that people have? Our panel discusses international horror - stories that transcend borders or the ways that they can be limited by them.

Writing Shorts - Friday 9.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Pete Sutton (Moderator), Tej Turner, Andrew Knighton, Neil Williamson

Often seen as an entry way into writing novels, there is also a definite skill to writing short fiction. Our panel explore the market and the qualities of a good short story.

Science Fiction Readings - Friday 10pm (Reading Room)

Adrian Tchaikovsky

Lorraine Wilson

John Dodd

Snow Witt

by Allen Stroud

In the nursery rhyme there were seven dwarves.
There were many more in the tribe, their names
came from how each of them behaved.
Astonishingly remained wide-eyed.
Truthfully was strict.
Really did not understand lies.
Actually, saw only what was in front of her.
Factually, was a dwarf detective.
Properly knew only one way of doing things.
Meaningfully was quite intense.
Prospectively panned for gold.
Possibly never got anything done.
Definitely was everyone’s best friend.
Affirmatively always agreed
Correctly argued with Properly all the time.
And Absolutely argued with both of them
Utterly despaired.
And Fraudulently got away with everything.

(first published in *Adverbially Challenged* 3 (2018))

Event Schedule Saturday

Fairytales and Folklore - Saturday 9.00am (Panel Room 1)

Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), Teika Bellamy, Charlotte Bond, Lucy Hounsom

Cautionary stories we tell children, lingering local legends of monsters, rites and dark gods, hungry for sacrifice. Our continual fascination with myths from the past is a constant source of inspiration for writers. Our panel will discuss their favourite fairy tales and folk lore, exploring what works on them as readers and what they can use in their stories.

Workshop: Short Stories - Saturday 9.00am (Panel Room 2)

Shona Kinsella

Knowing where and how to submit short fiction can be confusing. From knowing when your piece is ready to submit, to writing a strong opening, choosing the right market to submit to, and writing a cover letter, learn how to make your work stand out in the slush pile. To participate in this workshop, please sign up at the registration desk.

Workshop: Self-Publishing - Saturday 9.00am (Panel Room 2)

Heide Goody, Iain Grant, Rachel McLean

When you decide to self-publish your work, there are a lot of factors to consider. Heide Goody and Iain Grant offer advice and support on the self-publishing process, focusing on self-publishing as a business. Please sign up at the registration desk.

Fantasy Readings - Saturday 10am (Reading Room)

Lucy Hounsom
Gabriela Houston
Tiffani Angus

Author Marketing - Saturday 10am (Panel Room 1)

Richie Billing (Moderator), Michael R. Miller, Graeme Reynolds, Simon André Kledtke

Every writer wants to find their audience and most writers struggle to do so at the start. Our panel offers some guidance and advice on the dos and don'ts of marketing your work.

The Epic Fantasy Panel - Saturday 10.30am (Panel

Room 3)

Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), RJ Barker, Jen Williams, Stephen Poore

Sweeping stories, huge characters and world changing events across vivid landscapes. The Epic Fantasy novel is a heady mix of incredible writing. Our panel examine the ingredients and draw from their experiences to discuss what might be the themes and innovations that we see in contemporary epic fantasy.

Neurodivergency - Saturday 10.30am (Panel Room 3)

David Hartley (Moderator), Emily Inkpen, Jonathan Walker, Rachel Emma Shaw

The term 'Neurodivergent' is used to describe someone who thinks differently from the way the majority (referred to as neurotypical) expect. Neurotypical means the opposite – someone whose brain behaves in the same way as the majority of society. How does this affect characters in writing? How does it affect writers and other creative individuals who are neurodiverse? Do we see enough representation?

Horror Readings - Saturday 11am (Reading Room)

Rosanne Rabinowitz
Stephen Oram
Duncan P. Bradshaw

Launch: Luna Press - 11am (Main Room)

Francesca Barbini

Myths About Publishing - Saturday 11am (Panel Room 1)

Juliet Mushens (Moderator), Marcus Gipps, Dan Coxon, John Baker

What are the common misconceptions about the publishing industry? How do things really work? Many writers have assumptions about what happens to their manuscripts when they send them off. Our panel will reveal what happens at the other end and offer some advice on how best to navigate a publishing process.

The Fantasy Book Swap Podcast (Live) - Saturday 11.30am (Panel Room 2)

Ali Baker, Tiffany Angus

A live recording of the Fantasy Book Swap podcast, hosted by Ali Baker with guest Tiffani Angus. Fan-

tasy Book Swap is a podcast about children's fantasy fiction, where a guest chooses a favourite book from their childhood, Ali chooses a related contemporary one, and they discuss them.

Tiffani's choice: *The Crystal Cave* by Mary Stewart
Ali's choice: *Why I Went Back* by James Clammer.

Please come along with questions about the books, and join in!

Damage - Saturday 11.30am (Panel Room 1)

Richie Billing (Moderator), Jenni Coutts, Peter Mark May, Rachel Emma Shaw

Wounds and injuries, inflicted physical and mental trauma. Our panel explores how writers try to portray this accurately.

Launch: Unsung Stories - Saturday 12 Noon (The Main Room)

Dan Coxon, Ashley Stokes, Laura Mauro, Gary Budden

Fantasy Readings - Saturday 12 Noon (The Reading Room)

Anna Stephens
Shona Kinsella
Arawalo

Religion and Horror - Saturday 12 Noon (Panel Room 1)

Iain Grant (Moderator), Jonathan Walker, Simon Clark, Jason Whittle

To some, the twisting of real-world religions to suit the plot of a horror novel can be a conduit to reaching the reader. Everyone has a view on the big questions that religion tries to answer and the iconography of religions can be a rich source of inspiration for writers. Our panel discusses the use of religion in horror, how it resonates and becomes a useful part of their stories.

On Screen - Saturday 12.30 (Panel Room 2)

Myk Pilgrim (Moderator), Gavin Smith, Adam Simcox

Fantasy and Horror on screen. With the profusion of streaming services and channels available to the audience, has our appetite for the genres on the small and the big screen changed? What are the interactions between the screen and the page? Our panel consider their own experiences and offer some insight into film and television.

In Space - Saturday 12.30 (Panel Room 3)

Tom Toner (Moderator), John Dodd, Allen Stroud, Stark Holborn

Out there where there is no air. The Space Opera is the staple of science fiction. Our panel discusses the developments in contemporary science fiction, from television depictions, to a selection of their reading choices and ideas from their own writing.

Launch: Dead Ink- Saturday 1pm (The Main Room)

Dan Coxon, Robert Shearman, Lucie McKnight Hardy, Gary Budden, Timothy J. Jarvis

Readings - Saturday 1pm (The Reading Room)

Heide Goody
Ian Hunter

Researching the Novel - Saturday 1pm (Panel Room 1)

Stewart Hotston (Moderator), Adrian Tchaikovsky, Ashley Stokes

They say examining a writer's search history on the internet while they're working on a novel would raise some eyebrows! Our panel talk about their research processes when writing novels, looking at ethnography, online searching, library work and more.

Representing Sexuality Saturday 1.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Fiona Moore (Moderator), Sofia Rhei, Susie Williamson

Everyone has the right to love, even our characters. Sexuality in Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction can be a brilliant part of a story, but some writers are hesitant to involve 'distractions' or think about attraction. Our panel discusses sexuality in their work and the genres.

In Audio - Saturday 1.30pm (Panel Room 3)

Charlotte Bond (Moderator), Pippa Bailey, Pauline Kirk, E. M. Faulds

Whether its a podcast, an audio book or an adapted audio drama, or a story told solely in audio, the rise of the listener as an audience compared with that of the reader is a modern phenomenon made easy through technology. Similarly, creators have found 'a voice' in audio. Join our panel in discussing the aspects of podcasting, audio narration, performance and more.

Launch: Alchemy Press - Saturday 2pm (The Main Room)

Peter Coleborn, Jan Edwards, Stephen Jones, James Brogden, Mike Chinn, Pauline Dungate, Paul Finch, Tom Johnstone, Phil Sloman

Horror Readings - Saturday 2pm (The Reading Room)

CC Adams
Susan York

Fantasy Literature - Saturday 2pm (Panel Room 1)

Allen Stroud(Moderator) Farah Mendlesohn, Ali Baker, Ian Hunter

In 2009, Brian Stableford's A to Z of Fantasy Literature was published by Rowman and Littlefield. The edition contained more than 500 writers and 200 specific concepts that inform Fantasy writing. Now, Fantasycon Chair, Dr. Allen Stroud has been commissioned to write the new 'Historical Dictionary' of the genre. What do you consider to be Fantasy Literature? Join the discussion.

Medieval Books by Jess Hyslop - Saturday 2.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Jess Hyslop

What does a Medieval book actually look like? And what is the difference between parchment and vellum? This talk by writer and book conservator Jess Hyslop will introduce you to the main materials, structures, and features of European Medieval books, with a view to helping fantasy writers avoid some common misconceptions.

System Thinking - Saturday 2.30pm (Panel Room 3)

Simon André Kledtke (Moderator), Angeline Trevena, Michael R. Miller

Magic and technology were considered together in Arthur C. Clarke's Third law. Technology is built on systemic principles, so it follows that some writers believe in systemic thinking for magic and other aspects of a fictional story. Our panelists explore system thinking and consider how it can be helpful and how it might limit a writer when creating their works.

Guest of Honour Interview: Saturday 3pm (The Main Room)

Jen Williams, Juliet Mushens

Jen Williams interviewed by Juliet Mushens.

