



# Picocon 33

Origins

*In Medias Res*

Wyrmtongue

# The King's Speech

Welcome Guests!

So, it's that time of the year again. Picocon is here, hurray! We didn't mess it up and, thanks to all the hard work of our Sofa, Noor, it looks to be one of the best in recent years. (No offense ex-committees it's just something I'm practically contractually obligated to say at this point. Although technically as chair, I suppose I could change that. Hmm, future Picocon ideas, erect a statue in my honour?) But I digress. The sofa and beanbag have gone to great lengths to ensure that you have a great time today and I hope you will. We've got some fantastic guests lined up for you; there's Paul Cornell, author of the wonderful Shadow Police series, comic book-er extraordinaire, and Doctor Who writer. We have Michelle Paver; writer of the childhood defining Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series, and of course Carrie Hope Fletcher, author of the upcoming 'On the Other Side'; currently performing Eponine in the West End production of Les Mis. You're probably wondering why I'm selling you the guests when, if you're reading this, you've clearly already bought a ticket. It's a great way to fill up space to reach my word count (Don't tell the editor. And Amelia, if you're reading this, ignore that last sentence.\*)

Overall, it's been a superb year for the society; we've had tons of new faces and successful events. As such, new faces, you're probably wondering what to expect for your first Picocon. Well, there'll be lots of running around, probably an awkward moment or two, a tank of liquid nitrogen and a mallet, and definitely no fish. You'll no doubt see me around, chaperoning Paul, so feel free to approach me if you have any questions/complaints/urgent philosophical quandaries. Other than that, relax, take in the talks, play some Just Dance, and have a great day!

Anurag Deshpande - ICSF Chair

# The Sofa's Ramblings

Hi! My name is Noor, this year's Picocon Sofa (more comfortable than a Chair). Having organised events for the society last year as Chair of Vice, I counted myself just about inexperienced enough to attempt a Picocon, and people seemed to think that trusting me with it would be a good plan! I sincerely hope that over the course of the day this decision proves to be at least not totally ridiculous.

When considering the possible themes of this year's Picocon, I found myself also thinking of the mythos surrounding how the event began. And so this brought me on to the theme of Origins, where I made a pact with myself to attempt to run Picocon 33 while tracing the beginnings; Picocon 1. My investigations are detailed later in Wyrmtongue!

Of course, I also felt that Picocon 33 would not be complete without a pretentious Latin tagline - and so I tried to combine a common Latin phrase and a pun of sorts to encompass the second aim I had for Picocon 33. Where my first aim was to trace the origins of Picocon, my second aim was to investigate and discuss how storytelling differs across various forms of media. To

---

\* Editor's note: See crossword, 1 down.

combine these ideas, ‘in medias res’, meaning in the middle of things, represents how we are currently in Picocon present, have investigated Picocon past, and Picocon future is optimistic (I hope!). Just as the idea of the past, present and future interlink through the annual event of Picocon, in a similar way, various forms of media interlink by their fundamental aim; to tell a story.

With the theme and tagline neatly decided, I moved on to securing Guests of Honour (GoH’s) and the myriad of other tasks assigned to my post. With Paul Cornell’s experience in different forms of media, Mihelle Paver’s Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series set in the Stone Age origins of humanity, and Carrie Hope Fletcher hailing from the West End, War of the Worlds Musical and a soon-to-be fantasy author, I was lucky enough to secure GoH’s who allow for a perfect combination required to explore this year’s theme and tagline.

As is traditional to my role, Picocon 33 has gradually grown and eclipsed most of the things in my life, save perhaps the feeling of excitement and mild terror as the day (today!) approaches. However, despite the obvious additional workload, I have thoroughly enjoyed the process of organising this event - from the beginning to the end.

I hope you all have a wonderful time, and I would like to thank everyone for giving me the chance to run Picocon 33.

Noor Mulheron - Picocon Sofa

## A Word from the Beanbag

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single Picocon in possession of an excellent collection of honourable guests must be in want of attendees, and thus it is to you that we turn, dear reader. I am your Beanbag, provisional second in command. Welcome to the floor show.

The theme for this year’s Picocon is Origins. Picocon is of course cause for celebration, but it is also time for contemplation as we ponder both where we have come from and where we are going. A thought exercise: where were you at this point last year? Hopefully the answer was Picocon, to within a few weeks. Where will you be at this point next year? Hopefully also Picocon.

