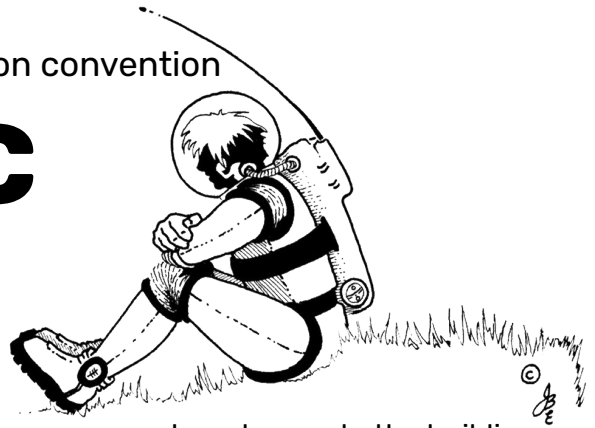


Levitation: The 75th British national science fiction convention

THE GALACTIC OBSERVER

Issue 1 – Friday afternoon



Chair's welcome

Welcome everyone to Levitation (Eastercon 2024)!

We have a packed programme of panels, workshops and talks; guests from far and near, artists and dealers.

One of the best things about an Eastercon is its people. Take advantage of the social spaces in the hotels and convention centre: say hello to people you don't know, and introduce them to other people. Help make the connections and networks that help Eastercons thrive.

We are still in Covid Times: masks are preferred in all rooms and we will prevent overcrowding. We are all in this together and need to care for each other.

Eastercons run on volunteers, so please sign up for a few hours. You get groats (tokens) to use in the convention and after eight hours can claim your convention T-shirt (sent after the convention). The head of volunteers is in a purple hi-vis vest.

You all helped to make this convention. Enjoy!

—Farah Mendlesohn

Open filking

Open filking will start at 8pm at the far end of the ground floor. If you have any trouble finding it, post in #help-desk on Discord.

Programme changes

Programme changes are reflected automatically in the online guide (available at guide.eastercon2024.co.uk) and are reproduced here.

Don't forget to check on Discord – there are threads for each item!

Watching Things on Screen

moves from Coalport to Wenlock 3&4 in the same time slot (Saturday 8pm).

How (Not) To Become an Astronaut

moves from Sunday 7pm to Saturday 8pm in the same room (Coalport).

Sentient AI As Character

moves from Wenlock 3&4 to Coalport in the same time slot (Sunday 7pm).

Develop Your Vocal Delivery

moves from Friday 1pm to Sunday 7pm in the same room (Wenlock 3&4).

Title Trivia

You may remember that Levitation is named for Henrietta Swan Leavitt, who was the first person to effectively estimate the distance to other planets by galactic observation. Hence the title of this, your Levitation newsletter.

After Dark

The conference centre will close each evening from 10:30pm (and 11:30 on Sunday). You'll have half an

hour to vacate the building but please be out well before the doors lock.

After hours we'll all be in the lovely comfy bar (or equally lovely games room) at the Holiday Inn. People who aren't residents of the Holiday Inn or International Hotel should order their drinks before 11pm; only residents can order after that time for them and their guests.

Food, Glorious Food!

Missing from the ReadMe.

Sushi: YouMe Sushi at PuttPutt Noodle (which is a soft play hall).

—Farah Mendlesohn

Armadillos Assemble!

One of the things we're sure you want to do this weekend is join Glasgow 2024, a Worldcon for our Futures, happening at the Scottish Event Campus 8-12 August. If you join this weekend they'll give you whisky chocolate! Or non-alcoholic alternative, I'm sure.

We understand that they're comparing a list of registered members with the list of people at this convention, and they *will* hunt you down. Go chat to them in the big social area by the convention centre bar and café.

Got a story? Email us! newsletter@eastercon2024.co.uk

Breakfast Blues?

