

CONRUNNER 4

POCKET PROGRAMME

(AKA Read Me)

(AKA Fold Me Up and Lose Me)

FRIDAY

FRIDAY	Main room	Room 2
16:00		Fantasy Con Hotel
17:00	Tech Training	
18:00	Dinner break	
20:15	Opening ceremony	
20:30 <i>approx</i>	First and Last and Always	
21:30 <i>approx</i>	Did You Spot Our Deliberate Mistakes?	

4 pm – 6 pm
Room 2

Fantasy Con Hotel

A convention hotel is a structure which contains function rooms, social space, and overnight accommodation and which has something wrong with it. Except the Park Inn, of course! Join **Claire Brialey** and **Mark Plummer** in a workshop session to look at several venues which do fit this description (and which might be familiar to attendees at British Eastercons), devise the least bad solution for how – or whether – you can fit everything in, dream up your preferred addition to the site that would make it all better, and work out the best alternative convention to put in each hotel. (You might also want to follow these ideas through to Sunday's panel session: *The Final Frontier*.)

5 pm – 6 pm
Main room

Tech Training

Have you ever wondered what's going on beyond the tech desk, and why programme participants tapping their microphones are the subject of muttering and dark glares? There's a programme discussion on Saturday about better integrating tech into conventions – but if you'd like to get your eye in first, and learn another way of helping out, **Martin Hoare** has offered to show people the ropes. You can then take a turn taking charge of the kit (and practising your glare and mutter) during the con. There will be a separate session on Saturday morning.

<Dinner break>

But hurry back by 8.15 pm...

8.15 pm
Main room

Opening ceremony

The convention's been open for hours already and we're not going to stand on ceremony. But who are the doughty conrunners trying to show you a good time this weekend? Come along to get prepared to dodge the committee when they're looking around hopefully for a volunteer, find out the latest news on the fun in store and the secret password that will let you access it and, most importantly, be assured that it's safe to stay in the room for the next two items. **Steve Cooper** and **Alice Lawson** say we should all be there, and they're in charge.

8.30 pm approx
Main room

First and Last and Always

What was the first convention you attended, and what impression did it make on you? When was the first time you helped out, and how did you get involved? Who's been your favourite convention guest, and what was the best programme item you can remember? What have you never done while working on a convention but always wanted to try? This is an open forum which we hope everyone at Conrunner will attend; you don't have to say anything, but it's open to everyone to take part, share your experiences and enthusiasms, and get things started with an overview of why we're all here and why we want to work on SF conventions. **Mark Plummer** will be encouraging as many of us as possible to say something while making sure as many of us as possible get the chance.

9.30 pm approx
Main room

Did You Spot Our Deliberate Mistakes?

It's easy to get things wrong when you're running a con. We've all done it and some of us are probably doing it right now. **Claire Briailey** will lead **Fergal MacCarthaigh**, **Doug S**, and **Ben Yalow** to confess their guilt – or tell a story about the error made *by a friend and not by them at all* – as a means of looking at options for what to do when you do make a mistake and how not to make it worse. Other mishaps, mistakes, learning experiences and brilliant solutions are welcome – provided they involve owning up and only telling tales against ourselves. But there won't be a prize for spotting all the things we got wrong with this convention *which of course we did on purpose as examples only...*

SATURDAY

10 am – 11 am
Main room

Tech Training

Have you ever wondered what's going on beyond the tech desk, and why programme participants tapping their microphones are the subject of muttering and dark glares? There's a programme discussion at 2 pm today about better integrating tech into conventions – but if you'd like to get your eye in first, and learn another way of helping out, **Martin Hoare** has offered to show people the ropes. You can then take a turn taking charge of the kit (and practising your glare and mutter) during the con.

10 am – 11 am
Room 2

An Honour and a Privilege

What makes the ideal Guest of Honour for different types of convention? Why have guests? How do you choose them? When should this happen and who gets to be involved? What are you planning to do with them at the con? How can you make it feel like a honour for them all the way through? And so who would you – as a conrunner and as a con attendee – rate as an excellent GoH, and why? **Tony Keen**, **Caroline Mullan**, and **Morag O'Neill** get to grips with these and other questions.