While you may find yourselves in the midst of the action, this event has been a long time in the making. A shout out to the Sofa, who has tirelessly overcome sleep deprivation, bureaucracy, and even (or so I’ve heard) angry squirrel summoners. A shout out to our legion of volunteers, especially those not currently on the ICSF committee. These noble souls have sacrificed their time and sanity without even the prospect of CV padding, and make the world a better place by their presence.

Whether it be from Abydos, Barsoom, or even Croydon, I’d like to extend a warm welcome to you all. Live long and prosper,

Ben Windo - Picocon Beanbag

# Origins

The theme of this year's Picocon event is 'Origins', and so it felt fitting to have an article that explores how the convention came to be. There has been much myth surrounding the origins of Picocon, and so I decided to try and trace back just how the convention began. There are two origin stories – one being that it was a gathering of ICSF members to play board-games at another's house which they decided to simply escalate; the other being that the first ever Picocon was actually an organised ICSF trip to a different convention in Glasgow, whereupon the group decided that we should make a convention like that ourselves! Picocon's name was reportedly coined by Steven Barnett, when it was observed that it was a very small convention – earning it the prefix 'pico'! The year of the first Picocon, however, has been traced back to be the academic year of 1982-1983. Picocon 2 was relatively small and unrecorded, but records survive of the third Picocon, Picocon Pi. This was so named as a pun on the fact that Picocon Pi sounds like Pecan Pie! Picocon has come far over the years, from a trip to a different convention entirely (or board games in a flat!) to a well known London Sci-Fi convention.

Noor Mulheron

# What's On

For those of you who don't know, there are many fun events to attend at Picocon. As well as talks by all the Guests of Honour, there is an Author's Panel where the authors can be asked questions by the attendees. Silly Games is an event where we imitate various gameshows, with general hilarity ensuing, and the Tabletop and Gaming societies run activities as well. We also have an event known simply as 'Harmless Fun'.

There are charity events in collaboration with RAG, such as Turkey Readings and Viewings, where books or films are read/shown, but they are so bad that people will pay to prevent them from continuing (or to make it keep going!). We also have 'Destruction of Dodgy Merchandise' (DoDM), where examples of terribly misguided merchandise are bid on to be saved or dunked in liquid nitrogen and smashed by the highest bidder – the proceeds again going to charity. This year, as last year, Stuart Ashens is coming to Imperial from the Youtube domain to chair the auctioning of the merchandise.

In the evening there will be a showing of the film *Le Voyage Dans La Lune*, which was the first science-fiction film on the screen, and a Pub Quiz, with the teams captained by our illustrious Guests of Honour!

We have booksellers and various retailers of items from jewellery to professionally illustrated prints by Autun Purser, and our own stand selling Picocon 33 t-shirts with this year's logo.

# Tabletop Gaming at Picocon!

This year the Tabletop Gaming society will be running boardgames and RPGs in Meeting Room 3 of the union (enter the main entrance, take the lift up to the 3rd floor and the door is on your right). Boardgames will run from 14:30 (just after the author's panel) until late, where we have lots and lots of games available, short and long to match everyone's tastes. We have some of our members around to teach games too, so don't worry if you don't know any from our collection.

We will also have some role playing games running in meeting room 3 from 18:00! No experience required, just bring your imagination. These will start promptly so please arrive at 6pm or as soon as possible afterwards.

Tabletop has regular Boardgame, RPG and Magic events each week of term. Check out our facebook group to find out where and when: [www.facebook.com/groups/ImperialCollegeBoardGames/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ImperialCollegeBoardGames/)

Dobbin Thomas

## Gaming

Imperial College Gaming Club may not be associated with the Science Fiction society in any official sense, but we've shared a reasonable number of members within the past few years and I myself have many a reason to appreciate Sci-Fi, so the natural step from there is to run something at Picocon.

We'll have our games consoles set up in Meeting Rooms 1 and 2 from 16:00 – 17:00, and again once all other events have ended at 19:00. We'll be running our most popular games – namely Super Smash Bros. and Just Dance (it's much more fun than it sounds). Whether you're a regular member of Gaming, wanting to reignite an old passion, or even if you haven't touched a video game in years, I can guarantee you'll have fun. There's a good reason why video games are one of the leading causes of procrastination in the country.

And if you happen to be a student, and you're not yet aware of us (read: if I haven't pestered you to come to Gaming before), you may like to know that the Club meets on a regular basis, on Wednesdays from 2pm in Room 403A in the EEE building.