If your hotel room doesn't include breakfast, you could do a lot worse than the Wrekin Giant, open from 8am throughout the weekend with a 2-for-one special on their £4.79 full English breakfast / veggie breakfast and many other breakfast options.

Hear Beer!

"My, there is a lot of beer!" said the nice chap from the conference centre to me yesterday afternoon. "I hope you lot are thirsty!" Let's prove him right. It's £6/pint, which feels positively economical to this time traveller from Conversation 2023.

Cloak and Dagger

If you need to leave your stuff, the TIC has a cloakroom set up on the 1st floor, in the corner by Coalport, £3 an item.

Need a Hugo Award?

The Hugo Award finalists have been announced in a glittering star-studded pre-recorded video after the opening ceremony, and can be found on the Glasgow 2024 website:

<https://glasgow2024.org/hugo-awards/2024-hugo-award-finalists/>

Many congratulations to all the finalists, especially those who are here this weekend.

Discord in the Ranks

If you haven't found the Levitation Discord server yet, then link through from the

Levitation Members' Portal to discover a whole world of text chat along with audio and video chat rooms. Every programme item has a persistent thread where people can chat about the topic before, during and after the event. You can also get help, arrange meetups, and get to know your fellow fans.

Access All Areas

If you have an access need can you please make it known to ops, speak to anyone in a hi-vis jacket, or tag @access in Discord. Please don't just assume we can't help; we have lots of ways to be flexible and we want everyone to enjoy the convention.

Run, Park, Run!

If tomorrow morning's five mile hike seem like a bit

much, how about a nice gentle, metric 5k run or walk? Parkrunners are meeting at 08:50 at this spot: <https://w3w.co/removers.suitcase.delighted>

Hail Hydro!

There's a fresh drinking water fountain here in the TIC for people want to stay hydrated and not spend money. It's round the corner from the games room on the ground floor, down a dark corridor and past a sign saying 'Beware of the Leopard'. There's a map in the helpdesk channel in the Discord if you still can't find it.

Bill Stickers will be Prosecuted

Remember that you may not attach anything whatsoever to any of the walls anywhere in the TIC at any time.



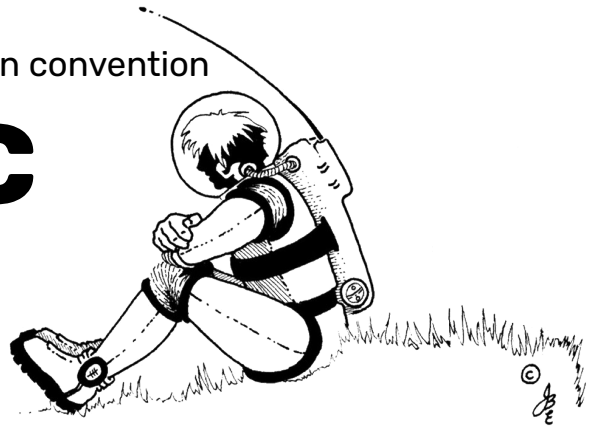
Hugo Finalists were invited on stage by Esther. Spot members of the newsletter team!

This issue was edited by Steve Davies with help from Alison Scott, Jan van't Ent, John Coxon, and a motley crew of other people. The artwork is "Contemplative Spaceman" by Guest of Honour Jackie Burns. Our technology is now either too old or too modern, but we can't tell which.

Levitation: The 75th British national science fiction convention

THE GALACTIC OBSERVER

Issue 2 – Saturday midday



Fitter fandom

18 intrepid Levitation members braved the morning fog today to walk through the town park and down to Ironbridge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. We set out at 7am, passing some industrial archaeology and the scene of a mining disaster before arriving at the Iron Bridge itself two hours and five miles later, just in time for a lovely breakfast at Truffles café, recommended. The fog cleared en route, and by the time we arrived the sun was shining.



The fans at Bridgecon

Fantasy Book Swap swapped

Due to a clash of commitments, this podcast recording, featuring Ali Baker interviewing Tade Thompson, will be at 9pm tonight in Coalport not 1pm as shown previously.