11 am – 12 noon

Main room

The Internationale

Whatever's happening in the rest of the world, there's still globalisation in conrunning. Communications around the world might now be easier, to reach both convention staff and attendees, but what are the practical issues in attracting and then catering for an audience drawn partly from overseas? How can you retain a local flavour for an international membership? How much do you need to tell people about the country as well as the convention? What will attendees, artists, dealers, or programme participants need to do to be allowed in to do what they want to do? What language are you even speaking? **Vincent Docherty**, **Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf**, **Judi Hodgkin**, and **Brian Nisbet** discuss how to address the challenges.

11 am – 12 noon

Room 2

You Clashed My Favourite Items and Then I Couldn't Get In

Between all the interests or streams you want to cover, the time and space you've got and the other demands other people are putting on both, and all the parameters affecting participants, trying to balance the programme and keep everything in place can be a struggle – but it's as vital as having all the good ideas and great participants in the first place. You'll also need to schedule things so that attendees feel the balance is right; there's nothing quite like a popular item in a small room to topple the complaints about clashing interests off the top spot. There are systems to manage this which can also help to identify emerging problems (and there's a related demonstration at 5 pm today), but the human touch is still essential. **Liz Batty**, **Clare Boothby**, **Mary Morman**, and **Steve Rogerson** consider what and who is needed to get the planning, the inspiration, the organisation, and the trouble-shooting all lined up so that everyone thinks it was effortless.

12 noon – 1 pm

Main room

Cracking the Code

We've been talking about codes of conduct for years, and for a while it seemed as though every con was starting from a blank sheet of paper. **Steve Davies**, **Kate Keen**, and **Alice Lawson** discuss where we are now, and particularly how to have a code of conduct and policies which really help all the people running and attending the con – and which you can actually implement, no matter who does what. Without rehashing specific cases, what do we now know about what's essential and about what's still difficult to get right? What do we all need to do now?

12 noon – 1 pm

Room 2

Is There Something I Should Know?

We might all think we've solved the problem of getting information to members, with con websites, email, and social media supplementing or even replacing progress reports. But people have different expectations about what information will be made available to them when, and there's no universal platform through which to reach everyone interested. Even if everyone arrives knowing everything they need to, during the con there will be lots of things we want to tell people, from 'don't take glasses into the pool' to 'here are the programme changes' to 'you've been banned'. Newsletters and programme apps only get information to the people who read them, and far fewer people seem to be using social media at the con than beforehand. So are we doing as well on this as we think we are? What do we still need to improve and why haven't we done it yet? What new challenges are looming and can we get a head start? **Dave Lally**, **Doug S**, and **Alison Scott** prompt a rousing discussion.

<Lunch break>

A buffet lunch will be provided, to keep your strength up for the afternoon...

SATURDAY	Main room	Room 2
10:00	Tech Training	An Honour and a Privilege
11:00	The Internationale	You Clashed My Favourite Items and Then I Couldn't Get In
12:00	Cracking the Code	Is There Something I Should Know?
13:00	Lunch	
14:00	This Shit Doesn't Just Happen (or, How to Create Memorable Events)	We Can Rebuild It: We Have the Technology
15:00		Room in use for meeting
16:00	A Journey Through Nine Worlds	Go On, Go On, You Know You Want To
17:00	Remind Me Again Why This Is Fun	Programme Programs
18:00	Dinner break	
20:00	Again! Again!	
21:00	Not Just a Hobby	

2 pm – 4 pm
Main room

This Shit Doesn't Just Happen (or, How To Create Memorable Events)

Attend this item and we promise the next convention, programme item or any other event you organise will be more engaging, more enjoyable and more memorable. Brought to you by **Jess Bennett** and **Chris Tregenza**, this is a practical guide for anyone involved in conrunning who wants to create better events – no matter how much experience they have.
PS: It will also be fun.
PPS: There will be tigers.