I hope you all enjoy Picocon, and find discover/confirm your passion for video games when you come and see us.

Luke Morton – Chair, Imperial College Gaming Club

# Schedule

- 09:00 Front Desk/Registration Opens\*
- 09:30 Author's Talk - Paul Cornell†
- 10:30 Author's Talk - Carrie Hope Fletcher†
- 11:30 Author's Talk - Michelle Paver†
- 12:15 Destruction of Dodgy Merchandise \*
- 12:30 Lunch (see Menu)‡
- 13:30 Author's Panel†
- 14:30 Turkey Readings and Silly Games†, Boardgames begin §
- 16:00 Gaming ¶
- 17:00 Harmless Fun (*definitely not a fish duel*)\*
- 17:30 Film Showing: *Le Voyage Dans La Lune*‡
- 18:00 Pub Quiz (with authors leading teams!) ‡, RPGs begin §

## Lunch Menu

Food will be served between 12:30-13:30 in Metric, from a mobile servery. Food tickets can be purchased in FiveSixEight and redeemed at the Metric servery. Prices below:

Beef Burger and Chips - £4.75

Chicken Burger and Chips - £4.80

Veggie Burger and Chips - £4.25

Mediterranean roasted vegetable and tomato pasta - £3.95

Please note, anyone purchasing any other items from the menu will need to wait as normal as these will be prepared in the main kitchen.

---

\* Beit Quad

† Blakett LT1

‡ 568 and Metric

§ Tabletop gaming events in Meeting Room 3. These will run until late.

¶ Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

# Guests of Honour

## Michelle Paver

Author of ‘The Chronicles of Ancient Darkness’, ‘Dark Matter’ and more, she has a first class degree in Biochemistry, and uses her scientific experience in her writing, as well as often going out of her way to experience the things character in her novels go through – even sledding in the Arctic and meeting with wolves!



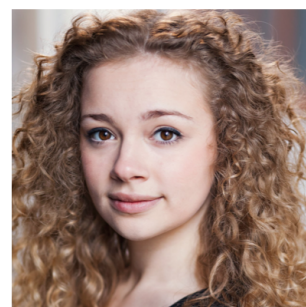
## Paul Cornell

Previous screen-writer for Doctor Who, he has also written several comics and is now an author of the ‘Shadow Police’ series and standalone novels. His experience in many different types of media is unparalleled.



## Carrie Hope Fletcher

Having played Beth in the War of the Worlds musical, Carrie Fletcher has experience in storytelling on stage that is being transferred into author-ship. Her debut fantasy novel, ‘On the Other Side’, is coming out this summer, and she has shared snippets of this novel with her large Youtube following. She is currently playing Eponine in the West End in Les Miserables.



# Quest Objectives

On your way in, you should have been assigned to one of three teams - Captain Pike, The First Doctor, or Wolverine - and given a sticky badge to wear with newfound pride. If somehow you slipped through the net, or misplaced your badge, then go and *politely* berate the receptionists until they give you one.

You will find a list of dangerous, potentially impossible items below. Find any of these items, bring the evidence back to the front desk, and win fabulous prizes ...in the form of points for your team. Whichever team ends up with the most points will be declared the finest, the greatest, and most importantly the winners!

Now go *for great justice*.

This year's teams are:



The Pikes - try to fish up some good treasure!



The Companions - no madman in a box to help you today.



The Mutants - save the pride for if you win, okay?

These items can be submitted to the Front Desk for Fun Points (after 11am). Pictures are not (generally) admissible; objective involving people *must* only be undertaken with the other person's permission. The front desk reserves the right to keep the submitted items. Each faction may claim an item on the only once, unless otherwise noted.

FD Front Desk Person's Discretion\*

E This item may be claimed multiple times per faction ("each")

M For each faction, the highest of their scores will be used

1	Little Green Pygmy Solders (E)	20	The Mabbott set
1	Hugs (Per person)	8	A Phylactery
30	Picocon	80	Dave Clements' phylactery
20	A non-ICSF fresher at Picocon	100	The Picocon Sofa, Calm
Age +5	Ex-ICSF Chair (M)	50	The Picocon Beanbag, Frantic
Age +5	Ex-ICSF Librarian (M)	15	Tea, Earl Grey, Hot
Age +5	T-shirts from Picocons past (M)	25	A good drink (FD, E)
10	Previous Guest of Honour (E)	10	A less good drink (FD)
10	Half of one (1) Dave	-5	Unsatisfactory drink (FD)

\* This actually applies to everything; where it is noted, it indicates that you're unlikely to change anyone's mind with your cunning arguments.