Science Fiction Readings - Saturday 3pm (The Reading Room)

Kevin Elliott
Faith (F. D. Lee)
Andrew Hook

Representing Race - Saturday 3pm (Panel Room 1)

Stewart Hotston (Moderator), CC Adams, Arawalo, Saara El-Arifi

How is race represented in contemporary fantasy, horror and science fiction? How have things changed? Have we managed to challenge and banish the tired tropes? Our panel discusses the representation of race, drawing on their own experiences.

Independent Presses - Saturday 3.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Teika Bellamy (Moderator), David Stokes, Cheryl Morgan, Peter Coleborn

Running an independent press is a unique challenge. Yet, these small businesses are the life blood of the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror publishing industry. Our panel discuss the way in which independent presses work and what sort of writing they look for.

Beginning to Write - Saturday 3.30pm (Panel Room 3)

Rob Malan (Moderator), Lorraine Wilson, Ashley Stokes, Damien Hine

You want to write a short story, a novella, a novel. Perhaps you've done this before, or perhaps it is your first time? Our panel shares their experiences in beginning to write - the decision to try writing and all the things they learned along the way.

Launch: Grimbold Books - Saturday 4pm (The Main Room)

Peter Sutton

Open Readings - Saturday 4pm (The Reading Room)

An open hour for members of the convention to read from their work.

The Art of Fantasy and Horror - Saturday 4pm (Panel Room 3)

Duncan Bradshaw (Moderator), Jenni Coutts, Chrissey Harrison, Stephen Jones

Images inspire us. Sometimes, the visual is an essen-

tial part of a book's design, adding to the experience. Our panel discusses fantasy art work and horror art work, that inspires and lingers in the memory of the beholder.

Post Lockdown Mental Health - Saturday 4.30pm (Panel Room 2) Dan Coxon (Moderator), David Cartwright, Justin Lee Anderson, Kat Dunn

How are you doing? No, really, how are you doing? A panel to discuss experiences of the lockdown, how we've struggled and what ways we have found to keep going. Please take the chance to share and support each other.

Authors and Social Media - Saturday 4.30pm (Panel Room 2) James Worrall (Moderator), Ben Marrow, Graeme Reynolds

In a world that seems to revolve around more and more noise, how can an author successfully navigate the bewildering number of social media channels? Is it worth engaging, participating and trying to promote your work? Our panel discusses social media and how best to make use of it.

Launch: Black Shuck - Saturday 5pm (The Main Room)
Steve Shaw

Mythic and Fairytale Readings - Saturday 5pm (The Reading Room)
Ai Jiang
Tamanna Dhupad

Editors - Saturday 5pm (Panel Room 2) Pete Sutton (Moderator), Carlie M. A. Cullen, Peter Coleborn, Juliet Mushens

The writer writes. The editor edits. What is an editor for? The work of an editor is often an uncredited task. How do they work with a writer and help them to achieve the best possible treatment of their story.

This is not Me but it is My Voice - Saturday 5.30pm (Panel Room 2)
F. D. Lee (Moderator), Mike Brooks, Anna Stephens, Susan Williamson

What are the characters we don't see enough of? Who are the people writing those kind of characters with life experiences that inform their work?

Games and Gaming- Saturday 5.30pm (Panel Room 3)
John Dodd (Moderator), Stark Holborn, Laura

Mauro, Amy Brennan

Gaming can be an inspiration, an outlet or even an industry that writers contribute to. Our panel of contributors who are part of the games industry in a variety of ways share their experiences.

Launch: Wizard's Tower Press - Saturday 6pm (The Main Room)
Cheryl Morgan, Juliet E McKenna

Fantasy Readings - Saturday 6pm (The Reading Room)
Justin Lee Anderson
Adam Simcox

No Seriously, We *Have* Always Fought: Developing Historical Awareness in SFF - Saturday 6.00pm (Panel Room 1)
Fiona Moore (Moderator), Ali Baker, Farah Mendlesohn, Lorraine Wilson

Reading the Internet recently, you could be mistaken for thinking that queer characters, exploration of trans issues and alternative sexualities, female and POC writers, and many other things, are all new to SFF, ignoring the fact that these have all been a part of the genre(s) for a long time, in some cases since the very beginning. This panel will discuss how we can build greater awareness of the historical depth of socially progressive writing in SFF in the wider culture.

Worldbuilding for the Reader- Saturday 6.30pm (Panel Room 2)
Peter Newman (Moderator), Shona Kinsella, Mike Brooks, David Green

The world of a story is created by the writer, but it is the reader who imagines it when they read. Our panel discuss worldbuilding techniques that they use and how they help them communicate their story to an audience.

Reviews on Trial - Saturday 6.30pm (Panel Room 3)
Pippa Bailey (Moderator), Jim Mcleod, Dave Watkins

Reviewing books, the work of a reviewer. What's coming out? What's the best way to engage with it. Our panel discuss how reviewers operate and their part in supporting readers and writers.

Guest of Honour Interview: Saturday 7pm (The Main Room)

Marcus Gipps, Shona Kinsella
Marcus Gipps interviewed by Shona Kinsella

Readings - Saturday 7pm (The Reading Room)

Gary Couzens, Tej Turner, Peter Sutton

The Mythic and the Darkness - Saturday 7pm (Panel Room 3)

Lucy Hounsom (Moderator), James Worrad, Rosanne Rabinowitz, Gabriela Houston

Stories that linger. Descriptions and fragments that suggest depth and meaning far greater than the words on the page. Real world myths can be a tremendous source for writers, and there are mythmaking techniques that many employ to add something that can stay with the reader long after the book has finished and the light has been turned out. Our panel discusses myths and what might remain behind for imaginative readers.

Words and Pictures- Saturday 7.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Robert Malan (Moderator), Clint Wastling, Allen Ashley, Andrew Knighton

Whether its graphic novels, comics, cover illustrations, adaptations, or the images invoked by the words on the page, the visual element of any story, be it imagined, or realised is incredibly important. Our panel discuss the relationship between words and pictures from a variety of perspectives and how different formats change the way artists create in visual and written forms.

Children's Fiction and YA - Saturday 7.30pm (Panel Room 3)

Ali Baker (Moderator), Sofia Rhei, Marisa Noelle, Damien Hine

Good stories for a younger audience have become sophisticated and imaginative narratives that fire up and inspire the minds of their readers. What makes good YA fiction or good middle-grade fiction? Our panel discusses their impressions of the field.

Fantasy Readings - Saturday 8pm (The Reading Room)

RJ Barker,
Juliet E Mckenna
David Wragg

The Horror, The Weird, The Supernatural - Saturday 8pm (Panel Room 1)

Graeme Reynolds (Moderator), Pauline Kirk, Simon

Clark, Jason Whittle

The genre of Horror has some qualities that readers see as being definitive. However, both Weird Fiction and Supernatural Fiction have some of these qualities. What is horror and how does it relate to the Weird and the Supernatural? Our panel discusses this question and relate their own interpretation and uses of tools and techniques associated with these genres.

Fiction and the World Around Us- Saturday 8.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Amanda Read (Moderator), Amy Brennan, Sofia Rhei, Rosanne Rabinowitz

Whether we look to nature for inspiration, or geology, or anthropology, the research that writers do, delving into each field in turn can be incredibly rewarding. Our panel discusses different influences on writing that can be taken from the world we live in and the ways in which some robust scientific thinking can improve stories, worlds and other works.

Families in Fantasy and Horror - Saturday 8.30pm (Panel Room 4)

Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), Gabriela Houston, Phil Sloman, Peter Newman

The inheritors of a dynastic legacy, or a group imperiled together because of the home they share. Families and family relationships are something readers recognise. How are they used and how could they be used differently in Fantasy and Horror?

Science Fiction Readings - Saturday 9pm (The Reading Room)

Stark Holborn
Allen Stroud

The Street - Saturday 9pm (Panel Room 1)

David Green (Moderator), Russell Smith, Angeline Trevena, Phil Williams

The urban fantasy genre can reflect much of the world in which we live. Urban horror can ensure there are monsters in the shadows, waiting for us if we make a wrong turn. Our panel considers the city and the sprawl as a setting for their stories. What makes it interesting and appealing?

Post Pandemic Audiences - Saturday 9.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Eliza Mood (Moderator)
Adam Simcox, Marisa Noelle, Stephen Oram

A global pandemic has been a popular topic for many writers. Now, after the world readership has ex-

perienced one, how is the audience's taste for fiction changed? Our panel tries to read the tea leaves and determine what might be the new stories that people want to read.

Music and Writing - Saturday 9.30pm (Panel Room 3)

Andrew Hook (Moderator), Neil Williamson, Allen Stroud, Kevin McVeigh.

Some writers are inspired by music, others use it as they write. Audio writers see it as part of the final form of their work. Our panel discusses music and writing. How one can relate to the other.

Horror Readings - Saturday 9pm (The Reading Room)

Chrissey Harrison
Phil Sloman
Charlotte Bond

Dungeons and Disorderly - Saturday 10.00pm (Panel Room 1)

Dave Moore (Moderator), Emily Inkpen, Anna Stephens, Anna Smith Spark, Russell A. Smith, Mike Brooks, Stewart Hotston

That Is Not Dead Which Can Eternal Shop... Game master David Thomas Moore wields the Big D20 once more, as a team of intrepid investigators uncovers some sort of plot by ultra-consumerist cultists to raise an ancient evil or something. Bring your most obscure adjectives (no, really, we'll need them).

Tales from the Dark with Kit Power - Saturday 10.30pm (Panel Room 2)

Kit Power (Moderator), Laura Mauro, CC Adams, David Watkins, Marian Womack

Late night horror short stories in the dark from a selection of horror writers, presented by Kit Power. Be prepared to be scared!