Radical Kindness, also at 9pm, will now be in Wenlock 3 & 4.

Shops shut horror!

Just a reminder that, in common with most large shops, the Asda near the convention centre will be closed tomorrow, Easter Sunday. Make sure you've stocked up on any provisions before then. It will be open till 10pm Saturday, and then from 7am Monday.

Breakfast bonus

If you are insufficiently breakfasted, the café upstairs in the convention centre will sell you bacon, vegan bacon and sausages, mushrooms, tomatoes... all for £4.50 up until noon when they switch to the lunch menu.

Late night extra

Remember that the fun doesn't stop when the TIC closes its doors. We have a late bar and a games room running for as long as you're drinking, playing or both, over in the Holiday Inn. All convention members are welcome, but non-residents can only buy drinks till 11pm.

Hydro hunt!

The water cooler is not where we said it was yesterday, and has moved to the near corner of the bar upstairs. Stay hydrated! And let us know where you think it will be tomorrow.

Shy Discord

One of Discord's special 'features' is that it doesn't show you all the text channels by default. You can find them by looking at 'Channels and Roles', browsing channels and choosing them all. Every programme item has a forum thread where you can chat about the item with other congoers.

Got a story? Email us! newsletter@eastercon2024.co.uk

Saturday is hall costume day

This is your day to dress up and look amazing. It's also your day to give the hall costume token you got with your badge to someone you think has dressed up and looks amazing.

Buffalo girls

If you are leaving the Holiday Inn bar after the TIC has closed, you need to go round the outside to get back to other hotels in Telford. There is a map on the back of the Read Me to show you the way. If you find yourself scaling a fence, you've probably gone the wrong way.

Tiny LARP

Do you fancy a little live-action role playing? CM Lowry (check out Beyond Cataclysm in the Dealers' Room) has written us a game.

You are an alien at Eastercon.

Set a timer on your phone. Go and talk to a stranger in a weird alien language. Hand gestures are allowed.

Convey the following message to a fellow Easterconner: "I want to win a Hugo Award."

When they (eventually) understand you, stop the timer, submit time to newsletter. Fastest time will be announced tomorrow.

Postcard from Green Room

It's official: tech have been in to monitor and can confirm that the Green Room is full of hot air.



Stylish trendsetters spotted dressed up and looking amazing

Feedback feedback

Programme participants should try to leave plenty of time before their panel items. It might be slightly longer to walk between rooms here than you're used to, and panel and lecture timings are often tight so you will not be able to run late to make up at the end.

Levitation all over again

Catch up has launched; you can currently see Friday items from Ironbridge 1, with more items to follow.

Catch up preview

The trouble with reviews of programme items has always been, 'Gee that sounded interesting, shame I missed it!' But now you can catch up with things after the con, so go and look at the item on character and point of view at 11:00am Saturday, moderated by Juliet McKenna.

Yet another difference between boomers and millennials (or I think we're now up to generation alpha) is the voice we prefer. 3rd person past tense is over, apparently. The kids of today relate best to first person present. Go watch on catch up to find out why and to stay current with the latest authorial trends.

Early risers

If you're up early tomorrow, remember that the TIC opens for volunteers at 9am, but for congoers at 9:30am. Before that, why not chill in Telford's lovely park?

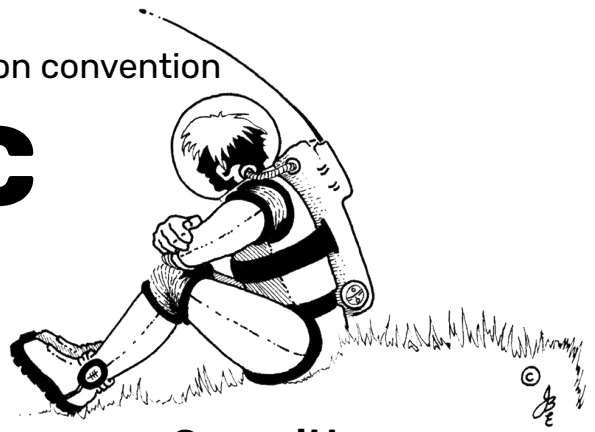
Calling all children

Crèche services can be found in the far corner of the dealers' hall. Please do sign up your children. Tinies childcare have made arrangements for activities suitable for up to pre-teens.

