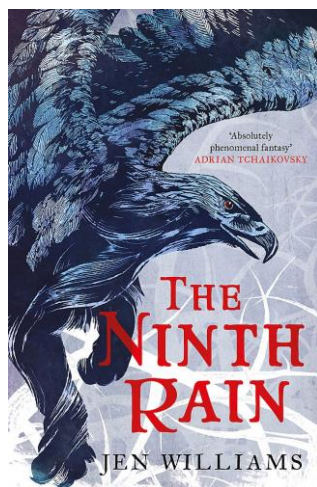
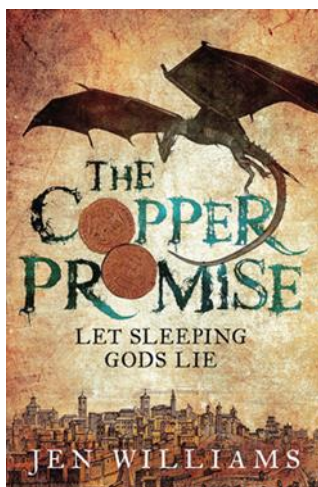




Guest of Honour

Jen Williams

PROGRESS REPORT 2



10 – 12th November 2023

COMMITTEE

Chair: Steve Lawson
chair@novacon.uk

Hotel Liaison: Steve Lawson
Hotel_liaison@novacon.uk

Memberships & Hotel Booking: Steve Lawson
membership@novacon.uk

Treasurer: Steve Lawson
treasurer@novacon.uk

Publications: Carol Goodwin
publications@novacon.uk

Programme: Helena McCallum
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Social Media: Carol Goodwin
socialmedia@novacon.uk

Secretary: Claire Cartwright
secretary@novacon.uk

Art Show: Serena Culfeather & John Wilson
artshow@artistsink.uk

Logos/Website: Alex Storer
blog@novacon.uk

STAFF

Dealer Bookings: Tony Berry
dealer_booking@novacon.uk

Cover Images: Books 1 of The Copper Cat and The Winnowing Flame trilogies by Jen Williams

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR



Well, not long to go now. As we speak the committee are working hard to make sure we bring you the best Novacon we can. There will be the usual mix of panels and talks with some other stuff

thrown in. Helena our programme supremo will talk more about this later in PR3 and I am confident there will be something for everyone to enjoy.

Our guest Jen Williams is really looking forward to the convention and has chosen Indian food as her choice for the Sunday night meal. The hotel is busy coming up with an interesting menu and tickets will be on sale at registration.

The hotel has continued with refurbishing the public areas and function spaces, everything is much brighter and looking very nice.

Please check out the hotel information page, and if you have not yet booked your room please think about doing so.

Please also note the new email address (in the contact list above) for any enquiries about the Art Show. This is artshow@artistsink.uk The Art Show will be in the same place as last year (the Chatsworth room) with the lovely natural daylight. NB Anyone who still wishes to exhibit and hasn't yet contacted Serena or John, please get in touch as soon as possible.

On a serious note, Novacon is in need of more people on the committee and in particular someone for social media. If interested please get in touch with me at chair@novacon.org.uk Looking forward to seeing you all in November

Steve Lawson



HOTEL & CONVENTION INFORMATION

Palace Hotel Buxton

Palace Road

Buxton

SK17 6AG

For Novacon 52 we will be returning to the Palace Hotel in Buxton in the Peak District.

As before, all the convention rooms including Programme, Off-Piste, Art show and Dealers are all on the ground floor. The bars and toilets are also on the ground floor and there is plenty of seating.

The Room rates have, unfortunately, gone up this the year, but we feel we still have competitive prices. **Rates (given below) are per room per night.**

Convention room rates

Rooms with Breakfast are: £100 per night for a Standard Double or Twin room (ie £50 per person with two people sharing).

Rooms with Breakfast: £65 for a Single room.

We have also got a reduced **Room Only rate** (new option this year) for anyone who can't be bothered to get up for breakfast; again, rates are per room per night.

Room Only: £92.50 per night for a Standard Double or Twin room (ie £46.25 per person with two people sharing)

Room Only: £57.50 for a Single Room

There are also a limited number of family rooms (2 adults and 2 children) and a few accessible rooms. There is ramp access at the rear of the hotel for those with difficulty with steps. Please note if you have specific requirements, don't hesitate to contact the hotel directly at 01298 767015.



Hotel Booking System – Please note this has changed from previous years.

