

Read Me!

Welcome to the convention! Everything you need to know for the next three days should be right here.

Guests of Honour

We're delighted that Diana Wynne Jones and Paul Cornell accepted our invitations to be Guests of Honour for Saturday and Sunday respectively. Unfortunately, we learned shortly before the con that Diana is unwell and is unable to attend. We're sure you all join us in sending her our best wishes for a speedy recovery. We will refund membership to anyone who no longer wishes to attend.

Food & Drink

We'll have our own bar in the conference centre from 11am to 12 midnight on Saturday and 11am to 7pm on Sunday. The main bar will open until at least midnight each night, and later if we're still drinking.

Breakfast is from 8am to 11am on Sunday and Monday mornings. The restaurant will then be open from 12:00 to 14:00, and from 18:30 to 21:00. There are plenty of other places to eat locally—see the back page of *Plokta*.

There will be a barbecue on Sunday evening at 7pm, for £5 per person. We have to give numbers in advance, so we'll be selling tickets on Saturday—see any Cabal member to buy a ticket. We hope you'll all come.

Posters

Only White Tak may be used to stick things to walls. Please be careful when removing it. We can supply White Tak upon request. Blu Tak must *not* be used.

Treasure Hunt

Flick is running a treasure hunt throughout the weekend. An entry form is available from the Cabal.

On-Site Facilities

Free Wifi is available for the convention. The password is "Venues".

The site has a number of sports facilities, including an open-air heated swimming pool, which has opened for the season. It's near Northcote House, which is the older building where they hold weddings, and we're welcome to use it but please keep the noise down so as not to drown out the wedding vows. There should also be croquet available; we have sets of rules.

Programme

All programme items are in the Sharp Suite unless otherwise stated. Workshops are in Fulton. Dealers, con desks and an exhibit of *Plokta* covers are in Mandela.

Saturday

11:00 Assembly

Our new Headmistress Alison Scott welcomes you back for another term at St Plokta's and reminds you *once more* of the school rules.

11:30 Get SF Back Under the Bedclothes Where it Belongs

SF has historically been a young adult genre, but of late is more read by middle-aged geeks. Now it seems to be getting back to its teenaged roots; young adult works are being nominated for major awards, and even winning them. Is this a positive development? Alison Scott, Rob Jackson, Paul Cornell & Caroline Mullan.

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 Are we Human or Are we Vampire?

Being Human is the smartest post RTD sf series on telly, but the secret of its appeal is complex. Is it the heir apparent to *Ultraviolet*, with the potential to be a British *Buffy*, or is it more like a supernatural *Rising Damp*? Does it follow in the tradition of flatshare sitcoms or the heritage of vampires and ghosts? And will the ghost ever get to wear a different outfit? Lilian Edwards, Christina Lake, John Medany & Michael Abbott

14:00 Extreme Papercraft (Workshop)

Alison Scott leads an attempt at putting together the insanely complicated and beautiful papercraft model of Howl's Moving Castle. All welcome.

15:30 Diana Wynne Jones GoH Panel

Steve Davies leads a panel discussion of the works of our Guest of Honour, Diana Wynne Jones, who is sadly too unwell to attend the convention.

17:00 Paul Cornell Reading

Paul reads a selection from his works.

17:15 *Plokta* Space Launch (Outdoors)

You'll believe an irritating small boy can fly. OK, not really. You'll believe an irritating small boy can launch a rocket. This is mostly a chance to play with a toy Steve Davies got for Christmas a few years ago, in a nice big open space.

18:00 Dinner Break

20:00 A Serious Scientific Talk

James Bacon channels Bob Shaw in another chance to see his performance from this year's Eastercon.

21:00 QI

Our very own *Plokta* version of the funniest quiz on TV. Michael Abbott is being Stephen Fry for the evening, but he won't tell us who is being Alan Davies. However, the contestants are Spike Parsons, Malcolm Davies, Paul Cornell and Square Bear.

22:00 *Plokta* Space Launch Part 2 (Outdoors)

In the second installment of the *Plokta* space programme, we launch 40 sky lanterns into Sunningdale airspace.

22:00 Children's Literature Night

Come as a character from children's literature.

