RECONNECT

Eastercon 76 • 18–21 April 2025 • Belfast ICC & Hilton Lanyon Place

PROGRESS REPORT TWO • AUGUST 2024

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easterconbelfast.org

info@easterconbelfast.org

@reconnecteastercon2025

Editor's Welcome

Welcome to the second Progress Report on how we are preparing for you all to come to Belfast next Easter — enthusiasm is building! This Progress Report is about a time when the work for the con is mostly preparatory, behind-the-scenes activity — but the more we do now, the better the con will be for it and the more fun you will all have.

Rob Jackson

Membership Rates

Joining is straightforward via our membership form on the website:

https://registration.easterconbelfast.org/

The current rates are:

Attending membership:

Full adult membership (age 18+): £80
Discounted rate for pressing financial reasons: £40
First Eastercon (age 18+): £40
All Ireland (age 18+): £40

Supporting membership: £25

Attending rates will be reviewed before the convention itself; these will be announced in a future Progress Report, and we will also announce day membership rates.

The discounted rate of £40 is available if you are: resident in the island of Ireland; a first-time attendee at an Eastercon; or have pressing financial reasons to need the reduced rate (no questions asked).

Progress Reports are normally sent by email. If you wish printed copies by post (normal or large print), this will be £5 extra. You need to tell us how you wish your badge name printed, and we would love to hear if you are interested in the programme, volunteering overall, having a dealer's table, a fan table, or Art Show space.

Programme Team Update

We have had a busy few months in the Programme Team since our last PR update. Amanda Sloan has stepped into the Programme Lead role, and has a team of nine fantastic volunteers: Jo Zebedee, Sarah Murray, Rachael Kelly, Peter Duncan, Lynda Rucker, and Catherine Sharp, plus new team members Alex Gordon, Declan Meenagh, and Frankie Bradley-Lestrange. It's exciting to have a diverse committee, who all bring their own special interests to Eastercon, including Peter, who is our heading our comics track, and Lynda, who heads up our horror track.

We communicate in a Facebook Messenger group chat, which has been working well for us, and meet approximately every six weeks — though that will increase now that we're ramping up to the big event!

We're excited to work closely with our six Guests of Honour, Rebecca Roanhorse, Derek Landy, Jeanette Ng, Lauren Beukes, Ian McDonald, and Will Simpson, to create a comprehensive programme that

TL/DR

RECONNECT
Eastercon 76

When:

- 18th–21st April 2025

Where:

- ICC (International Convention Centre)
  2 Lanyon Place
  Belfast BT1 3WH
  https://iccbelfast.com/
- Hilton Belfast
  4 Lanyon Place
  Belfast BT1 3LP
  https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/bfshitw-hilton-belfast/

Notes:

The ICC and Hilton Belfast are connected by an indoor corridor and escalators. There is ample space at the ICC which has hosted up to 5,000 people.

The venue is central to Belfast, being 10 minutes' walk from the City Hall and main shopping and dining areas, with imposing views of the River Lagan.

There is a massive choice of hotels and other accommodations, ranging from the opulent to the frugal, within half a mile of the venue.

More:

More details on every aspect of the convention can be found on the Reconnect website: https://easterconbelfast.org/.

For further information, email info@easterconbelfast.org.

is sure to have something for everyone. There have been some really interesting programme ideas and suggestions from the larger Eastercon community, and the team is bringing some fascinating ideas to the table, as well. We have over 100 programme ideas, to date, and are currently still open to panel submissions. Kari Maund will be leading the Green Room, ensuring our panel participants have everything they need on the day.

The Cosplay element, headed by Sabine Furlong with Joanne Alexander, is sure to be a blast. Belfast has a thriving and diverse cosplay community and we can't wait to see them in action. Saturday will see a cosplay Masquerade in the late afternoon, followed by the British Science Fiction Awards, and ending the evening with a disco — cosplay encouraged!