Tongue Work

By Ai Jiang

Soft flesh too sensitive
to temperature clocks in
when you wake.
Like sand or water
in a winding cave that quakes
when its entrance's seal unseals
and allows the mind's echoes free
but not always freed.
They force the seal and drop ropes
lined with thorns and their own roses
dipped in colours only they accept
and replace your echoes with theirs.
They laugh at your silence
while sitting on thorns like nothing.
They watch your cave bleed,
giving you no choice but to leave.
But to leave is more dangerous
than staying, working, twisting
the soft flesh like moulding clay
into a shape that only they want to see.

(First published in *Claw & Blossom* (2021))

Event Schedule Sunday

Fantasy Readings - Sunday 10.00am (The Reading Room)

Gray Williams
David Green
Pauline Kirk

BFS AGM - Sunday 10am (Panel Room 1)

Allen Ashley, Helen Armfield, Lee Harris

The annual meeting of the British Fantasy Society, presided over by the committee. All members of the society are invited to attend.

Surprise SMASH! - Sunday 10.00am (Panel Room 2)

Donna Bond (Moderator), Duncan Bradshaw, David Watkins

We're heading into the future! What will be the great sellers, the next run away hits that sweep into the publishing industry and run away with the plaudits and prizes. From the outlandish to the strange, to the improbable and impossible, our panel with help from the audience consider what might be the next big thing.

Can Superhero Stories Change the World? - Sunday 10am (Panel Room 3)

Stewart Hotston (Moderator) Anna Stephens, Gavin Smith

Once the mainstay of comic books and graphic novels, now a staple in movies and novels, Superheroes are characters who can perform extraordinary feats, beyond what we mere mortals can do. But the best superhero characters remain relatable and human at heart. Our panel discusses the way superheroes can be used in stories.

Guest of Honour Interview: Ian Whates Sunday 10.30am (The Main Room)

Ian Whates, Allen Stroud

The Magical - Sunday 11.00am (Panel Room 2)

David Allan (Moderator) Justin Lee Anderson, Susan Williamson, Amanda Read

There is something about magic in fantasy that remains undefineable, despite efforts to categorise, catalogue and rationalise it. What do you use magic for in your work? Our panel discusses the use of magic in writing, considering innovations, structures and

how it can make a story sparkle, sometime literally!

Past Authors on Present Authors - Sunday 11.00am (Panel Room 2)

David Cartwright (Moderator) Ritchie Valentine Smith, Ben Marrow, Marcus Gipps

Who inspired your writing? Did you meet them? Who are you influenced by now? Some of the most influential writers of the past are names we all know, but others may be ones you have never heard of. Our panel discusses their writing and how it has been shaped by some of the great books they have read.

Readings - Sunday 11am (The Reading Room)

Marian Womack
Laura Mauro
Lucie Mcknight Hardy

Writepolis Live! - Sunday 12 Noon (Panel Room 1)

R. J. Barker, Kit Power

A live version of the popular podcast. Join R. J. Barker and Kit Power to discuss the profession of writing.

Representing Disability - Sunday 12 Noon (Panel Room 2)

Allen Stroud (Moderator), David Hartley, Kevin Elliott

Our world is a diverse place. Our futures and our fantasies should be similarly diverse. We should be able to 'see' ourselves to find role models and inspiring characters in stories. Join our panel as they discuss the representation of disability in genre fiction.

Time and Time Travel - Sunday 12 Noon (Panel Room 2)

F. D. Lee (Moderator) Tiffani Angus, Pauline Kirk, Steve Walsh

The future, the past, the present. We're all travelling through time. Can events be changed if we went back? Who would remember? What if you meet yourself? All of these questions and more are ones a writer has to think about if they are using time in different ways in their stories. Join our panel to discuss novel ways of using time in a story.

**The British Fantasy Society Banquet - Sunday 1pm
(The Main Room)**

The society's annual dinner that precedes The British Fantasy Awards.

The British Fantasy Awards - 3pm (The Main-Room)

Featuring the prize giving for Best Anthology, Best Artist, Best Collection, Best Comic/Graphic Novel, Best Fantasy Novel, Best Film/TV Production, Best

Horror Novel, Best Independent Press, Best magazine/Periodical, Best Newcomer, Best Non-fiction, Best Novella, Best Short Fiction, Best Audio Work, and the Karl Wagner Award.

The Dead Dog Party - 4.30pm (The Main Room)

An after party celebration of the convention, its participants, volunteers and organisers. Thank you all for coming! Party ends at 6pm.

Because A Tree

by Allen Ashley

Because a tree
gives us fruit, timber, knowledge,
shelter. Rooted for years, it
marks our childhood, our sweethearts,
our boundaries. Each one its own
ecosystem, it's feeding the five
thousand insects, birds, squirrels;
storing away our carbon
and breathing out oh two too.

Because a tree
supposedly tempted; and later
formed a burden to be carried,
nailed upon, left. Ill-used
through the aeons: the hull
of the slave ships, the handle
of the muskets, the frame
for the guillotine and right
square on the gallows.

Redwood, sequoia, oak –
150 not out;
no stumping allowed.
Because a tree lives
above and below, holds its ground
and ours through slings, arrows
and cyclones. Is there before
us and after us.

(Previously published in "Echoes from an Expired Earth" by Allen Ashley, Demain Publishing, 2021)

FANTASYCON 2021 TIMETABLE (FRIDAY)

The Main Room	The Reading Room	Panel Room 1	Panel Room 2	Registration and Dealers
			3.30pm – New to Fantasycon Karen Fishwick	12 Noon – Dealers and Registration Desk Open
			4.30pm – Self Publishing Experiences Iain Grant (Moderator), Kevin Elliott, Heide Goody, Rachel McLean	
	Reading Group 1: Fantasy (3) Susie Williamson Clint Westling Teika Bellamy	5pm – Genre Splicing Allen Stroud (Moderator), Andrew Hook, Cheryl Morgan, Juliet E. McKenna	5.30pm – Bringing Character Neil Williamson (Moderator), Jen Williams, Phil Sloman, Myk Pilgrim	6pm – Dealers Close
	Reading Group 4: Horror (3) David Cartwright Hannah Bright Jason Whittle	6pm – Representing Women Charlotte Bond (Moderator), F. D. Lee, Saara El-Arifi, Susan Williamson	6.30pm – Writing Groups Allen Ashley (Moderator), Rachel Emma Shaw, David Green, Ian Hunter	
7pm – Welcome to Fantasycon Allen Stroud, Jen Williams, Marcus Gipps, Ian Whates	Reading Group 2: Fantasy (3) David Allan Simon André Kiedtke Anna Smith Spark	7pm – Writing as a Business Iain Grant (Moderator), David Moore, Adrian Tchaikovsky, Juliet E. McKenna	7.30pm – Friday Night Poetry Allen Ashley (Moderator)	
8pm – 11pm Karaoke (sponsored by Rebellion Publishing Ltd.) David Moore	Reading Group 6: Horror (3) Neil Williamson Jonathan Walker Dan Coxon	8pm – Representing Gender Heide Goody (Moderator) Tej Turner, Kat Dunn, Arawalo		9pm – Registration Closes
	Reading Group 9: Weird Fiction (2) Tom Johnstone David Hartley	9pm – World Horror Laura Mauro (Moderator), Jim McLeod, Peter Mark May, Matt Shaw	9.30pm – Writing Shorts Pete Sutton (Moderator), Tej Turner, Andrew Knighton, Neil Williamson	
	Reading Group 13: Science Fiction (3) Adrian Tchaikovsky Lorraine Wilson John Dodd			

FANTASYCON 2021 TIMETABLE (SATURDAY MORNING/AFTERNOON)

The Main Room	The Reading Room	Panel Room 1	Panel Room 2	Panel Room 3	Registration and Dealers
		9.00am - Fairy Tales and Folk Lore Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), Teika Bellamy, Charlotte Bond, Lucy Hounsom	9.00am to 10.30am – Short Story Workshop Shona Kinsella	9.00am to 10.30am - Self Publishing Workshop Heide Goody, Iain Grant, Rachel McLean	9am Registration Desk Opens 10am Dealers room Opens
	10am - Reading Group 3: Fantasy (3) Lucy Hounsom Gabriela Houston Tiffani Angus	10am – Author Marketing Richie Billing (Moderator), Michael R. Miller, Graeme Reynolds, Simon André Kiedtke	10.30am – The Epic Fantasy Panel Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), RJ Barker, Jen Williams, Stephen Poore	10.30am – Neurodivergency David Hartley (Moderator), Emily Inkpen, Jonathan Walker, Rachel Emma Shaw	
11am – Launch: Luna Press Francesca T Barbini, John Dodd, Cheryl Morgan, Lorraine Wilson, Allen Stroud	11am – Reading Group 18: Horror (3) Rosanne Rabinowitz Stephen Oram Duncan P. Bradshaw	11am – Myths About Publishing Juliet Mushens (Moderator), Marcus Gipps, Dan Coxon, John Baker	11.30am – Fantasy Book Swap (Podcast) Ali Baker, Tiffany Angus	11.30am – Damage Richie Billing (Moderator) Jenni Coutts, Peter Mark May, Rachel Emma Shaw	
12 Noon – Launch: Unsung Stories Dan Coxon, Ashley Stokes, Laura Mauro, Gary Budden	Reading Group 5: Fantasy (3) Anna Stephens Shona Kinsella Arawalo	12 Noon – Religion and Horror Iain Grant (Moderator), Jonathan Walker, Simon Clark, Jason Whittle	12.30am – On Screen Myk Pilgrim (Moderator), Matt Shaw, Gavin Smith, Adam Simcox	12.30am – In Space... Tom Toner (Moderator), John Dodd, Allen Stroud, Stark Holborn	
1pm – Launch: Dead Ink Dan Coxon, Robert Shearman, Lucie McKnight Hardy, Gary Budden, Timothy J. Jarvis	1pm - Reading Group 8: Fantasy (3) Heide Goody Ian Hunter	1pm – Researching the Novel Stewart Hotston (Moderator), Adrian Tchaikovsky, Ashley Stokes	1.30pm – Representing Sexuality Fiona Moore (Moderator), Sofia Rhei, Susie Williamson	1.30pm – In Audio Charlotte Bond (Moderator), Pippa Bailey, Pauline Kirk, E. M. Faulds	
2pm – Launch: Alchemy Press Peter Coleborn, Jan Edwards, Stephen Jones, James Brogden, Mike Chinn, Pauline Dungeate, Paul Finch, Tom Johnstone, Phil Sloman	2pm – Reading Group 17: Horror (3) CC Adams Susan York	2pm – Fantasy Literature Allen Stroud (Moderator) Farah Mendlesohn, Ali Baker, Ian Hunter.	2.30pm – Medieval Books by Jess Hyslop Jess Hyslop	2.30pm – System Thinking Simon André Kiedtke (Moderator), Angeline Trevena, Michael R. Miller	
3pm – Guest of Honour Interview Jen Williams, Juliet Mushens	3pm: Reading Group 15: Science Fiction (3) Kevin Elliott Faith (F. D. Lee) Andrew Hook	3pm – Representing Race Stewart Hotston (Moderator), CC Adams, Arawalo, Saara El-Arifi	3.30pm – Independent Presses Teika Bellamy (Moderator), David Stokes, Cheryl Morgan, Peter Coleborn	3.30pm – Beginning to Write Rob Malan (Moderator), Lorraine Wilson, Ashley Stokes, Damien Hine	
4pm – Launch: Grimbold Books	4pm: Open Readings	4pm The Art of Fantasy and Horror Duncan Bradshaw (Moderator), Jenni Coutts,			