We have decided to go with a different booking system this year; you will be able to **book direct** with the hotel's central booking office, the telephone number is:

0333 323 1574

Please use the Booking ref: NOVA101123



The whole hotel is light and airy with high ceilings and some impressive decor. And a conservatory. And the longest continuous wrought-iron bannister in Britain, or was it Europe? And possibly a ghost. There is a swimming pool and gym/spa facilities

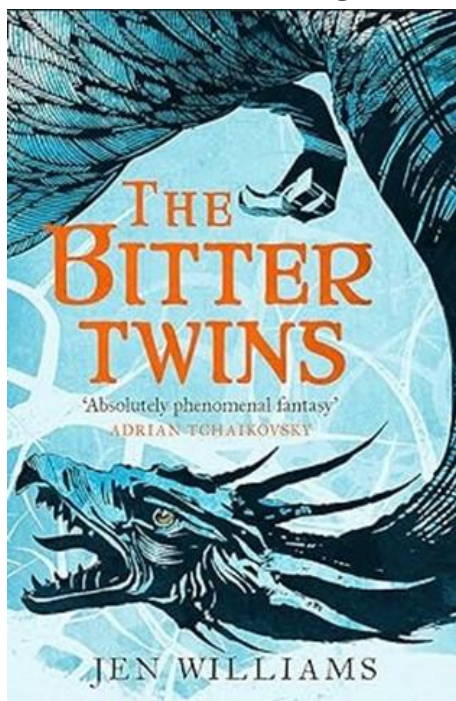
Buxton itself is a thermal spa town, with lots of interesting buildings and places to visit for those who wish to venture outside the hotel. These include the Opera House, the Devonshire Dome (once the largest unsupported dome in the world), a restored Georgian crescent and the ornamental Pavilion Gardens. There are supermarkets nearby

(Waitrose, Aldi & Sainsburys Local) and plenty of cafés and restaurants. More information can be found at www.visitbuxton.co.uk.

DEALERS' TABLES

Dealers' tables (6 ft) are available at £20. Dealers normally have to be a member of the convention but we are happy to talk about this. Also, we are open to discussion if you wish to only come for one day. Contact Tony at the email address on Page 2

THE BITTER TWINS



Jen Williams

Sequels are hard, both for the author but also to some extent for the reader. I find this is doubly so when the first novel has been one that I really enjoyed so there is an element of fear that it won't be able to meet the high expectations raised by the first. Thankfully, in **THE BITTER TWINS**, Jen Williams has clearly risen to the challenge and yet again has written an intriguing and different fantasy story.

In the first book (**THE NINTH RAIN**) we saw a world recovering from the periodic invasions of a mysterious non-human group called the Jure'lia.

Actions taken during that first novel have led to the return of the Jure'lia but also of some of the magical warbeasts that have been the only effective resistance to them. However, this time things are very different. Both the Jure'lia and the warbeasts are weakened and depleted and it is clear that previous strategies will not work for either side. Now the Jure'lia and the opposing forces (of humans, Eborans

and the warbeasts) must search for new resources and methods to enable them to succeed. In that search mistakes will be made by both sides, and new threats will appear.

As with the previous novel, the characters continue to be a major strength in this novel. They are not perfect heroes or indeed villains, unlike many other fantasy stories, and they have character flaws which add to their verisimilitude but also drive some aspects of the story in a very consistent manner. The three main characters of Vintage, Noon and Tor continue to hold the reader's interest and newer or minor characters are also well developed. In particular, I like the growing relationship between the Eboran, Aldasair and the human, Berm and also the continued verbal sparring between Tor and Noon. Indeed, the realistic, unpretentious and often humorous dialogue is one of the highlights of the book. Unlike some traditional fantasy authors, Jen Williams also shows the personal consequences to her characters and is not afraid to put them through emotional and physical traumas and losses.

In the previous story, the origin and biology of the Jure'lia and (to a lesser extent that of the Eborans) was not fully explained and was one of the different features of this book which I really liked. Here we start to unearth a little bit more although not everything and again this is an aspect that I really like. The plot also continues to move along towards an exciting climax at the end but with still lots to be resolved in the next volume. Once again if you are a fantasy fan, then I heartily recommend this book.