2 pm – 3 pm
Room 2

We Can Rebuild It: We Have the Technology

If you haven't got the right tech in the right places and enough people who know how to operate it well, at least part of your programme will be inaudible, unwatchable, or even completely impossible – and that's before programme participants try to use it... Yet, even if you're lucky enough to be using a site with everything built in, tech equipment can often be one of the biggest pressures on a convention budget. This often makes committees suspicious of tech and techies alike! What do tech and programme teams need from one another to make the convention run smoothly? **Deborah Crook**, **Martin Hoare**, **Jane Nicholson**, and **Jay** aim to demystify the planning and operation of convention tech and help other conrunners work out what they think they want, what they really need, when they need to decide, and who can help.

4 pm – 5 pm
Main room

A Journey Through Nine Worlds

In February 2013 a Kickstarter project announced a group of fans putting together a weekend-long, multi-genre convention in London that summer, 'founded on the radical belief that geekdom should not be restricted by class, age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, or the ability to cite Wookieepedia in arguments'. Nine Worlds is now in its fifth year and continues to have a broad and growing base. **Jay**, **Kate Keen** and **Samantha** describe how the team have approached and developed many areas of conrunning within their model; come along to explore the lessons and mutual opportunities for people to work together who know about different types of cons.

4 pm – 5 pm
Room 2

Go On, Go On, You Know You Want To

So you have this brilliant idea for a convention. But you need to persuade other people to come to it, and to get involved; you might even need to win a bid against other people's brilliant ideas. At other conventions, do you have a desk, throw a party, run your own programme item, put promotional materials in surprising places, tape people to the floor until they sign up, or try something else to get noticed in a good way? *Phil Lowles, Helena McCallum, and James Shields* lead a discussion about how to get the right pitch to promote your con and/or bid, to make the people you want to reach want to attend your con – even when (or perhaps especially if) you want to do something rather different to what people are expecting.

5 pm – 6 pm
Main room

Remind Me Again Why This Is Fun

How do we attract, manage and motivate volunteers? How do we ensure that we're not just relying on a dwindling pool of the same old faithful and/or putting off new people? How do we make the best use of people's interests and skills and find out what those really are? What do we do about people who offer to help but aren't very helpful? How can we avoid creating a new management bureaucracy and needing even more volunteers to run that? And how do we encourage people to help out at all when there's so much criticism about everything? What makes *you* want to work on conventions, and what puts you off? *Martin Easterbrook, Vanessa May, Fergal MacCarthaigh, and Shana Worthen* share some of their answers.

5 pm – 6 pm
Room 2

Programme Programs

We might have solved the people problems with programme earlier today – no, really – but how do you want to herd your cats, get your ducks in a row, and manage your animal metaphors? What features do you really want in a programme system and how should that work in practice, rather than leaving you longing for ten packs of post-it notes and a simple spreadsheet? How can you use your system to help with programme planning as well as scheduling, and keep track of relevant developments in the rest of the con? *Liz Batty and Emma England* provide a practical demonstration of Grenadine, a system developed by fans which – among an increasing number of convention functions – supports programme management end to end, and provides an at-con app for attendees.

<Dinner break>

Tonight you've got until 8 pm...

8 pm – 9 pm
Main room

Again! Again!

Tony Berry, Kent Bloom, Mark Meenan, and Klaudia Szygenda discuss the problems and opportunities of running series cons. The longer your con goes on, the more there's a challenge to get the balance right between continuity and change – for committee and staff as well as other attendees. How strong do you want the golden thread to be? Is there a right time to stop, reset, or significantly change direction? And who really owns the con?

9 pm – 10 pm
Main room

Not Just a Hobby

What outside uses are there for your conrunning skills? How have you called on your fannish experiences to help in other activities? Have you found yourself wishing that your job was more like working on a convention? And where have you found there's not as much crossover between your day job and conrunning as you first thought? *Pat McMurray, Farah Mendlesohn, and Alison Scott* get the ball rolling.