FANTASYCON 2021 TIMETABLE (SATURDAY AFTERNOON/EVENING)

The Main Room	The Reading Room	Panel Room 1	Panel Room 2	Panel Room 3	Registration and Dealers
5pm – Launch: Black Shuck Steve Shaw, Andrew Hook, Sarah Lotz, Lucie McKnight Hardy, Teika Bellamy	5pm – Reading Group 7: Ai Jiang Tamanna Dhuppad	5pm – Editors... Pete Sutton (Moderator), Carlie M. A. Cullen, Peter Coleborn, Juliet Mushens	5.30pm – This is not me, but it is my voice F. D. Lee (Moderator), Mike Brooks, Anna Stephens, Susan Williamson	5.30pm – Games and Gaming John Dodd (Moderator), Stark Holborn, Laura Mauro, Amy Brennan	6pm Dealers Closes
6pm – Launch: Wizards Tower Press Cheryl Morgan, Juliet E. McKenna	6pm – Reading Group 10: Fantasy Justin Lee Anderson Adam Simcox Kit JKB Power	6pm – No Seriously, We *Have* Always Fought: Developing Historical Awareness in SFF Fiona Moore (Moderator), Ali Baker, Farah Mendlesohn, Lorraine Wilson	6.30pm – Worldbuilding for the Reader Peter Newman (Moderator), Shona Kinsella, Mike Brooks, David Green	6.30pm – Reviews on Trial Pippa Bailey (Moderator), Jim Mcleod, Dave Watkins	
7.30pm – Guest of Honour Interview Marcus Gippis, Shona Kinsella	7pm – Reading Group 11: Fantasy Gary Couzens Tej Turner Peter Sutton	7pm – The Mythic & The Darkness Lucy Hounsom (Moderator), James Worrall, Rosanne Rabinowitz, Gabriela Houston	7.30pm – Words and Pictures Robert Malan (Moderator), Clint Wastling, Allen Ashley, Andrew Knighton	7.30pm – Children's Fiction and YA Ali Baker (Moderator), Sofia Rhei, Marisa Noelle, Damien Hine	8pm Registration Desk Closes
	8pm – Reading Group 14: Fantasy RJ Barker Juliet E McKenna David Wrags	8pm – The Horror, The Weird, The Supernatural Graeme Reynolds (Moderator), Pauline Kirk, Simon Clark, Jason Whittle	8.30pm – Fiction and the World Around Us Amanda Read (Moderator), Amy Brennan, Sofia Rhei, Rosanne Rabinowitz	8.30pm – Families in Fantasy and Horror Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), Gabriela Houston, Phil Sloman, Peter Newman	
	9pm – Reading Group 12: Science Fiction Stark Holborn, Allen Stroud	9pm – The Street David Green (Moderator), Russell Smith, Angeline Trevena, Phil Williams	9.30pm – Post Pandemic Audiences Eliza Mood (Moderator) Adam Simcox, Marisa Noelle, Stephen Oram	9.30pm – Music and Writing Andrew Hook (Moderator), Neil Williamson, Allen Stroud, Kevin McVeigh.	
	10pm: Reading Group 19: Horror and Weird Fiction Chrissey Harrison Phil Sloman Charlotte Bond	10pm – Dungeons and Disorderly Dave Moore (Moderator), Emily Inkpen, Anna Stephens, Anna Smith Spark, Russell A. Smith, Mike Brooks, Stewart Hotston		10.30pm – Tales from the Dark with Kit Power <i>Kit Power (Moderator) Laura Bellamy</i>	

FANTASYCON 2021 TIMETABLE (SATURDAY AFTERNOON/EVENING)

The Main Room	The Reading Room	Panel Room 1	Panel Room 2	Panel Room 3	Registration and Dealers
5pm – Launch: Black Shuck Steve Shaw, Andrew Hook, Sarah Lotz, Lucie McKnight Hardy, Teika Bellamy	5pm – Reading Group 7: Al Jiang Tamanna Dhupad	5pm – Editors... Pete Sutton (Moderator), Carlie M. A. Cullen, Peter Coleborn, Juliet Mushens	5.30pm – This is not me, but it is my voice F. D. Lee (Moderator), Mike Brooks, Anna Stephens, Susan Williamson	5.30pm – Games and Gaming John Dodd (Moderator), Stark Holborn, Laura Mauro, Amy Brennan	
6pm – Launch: Wizards Tower Press Cheryl Morgan, Juliet E. McKenna	6pm – Reading Group 10: Fantasy Justin Lee Anderson Adam Simcox Kit JKB Power	6pm – No Seriously, We *Have* Always Fought: Developing Historical Awareness in SFF Fiona Moore (Moderator), Ali Baker, Farah Mendlesohn, Lorraine Wilson	6.30pm – Worldbuilding for the Reader Peter Newman (Moderator), Shona Kinsella, Mike Brooks, David Green	6.30pm – Reviews on Trial Pippa Bailey (Moderator), Jim McLeod, Dave Watkins	6pm Dealers Closes
7.30pm – Guest of Honour Interview Marcus Gipps, Shona Kinsella	7pm – Reading Group 11: Fantasy Gary Couzens Tej Turner Peter Sutton	7pm – The Mythic & The Darkness Lucy Hounsom (Moderator), James Worrad, Rosanne Rabinowitz, Gabriela Houston	7.30pm – Words and Pictures Robert Malan (Moderator), Clint Wastling, Allen Ashley, Andrew Knighton	7.30pm – Children's Fiction and YA Ali Baker (Moderator), Sofia Rhei, Marisa Noelle, Damien Hine	8pm Registration Desk Closes
	8pm – Reading Group 14: Fantasy RJ Barker Juliet E McKenna David Wragg	8pm – The Horror, The Weird, The Supernatural Graeme Reynolds (Moderator), Pauline Kirk, Simon Clark, Jason Whittle	8.30pm – Fiction and the World Around Us Amanda Read (Moderator), Amy Brennan, Sofia Rhei, Rosanne Rabinowitz	8.30pm – Families in Fantasy and Horror Anna Smith Spark (Moderator), Gabriela Houston, Phil Sloman, Peter Newman	
	9pm – Reading Group 12: Science Fiction Stark Holborn, Allen Stroud	9pm – The Street David Green (Moderator), Russell Smith, Angeline Trevena, Phil Williams	9.30pm – Post Pandemic Audiences Eliza Mood (Moderator) Adam Simcox, Marisa Noelle, Stephen Oram	9.30pm – Music and Writing Andrew Hook (Moderator), Neil Williamson, Allen Stroud, Kevin McVeigh.	
	10pm: Reading Group 19: Horror and Weird Fiction Chrissey Harrison	10pm – Dungeons and Disorderly Dave Moore (Moderator) Emily Inkpen			

Tides of Avalon

by Jen Williams

The king looked down at his nephew, broken in the mud. Before the end his eyes had turned red, just as the old wretch said they would, and there were coarse tufts of black hair on the backs of his hands, but he'd managed to stop it before it went too far. The boy's breastplate was caved in, his chest a bloody ruin.

Arthur could feel his own life's blood leaving through the wound in his side, but he wasn't going to spend too long thinking about that.

'This is an end to it, then?'

Percival dragged his eyes up from the churned mud and the bodies lying there. The boy's face was white with shock and his eyes glittered wetly with the overcast light; it was a face Arthur had seen many times after battle. Too many.

'That is what he said, sire.' Now the boy was looking at the gash in Arthur's side. 'Sire, we must get you to...'

'Tell me exactly what he said, Percival. I would hear it now.'

His squire looked back down at the king's nephew.