We're also working closely with Stephen Butler at the University of Ulster to build a comprehensive academic programme. Stephen, who is a lecturer in Modern Fiction, is eager to bring the academic element to life, and we're so excited to see what he comes up with. Please watch this space for a future update, when we put out a call for academic submissions.

Now that we're in the final year to Eastercon, we're getting ready to lay out the programme agenda. We're planning a half-day in-person workshop in the near future and envision a huge whiteboard and lots of little slips of paper.

If you'd like to get involved in the Programme Team, or have any programme ideas or suggestions, please fill out the Programme Survey, and a member of the team will be in touch with you.

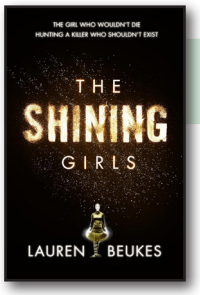
Get to know our Guests of Honour —

LAUREN **BEUKES** | DEREK **LANDY** | IAN **McDONALD** | JEANNETTE **NG** | REBECCA **ROANHORSE** | WILL **SIMPSON**

⬇ START HERE! ⬇

We're very excited to start sharing some short reviews covering works from our Guests of Honour. We have six Guests of Honour, all with uncommon talent, but not as widely known as they should be. To help you get to know their work — or to enrich your reading experience if you are already familiar with them — here are six reviews all written by the Reconnect team, to show you just why they are our Guests of Honour. Getting to know their work is a great prelude to meeting them in person at the con!

Our team of volunteers is making their way through as many Guest of Honour works as possible so that we can bring you a comprehensive programme that touches on their main themes. Their genres range from the downright creepy to the otherworldly and fantastical.



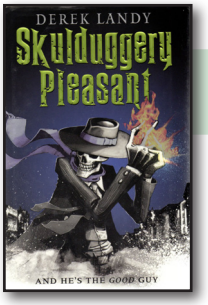
The Shining Girls, *by Lauren Beukes*

review by Jo Zebedee, Programme Team

The Shining Girls was my first Lauren Beukes book. I love genre-crossing books, and the mix of serial killer, crime and time-travel really appealed — I'm a sucker for time travel. I found myself hooked, very quickly, not just as a reader, but also as a writer. To maintain a tight and complex time line over so many years, without leaving plot holes in awkward places, takes a degree of skill. To develop a likeable main character from what could have been so easily a victim-vibe, and turn their challenges into

strengths takes a deft hand. And to make a truly creepy antagonist, who can jump through time in search of the 'Shining Girls' — his victims — and appears seemingly invulnerable through his use of the cloak of time.

Combined with the feel of classic noir, the book worked for me on several levels and when the climax arrives, it does so with a bang. It's a book I've remembered, whose feeling and vibes come back at odd moments, and the TV adaptation of it picked up on that feel so well — it's really worth a watch. In short, something different for the genre, but which picks up on the classic time-travel elements of subterfuge and the isolation of being out of our own time and place, and chimes it perfectly with the feel of noir crime.

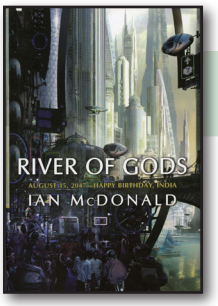


Skulduggery Pleasant, *by Derek Landy*

review by Alex Gordon, Programme Team

Skulduggery Pleasant sets the bar for witty humour, fleshed out characters and interesting magic. This dark fantasy series takes place in beautiful Ireland and follows the story of Skulduggery Pleasant, the wise cracking, sarcastic and semi-undead private detective. He is joined by Stephanie, a normal 12-year-old girl who gets in the middle of a massive magical conspiracy after the death of her uncle. Together they start an investigation to see if everything is as it seems or if murder is afoot. It's not long before Stephanie is learning the ropes of this unseen world, from choosing a name to figuring out her own latent magical power. They are aided by plenty of colourful characters, all part of Skulduggery's network of confidants, from a strait-laced tailor wielding the power of the elements to a loose cannon peacekeeper able to enhance her body and turn the walls and ceiling into her arena. It all starts as a personal grudge between our sarcastic investigator and the man who made him who he is today, but the bigger picture always raises its ugly faceless head to loom over us.

