Iridescence

Eastercon 77 3rd-6th April 2026
Birmingham Hilton Metropole

Chair's Update

Hi everyone,

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to Iridescence, the 77th Eastercon and to be returning to Birmingham which is always such a great place to celebrate our fandoms. With just over four months to go, the team is busy assembling what is shaping up to be a really interesting and enjoyable convention for you all. And it really is for all of you, Iridescence is about celebrating variety and diversity, finding joy in our fandoms and light in the darkness even as the world around us becomes ever more challenging.

We are, to steal a phrase, hopeful despite the times. Remember, this is our convention, a celebration and a very concrete articulation of who we are as a community and the values that we represent. Tolerance, inclusivity and diversity, an open mind: all these things matter more than ever.

One of the great joys of running something like this is getting to work with and get to know our wonderful Guests of Honour. Just this last week we've been in some inspiring meetings with all manner of fantastic ideas which we can't wait to share with you in April.

All of the team are working hard to deliver a great convention, but as ever, we are looking for people to volunteer. We never have enough people – a phrase I think every convention committee since time immemorial will recognise. The team all work incredibly hard; it's their hard work and dedication that you can already see in the planning and thought that has gone into Iridescence so far. To that end, we very much welcome anyone who wants to be involved - please email volunteers@eastercon2026.org if that's you.

See you all in April!

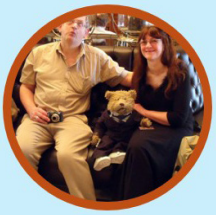
Phil Dyson

R J Barker

Karen Lord

Our Guests of Honour

Emma Newman



John Wilson & Serena Culfeather

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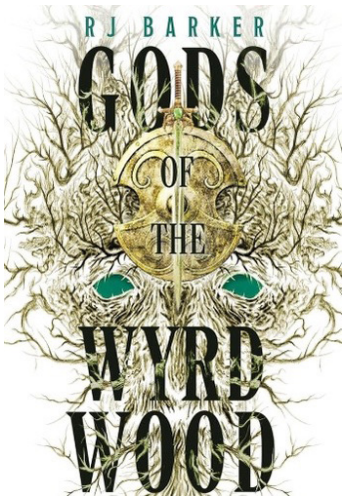
Our Guests of Honour

We are very excited to welcome our amazing Guests of Honour to Iridescence, and they are excited about coming along!

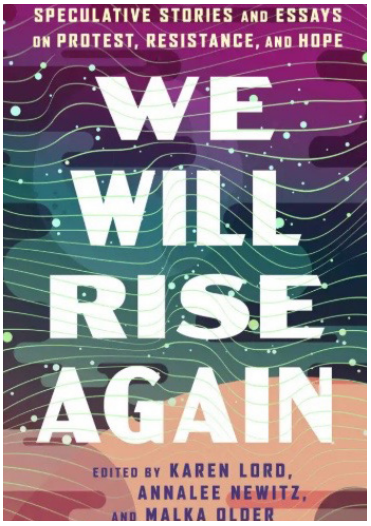
RJ Barker

RJ's brilliant fantasy novels range across all sorts of subjects, including ships, dark folklore, assassins, pirates, evil empires and fighting gods. He'll be talking about these, of course, and we also want to explore the politics of making art – how do working class people get the chance to do this, for example? RJ also collects weird art, loves metal music, and is big crime fiction fan, so we are looking forward to talking about those as well!



Karen Lord

Karen's wonderful novels range across fantasy and science fiction, politics and sociology, religion and revolution.

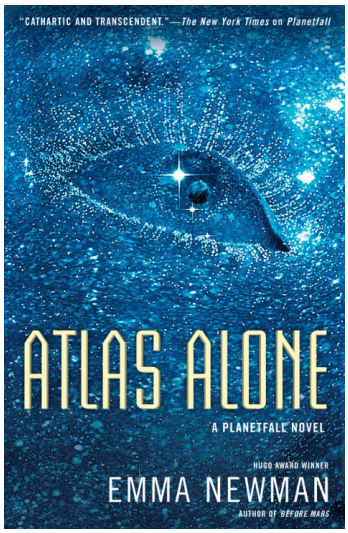


Alongside books like Indigo and The Blue, Beautiful World, she's co-editor of a new and timely collection coming out at the end of the year, 'We Will Rise Again – Speculative Stories and Essays on Protest, Resistance and Hope'. She's looking forward to discussing all these at Eastercon, and to hanging out in the bar with fans. She'd love to talk to any bookbinders as well, especially if they have tips on binding books to stand up to a tropical climate!