This issue was edited by Alison Scott with help from Steve Davies, Jan van't Ent, Steven Cain and really not enough coffee. The artwork is "Contemplative Spaceman" by Guest of Honour Jackie Burns. I only put the green picture in to balance the magenta one from issue one, toner fans!

THE GALACTIC OBSERVER

Issue 3 – Saturday evening



BSFA awards

The BSFA awards were presented earlier today, and the winners were as follows:

- **Best Artwork:** The cover of *The Surviving Sky* by Leo Nickolls.
- **Best Audio Fiction:** *The Dex Legacy* by Emily Inkpen.
- **Best Collection:** *The Best of British Science Fiction 2022*, edited by Donna Scott.
- **Best Fiction for Younger Readers:** *The Library of Broken Worlds* by Alaya Dawn Johnson.
- **Best Non-Fiction (Long):** *A Traveller in Time: The Critical Practice of Maureen Kincaid Speller*, edited by Nina Allan.
- **Best Non-Fiction (Short):** *Project Management Lessons from Rogue One* by Fiona Moore.
- **Best Novel:** *The Green Man's Quarry* by Juliet McKenna.
- **Best Short Fiction:** "How to Raise a Kraken in Your Bathtub" by P. Djèlí Clark.
- **Best Shorter Fiction:** *And Put Away Childish Things* by Adrian Tchaikovsky.
- **Best Translated Shorter Fiction:** *Vanishing Tracks in the Sand* by Jana Bianchi, translated by Rachael Amoruso.

Congratulations to all the winners, and to the BSFA on a great ceremony!

Clocks change

There will be a panel entitled **The arguments for and against British Summer Time** at 1am on Sunday.

First-time attendee shortage

The **Introduction for people new to cons/Eastercon** panel had exactly one person in the audience, so they got particular care and attention from the panel. Are there no other first-time Eastercon attendees here?

Multiple attendee proliferation

If you were a member of last year's Eastercon, we've sent you a link to the PDF and ePub of our Souvenir Book. If you would like a paper copy, please come and pick one up from the dealer's room.

—Alison Scott

Wandering registration

The main registration desk is now closed because most people have registered. *[And if you're reading this, you're probably one of them—John]* You can register for the convention in Ops, and also sign up for items requiring signup there.

Committee statement

On Thursday the Levitation (Eastercon 2024) executive committee was informed that a person, whose presence we believed would cause significant interference with the operations of the convention, was intending to join on the door.

The Levitation executive committee took the decision to refuse membership to this person.

An email was sent explaining our decision and referencing our code of conduct which states that we may revoke or refuse membership under these circumstances.

When this person then chose to enter the convention the next day, we told them that they would not be allowed to buy a membership and asked them to leave the site. They repeatedly refused to do so. We explained that if they did not leave we would ask site security to escort them out. They did not leave, and security did therefore escort them from the premises.

A second person of concern who purchased a membership in 2022 was permitted to remain under specified conditions, and has abided by those conditions.

—Farah Mendlesohn, chair

Joining libraries

Emily January was on **What is the appeal of libraries for SF readers?** and has pointed out an interesting fact about Telford and Wrekin Library Services for members who enjoy ebooks and audiobooks.

You can join with the form at telford.gov.uk/info/1012/libraries/3/join_the_library/ but you need to go to an actual branch to finalise the membership. Fortunately, Southwater Library is just up the hill from the convention centre (opposite the Nando's and cinema). We're unsure of their Bank Holiday opening hours, but members staying until Tuesday can sign up.