Overall, this series has you spoiled for choice. Hilarious banter, magic, suspense, action and even horror. With two full bodied arcs with neatly tied up bows for endings you cannot do much better than reading the beautifully written ***Skulduggery Pleasant***.



River of Gods, *by Ian McDonald*

review by Sam Poots, Dealer Liaison and Listener Team

River of Gods is a true epic of the cyberpunk genre, its interweaving stories stretching from the deeply personal, to the political, to the wonderfully weird transcendental. Published in 2004 and winner of the BSFA award, the book depicts a near-future India during the run up to the centenary of its independence from the British Raj. AIs, known as *aeais*, are a regular part of everyday life. Some are celebrities, the mega-star actors of popular TV shows. Others, those which grow too independent, too intelligent, often appear as entities from Hindu mythology and are hunted down by the Krishna corps. It is almost impossible for me to sum up everything happening in this book. It provides a vibrant, well-realised look at a future in which ancient traditions mix and mingle with the steady march of technology, one which leads the characters into places filled with exciting, terrifying, and hopeful possibilities. It's a book which almost feels more timely now, with the rise of AI generated content, than when it was published. It really is one to experience for yourself.

What's an Eastercon?

Eastercon is the annual British National Science Fiction Convention. It has been held over the Easter weekend every year since 1955, and is the original gathering of the clans of the UK science fiction field. Eastercon attracts 800–1,200 fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy and similar genres.

Programme events usually include panels, workshops, talks, quizzes, competitions, an Art Show, a Dealers' Room selling books and other items, and gaming and crafting rooms. Events range from hard science through writing workshops to the fun and silly. People are encouraged to take part. Authors, artists, dealers and other professionals in the field attend to meet both fans and colleagues as well as appear on the programme or exhibits.

As SF has broadened its scope to encompass comics, film, TV, games, cosplay, filk and other media as well as books and magazines, Eastercon has encompassed all these new forms of artistic endeavour.

Because it is considered to be a place for fans to meet and take part, rather than sit and listen to presentations, it's a convention and not a conference. Similarly when you pay your money to take part, you buy a membership in Eastercon and not a ticket. Each year the convention is run by a different committee, made up of volunteers from the community.

If you want to find out more about Eastercons, you can start by browsing the *Eastercon Wiki* (*https://eastercon.fandom.com/wiki/Eastercon_Wiki*).

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Your RECONNECT Team

Co-Chair and Treasurer
Tommy Ferguson

Co-Chair
James Bacon

Communications
Jo Zebedee

Tech
James Turner

Venue Liaison
Tommy Ferguson,
Jo Zebedee

Dealers
Melissa Taylor, Sam Poots

Art Show
Serena Culfeather,
John Wilson

Ops
Pat Maher

Accessibility
Cinzia Savonitti,
Declan Meenagh

Listener Team (pre-con)
Sam Poots, Melissa Taylor

Volunteers
JJ Brutsman

Programme Team
Amanda Sloan (Lead); Jo Zebedee, Sarah Murray, Rachael Kelly, Peter Duncan (Comics track), Lynda Rucker (Horror track), Catherine Sharp, Alex Gordon, Declan Meenagh, Frankie Bradley-Lestrange (GoH liaison)

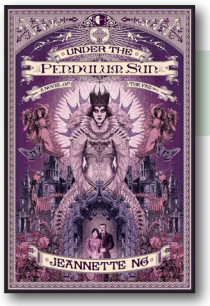
Green Room
Kari Maund (Lead)

Cosplay
Sabine Furlong,
Joanne Alexander

Registration
Zoe Thompson,
Martin Smart

Publications
Rob Jackson, Pat Virzi

RECONNECT logo by Sara Felix



Under the Pendulum Sun, *by Jeannette Ng*

review by Sam Poots, Dealer Liaison and Listener Team

Under the Pendulum Sun is perhaps the most interesting and disturbing take on the fair folk since ***Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell***. Jeanette Ng leans on the folklore studies of the Victorian era to create a world and characters as rich, atmospheric, and full of shadows as an old oil painting. The book is a brilliant piece of gothic literature, one which interrogates the oppressive social and cultural beliefs of the time, digging deep into its characters and drawing their darkest secrets out into the light one by one. It's a brilliant, fever dream book whose world I want to explore further.