'He said that Mordred was their last hope, sire, and that with him went all their plans for the kingdom. The line will die out now, left to become an echo of a thing, a memory in the hearts of men. They will be nothing but stray dogs, fighting over scraps.' Percival cleared his throat. 'That's what he said.'

Arthur nodded, and pressed his fingers to the wound in his side. The pain was tremendous, but he welcomed it. To their right the river ran red and grey, rushing the souls of men onwards to their end, while ravens began to circle overhead. This is what it all comes down to? A dead boy in the mud and the stink of my own guts, already festering? Arthur hefted his sword from where it rested in the mud. By all the gods, I can smell my own shit.

'I hope it means something, Percival. Fetch my horse and get her ready. I'll be riding straight to the old forest.'

Percival's eyes widened with panic. He made to put a hand on Arthur's arm and then thought better of it.

'You can't! I mean, my lord, we must take you to the surgeons and have them help you. There is a woodling woman there and they say there is nothing she cannot heal.'

'Percival, my horse.'

The squire shook his head, and Arthur saw with

wonder that the boy – a boy who had just lived through his first real battle and had killed his first man – was about to cry. It made him feel old.

'You'll never make it to the old forest, sire, not with that wound and travelling a-horse.'

'Listen to your King, Percival.' Arthur laid a hand on the boy's shoulder and squeezed. His wound burned and stabbed, but he ignored it. 'Do as I ask.'

'But if you should die on your journey...'

'I will not die on the way to the forest, Percival. At least not until I reach the lake.' Arthur smiled bitterly. 'Merlin has one last task for me, and while that promise goes unfulfilled he won't let me die. The bastard.'

He travelled alone.

And wasn't he glad of that? It would not do for his men to see him, pale-faced and sweating, his grip on the reins turning his knuckles white. The wound he'd bound up as best he could, trying not to look too closely at how his flesh had been raggedly parted. It was a struggle to sit upright on his horse, each step along the forest path a knife in his side. But slump he would not, because he was Arthur, and he was ever a stubborn man.

On all sides the trees crowded out the sky, all of them huge and black with time. This was one of the oldest places, a dark scar on his kingdom that most men considered haunted, populated only by ghosts and mad men. But it wasn't empty; Arthur could hear the shrill calls of birds all around, and the stealthy tread of other, larger creatures. Now and then he would hear the lonely bark of a she-fox.

My kingdom. She will carry on without me just as these trees have, and who will even know my name?

His fingers brushed the hilt of his sword, and he took some reassurance from its weight against his leg. It would be difficult to give up.

'Arthur, you're looking well!'

A slim patch of shadow between the trees folded in on itself and became a tall, gaunt man with a tangled grey beard. He wore rags and furs, and there were bones and gems twisted into his wild hair. His green eyes were impossibly bright in the gloom.

'Merlin Demon-Born. I was starting to think you weren't coming.'

Except that wasn't true. The old man's fishy stink was all over this forest.

'And miss this?' Merlin walked daintily between the snarls of holly bushes until he could place his dirty fingers on Arthur's mount. The horse snorted. 'The great King on his final quest, bravely battling his final foe... death.' His eyes narrowed shrewdly. 'The wound is bad, yes?'

Arthur ignored him.

'Mordred is dead.'

Merlin nodded, just as though he already knew; which Arthur supposed was entirely possible. The old man began to walk on down the path, and the horse followed.

'Good,' he said. 'Let that be an end to it.'

They moved through the forest in silence. Beyond the canopy of trees the sun began to set. The shadows grew fat and bled into one another, and the sounds of the forest began to change as the animals who lived their lives under the moon's light crawled out from their hiding places. Arthur shivered and flexed his fingers; they were starting to go numb.

'How much further?'

Merlin glanced up in surprise, as though he'd forgotten the king riding just behind him. In this light his face was long and strange. He barely looked human at all.

'We will come to the lake in the dawn's light.' His thin lips split into a grin. 'Are you discomfited?'

Arthur grunted. The cloth covering his wound was brown and stiff with old blood, but every time he shifted in his saddle he felt another warm surge as his body rushed to betray him.

'I've bled greatly for your war against the dog-men, Merlin. A kingly corpse will do you no good at all.'

The old wizard laughed, a dry rattle like shingle on a beach.

'There is enough left in you, sire, more than enough. You are a very singular man. Who else could ride straight from a battle, mortally wounded, and still be sat upright on his horse? None, I tell you, but Arthur. King Arthur – the king of now, and the king of centuries as yet undreamed of. I've told you that, yes?'

Arthur grimaced, but his heart swelled at the words, as it always had.

'You have mentioned it.'

'That is why it could only be you. One day, when your kingdom is ready, when it needs its most celebrated king – you will return.'

The forest soon grew too thick for the horse, and

with a pang of regret Arthur let the fine animal go, hoping it would not meet a bear or a wolf. They walked for the rest of the night in near silence, with only the occasional grunt of pain from Arthur and the strange calls of night birds in the darkness around them. Merlin waited until the king was stumbling half blind before pulling a shimmering globe of light from within his sleeve, and then they saw the forest revealed in soft ghost-light.

For Arthur it was a time of pain that seemed to stretch out forever. The agony in his side, that terrible internal tearing, blossomed into a hot wave that enflamed every inch of his skin. The forest was cold and damp but he was ablaze, a man of fire and gritted teeth walking endlessly, endlessly through the trees.

I should not have kept this promise, he thought – when he could think, when the pain didn't fog his thoughts completely – I should have died on the battlefield. A hero's death. They would have written songs about it. Instead I will shuffle to my end, with the stink of my own guts in my nose and the company of a wizened devil.

But he kept going, because he was the king, and he was a stubborn man.

When the first pink light of dawn began to stain the sky overhead Arthur at first took it to be an illusion – there were bright stars in front of his eyes now, bursting and vanishing like sparks from a fire – until he realised that in the distance the ground was glittering with the same rose light. He rubbed a hand across his eyes.

'We are here,' said Merlin. He pointed with the stick. 'The lake.'

Of course it was the lake. The trees to either side thinned out and they found themselves on the shoreline of a lake so wide the other side was little more than a thick line of darkness. The dawn sky, violet now and streaked with ragged scraps of cloud, was reflected perfectly in the water. A great mirror, thought Arthur.

All at once, the strength finally drained from his legs and he stumbled, falling to his knees in the tall reeds. Immediately Merlin was at his side, dragging him back to his feet with surprisingly strong arms.

'Not yet, sire. Not yet. Time to rest soon, but we must get you into the waters.'

'Tell me again,' said Arthur. He allowed himself to be half dragged towards the shore, wondering at how a skinny wretch like Merlin could manage it. 'What will happen? Afterwards.'

'Of course my lord.' They splashed to the edge of the lake, and Arthur felt freezing water flow over the tops of his boots. 'You will travel far from here to a

place called, let us say, Avalon, and there they will heal you and give you to sleep. Arthur, the greatest and wisest of all kings, will sleep for centuries, until the kingdom is once more in need of you. Then you will wake and return.'

They walked until the water was up to their waists. The cold of it seemed to ease the pain of his wound slightly, and Arthur found some of the fog lifting from his vision. There was a stirring in the water out further into the centre of the lake, causing little waves to lap against his stomach.

'The sword, sire. Remember?'

Arthur drew Excalibur, and a narrow shape broke the water in front of them.

'The Lady,' said Arthur. His grip on the sword tightened a little.

The Lady of the Lake walked towards them. Her head was bald and sharp-boned, her skin greenish-white. Eyes that were more like a cat's than a woman's flickered back and forth between the king and the wizard, and she opened a wide mouth lined with teeth like fish hooks. She wore nothing but a covering of warty scales.

'You are as beautiful as ever, my lady,' Arthur sketched an awkward bow.

She hissed at this remark and held out her hand expectantly. The fingers were webbed.

'Must I really?' Arthur glanced at Merlin. 'A returning king should have his sword.'

Merlin's thin face was unmoved.

'It is what was promised.'

Reluctantly, Arthur held the sword out, blade first, and the lady of the lake snatched it out of his hands. Its wickedly sharp edge didn't seem to worry her scaly fingers.

'She was a good sword,' Arthur frowned as the Lady examined it briefly and then dropped it beneath the waters. There was a silvery flash, and it was gone.

'Plenty of swords in your future, Arthur, don't pout. Now, we must prepare you for your journey.'

Merlin gestured to the Lady, whose yellow eyes shone with sudden interest. She reached below the water and when her hands came up again she carried a soft white globe, no bigger than an apple. It shone with faint pearlescent light.

'And what's that?'

'Just a way to bind your wound for the journey, sire. Now, try not to move.'

Merlin's strong arms encircled his chest from behind, so tight it was difficult to breathe, and the Lady shot forward eagerly, lips curling back from her teeth in what was almost a smile. She pulled back the ragged remains of Arthur's hauberk to reveal the wound.

'What are you-?'

She thrust the white globe at his side and pushed, tearing the wound anew and causing a fresh gush of blood to darken the lake. Arthur screamed, but Merlin's grip was merciless.

'Do not take on so, my lord! This is the way it must be. You are the only one who could carry this burden for us.'

Arthur thrashed as the Lady forced the globe into his wound, pushing it until the sides closed around it and only a slither of white could be seen. She retreated and Arthur sagged, nearly passing out with the pain.

'Why?' He coughed up a wad of blood. 'What are you doing?'

'Just the start of your healing, sire, that's all,' Merlin smoothed his fingers across Arthur's brow, pushing away the loose strands of hair as tenderly as a mother with her child. 'You will take this with you, and go where we cannot.' The wizard's voice hardened, and Arthur suspected he was no longer talking to anyone visible. 'The dog-men will fall before us, yes, and the tides will rise. The tides will rise.'