Our esteemed Head of Programme, Virginia Preston, engrossed in Karen Lord's The Best of All Possible Worlds.

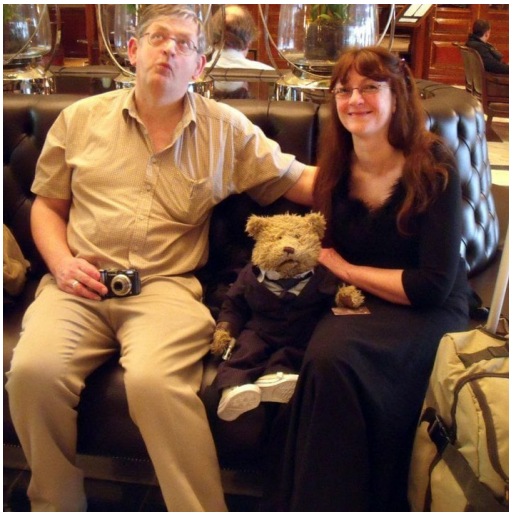
Emma Newman

As well as being an amazing author, podcaster and audiobook narrator, Emma is a long-time contributor to Eastercons, taking part in panels, running workshops for writers and exhibiting art, and we're looking forward to celebrating all these next year. Her Friends of the Earth podcast looked at Imagining Tomorrow, and we'll be talking about that, as well as fantasy, science fiction, writing and publishing. She's keen to take part in games and other fun items and we may even see her in a play!



John Wilson and Serena Culfeather

Serena and John have been running convention art shows for many years (see an example below!) and putting their crafting skills to spectacular use. For example, the box John made for the Doc Weir award, and the 12-foot dragon Serena made for LonCon3. They are looking forward to highlighting the amazing art created in our community at Iridescence. We are planning panels and talks, thinking about some special prizes for art show, and also hearing about their other interests, like beekeeping and cats, which we know will appeal to many of us!



Credit: Flick and efanzines.com/DocWeir/

Credit: Steve Harbron

Programme, Games and Entertainment!

We are building a programme that reflects the convention's key aims of taking joy in our diversity and finding hope for the future. Our Guests of Honour all represent this in their different ways and we are so looking forward to discussing their work. We've been talking to them about their ideas and can already tell you that there'll be discussion of climate change, navies, religion, revolution and resistance, spaceships, crime fiction, friendship, gaming, art, conrunning, and many other things besides!

Thank you to everyone who has sent in ideas via the programme form – if you haven't contributed yet, or have thought of a new idea, please use it to get in touch.

For entertainment, we are planning to have a semi-staged play, one-person shows, a disco, karaoke, and possibly a space science circus!!

There are lots of other brilliant suggestions, for panels, serious talks, silly things, and other activities, but there's definitely room for more so please get in touch.

We are particularly keen to hear from any younger members who might be interested in giving a ten-minute talk on something they are passionate about – we have one planned already and would love a few more.

We'd also love to hear from you if you'd like to run a book club, especially for one of our Guests of Honour's books.

Also, we are thinking about ways to celebrate Birmingham and Birmingham's SFF connections, so do tell us your ideas for that.

Authors and creators – we will of course provide opportunities for readings and signings, and if you have a book to launch please get in touch by 5th January so we can work out the details. If there's enough interest we may have a universal book launch for anyone who's published something in the last year.