Emily reports that their SF selection isn't spectacular, but they did have lots of the **Murderbot** books.

Department of new-fangled inventions

"Did you get my very important email?" said Pat McMurray. "I wanted to say that a personal item of value was found in Coalport last night. If you have lost such an item please contact Ops in Beckbury."

We checked but had not had the email. "Whoops," said Pat, "I sent it to newsletter at eastercon204.co.uk, let me send it again." After it still didn't arrive it turned out he'd sent it to newsletter at eastercon2014.co.uk.

Remember, people, our email address is newsletter@eastercon2024.co.uk. (Meanwhile, ten years ago, the newsletter team at Satellite 4 are a bit confused.)

Henrietta Swan Leavitt

We asked España Sheriff (who drew the egg that Levitation has been using for its logo) to draw Henrietta Swan Leavitt, and she has given us the below illustration. *[She's very talented and lovely and also my wife—John]*



Noted astrophysicist Dave Clements pointed out on Discord that Henrietta Swan Leavitt measured distances to other galaxies, not to other planets. We regret the error. *[Wouldn't have happened if I were in the room—John]* *[And why precisely weren't you in the room, John?—Marianne]*

Feedback

Reminder that the Sunday Feedback Session is at 10am in Atcham. Do come along even if you don't have any complaints: compliments are always acceptable.

Hugo Pope trivia

Turns out having Nicholas "Hugo Pope" Whyte on your team for a Worldcon pub quiz is handy.

—España Sheriff

Don't fall off

Anyone on programme in Ironbridge must sign to say they've been told not to fall off the stage as there are no safety rails.

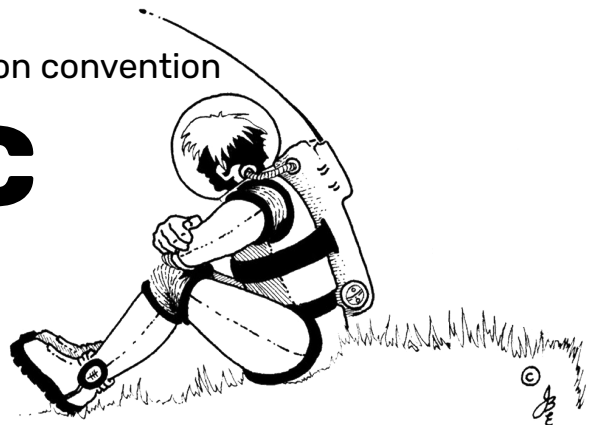
Amazeballs

Come and get your amazing tat at the Amazeballs Fan Fund tombola in the Dealers' Room. There's lots of stuff and it's all for a good cause.

This issue was edited by John Coxon with help from Marianne Cain, Alison Scott, Jan van't Ent, and a motley crew of other people. The artwork is "Contemplative Spaceman" by Guest of Honour Jackie Burns. Alison says she's looking forward to staying up late tonight without staying up late, so please keep her out till 4am.

THE GALACTIC OBSERVER

Issue 4 – Sunday afternoon



Feedback

The **Feedback Session** was held at 10am so that anyone who hadn't put their clock forward would not get to feed back.

Reports of compliments are thin on the ground, but a request was made for a PDF of the full programme for those who prefer not to use the online guide. This is on the list of things to do, but didn't quite make it to the top of the list pre-convention.

More flying toasters

The committee have asked us to emphasise that we need to be out of the TIC well before the building closes. Do note that the TIC is open for an hour later on Sunday, but you should still be aiming to leave before 11:30pm.

(This means not hanging around in Beckbury drinking beer until the very last minute when Security turn the lights out.)

Visible and trans

Today is trans day of visibility! Solidarity with all my trans siblings at this con and elsewhere! May you be exactly as visible as you want!

(Those with a physical invisibility can ask Ops for bandages.)