The Lady of the Lake hissed again.

'Here is your vessel, my lord,' Merlin pulled Arthur upright in time to see a slim white boat slide into view. It was made of a pale wood and there were strange sigils carved into its side. There were no oars, and no sails.

'This is how I am to travel to Avalon?'

In answer Merlin and the Lady of the Lake took hold of him and lifted him bodily into the boat. Arthur lay on the bottom and looked up at the sky. The clouds were yellow.

'Go now, Arthur Pendragon, the King of the now and the shall be. Take our precious cargo with you, for we are too old to travel.'

Shifting in the boat, Arthur turned to see Merlin and the Lady of the Lake looking down on him from either side. Their faces were deeply shadowed, but for the first time he noticed how alike they were. Had Merlin always had such sharp cheekbones? They almost seemed to poke through his thin, greenish skin. And his mouth... had it always been that wide?

There was a shudder and a jerk, and the little boat began to speed away from them, apparently moving of its own accord. Arthur felt a soft thrumming from below, as though a thousand tiny fingers were prodding him along. The faces of Merlin and the Lady were lost to him, but he heard his wizard's voice, cracked and inhuman.

'The tide will rise!'

The boat travelled in silence.

Arthur lay on his back and looked up at the sky. The wound in his side was still an agony, and the white globe forced in there by the Lady's hard fingers had only made it worse, but that all felt very distant now, as though it were happening to someone else.

And in a way, it was, reflected Arthur. Soon he would be at Avalon, and they would heal him anew, and he would wait there for this distant point in the future that Merlin had always spoken of when he'd rise again. He thought briefly of her, the woman with the shining brow and he did feel a moment of sorrow, quickly clouded with anger. I'll leave them all behind, he thought, and they will regret all of their betrayals.

The sky turned from pale blue to bright azure to indigo, and then huge purple clouds crowded over to shield him from the stars. Night came, but the burning of his wound kept him warm, and the sun rose again, passing over him like a comet. Again and again he watched the sky flicker through all its colours, until he could no longer tell what time of day it was or even how long he'd been travelling. He slept, on and off, and dreamed dark dreams of dog-men in the woods, tracking him by the blood that poured endlessly from his stomach, and of a woman as pale as the moon with scarlet writing on her tongue.

'Will it not end?' he said to the open sky when he woke. 'I must either die or be saved.'

The first sign that the journey was over came in the form of birdsong. Arthur lifted his head to see where the music came from and saw a cluster of shining spires, white as bone, reaching up into the sky. It was a city unlike any he'd seen, so bright it was hard to look at. From where he crouched he could see that the boat was sailing up a narrow river, and to either side were broad walkways, carved from flawless marble. He could see figures in the distance too, approaching at a run.

'I am here.' Arthur shifted forward in the boat, trying to rise, but the wound was swollen now, pushing out his belly like a woman with child, and it was all he could do to stay upright. One of the figures on the walkway reached the boat and took hold of it, pulling it to the river's edge.

'I am Arthur, your king. I have been sent here to...'

Arthur faltered as he took in the face of his rescuer. Mottled green skin shimmered with scales, and eyes that were much too wide for a human face blinked wetly. She opened her mouth and it was like a door swinging open when the latch is broken; inside there were teeth like jagged glass, row after row of them.

'We know why you have been sent.' The voice was guttural and harsh. 'You come bearing their children.'

'At last!' Another inhuman face appeared. Arthur tried to shift his body to the other side, away from them, but together they reached out with their claws and dragged him back. Arthur saw his flesh parting where they touched him, and blood began to fill the bottom of the small boat.

'You don't understand. I've been sent by Merlin. You are to heal me and I will live here, until it is time for me to rule again.'

The strange figures weren't listening. They dragged him from the boat so that he lay, sprawled and gasping like a fish, on the hard marble floor.

'You? It is not you who will rule, warm bag of meat.' The creature who had first spotted him grinned again. 'You've bought our children safely home, as was promised, and once more we will thrive.'

'Your children? I don't...'

'The tide will rise again,' said the figure to his left, and all at once there was a surge of horrendous pain in Arthur's guts. He screamed...

...and something inside him answered.

'We go below,' said the green woman.

Distantly, Arthur became aware of a great shaking beneath him, and the spires of silvery marble seemed to tremble.

'What's happening?'

'You've brought us hope, Arthur Pendragon. You meat-sacks, the dog-men, the fey, all of you will drown.' The green woman bent over him and rested her hands on his swollen stomach. 'The tide will rise, and you will drown.'

And all around him the city that may or may not have been Avalon sank below the waves.

FantasyCon 2022

Guests include

**LIZ WILLIAMS
&
RIVERS SOLOMON**

**Plus all your favourite
panels, interviews, discussions,
book launches and more!**

**Head to
www.fantasycon.org
to book.**

**Ultra-early discounts available
if you book during the weekend of
FantasyCon 2021 !**

**16th-18th September
Park Inn, Heathrow, London**



The British Fantasy Awards 2021

Compiled and Organised by Katherine Fowler - (BFS Awards Administrator)

Following two rounds of nomination and voting from the members of the British Fantasy Society and FantasyCon, The British Fantasy Awards has reached its jury stage.

For 2021 the shortlisted entrants are:

Best Newcomer (The Sydney J. Bounds Award)

Jurors: Mohsin Siddiqui, Rhian Bowley, Shellie Horst, Tom Lloyd, Sammy Smith

Tiffani Angus, for *Threading the Labyrinth* (Unsung Stories)

Dan Coxon, for *Green Fingers & Only the Broken Remain* (Black Shuck Books)

Sean Hogan, for *England's Screaming* (PS Publishing) & *Three Mothers, One Father* (Black Shuck Books)

Kathleen Jennings, for *Flyaway* (Tordotcom)

Simon Jimenez, for *The Vanished Birds* (Titan)

Rym Kechacha, for *Dark River* (Unsung Stories)

Best Film / Television Production

Jurors: Rachel Pattinson, Martyn Sullivan, Amit Khaira, Sarah Pinborough, Arabella Sophia

Birds of Prey

The Boys: What I Know (Season 2, episode 8)

The Haunting of Bly Manor: The Romance of Certain Old Clothes (Season 1, episode 8)

The Invisible Man

The Lighthouse

Saint Maud

Best Non-Fiction

Jurors: David G Wilson, Trudy Lynn, Susan Maxwell, Jessica Lévai, Kevin McVeigh

The Full Lid, Alasdair Stuart, ed. Marguerite Kenner
It's the End of the World: But What Are We Really

Afraid Of?, Adam Roberts (Elliot & Thompson)

Notes from the Borderland, Lynda E. Rucker (in "Black Static", TTA Press)

Ties that Bind: Love in Fantasy and Science Fiction, ed. Francesca T Barbini (Luna Press Publishing)

The Unstable Realities of Christopher Priest, Paul Kincaid (Gylphi Limited)

Women Make Horror: Filmmaking, Feminism,

Genre, ed. Alison Peirse (Rutgers University Press)

Best Artist

Jurors: Paul Yates, Kayden Weir, Alex Gushurst-Moore, Tatiana Dengo Villalobos

Warwick Fraser-Coombe

David Rix

Vincent Sammy

Daniele Serra

Best Comic / Graphic Novel

Jurors: Rebecca Gault, Alicia Fitton, Edward Partridge, Michele Howe, Hannah Barton

The Daughters of Ys, Jo Rioux & M.T. Andersen (First Second)

DIE Vol. 2: Split the Party, Kieron Gillen & Stephanie Hans (Image Comics)

John Constantine: Hellblazer, Vol. 1: Marks of Woe, Simon Spurrier & Aaron Campbell (DC Comics)

The Magic Fish, Trung Le Nguyen (Random House Graphic)

Rivers of London: The Fey and the Furious, Ben Aaronovitch & Andrew Cartmell (Titan)

Venus in the Blind Spot, Junji Ito (VIZ Media LLC)

Best Magazine / Periodical

Jurors: Samuel Poots, Vanessa Jae, Adri Joy, Devin Martin, Kate Coe

Black Static

The Dark

FIYAH

Ginger Nuts of Horror

Shoreline of Infinity

Strange Horizons

Best Independent Press

Jurors: Rowena Andrews, Anna Slevin, Ann Landmann, Cheyenne Heckermann, Amy Brennan

Black Shuck Books

Flame Tree Press

Luna Press Publishing

Unsung Stories

Best Audio

Jurors: Kat Kourbeti, Tam Moules, Arden Fitzroy, Pete Sutton

Breaking the Glass Slipper, Megan Leigh, Lucy Hounson & Charlotte Bond

The Magnus Archives, Rusty Quill

PodCastle, Escape Artists

PseudoPod, Escape Artists

The Sandman, Dirk Maggs & Neil Gaiman (Audible Originals)

Stellar Firma, Rusty Quill

Best Anthology

Jurors: Abbi Shaw, Lauren McClelland, Caroline Oakley, Emma Varney, Ginger Lee Thomason

After Sundown, ed. Mark Morris (Flame Tree Press)

Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women, ed. Lee Murray & Geneve Flynn (Omnium Gatherum Media)

Dominion: An Anthology of Speculative Fiction from Africa and the African Diaspora, ed. Zelda Knight & Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki (Aurelia Leo)

Shadows & Tall Trees, Vol. 8, ed. Michael Kelly (Undertow Publications)

Best Short Fiction

Jurors: Laura Braswell, Danny Boland, Steve J Shaw, Allyson Bird, Alia McKellar

8-Bit Free Will, John Wiswell (in PodCastle 654, Escape Artists)

Daylight Robbery, Anna Taborska (in “Bloody Britain”, Shadow Publishing)