Gaming

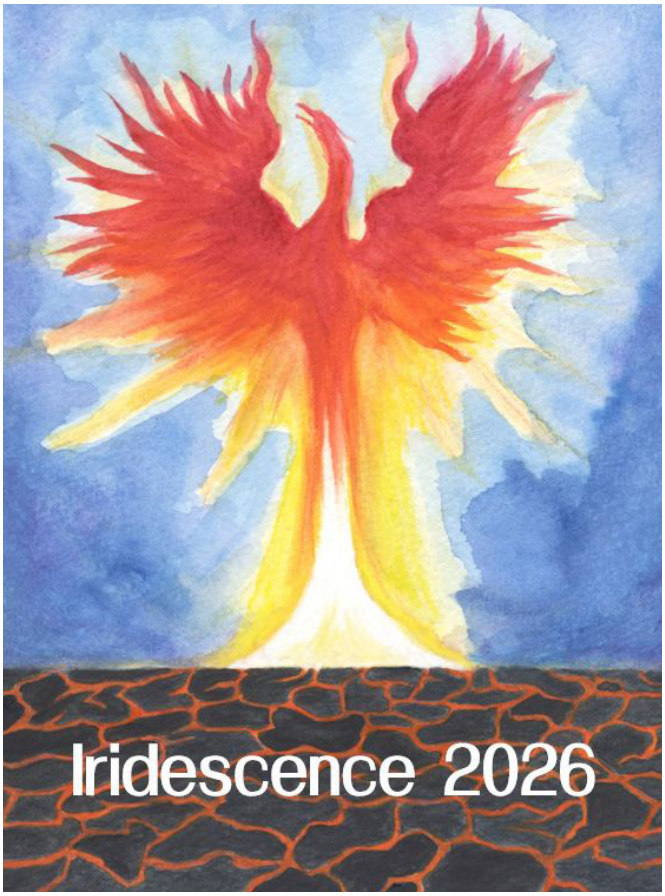
We will have a games room and overflow games room of course, and at least one RPG at con, and are really keen to hear from you about gaming-related activities we can run.

Virtual

We will be aiming to stream the main programme rooms, and all supporting members will have access to this. We will have a Discord for members where everyone can discuss their cats, their books, their games, and maybe the odd programme item.

Please check the website for the programme ideas form.

Iridescence Art - España Sherrif



The phoenix is a wonderful creature to paint, full of wonderful symbolism, it's colourful, flamboyant, and immediately recognizable even when stylized (well, almost always recognizable, more on that later).

I've always loved to draw winged creatures in flight more generally, sketching eagles, angels, winged robots, and such in my school notebooks, mostly while in class. You can doodle endlessly on the feathers, adding detail and curlycue to your heart's content - but the phoenix in particular lends itself to invention, and even better I could obscure the more complicated anatomical details in flames, themselves an excellent subject for rococo excess. Once you add colour, it only increases the drama, although I'm a bit of a boring purist and generally stick with red and yellow, or red and gold if I'm feeling fancy.

One of the first pieces of art which I remember not just selling, but actually getting enthusiastic feedback on, was at a Bay Area convention many moons ago. Many, many, moons ago. It was a phoenix, naturally, which I was reasonably proud of but naturally could still see all the flaws in. But the staff member who bought it also asked me if I would mind if she had a tattoo done of it. I was flabbergasted. I don't know if she ever did, but you can imagine what an incredible compliment that was, though I'm pretty sure my first answer was something along the lines of "... are you sure?"

Another reason I love phoenix imagery is that the flag of San Francisco features a phoenix rising from the ashes as its emblem. Now, if you've ever seen the flag of San Francisco (go look, I'll wait) you might be forgiven for not really remembering that, or maybe thinking it was an especially sad eagle, but dammit its a phoenix, just trust me on this one. The great thing about this flag is that it nearly nails it; a phoenix rising from the flames? Perfect for a city that burned down half a dozen times in a single year, half a century before it even had its famously destructive earthquake. A badass motto? "Oro en Paz, Fierro en Guerra" (Gold in Peace, Iron in War), yeah it does! Big text telling you the name of the city? Uh, okay sure that's also on there. Sounds pretty good, right? But the phoenix looks like a turkey, the flames look like a cartoon crown, and the whole thing is surrounded by a huge yellow border that is entirely there by accident because the ceremonial gold trim in an early design got incorporated into the whole mess. It's great and I hope they never change it.

But I digress...

The Iridescence phoenix… and now I suddenly wonder if it has a name… “Iris”? (too obvious), “Ire”? (right up my alley, but maybe not quite in keeping with the convention’s vibe), Riddy? (Hmm, too Kaos?)

Anyway, where was I? … The Iridescence phoenix made her debut a few years back in a much edited and stylized form as the cover of the revival issue of Chris Garcia’s fanzine The Drink Tank. Its triumphant return after several years hiatus was heavy metal themed and I could not resist that combination of theme and symbolism. I painted the phoenix in watercolour, but then I had as much fun creating a digital wasteland of lava and skulls as I’d had adding ballpoint pen filigrees to the birds in the margins of my textbooks all those years ago. But now I’m very happy to see her original, slightly less apocalyptic version rising once more for your enjoyment.