—Alexandra Lanes

Venue staff appreciation

There is an online collection plate for the staff available through the members' portal or at app.collectionpot.com/pot/3064884.

There will be a traditional collection at the closing ceremony but if people would like to give digitally, please visit the link above.

No nuts here

The committee have asked us, quite nicely given the circumstances, to emphasise that the TIC should be a nut free zone since we have members with serious allergies. This includes chocolates, candies or sweets containing nuts.

Item found

In Coalport Friday night, a personal item of jewellery. If you have lost such an item please contact Ops in Beckbury (next to newsletter).

A toast for Deb Geisler

Fans are gathering at 5pm Sunday at the Glasgow 2024 desk to raise a glass to the memory of Deb Geisler, who chaired Noreascon 4 (the 2004 Worldcon). We would love for anyone who misses her to join us.

Return to the Moon!

A well-known science fiction author has been working with ESA on an exciting project involving, well, the Moon. Pepper, James S, Stuart, and a super-special secret guest have all the news at 11am on Monday in Atcham.

Blisteringly good beer

If you're a fan of local beers, The All Nations Inn brewpub is a short drive away. Licensed to brew since 1832 they are offering a selection of ales and large baps. The dog-friendly gardens have splendid views over Blists Hill.

—Dan Smithers

Foodback

Newsletter staff can recommend Nando's (just as cheeky as other branches), Wildwood Kitchen (for just about anything), Novello Lounge (for light meals and coffee) and Miller & Carter (for excessive quantities of dead animal). We also went to Wagamama and recommend bringing earplugs.

Lounge fiction

My subconscious keeps thinking of the restaurant nearby as the Novella Lounge. Or, for BSFA members, the Shorter Fiction Lounge.

—Graham Sleight



The clock in the Telford Centre.

Kit Williams clock

Something that may be of fannish interest is the clock at the shopping centre, only a short walk away (left). It is by artist and writer Kit Williams who is known for his mystery picture book *Masquerade*. I have yet to see it perform on the hour, but I intend to before the end of the con.

—Kylie Ding

More time travel

Meanwhile, in 204 AD, Hippolytus of Rome gets a mysterious ethereal message and spends the next 18 years worrying about the date of Easter.

—Pat McMurray

Tiny LARP follow-up

I tried the LARP [see issue 2!—John] eight times. Seven to completely bewildered individuals, and once to someone who guessed it in 17 seconds (because they'd read the newsletter).

—CM Lowry

Historical curios

Do you want to own some fannish history? We have several copies of *New Futurian* from the 1950s. If you would like an issue, see Eowyn around the con and ask her for a copy. Donations to cover costs of cataloguing are gratefully accepted.

Glasgow deadline

Expressions of interest in programme need to be in by 3 April, and there's an item at noon on Monday in Coalport entitled **How to fill in a programme participation form**.

Business meeting

The **Business Meeting**, which has been held every year with exactly that name for as long as I can remember [*don't make me hurt you—Alison*], was held this morning.

Phil Dyson gave a very brief bit of news, which is that he and the Reclamation 2022 team are putting together a bid for 2026; if you would like to know more or volunteer, contact him.

Tommy Ferguson and James Bacon gave an update on behalf of the 2025 Eastercon, Reconnect (and if you missed it, it's available on catch-up). Rates are currently £70 with a variety of concessions, and will eventually rise; you can register at registration.easterconbelfast.org and they would love you to do so.

Shops shut

Just a reminder that the Asda near the convention centre will be closed today. However, most of the restaurants appear to be open.

Sleepjack

Did you remember to put your biological clock forward one hour last night? Are you awake at all? We didn't think so.

Fan fund frolics

If you would like to give money to the fan funds and can't wait for the **Fan Funds Auction**, you have options.

Firstly, you can head to the Dealers' Room and find the Amazeballs, which are jolly good fun.

Secondly, you can vote! The deadlines for the different funds are below.