5	Delicious Blood (FD)		after being poked) (M)
15	Spirits from beyond	10	Out of place kerning
1000	£100 (E)	20	An unaired TV pilot
7	The contents of my pocketsets	20	An untelevised air pilot
5	Good News (FD, E)	30	A control crystal (with demonstration)
-5	Bad News (FD, E)		
1	A funny joke (FD, E)	40	Three quarters of a planck length
-1	A bad pun (FD, E)	20	A demonstration of Xeno's paradox
25	A competent barbershop quartet (FD)	10	An aesthetically pleasing key (FD)
		14	A clowder of one cat
5	Any song sung in the style of William Shatner	5	The man they call Jayne (or his hat)
		-50	The source of the mysterious ticking noise
50	A barbershop quartet in the style of William Shatner	400	The World Turtle
		800	With orbiting bodies
50	Any door to London Below	10	A surviving member of the Imperial Steampunk Society
3	Newly acquired merchandise		
5	A teleological proof of the existence of a higher power	50	A book ICSF lacks (and wants)
1	The solution to the next item on the list (E)	1	The Light at the end of the tunnel
		5	A Crowning moment of awesome
-1	The solution to the previous item on the list (E)	17	Proof Humanity's reach extends beyond its imagination
		70	A lost Dr Who episode
10	Donations of a themed plastic abomination	3	Famous last words (subject to checking)
5	A demon bear (bonus points if fluffy)	-1	Anything irrelevant (E)
5	A member of the Family of Blood	-5	Anything irrelephant (E)
5	A little fall of rain	4	A huge Mulligan
5	Origami	3	Galaxy
20	Dinosaur Origami	2	A practical application for General Relativity
10	Harmless Victor		
8	A Non-Euclidean Triangle	4	Transcendent understanding
5	A snake eating its own snake tail, or snail.	10	A point in the complex plane
		30	4 Unitless Sergeis
5	Tribble	5	A working AI (demonstrated)
60	Tribble (Functional)	10	A working AI (safely demonstrated)
5	A Nanosecond	1000	Time machine (points were awarded 17th Feb 6pm, ICSF Library, password is "Apep")
10	An accretion disk		
30	A terrifying technological terror		
3	A good hat	25	A swordfish
5	A correctly fitted top hat	35	A fishsword
5	Convincing closet cosplay	10	A Swan
10	Convincing actual cosplay	4	Nerf Guns
10	Pretty trinkets (FD)	3	NERV guns
3	The start of something beautiful	10	Lab Stuff
30	The phone from a castle	-50	per fatality
20	The phone from a police box	10	The Staff of Ra
50	Happiness, $\geq 0.1M$ Concentration	3	Positronic Brain
n(n-1)	n Interlocking Cogs (Functional	3	Observable Brownian Motion

- 5 A fluffy dragon
- 7 A plasma generator
- 5 Ion cannon (demonstrated)
- 20 Spontaneous combustion whilst dancing (E)
- 5 A Henry (E)
- 10 A Wild Henry
- 10 A completed nonogram (E)
- 15 A completed crossword (E)

Good Luck!

You're likely to need it...