Art Show

We have already had more than 50 expressions of interest in the Art Show so we are expecting a fantastic display. If you would like to take part, please let us know ASAP via email as we will have to close the list soon. All sales of artwork will be ‘buy it now’ with no auction.

We are really looking forward to celebrating the achievements of our Fan GoHs John Wilson and Serena Culfeather in the Art Show. If you are interested in being part of this, let us know!

Finally, have you ever thought of volunteering to help us in the Art Show? We always need help at set up and take down, but we will also need some help at the desk during the convention. This is mainly taking payments for artwork and keeping an eye on the show while we do data entry or grab something to eat. Even a couple of hours would make a big difference!

Email Tim and Jackie Duckworth artshow@eastercon2026.org

Dealers

As we head towards the end of the year, the Dealers room is starting to fill up with booksellers, artists and fan tables. There are some familiar faces as well as some new ones among the authors and publishers who plan to attend in 2026. With more than half the space already filling up, we are moving the deadline forward to the 31st of December and starting to assign spaces to those who have already applied as well as sending out emails to confirm details with some that have more unusual requests.

There are still spaces available, but time is running out to reserve one. So, if you haven’t filled in the form already, now is the time to do so. Fill out the Dealers Booking Form

Priority is on a first booked, first assigned basis.

If you have any queries about dealer tables at Eastercon 2026, feel free to email on dealers@eastercon2026.org

Fan Tables

The fan table area is starting to fill up with amazing groups and communities. With more than half the spaces already reserved, we have moved deadline forward to 31st December and beginning to assign tables to those who have applied. We will also be reaching out to confirm details for groups with special requests.

There are still spaces available but the time to act is now. Fill in the form to reserve your fan table

Priority is on a first booked, first assigned basis.

If you have any questions about fan tables at Eastercon 2026, feel free to email us at dealers@eastercon2026.org

Doc Weir Award

Do you know someone in fandom who helps to make things happen, contributing time, effort, ideas and support – often behind the scenes? That might mean that they've already won the Doc Weir Award (you can see a list of recipients , and more information what they've done, at the Doc Weir Award site). But it might mean you just think they must have done, until you check.

Named in memory of Dr Arthur Rose 'Doc' Weir and first presented in 1963, the Award offers some recognition for the community activities that can seem to go unnoticed. It's been won by authors, booksellers and many fans: fanzine editors, convention runners, club organisers, and other people who just do stuff; winners have included specialists who contribute in a particular role at every opportunity, people who help out all over the place in a variety of ways, and most points in between. It's not necessarily an award for conrunning in general or Eastercon-running in particular, although that's often been included among a winner's activities. But by long tradition it is voted on and announced at the Eastercon each year.

Christine Davidson, the 2025 winner, will be co-ordinating the voting and presentation this time, and members of Iridescence will be able to vote during the con. So do think about who should win the Doc Weir Award in 2026 – but it's also traditional to try to make sure the winner is very surprised!

Merchandise

Our stunning Iridescence Eastercon 2026 logo can now be yours to wear!

Fly your fandom flag with this stunning design by España Sherrif, carefully rendered into the most fabulous merchandise by wonderful Stow Shirts.

You can grab yours today at our online shop

Hotel Information

Hotel booking for Hilton Birmingham Metropole is live and we have a brilliant deal on room rates for our members. The room rates are:

£142 per night for a double room including breakfast
£132 per night for a double room, room only
£99 per night for single room including breakfast
£94 per night for single room, room only

These rates are available for stays from 2 to 7 April 2026 inclusive.

The first night is a non-refundable deposit in line with Hilton's requirements. When the booking confirmation comes for verification through your bank it will look like it is asking for the full amount. However, it will only take the first night's amount as the deposit.

There are still plenty of rooms available as part of the convention. If you have access requirements, you can inform the hotel when booking in order to have those met. There are also fully accessible rooms.

Food

As well as the hotel's three restaurants there will be food trucks available to members. Also Resorts World Birmingham is a short walk away, with 18 different eateries offering a variety of world cuisines and food at various price points. It also has a cinema and escape rooms in the unlikely event you want some time away from the convention.

Pet Friendly

The hotel is pet friendly but please make sure they are aware of your requirements when booking.