- **European Fan Fund (EFF):** 11:59pm, 1 April.
- **Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF):** 11:59pm, 2 April.
- **Going Under Fan Fund (GUFF):** 11:59pm, 22 April.

Thirdly, the **Fan Funds Auction** will be held at 8pm Sunday (that's tonight) in Atcham. The catalogue will be available beforehand; keep an eye on Discord and the next newsletter for more info.

For more details, visit the table in the Dealers' Room.

Thirteen-sided dice

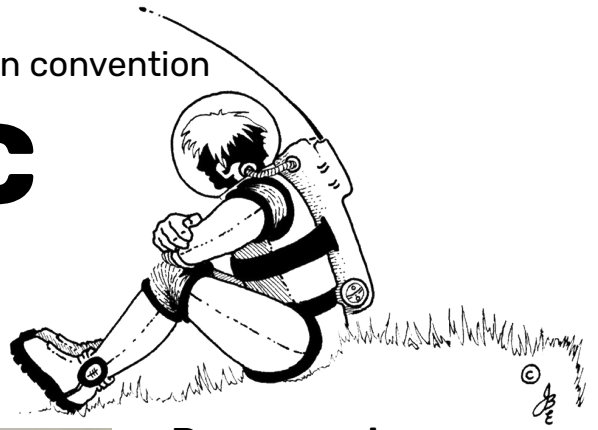
If you, like your newsletter editor, are a fiend for odd dice (or just dice in general), there are thirteen-sided dice available alongside a game that uses them at the Beyond Cataclysm table in the Dealers' Room (closing 5:30pm on Sunday). I love them and they are very shiny.

This issue was edited by John Coxon with help from Steve Davies, España Sheriff, Jan van't Ent and a deafening silence. The artwork is "Contemplative Spaceman" by Guest of Honour Jackie Burns. If an alien tries to communicate with you, it's probably because they want to sell you something.

Levitation: The 75th British national science fiction convention

THE GALACTIC OBSERVER

Issue 5 – Monday lunchtime



The plaid people of fandom

In a surprise departure from the normal timetable, Glasgow 2024 has released this year's Hugo base ready for the first of April. The traditional rocket has been dipped in Landing Zone tartan for a contemporary look, and the base, designed by veteran base designer Vincent Villafranca features armadillos, traffic cones and a flying haggis. You can get your photo taken with this post-apocalyptic Hugo if you're quick.



Reconnextra

Fellow Irishman Dave Lally will take any fans around after next year's Eastercon, Reconnect, to Belfast's Titanic Centre on Tuesday 22 April 2025. He's letting you know now so that you can plan. It's now the most popular tourist destination in Ireland. *[I went to see this last year and it was smashing -Ed.]*

Fan fund fanks

Thank you to everyone who has supported the fan funds throughout the convention. Remember you've just got a few more hours to vote in EFF, and another day for TAFF. The auction raised over £750, which is not bad given that we've saved all the best stuff for Glasgow. See you there!

More feedback

The Monday Feedback Session had a few suggestions for Reconnect in 2025. Unfortunately, it doesn't look as if moving the Telford International Centre to Belfast would fit in the budget.

Attendees had suggestions to improve disability provision, some of which have been taken on board for future years and some (a second lift) passed on to the venue.

There was praise for the virtual convention which has run very smoothly this year. Glasgow 2024 is using a similar system and wants all your feedback.