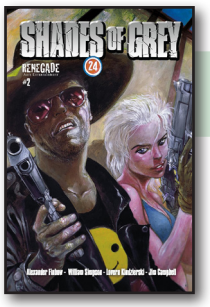
A Murder at the End of the World, *by Rebecca Roanhorse*

review by Frankie Bradley-Lestrange, Programme Team

Rebecca Roanhorse's works have been on my TBR list for longer than I care to admit. ***Black Sun*** had all the components of my favourite reads — rich mythology, political intrigue, powerful women, and a world I could sink my teeth into. Unfortunately, with mental health being what it is, picking up new books can be a challenge, even when you know you'll love the work.

That's why, when I discovered Rebecca Roanhorse had a hand in the writing and development of ***A Murder at the End of the World***, I knew I had to take a chance. It was a limited run TV show, low investment, completely encapsulated. One episode a day and I'm done in a week. Little did I know it would be three AM and I would be reduced to a puddle of tears. Now I have ***Black Sun*** prepped as an audio book and I'll be diving into it later today.

If you're looking for a gateway into the world of speculative fiction, ***A Murder at the End of the World*** is a fantastic place to start. This show does what all great Science Fiction does, it looks at our society and the state of the world, draws conclusions, and shows the audience a possible scenario if we do not course correct. A powerful statement on the evolution of technology and what it means for one man to hold so much power he seems untouchable. Our phones can do amazing things. But they can also allow us to do terrible, unspeakable things if we are not careful.



Shades of Grey, *by Alexander Finbow & William Simpson*

review by Amanda Sloan, Programme Lead

Shades of Grey is adapted from the film ***24 Hours in London***, also written and directed by Alexander Finbow. It follows a pair of assassins hired to kill a gang in a park, but miss a key civilian witness. Their boss, Christian, orders them to the police precinct to finish the job. This standalone introduction to ***Shades of Grey*** showcases a London full of ruthless criminals, cops playing hero, and those who walk a morally grey line.

Will Simpson's artwork is clever, engaging, and violent, bringing this story to life frame by frame. Having previously been familiar with Will's work as the lead Storyboard Artist for ***Game of Thrones***, it was fascinating to see him creating in a different genre. There were multiple frames that caused me to gasp — fantastic!

Accessibility Policy

Our accessibility policy describes what we aim to do to help people with access needs, and the full access audit — looking at how we use the site for you — is underway now. The detailed audit report will be uploaded to our website soon, and printed in PR3. For info, email access@easterconbelfast.org.

This is a precis of our accessibility policy; for more detail, check the website at: https://easterconbelfast.org/accessibility-policy/

Programme rooms and items:

- The programme items will be 60 minutes long in 90 minute slots to allow movement and breaks.
- We will have at least one wheelchair/scooter space marked in each programme room with space for a mobility scooter to manoeuvre.
- We will reserve seats for those with access needs in all programme rooms and have seating in any area where there is likely to be queueing. There will be step free access to any staged areas, and microphones.

Scooters:

- We aim to have mobility scooters available. These will need to be prebooked by emailing the accessibility team.
- Hotels:
- Our access audit (to be published in PR3) will include specific information about the venue so you have advance knowledge of the venue and nearby facilities.
- The Hilton Hotel bedrooms will be prioritised for those with specific access needs. Those who need it will be allowed to book earlier than general release.
- We will provide a clearly legible map and signage at the venue to aid navigation, and aim to keep the route between the Hilton and the ICC clear.

Publications Format:

- We aim to have a large print paper programme available on request. If you require this, please email the access team.

Quiet Room:

- We will have a quiet room space and aim for one in each venue.