Traveling to the Venue

The hotel has excellent transport links. It is just off the M42, connected to the NEC. Birmingham Airport BHX and Birmingham International Rail Station are two miles away – approximately at 12-minute walk, and a 5-minute drive away, with monorail services to Birmingham International Airport. Birmingham City Centre is a 10-minute train ride away.

Parking

The convention as secured a reduced rate for parking of £14 per night. This can be paid in advance via the link that will be in your email communication. It can be paid closer to the time or at any point during your stay. There will be QR codes distributed around the venue. There is no additional discount for blue badge holders.

Fan Funds

Fan funds work to strengthen connections across SF fandom around the world. They raise money to enable fans to travel to attend a science fiction convention as a representative of fandom in their country, and to meet in person both existing and new contacts in the SF community.

These funds exist only through the generous support of fandom. Money for each trip comes partly from a small fee paid to vote in each race, with the rest raised through publications (including reports written by fan fund delegates following their trips), and activities at relevant conventions and online which are also intended to raise awareness of the funds.

And that's where Iridescence comes in. Expect to see auctions and other fundraising entertainments at the convention – some of which we hope will be available to online members too – with many strange and/or wonderful items to be won.

If you've got some strange and/or wonderful items suitable to donate to the fan funds, thank you – but please do contact us ASAP at leagueff.uk@gmail.com, to help us manage donations and fundraising at Easter and beyond. (That's the League of Fan Funds, the group that co-ordinates these activities for UK funds – including other fan-run good causes like the SF Encyclopedia.)

Before the convention, expect news of candidates in the 2026 races to send fans from Europe to Oceania, from North America to Europe, and across Europe too, with more information about how to get involved.

Links for more information:

- UK League of Fan Funds (LFF)
- Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF)
- Going Under/Get Up-and-over Fan Fund (GUFF)
- European Fan Fund (EFF) (old site, with overview)

Credit: D West

Volunteering

Eastercon is built by fans, for fans. We need you to help make it happen.

Be it before con or at it, whether you can spare an hour or dive in for the whole weekend, there's a role with your name on it. You'll meet brilliant people, learn new tricks, and maybe even discover your hidden superpower (coffee wrangling counts).

Never volunteered before or wanting to try a new role?

Perfect! We'll show you the ropes and cheer you on.

Not sure what role suits you but keen to help?

Drop us an email and let's figure it out together.

If you've ever thought about getting involved, now is the perfect time to sign up. Every extra pair of hands helps us make Eastercon 2026 the best it can be.

Sign up on our Volunteering page

Access

Not sure if you have access needs? Please don't self-exclude. If an accommodation will make it easier for you to attend and enjoy Iridescence, then please tell us!

You can update your access requirements in the members' portal. To reach the members' portal, click on Register and follow the instructions. Or, you can email access@eastercon2026.org

We are committed to providing mobility scooters at the convention to those members who need them. Please email access@eastercon2026.org to let us know as soon as possible if you will require the use of one.

We are also seeking to provide a creche. Details will follow, but please email access@eastercon2026.org as soon as possible if you need this service.

See the section on hotel room booking at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole, which includes information about what to do if you have access needs. The Hilton Birmingham Metropole has a detailed Access Guide.

Blue Badge parking is available at the Hilton, but it is not free or discounted further from the reduced rate secured by the convention.

We are planning a site visit and accessibility audit similar to those made by the last few Eastercons (Reconnect in Belfast and Levitation in Telford).

Bursary Scheme

Our bursary scheme is designed to make Eastercon more accessible by helping with costs for those who might otherwise find it difficult to attend. We believe that everyone should have the chance to be part of the convention community, and this is one way we can help make that happen.

The first application deadline has now passed, and decisions are currently underway. If you've already applied, we will be in touch as soon as we can.

If you haven't applied yet but would benefit from some help, then please don't rule yourself out, we're still accepting applications.

The scheme is supported entirely by donations, and thanks to the generosity of our community, we've been able to help more people each year. If you'd like to contribute, we've made donating quick and easy—every pound helps us extend support to more fans.

For details on how to apply or donate, visit our bursary scheme page

Iridescence Committee

The Chair - Phil Dyson
The Money - Phil Nanson
The Secretary - Caroline Mersey
The Programme - Virginia Preston
The Tech - James 'JT' Turner
The Website - James Shields
The IT Wrangler - J C Clarke
The Comms - Meg MacDonald