Infinite Tea in the Demara Café, Ida Keogh (in “London Centric: Tales of Future London, Newcon Press)

We Do Like to be Beside, Pete Sutton (in “Alchemy Press Book of Horrors 2”, Alchemy Press)

Best Collection

Jurors: Raquel Alemán Cruz, Chris White, Carrienne

Dillon, Aaron S. Jones, Hannah Zurcher

Bloody Britain, Anna Taborska (Shadow Publishing)
Only the Broken Remain, Dan Coxon (Black Shuck Books)

The Watcher in the Woods, Charlotte Bond (Black Shuck Books)

We All Hear Stories in the Dark, Robert Shearman (PS Publishing)

Best Novella

Jurors: Timy Takács, Phillip Irving, Ellis Saxey, Kshoni Gunpath, Alasdair Stuart

The Flame and the Flood, Shona Kinsella (Fox Spirit)

Honeybones, Georgina Bruce (TTA Press)

The Order of the Pure Moon Reflected in Water, Zen Cho (Tordotcom)

Ring Shout, P. Djèlí Clark (Tordotcom)

A Song for the End, Kit Power (Horrific Tales Publishing)

Triggernometry, Stark Holborn (Rattleback Books)

Best Horror Novel (The August Derleth Award)

Jurors: Rhian Drinkwater, Judith Schofield, Fabienne Schwizer, Ben Appleby-Dean, Ai Jiang

Beneath the Rising, Premee Mohamed (Rebellion)

The Hollow Places, T. Kingfisher (Titan)

Mexican Gothic, Silvia Moreno-Garcia (Jo Fletcher Books)

The Only Good Indians, Stephen Graham Jones (Titan)

Plain Bad Heroines, Emily Danforth (The Borough Press)

Survivor Song, Paul Tremblay (Titan)

Best Fantasy Novel (The Robert Holdstock Award)

Jurors: Aoife Roantree, Steven Poore, Sue York, S.D. Howarth, Kate Towner

The Bone Shard Daughter, Andrea Stewart (Orbit)

By Force Alone, Lavie Tidhar (Head of Zeus)

The City We Became, N.K. Jemisin (Orbit)

Dark River, Rym Kechacha (Unsung Stories)

The Once and Future Witches, Alix E. Harrow (Orbit)

Threading the Labyrinth, Tiffani Angus (Unsung Stories)

*One idea can
jinx a whole
country in less
than a lifetime...*

**L Ron Hubbard Writer
of the Future 2020**

Available for pre-order
1 October, publishing
28 October
£9.99 paperback
£4.99 ePub

*Reminiscent of The Handmaid's Tale,
Never Let Me Go and Stranger Things*

Cathryn Summerhayes



THE WORD

JL George

*Has the vibe of a cult late 70s
British sci-fi TV show... clever, bleak, violent*

Lloyd Markham, author of *Bad Ideas* \ *Chemicals*

THE WORD

JL George

*Could well encapsulate the post-truth world we
find ourselves in. A powerful, necessary work*

Patrick Jones, *Everything Must Go*



WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION 2021

Author Guest of Honour

Nisi Shawl

Artist Guest of Honour

John Picacio

Editor Guest of Honour

André-François Ruaud

Special Guest

Owl Goingback

Special Guest

Yves Meynard

Special Guest

Brandon O'Brien

Toastmaster

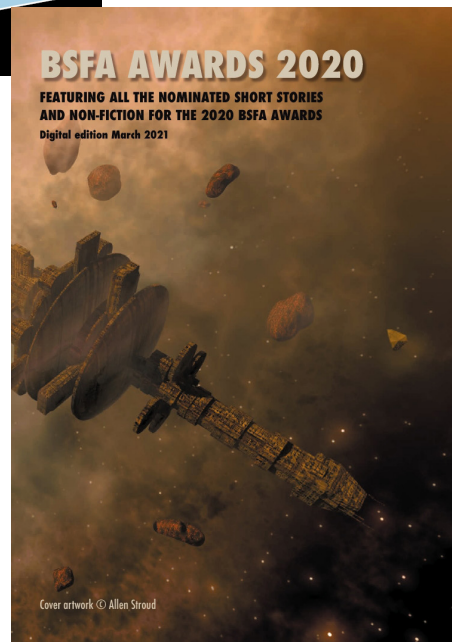
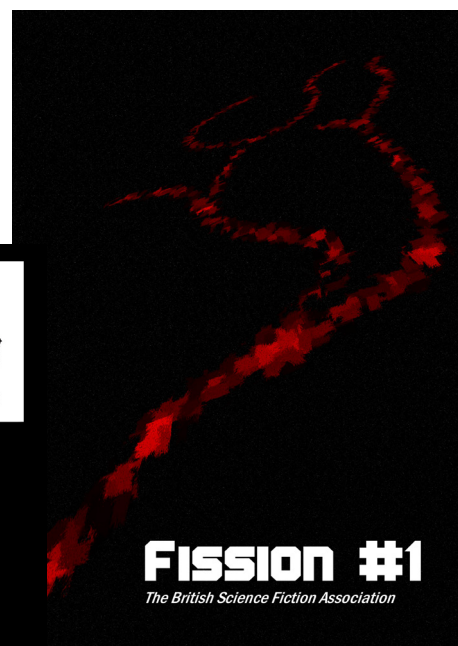
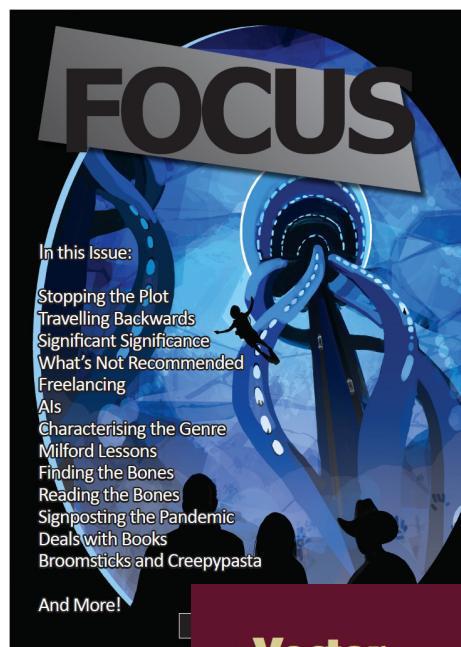
Christine Taylor-Butler

Theme

Fantasy, Imagination, and the Dreams of Youth

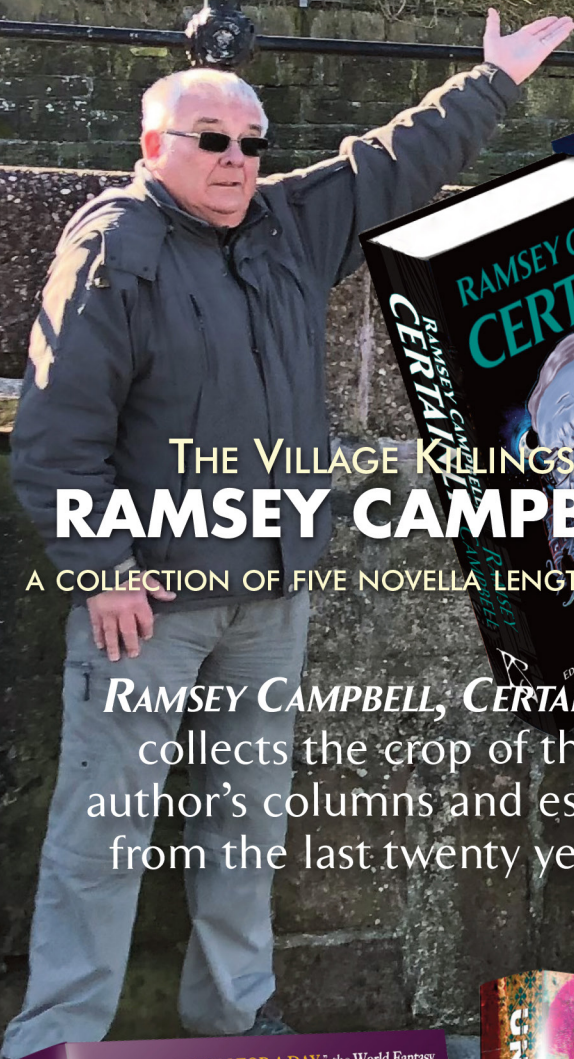
Montréal, Québec, Canada — November 4–7, 2021

www.wfc2021.org



ESTABLISHED IN 1958
JOIN US AT - [HTTP://WWW.BSFA.CO.UK](http://www.bsfa.co.uk)

NEW for FantasyCon 2021



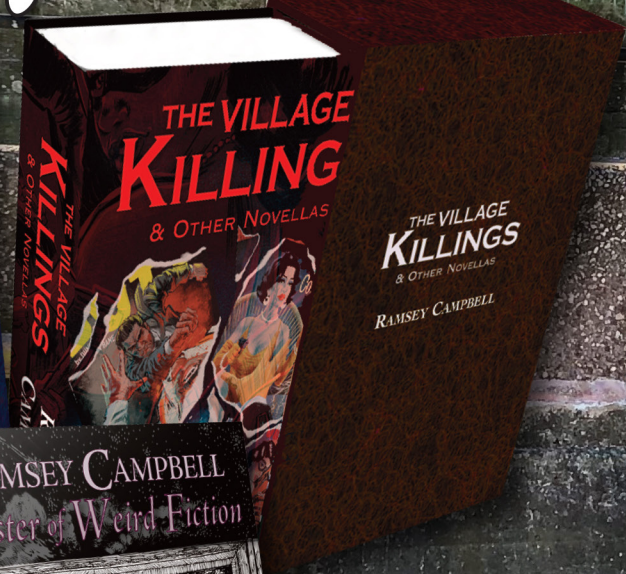
THE VILLAGE KILLINGS RAMSEY CAMPBELL

A COLLECTION OF FIVE NOVELLA LENGTH STORIES

RAMSEY CAMPBELL, CERTAINLY
collects the crop of the
author's columns and essays
from the last twenty years