Scent:

- Please don't apply scents while in the convention spaces, including in the toilets. We aim to ensure that cleaning products and hand sanitisers are unscented, and hypoallergenic.

Gender Neutral Toilets:

- We aim to have these in both venues, in addition to accessible toilets.

Invisible Conditions:

- We recognise that not all conditions are visible and where an attendee chooses to make their needs known will not require any disclosure of medical information or proof.

Allergies and Food:

- Information should be available; if you have an allergy (food or otherwise) or dietary requirement and would like this information passed on to party hosts, launch organisers or to the Hilton Hotel, we are happy to do this.

Communication and Social:

- See the website for details about communication preferences, pronoun preferences, sign language in Northern Ireland, and specific support and a meet-up for those New to Eastercon.

Alcohol:

- We will ask that any time alcohol or food is available there should be a soft drink option as well. This will apply to parties and launches.

Covid:

- We will put together a policy regarding Covid, if it is appropriate, closer to the time. Our aim is to do this in early 2025. The convention centre has a CO_2 monitoring system linked to their air conditioning and where CO_2 levels are found to be raised, the AC will mitigate this.

Online Access

We will plan to stream live and record our main programme (resources and costs allowing) where appropriate. This is from Hall 1A in the ICC.

We will look at the options of captions/subtitles on this live and recorded online content. Please contact us if you would benefit from this.

We intend to record Hall 1A, where appropriate, to allow this to be viewed later. Attendees should know the items are being recorded and will be informed of this.

We hope to have a Discord channel if we can find the volunteers.

Our Code of Conduct will apply to online spaces and direct messaging as well as in physical places.

VisitBelfast are the city's visitor and tourist information office and are our partners in helping you all get to know the city. We will give you their most up-to-date links in later Progress Reports, but in the meantime, the main choice of taster videos is on this link: https://www.youtube.com/@VisitBelfast

Volunteers Wanted

Reconnect, Eastercon Belfast, is a volunteer-run event and couldn't exist without enthusiastic input from hundreds of dedicated fans. Volunteering for a convention is a rewarding experience. It's a chance to work on a large project, make new friends, and learn new skills or use existing ones. It's also a chance to give back to your community. If you are interested in volunteering please email volunteers@easterconbelfast.org.

Webmaster! We would particularly welcome an enthusiastic person with website editing skills who can keep our website up to date with what's happening as we prepare for the convention. Please email volunteers@easterconbelfast.org.

General

- The ICC has a series of videos that might be helpful; these were prepared for the 2021 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, an accessibility conference: Social Narrative Access Video for delegates — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI_SAHeaDkw.

Stipend

- We will have a stipend to assist those who would benefit from some financial assistance. This is as well as a low-income membership rate. Our hardship rate is not judged, and we trust those who apply for it, and also can assist further. Please contact the Accessibility team if such assistance is helpful.

Please contact us and let us know if there is anything we have not mentioned. Cinzia Savonitti and Declan Meenagh are the Access team so far, and available to deal with any concerns, queries or questions. Reminder: email access@easterconbelfast.org.

Accommodations

Our main hotel is the Hilton Lanyon Place; this is also one of our two main sites for the convention and is joined to the International Convention Centre by an indoor walkway, as well as being conveniently adjacent via the front entrances of both venues. We will be announcing the discounted room rate in a separate email to all members in September, along with details about booking rooms via the accommodation agency linked to the city's VisitBelfast tourism information bureau. There will then be a page on our website with details for booking accommodation.

Rooms in the Hilton will be prioritised for those with accessibility requirements, who will be allowed to make bookings specially early. There are many other hotels, AirBnBs, hostels and guest houses within convenient walking distance. Please start looking at city maps to work out what and where might suit you in terms of cost and location.

Transport News

Though we will have more details about arriving in Belfast in Progress Report 3, you may well find that some air, ferry or train fares are cheaper if booked very early. It is worth checking with the airline, train or ferry company for your route.