SUNDAY

SUNDAY	Main room	Room 2
10:00	Registration, Registration, Registration	Follow the Money
11:00	Are You Being Served?	London, Helsinki, Dublin... Nice?
12:00	Is This On The Record?	
13:00	Lunch	
14:00	The Final Frontier	We Have To Have This Programme Item
15:00	Forward to the Future of 2024!	
16:00	Closing ceremony	

10 am – 11 am
Main room

Registration, Registration, Registration

James Shields presents for our delectation and delight Drupal ConReg – the convention registration system he’s developed, wrangled and refined over a number of cons – showcasing the system features and its configuration and management as well as planned development. Discussion of what a con and its members need from a registration system, questions, and suggestions for improvements and new features – and discussion of practical alternatives – are all welcomed.

10 am – 11 am
Room 2

Follow the Money

Have you got what it takes to be a convention treasurer, or do you just want to be assured that someone else has got that under control? How much do conrunners need to know rather than believing in the ‘magic money tree’? What are the advantages and disadvantages of another organisation backing or underwriting the con? How cautious does your budget need to be to begin with, how do you gauge the right amount of risk to bear at different stages, and how can you plan to make the best use of last-minute cash if the tree bears fruit after all? **JC Clarke, Steve Cooper, Paul van Oven,** and **Sarah Shemilt** give us the benefit of their experience.

11 am – 12 noon
Main room

Are You Being Served?

The dealers’ room, art show, exhibits and displays – whatever names those all go by – can be a major attraction for people attending conventions and a place to spend a lot of time. Some dealers, artists, and exhibitors are also fans and indeed conrunners, while some see conventions as purely business even when they enjoy the atmosphere and the genre. It can be too easy to see these areas as distinct from the rest of the convention – but far more rewarding to integrate them. **Brian Ameringen, Ian Knope,** and **Shana Worthen** – participants from both sides of the table – take the chance to discuss ways to do it right.

11 am – 12 noon
Room 2

London, Helsinki, Dublin... Nice?

Where might the *next* next European Worldcon be held? There’s a bid for a Worldcon in France in 2023; in this session **Georges Bormand** and **Alain Jardy** will present the bid and give everyone a chance to find out more about hopes, dreams, plans and opportunities to get involved. Plus, as an added bonus, Eurocon Nemo (2018 in Amiens).

12 noon – 1 pm
Main room

Is This On The Record?

Conventions have been recording programme items for years, but we've come a long way from audio tapes and home movies. Now half the audience could be recording and/or streaming what's happening at a panel or in the bar, and people who can't be at the convention would often like to be able to watch or even take part remotely. But not everyone wants to be recorded for posterity or to be the subject of comments below the line. **Steve Davies**, **Karo Leikomaa**, and **Helena McCallum** help to draw out the arguments for and against recording programme items and other con activities, and how to approach it as a matter of policy and practice.

<Lunch>

A buffet lunch will be provided again, in case it's been too long since breakfast...

2 pm – 3 pm
Main room

The Final Frontier

Space: the commodity of which you've never got enough. When you're looking for a venue, it's easy to lose track of all the things you want to do in it and where you might be able to do them – and it's just as easy to imagine that everyone is looking at the site in the same way that you are. Have you involved people covering different perspectives about what the con needs, and challenged their assumptions about the space they need to deliver their functions? How do the many separate desires for a room of one's own fit with the overall idea for this convention? And how do you resolve all the competing visions and land grabs, and when? **Margaret Austin**, **Giulia de Cesare**, **Kari**, and **Mark Meenan** share their thinking – and encourage positive examples of using space creatively!

2 pm – 3 pm
Room 2

We Have to Have This Programme Item

There's often some programme you don't care about or know about but think you've got to provide – but you might not even know the right people to ask to design it or be on it. So you end up with yet another introductory or generalised item which is only attended by people who need no introduction and are there because that's the only item they've got. Or you try to inject some different thinking but still end up with a topic that everyone interested is already bored with. And the people you invite to take part think most of the audience would be as good or better than them. Can **Pat McMurray**, **Caroline Mullan**, and **Steve Rogerson** avoid the trap of 'SF/fandom in [country]' and '[theme] in SF/fandom'?

3 pm – 4 pm
Main room

Forward to the Future of 2024!