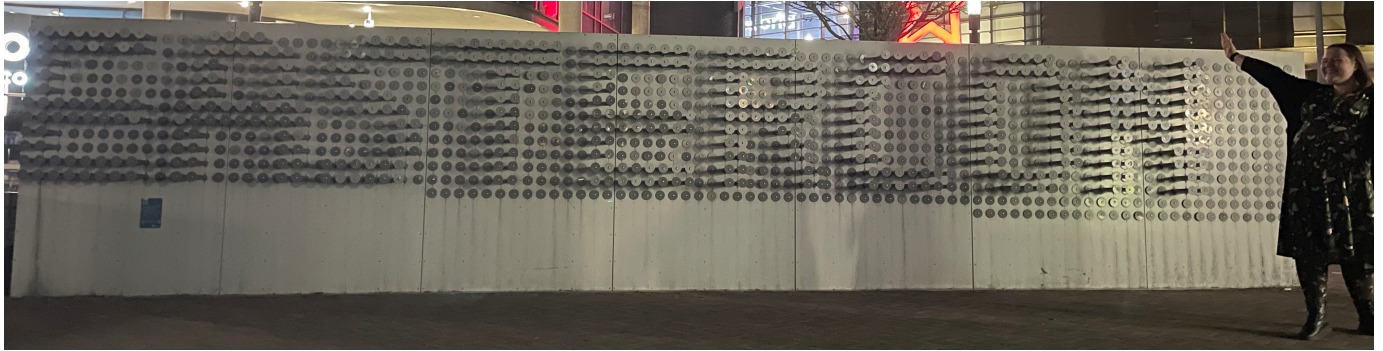
Newsletter shoutouts

To Tessa Stokes, 12 today, and Roger and Elizabeth Robinson, who tied the knot on April Fool's Day, 1967.



Toasts to our dearly missed friends abounded last night. Glasgow 2024 raised a glass to Noreascon 4 chair Deb Geisler, and the traditional Vauxhall gathering was this year dedicated to the memory of Dave Tompkins and Smudge.

Find year-round fannish fun at the #keep-in-touch channel on the con Discord. See you in Belfast!



Your newsletter team hard at work at 4am Sunday reconfiguring the Telford Interactive Gallery Wall

Under the weather?

So far, Levitation has had no reports of Covid. It is extremely important that members of the convention test if they have any symptoms, and let ops know if they test positive. If you test positive within ten days after the convention please let us know via communications@eastercon2024.co.uk

– Farah Mendlesohn

Poetry corner

Retracing principles
Axiomatical
Friends yet unmet
Follow Leavitt's decrees

Measuring distances
Intergalactical
By observation
From planets like these

– duckbunny

We get feedback

An anonymous reader thanks us for the innovation of watermarked numbers on the issues. Well done, editor Steve Davies, whose innovation indeed it was. In 1995, for Intersection in Glasgow. We've been doing it ever since.

Catching up with catch up

Catch up is complete up to Sunday now. Your newsletter editors are looking forward to enjoying the convention all over again next weekend, and this time getting to see some programme. John recommends Stew Hotston's talk on **Strange Worlds, Strange Games**. Stew was engaging on the topic of the whiteness of games and had sharp observations.

Just rewards

Volunteers! Please use up your groats, hand in your timesheets and collect your t-shirt if you pre-ordered, or give us your size and fit and we'll post you one.



*Do they know something we don't?
(Thanks to spotter Helen Cross)*

Get your newsletter while it lasts

The newsletter stand that was on the ground floor outside the newsletter office has been manfully manhandled upstairs by executive editor John Coxon and is now in the bar where the people are.

Let us know if you still find the newsletter useful. Glasgow 2024 will be having electronic news only, and it is possible that Reconnect will be the last Eastercon with a paper newsletter. After that, you'll find us outmoded dinosaurs lumbering through the bar as hordes of nimble social media marsupials swap ten second viral videos.

Tip jar for venue

You can tip the venue staff in cash at ops or at the closing ceremony, or online at app.collectionpot.com/pot/3064884.

New model armadillo

Farah lets us know that her Seventeenth Century Puritan Name is Kindly Implacable. That's funny, we could sworn it was *[Continued in issue 6 - Ed.]*

This issue was edited by Alison Scott & Steve Davies with help from Marianne Cain, Steven Cain, and Jan van't Ent. The artwork is "Contemplative Spaceman" by Jackie Burns. Did you know that Galactic Observer is an anagram of Algebraic Vectors? That would have been our spoof title if it had been funny.