Carol Goodwin

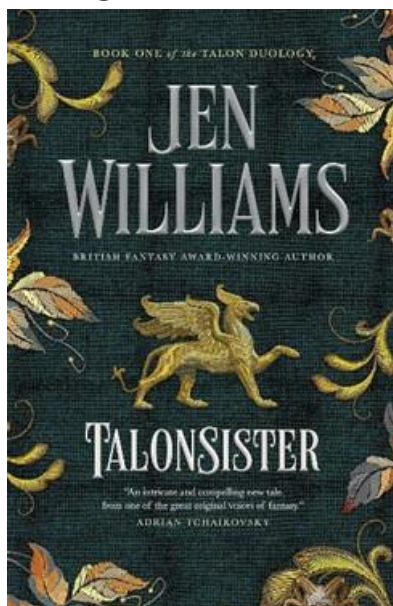
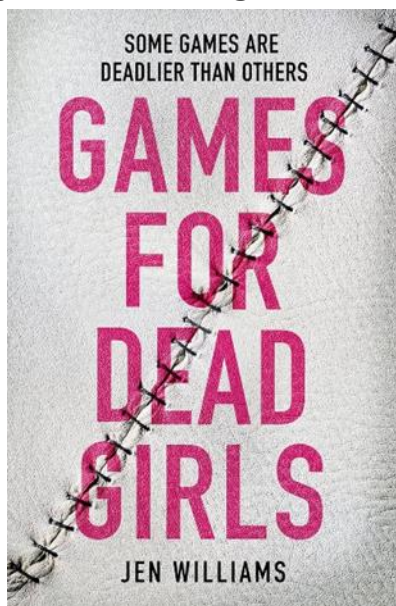
THE BITTER TWINS is the second book of The Winnowing Flame series. It is published by Headline. An omnibus edition of the complete series is also available as an e-book.

Addendum

Carol Goodwin

Apologies for the late delivery of this Progress Report. I had a neck injury in June which has affected my ability to write etc for a while. I'm now well on the way to recovery and back to working on the remaining Novacon publications

JEN WILLIAMS – 2023 BOOKS



Since the last Progress report, our GOH Jen Williams has published two new books.

The first book, *GAMES FOR DEAD GIRLS* is a supernatural crime thriller and was published on 30th March. The story starts when Charlie returns as an adult to the seaside town she used to visit as a child. Accompanied by her niece she is there to research a book on folklore. However, as she digs deeper into past history, she finds women have been going missing for decades. Could the scary stories of her youth actually be true? Booklist described it as ‘A brilliantly crafted tale of unexplained disappearances and macabre urban legends ... Recommended to fans of Stacy Willingham, Karin Slaughter, and Stephen King’. It is published by HarperVoyager in hardcover with an RRP of £16.99 (ISBN 978-0008383848).

The second book, *TALONSISTER* was published on September 12th. This is a secondary world fantasy, and is the first in the *Talon* duology. It is ‘a world of mythical creatures, ruthless religion and a magical past that refuses to be forgotten’. Featuring a woman raised by griffins, a soldier trying to recover her past memories after being transformed into a magical killing machine,

and envoy Kaeto – assigned to escort a ‘bone-crafter’ across the Imperium – that is until he realises their mission could lead to a new and bloodier war than the one which has just finished. The book is available as a hardcover (RRP £16.99) from Titan Books (ISBN 978-1803364353). We hope to have copies of this book available for purchase and signing at Novacon.

TERRY PRATCHETT DISCWORLD STAMPS



I thought this might be of interest to Novacon members. In August, the Royal Mail issued a set of 8 new stamps to commemorate 40 years of Terry Pratchett’s *Discworld* series. The illustrations are by Paul Kidby, who did much of the original Discworld artwork. There are two first class, two £1, two £2 and two £2.20 stamps in the series. More information at <https://shop.royalmail.com/terry-pratchetts-discworld-stamp-set>

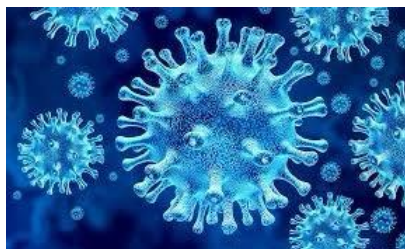
CODE OF CONDUCT

A Convention is a private event and, as such, the Committee has always had the right and the ability to remove any attendee for antisocial behaviour. Over recent years, it has become standard practice for such events to publish a Code of Conduct providing guidelines as to what that antisocial behaviour may include.

The Code of Conduct is a living document. It evolves, intending always to reflect current best practice. The version in use at each Novacon is fixed in advance of the convention, and the

version for Novacon 52 will be available on the website (www.novacon.uk/n52/) and will be printed in the convention Programme book. It should be noted that the Code of Conduct governs not only behaviour at Novacon, but also in certain spaces elsewhere, including but not limited to activity online, such as in messages or replies to Novacon accounts on social media, and posts in Novacon pages and groups. The Novacon Code of Conduct team receives complete information from preceding Novacon Code of Conduct teams, and passes complete information to future Novacon Code of Conduct teams. It also maintains an awareness of activity which has been of concern to other conventions. For most people, the simple principle of, “Behave like a decent human being,” is enough of a guideline. However, if in any doubt, please consult the Novacon website or contact the team at CodeOfConduct@novacon.uk

COVID POLICY AT NOVACON



Although we hope for the best, we cannot be clear at this stage what the Covid situation will be in November. The committee will continue to monitor things and will have similar restrictions to previous years if required. We will keep members up to date with any proposed restrictions.