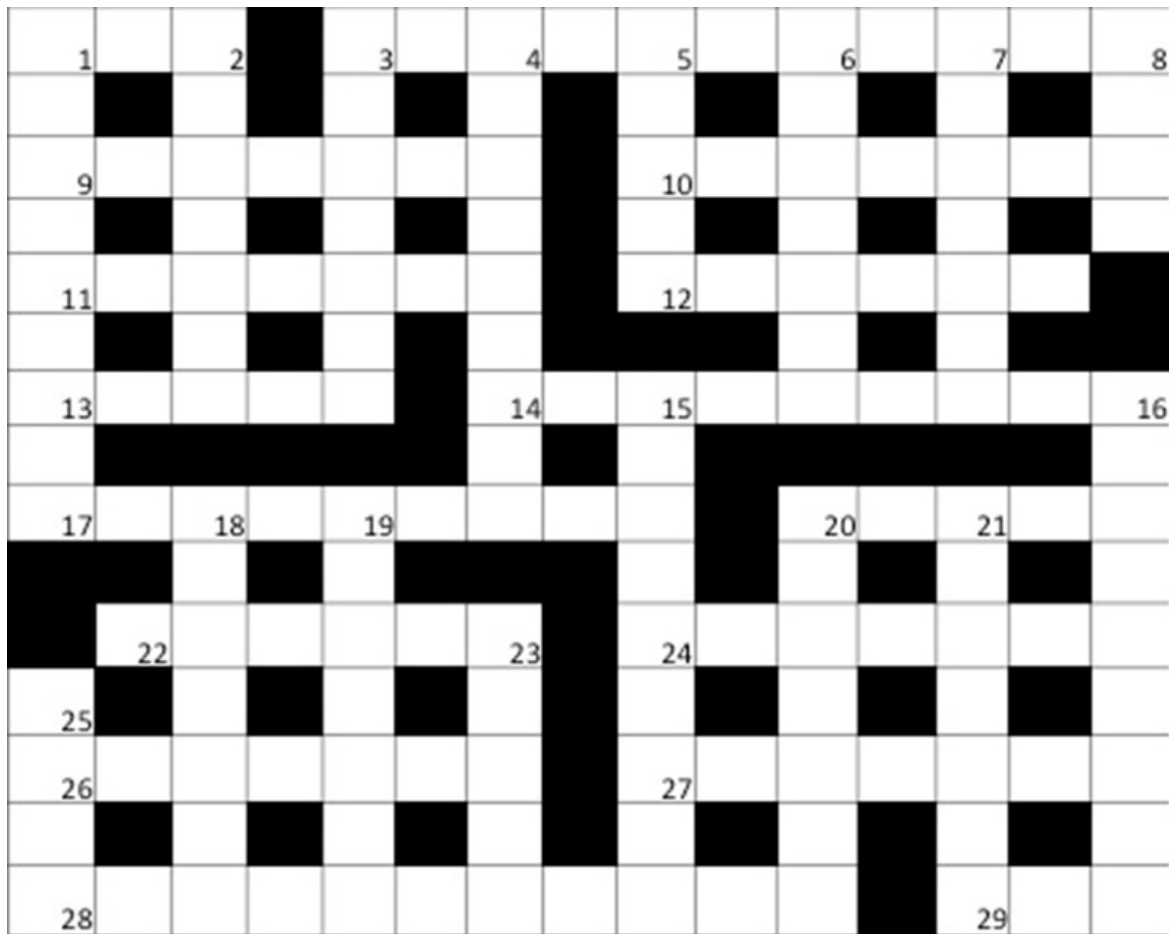
# Nonogram

2 2 2  
3 5 2 2 1      2 2 2 2 2 4  
1 1 1 2 1      3 2 4 2 2 3 2 1

2 3 4 5 2 1 6 6 6 2 2 2 2 2 4 11 4 4 1 3 2 2 4 2 12 5 1 1

4 4 4 5 6 6 6 6 6 1 3 5 3 2 2 6 1 1 2 3 4 3 1 1 6 19 2 2 3

# Crossword



**ACROSS:**

- 1 – What the entire ‘Wolverine: Origins’ movie is based on
- 3 – Claire Bennet’s power (from Heroes)
- 9 – Shakespearian play
- 10 – A Michelle Paver book
- 11 – A — plan!
- 12 – An editor’s obsession
- 13 – Mrs. Nesbitt’s pink clothing item in Toy Story
- 14 – Howl’s castle if Calcifer died
- 17 – What Hellcat, Mickey Smith and Watson are
- 20 – Unit of luminous flux
- 22 – Norse goddess of love
- 24 – Perry from Phineas and Ferb
- 26 – FN-2199’s line in Star Wars: A Force Awakens
- 27 – Result of ascension
- 28 – The greatest war of Greek mythology

29 – A martian solar day

**DOWN:**

- 1 – People like the Chair (eg. Anurag!)
- 2 – Thing the Doctor didn’t attend to earn his title
- 3 – Type of goat
- 4 – The — power register for X-men
- 5 – League of legends publisher (plural)
- 6 – Banderas
- 7 – Japanese father of the gods
- 8 – Legendary creature
- 15 – Reminiscent of childhood
- 16 – Daleks
- 18 – How Cthulu lies
- 19 – Kara Zor-El’s home planet
- 20 – Wearing pants over tights reduces this
- 21 – Possible origins of life on Earth
- 23 – The end goal of alchemy
- 25 – Imperial walker

# Map