Helsinki, Dublin, Nice... It's an exciting time to be a conrunner interested in European Worldcons. But what about the UK? In 2024 it will be a decade since Loncon 3, and so **Emma England**, **Esther MacCallum-Stewart**, and **Vanessa May** have started working to bring Worldcon back to the UK. Today they want to share information about what they've been doing so far, including shortlisting venues with the help of the 2024 discussion group. They also want to talk about what's next and how to get involved – so a large part of this session will be answering questions, taking feedback, and growing support for the bid.

4 pm
Main room

Closing ceremony

Steve Cooper and **Alice Lawson** will lead a review into whether we've got any better at standing on ceremony, and what's next.

4.30 pm approx

It should all be over bar the shouting... (For those not rushing off at once to get home, please avoid shouting in the bar.)

OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW

The Conrunner committee expect all discussions at the convention, including those in and relating to programme items, to be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and fairness. We expect all attendees (including ourselves) to treat one another and the hotel staff with the high standards of mature behaviour we would all want to see at any other convention that we work on or attend. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or other offensive statements or actions.

Programme items will take place either in the main room (AKA Regent Room) on the ground floor or in room 2 (one floor down, accessed by lift or stairs). Venues are specified in the item descriptions and grids. Lunch on both days will be provided in the Business Lounge, near programme room 2.

The main hotel bar is on the ground floor, round to the right of reception; we have resisted the urge to give it a hilarious British pub name for the duration. We encourage you to use the bar as a gathering space; if you want somewhere quieter to sit, or want to make a more private space less quiet with your own meeting or guerilla programme item, we also have use of the Club Bar downstairs – although that bar isn't serving drinks. Have a word with a member of the committee if you would like to use some private space.

Changes to the schedule, any extra events, and abject apologies for any parts of this leaflet which turn out to be wrong will be announced as soon and as clearly as possible. We are doing our best to make sure programme items start on time; we've left comfortable gaps for meal breaks and we'll have threatened, bribed, or otherwise persuaded participants to show up at the right time and place. There should also be short gaps between items for you to do whatever you want or need to do then. Please act accordingly!

If you're booked into the Park Inn via the convention, breakfast is included in the cost of your room and is served in the restaurant beyond the main bar, between 8 am and 10.30 on Saturday and Sunday – so there's plenty of time to fortify yourself and get along to the earlier programme items each day. If you're still at the hotel on Monday morning, be warned that weekday times are 6.30 to 9 am. Bar meals and snacks are available throughout the day as well as more substantial meals in the restaurant from 6.30 pm.

Hotel check-out is by 12 noon; the hotel have space to store luggage. If you check out earlier in the day, or at least don't all rush at once, it shouldn't take long and you won't miss much of the programme...

IN MEMORY OF PETER WESTON (1943 – 2017)

Peter Weston died on 5 January 2017; among many other achievements in fandom and science fiction, he chaired the 1971 Eastercon, three Speculation conferences, and Seacon '79 (the third British Worldcon). It's still difficult to believe that we won't suddenly see Peter walking into this convention; he would have had some excellent experiences and stories to share. Instead, a donor who wishes to remain anonymous has funded a scholarship to Conrunner 4 to commemorate Peter's contribution to conrunning.

You can read more about Peter in special issue 355½ of Dave Langford's fanzine *Ansible* (online at <http://news.ansible.uk/a355x.html>) which reprints Tom Shippey's eulogy from Peter's funeral, and at much greater length in his own memoir *With Stars In My Eyes* (available, with a sample chapter, from NESFA Press: www.nesfa.org/press/Books/Weston.html). Peter's fanhistorical fanzines from the past decade, *Prolapse* and *Relapse*, remain available at efanzines.com/Prolapse/

You can also see and hear Peter describing his discovery of sf fandom in a short clip from a recent BBC documentary (shortened link to YouTube: <https://is.gd/zxE1j6> – with thanks to Graham Charnock). An episode of a much earlier BBC documentary covering Seacon '79 is also available on YouTube (shortened link: <https://is.gd/pp5mx8> – with thanks to Kevin Davies).