Belfast's Great Victoria Street station is being updated to a new transport hub, Belfast Grand Central Station, but this will not be open till sometime in 2025. This is affecting some transport options through the city. However, the convention station, Lanyon Place remains fully operational throughout.

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New Members (25 March 2024 – 17 July 2024)

Hugh Adams (A0457)
Kari Ariel (S0436)
Andrew Armstrong (A0358)
Helen Armstrong (A0359)
Hazel Ashworth West (A0392)
James Bacon (A0363)
Christopher Baker (A0376)
Ali Baker (A0378)
Chris Barker (S0437)
Colleen Batey (A0351)
Sian Bradshaw (A0385)
Ian Brown (A0350)
Betty Burney (A0405)
Claire Cartwright (A0444)
Dave Cartwright (A0445)
Arthur Chappell (A0357)
Helen Cross (A0349)
Tony Cullen (A0365)
Rick Danforth (A0404)
martyn Dawe (A0370)
Aliette De Bodard (A0416)
Jim de Liscard (A0347)
Yoann Desgrange (A0465)
Fran Dowd (A0381)
John Dowd (A0382)
Tim Duckworth (A0395)
Phil Dyson (A0367)
Leigh Edmonds (A0461)
Sara K. Ellis (A0438)
Jack Fennell (A0463)
Anne-Louise Fortune (A0379)
Moira Fox (A0447)
Steven Fox (A0448)
Alan Gillott (A0348)
Roy Gray / TTA Press (A0368)
David Green (A0455)
Alisson Guillôme (A0466)
Gareth Hanrahan (A0456)
Elvis Havoll (A0430)
Constanze Hofmann (A0407)
Jacob Holder (A0449)
Jonathan Holmes (A0443)
Berna Hudson (A0412)
Terry Hunt (S0353)
Louiz Hutchings (A0409)
Tony Ibbs (A0360)
John Jarrold (A0383)
Stuart Jenkins (A0413)
Gareth Kavanagh (A0384)
Amanda Kear (S0369)
Juliet Kemp (A0387)
Emma J King (M) (A0364)
Ian Kitley (A0352)
Janet Knight (A0421)
Georgie Knight (A0434)
Linda Krawecke (A0391)
Jonathan Laidlow (A0462)
David Laight (A0389)
Dave Lally (A0446)
David Lascelles (A0418)
Joyce Lloyd (A0375)
Craig Macbride (A0464)
Derek Macleod (A0398)
Robert S Malan (A0406)
C. L. McCartney (A0371)
Kev McVeigh (A0419)
Pádraig Ó Méalóid / Poisoned Chalice Press (A0458)
Caroline Mersey (A0362)
Sara Messenger (A0423)
Tanaqui Meyer (A0390)
Murray Moore (A0345)
Mary Ellen Moore (A0346)
Phil Nanson (A0372)
Phil Nanson (S0435)
James Odell (A0394)
Sue Paterson (A0408)
Joan Patterson (A0361)
Jodie Payne (A0355)
Harry Payne (S0432)
Hal Payne (S0433)
Elayne Pelz (A0374)
Tommy Persson (A0411)
Virginia Preston (A0366)
Ceri Pritchard (A0422)
Bill Ray (A0399)
Aletia Ray (A0400)
Pandora Ray (A0401)
Gray Ray (A0402)
Ash Robson (A0429)
Jackie Shaw (A0441)
España Sheriff (A0380)
Jane Smithers (A0356)
Ian Snell (A0377)
Adrian Snowdon (A0450)
Aspen Somerton (A0410)
Mark Stay (A0397)
Anne Stokes (A0424)
David Stokes (A0425)
Teresea Stokes (A0426)
Geri Sullivan (A0403)
Cat Taras (A0459)
Melissa Taylor (A0431)
Ellen Torunn Andresen (A0460)
Nick Upson (S0414)
Dawn Upson (S0415)
Pat Virzi (A0393)
Phil Willis (A0420)
yam willis (A0442)
The Fossil (A0343)
Oregor of the North (A0344)
Omega (A0354)
Kari (A0373)
Prufrax (A0388)
domin-IKA (A0396)
Melusine (A0417)
Angrickle (A0427)
Blaze (A0428)
Balli (A0439)
Sam (A0440)
Conor (A0451)
Emma (A0452)