Sunday

11:00 Rebooting the Franchise

Star Trek, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Dr Who*, *Terminator*, *Batman*—many venerable SF universes are being rebooted, or re-envisioned. How and why is this happening? And should it happen at all? Alex Ingram, Paul Cornell and Fran Dowd discuss.

11:00 Belly-Dancing (Workshop)

Participants only. All participants aged ten or over are welcome. Sue will wear you out and get you energised for the day.

12:00 Live-Action Video Game Charades (Outdoors unless wet)

Your chance to shake off some cobwebs and act out live action versions of classic computer games. Alison Scott organises the assembled masses.

12:00 Beading (Workshop)

Giulia De Cesare shows you how to make earrings, and can also give advice on more complicated beadwork.

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 Forthcoming Conventions

Representatives of a number of upcoming conventions of all shapes and sizes discuss their conventions, answer your questions and take your money. Includes Rob Jackson (Corflu Cobalt), Rita Medany (*Odyssey 2010*), Alan Bellingham (*DiscWorldCon*) & Steve Cooper (*Conrunner & Reno in 2011*).

14:00 Stitch & Bitch (Workshop)

Come along and chat and knit, crochet, sew, or whatever other crafty thing you happen to have with you. And drink tea.

15:30 Paul Cornell Guest of Honour Speech.

“Extemporising a speech should be fun—how long do you want?” said Paul.

16:30 Back in a Tweet

After a long and steady relationship with LiveJournal, fandom has had a bit of a fling with Facebook, is flirting with Twitter, and rumour has it, may even be leaving home entirely soon for Dreamwidth. How if at all has fandom been transformed by the advent of online social networking? Is the real world only now catching up on what fandom has had all along? Why do older fans still seem to prefer mailing lists, Usenet or (whisper it) apas? How can technologies like Twitter make conventions more fun? Lilian Edwards, Phil Bradley, Crazy Dave & Kari.

17:30 Web 2.0 Show-and-Tell (Workshop)

Following on from the previous panel, Phil Bradley leads a practical workshop in Web 2.0 social networking tools. Bring a laptop, if you have one with you.

19:00 Barbecue (Bar terrace, or restaurant if wet)

You should have bought a ticket yesterday if you want to attend, but we might have a couple of spares.

21:00 Harry Plokta and the Half-Cut Prince

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to convention programmes, along comes another Ian Sorensen musical, with a multi-million dollar budget for special effects. Zimbabwe dollars, that is.

22:30 Rob Jackson's Tetrahedron Trivia Quiz

Four teams have a go at SF, fannish and general knowledge trivia set by the warped brain of a psychiatrist who happens also to be a fan. The Tetrahedron is the pyramidal die which chooses which team starts each round. Volunteer if you dare!

Monday

11:00 Best SF of 2008

Mike Scott and Julian Headlong discuss the year in SF, and the shortlists for the various awards.

11:00 Stretch & Balance (Workshop)

Jess Bennett helps to clear the Monday morning cobwebs. Wear comfortable clothes that you can move about in. The workshop is bare feet.

12:00 Forgotten Futures

Why is it that some YA sf futures last, and others don't? Fandom is happy to endlessly discuss Narnia and Tolkien, Heinlein juveniles, Jan Mark and Diana Wynne Jones (and quite right too) but

less likely to think about (say) E Nesbit, Andre Norton's catpeople and Louise Lawrence. Which of today's juveniles will stand the test of time and why?

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 I Can See Your House From Here

A panel inspired by the Cabal discovering that Microsoft Live has lovely birds-eye pictures of the Cabal's tents, cars, hot tub etc. Our views are equal parts 'isn't it fantastic what we can do with all this cool location technology' and 'shouldn't we be doing something to stop this?' Dave Clements, Nick Gibbins & Tom Becker

14:00 Sita Sings the Blues (Workshop)

A showing of Nina Paley's wonderful Creative Commons licensed animated film based on the Ramayana.

15:00 Fannish Agony Aunty

"My fan fund trip is about to start and I'm not sure of my ability to do interpretive dance."

"D West says my fanzine is fluffy."

Agony Aunt Ang Rosin will solve all your fannish problems.

16:00 Prize Giving

We gather together again to give out prizes for the various activities of the weekend. Special awards for the best photograph of the convention, and the best tweet tagged with #plokta.