CONVENTION TABLES

These are free to anyone who is running a convention. Contact Tony for reservations.

ART SHOW

If you want to show your art it is free to convention members, but you will need to reserve space. So, contact us to discuss what you need and so that we can do a little planning. If you have any questions related to the art show, please contact Serena.



MEMBERSHIP LIST SEPTEMBER 2023

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Jen Williams | 29 Tim Stannard |
| 2 Gareth Powell | 30 Charlotte Bulmer |
| 3 J Dianne Dotson | 31 Pat Brown |
| 4 Steve Lawson | 32 Vernon Brown |
| 5 Claire Cartwright | 33 William Goodall |
| 6 Carol Goodwin | 34 Steve Dunn |
| 7 Helena McCallum | 35 Giulia DeCesare |
| 8 Alex Storer | 36 Steve Davies |
| 9 Tony Berry | 37 Julie McMurray |
| 10 Serena Culfeather | 38 Pat McMurray |
| 11 John Wilson | 39 Paul Dormer |
| 12 Alice Lawson | 41 Morag O'Neill |
| 13 Noel Collyer | 42 Pauline Morgan |
| 14 Martin Smart | 43 Chris Morgan |
| 15 Tim Kirk | 44 Hazel Ashworth West |
| 16 Flick | 45 Sue Jones |
| 17 Michael Davidson | 46 Melica Smith |
| 18 Christine Davidson | 47 Marcus Rowland |
| 19 Alan Woodford | 48 Ian Sorensen |
| 20 Anne Woodford | 49 Yvonne Rowse |
| 21 Peter Wareham | 50 Sally Rowse |
| 22 Gwen Funnell | 51 Barbara Jane |
| 23 Omega | 52 Roger Robinson |
| 24 Harry Payne | 53 Harpal Singh |
| 25 Hal Payne | 54 Caroline Mullan |
| 26 Jodie Payne | 55 Brian Ameringen |
| 27 Chris Bell | 56 Emjay Ameringen |
| 28 ½r | 57 Nick Mills |

58 Bridget Wilkinson
59 Chris Stocks
60 Laura Wheatly
61 Niall Gordon
62 Nicholas Jackson
63 Tobes Valois
64 DC
65 Fran Dowd
66 John Dowd
67 Mike Scott
68 Simon Beresford
69 Alison Scott
70 Steven Cain
71 Jamie Scott
72 Jackie Burns
73 Peter Buck
74 Alison Buck
75 Claire Brialey
76 Mark Plummer
77 Adrian Snowden
78 Pete Randall
79 Ian Maughan
80 Judith Mortimore
81 Penny Hill
82 David Cochrane
83 Claire Wardell
84 David Langford
85 John Bray
86 Peter Hicks
87 Dave Hicks
88 Cat Coast
89 Roger Perkins
90 TJ
91 Henrick Pålsson
92 Vanessa May
93 Simon Dearn
94 CL Gamble
95 David Hodson
96 Susan Peak
97 Tommy Ferguson
98 Jean Thompson

99 Phil Nanson
100 Kari
101 Judy Perrin
102 Kate Solomon
103 Malcolm Davies
104 Esther MacCallum-Stewart
105 Angela Rosin
106 Tony Keen
107 Peter Ellis
108 Christina Lake
109 Doug Bell
110 Stephen Oram
111 Katherine Franklin
112 Jilly Paddock
113 Dave Brzeski
114 DC
115 Luke Smith
116 Jacqueline Duckworth
117 Tim Duckworth
118 Catherine Sharp
119 Melica Smith
122 Julia McLaughlin Cook
123 David Cartwright
124 Helen Gould
125 Teika Marija Smits Bellamy
126 Neil Tomkinson
127 Alison Tomkinson
128 Sue Edwards
129 Jonathan Earl
130 Stephen Burridge
131 Rogelio Fojo
132 Sofia Fojo
135 Robert Sneddon
136 Dominika Klimczak
137 Ian Stewart
138 David Cooper
139 Jane Cooper
140 Steve Holloway
141 Richard Stephenson
142 Judy Perrin