AI in Art

We will operate in line with the Glasgow 24 Worldcon's policy, available in full here: https://glasgow2024.org/about/policies/ai-art-statement/. We welcome you as Artists from any medium, using any media, but when you bring us your work, we do ask that it is your work. All art in the Art Show must have been created by the artist, and not generated. We will enforce this to the strictest extent. In the Dealers' Room, we strongly prefer that you avoid selling AI generated art, and mark any AI generated work as being so.

art by William Rotsler

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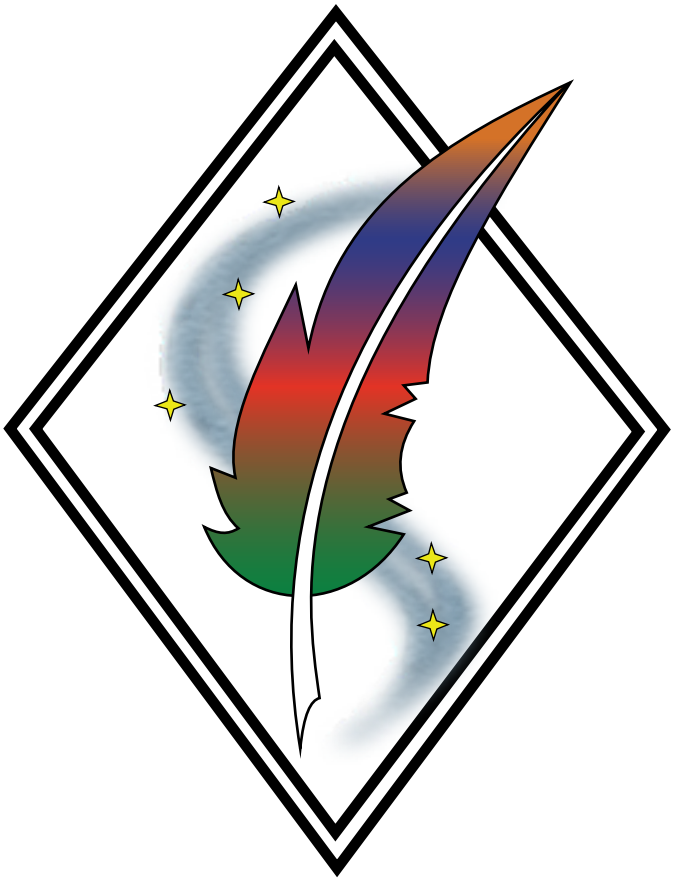
EASTERCON 76 ▪ 18–21 APRIL 2025 ▪ BELFAST ICC & HILTON LANYON PLACE



Where To Find Us

We're having a party at Worldcon! Join us in SEC Hall 4 on Saturday evening from 9pm for some Northern Irish snacks (tayto cheese'n'onion anyone?) and some Belfast whiskey (with the e, of course!) and gin.

Oh and craic, of course. We're always up for some craic!

We plan to have a presence at Gamecon Belfast; Glasgow 2024, this year's Worldcon; Octocon in Dublin; and Novacon in Buxton.

Our key communication tools are our website, our *info@* email address, and our new Facebook page (*https://www.facebook.com/reconnecteastercon2025*). We will still direct queries to our info@ address; we won't be able to monitor it 24/7, but we will do our best — but importantly for us, we will push information out to fans utilising it.

This is a plan, so do consider before posting: **H-A-L-T**. (Before posting, are you **H**ungry, **A**ngry, **L**onely, **T**ired or stressed.)

Email us, especially if there is some negativity that we messed up on. Inevitably, we will make mistakes, so email us, because we are happy to admit to errors, and happy to work to fix them, if we can, and to apologise, but we would like a hint of positivity, about our Facebook page, which is promotional.

https://easterconbelfast.org/

info@easterconbelfast.org

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