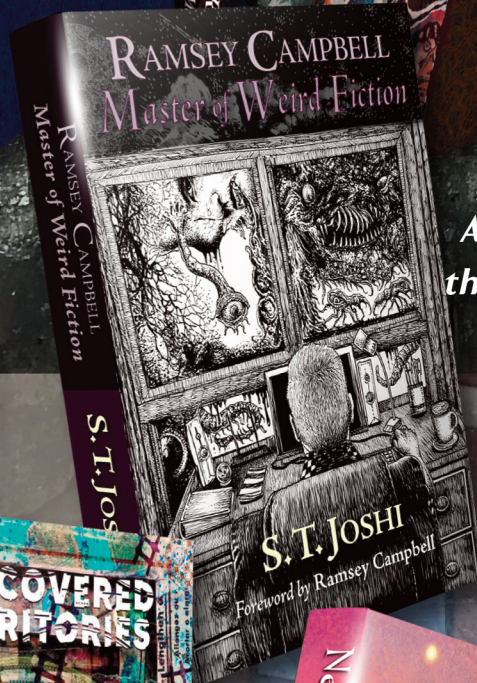


RAMSEY CAMPBELL
CERTAINLY
A collection of essays
EDITED & WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
S. T. JOSHI



THE VILLAGE
KILLINGS
& OTHER NOVELLAS

THE VILLAGE
KILLINGS
& OTHER NOVELLAS
RAMSEY CAMPBELL



RAMSEY CAMPBELL
Master of Weird Fiction

RAMSEY CAMPBELL
Master of Weird Fiction

S. T. JOSHI

S. T. JOSHI
Foreword by Ramsey Campbell

An examination of
the works of Ramsey
Campbell
by S. T. JOSHI



Includes "QUEEN FOR A DAY," the World Fantasy
Award-winning tale of murder in the Crescent City.

REVELATION
& OTHER TALES
OF FANTASCIENCE

ALBERT E. COWDREY

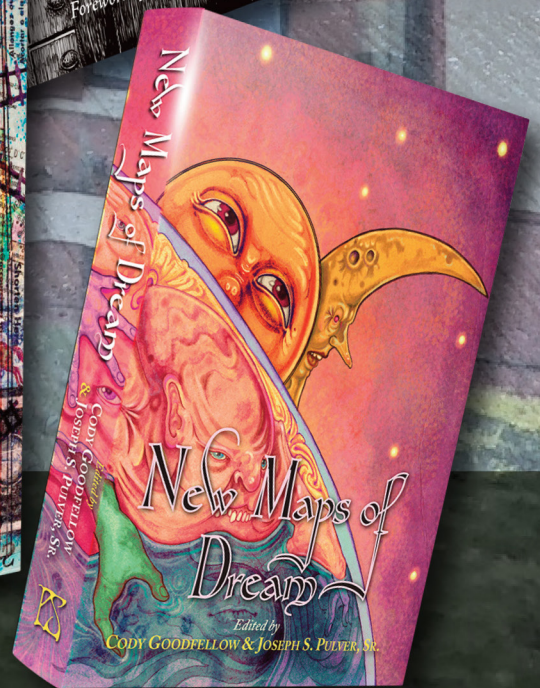
An SF collection by
ALBERT COWDREY



**UNDISCOVERED
TERRITORIES**

ROBERT FREEMAN WEXLER

A collection by
**ROBERT FREEMAN
WEXLER**



**New Maps of
Dream**

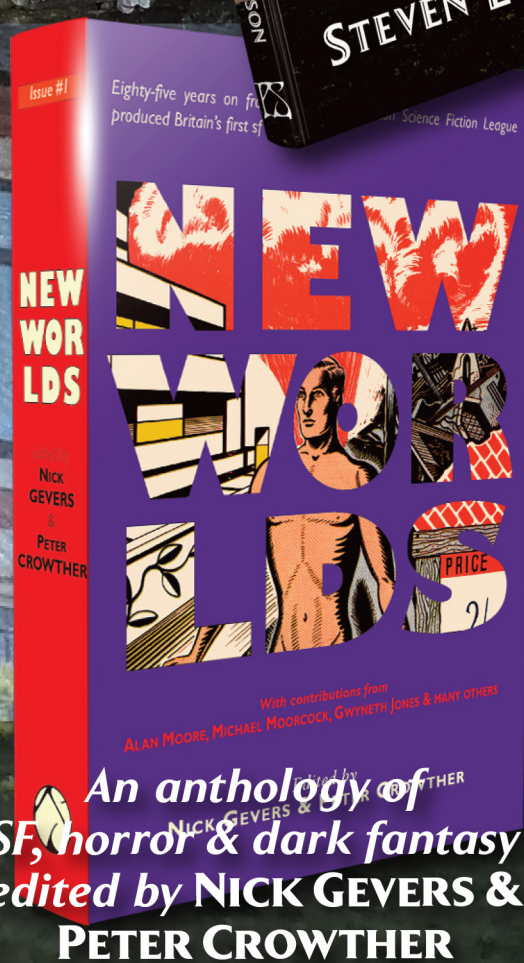
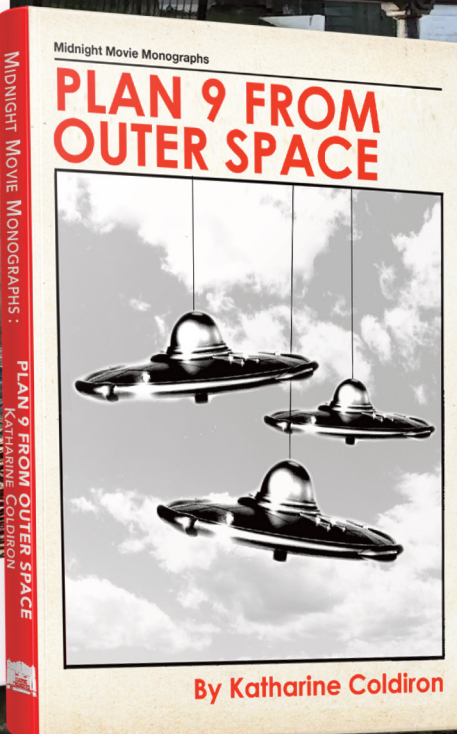
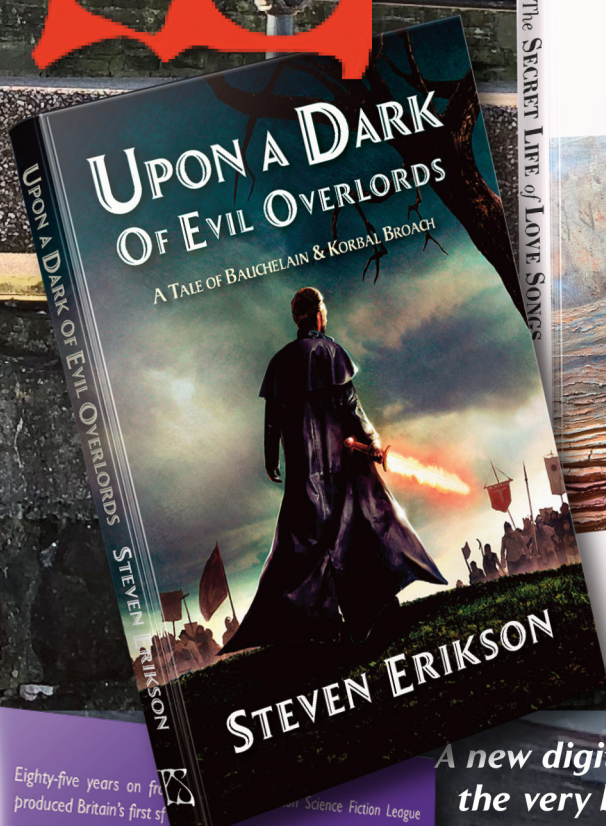
Edited by
CODY GOODFELLOW & JOSEPH S. PULVER, SR.

An anthology edited by
**CODY GOODFELLOW &
JOSEPH S. PULVER, SR.**

1



20% DISCOUNT ON ALL ONLINE ORDERS
FOR THE DURATION OF THE CONVENTION
USE VOUCHER CODE **BFS2021**



www.pspublishing.co.uk

Fantasycon 2021 Team

This event is run by HWS, but we could not do it without the support of the wonderful volunteer team, both the Red Cloaks, who work so hard at the event, and members of the British Fantasy Society.

Some people appear on more than one list as they have helped in multiple ways.

HWS Events

Allen Stroud
Karen Fishwick
Stuart Maher

Red Cloaks

Amy Brennan
Chris Jarvis
Danie Ware
Pat Hawkes-Reed
Julia Hawke-Reed
Camden Ford
David Carey
Russell A. Smith
Elliot Craggs
Ruth E. J. Booth
Chloe Yates

British Fantasy Society

Allen Ashley
LPG
Lee Harris
Katherine Fowler
Shona Kinsella
Ian Hunter
Sean Wilcock
Karen Fishwick
Sarah Deeming

For information on FantasyCon 2022 as well as other British Fantasy Society events, news and publications, then please check out:

www.britishfantasysociety.org

For future events from HWS, keep an eye on their website here:

www.hwsevents.co.uk

