

# • THE KING'S SPEECH •

---



**MATTHEW LAST**

ICSF Chair

---

Hello everyone, and welcome to the 37th Annual Picocon!

You are in for a wonderful day full of talks, panels, Silly Games, merchandise smashing and fictitious fish fighting. Our Picocon Sofa and Beanbag have been hard at work all year round, aided by many volunteers, to bring this wonderful convention to life and we all hope you enjoy every second of it. Look to the Sofa's editorial to find out more about the day.

I am pleased to report that, thanks to the continued efforts of a wonderful community and hardworking committee, the library remains a den of escapism and nerdiness. Highlights of this year so far have included hazardously joyful events such as our Christmas and Halloween parties, weekly Doctor Who viewings and the odd mafia takeover. We continue our expansion into the fields of membership (More people!), the Dyson library (More books!) and IC Radio (Our podcast every Wednesday from 3PM!). Do pop down to the library itself if you'd like a quick visit over the course of the day.

We have plenty more planned for the rest of the year, but for now I shall wish you all a happy and entertaining Picocon! ΨΦ

# • THE SOFA'S RAMBLINGS : WHY PRIDE? •

---



**HARRY BLACK**

Picocon Sofa

---

Welcome one and all to Picocon 37: *Pride!*

Why Pride, you might be asking? Well let me explain:

Picocon has always<sup>†</sup> fallen within LGBT History Month in the UK. I myself happen to be asexual, and have found a good number of my fellow ICSF members to fall somewhere in the LGBTQ+ community. Science Fiction and Fantasy, as genres, often seem to me to be about exploring our world, but through the lens of a very different world: it is unsurprising then, that these genres are used to tell the story of LGBTQ+ characters more than other genres<sup>‡</sup>. With this in mind, I decided (before Picocon 36 had even occurred) that I wanted Picocon 37 to be about highlighting LGBTQ+ characters and creators in the genres Picocon has always been about celebrating.

Just over a year later, and that plan seems to have just about come together! We have 3 truly brilliant Guests of Honour this year: I must say a huge thank you to **Roz Kaveney**, **Juliet Kemp** and **Tamsyn Muir**, as without them we would not have much of a Picocon at all this year—and they'll certainly be far more entertaining and interesting than I could hope to be!

Of course, we'll have many returning traditions and vendors! For health and safety reasons, there will most certainly not be any duels fought with fish, which means that the newly acquired safety gear (lab coats & paintball masks) will not be needed. This definitely will not occur on the Queen's Lawn later in the day, as it never has.

We will of course also be employing liquid nitrogen to destroy some merchandise that looks as though it shouldn't have been made, and playing many of the silly convention games that we always do (I hear this year we may be playing a large game of *Mafia*) while raising some money for some spectacular charities: **Switchboard** and **Stonewall**.

Have fun! ΨΦ

---

<sup>†</sup>[*citation needed*]

<sup>‡</sup>again, [*citation needed*]. I may be making this up entirely!

## • WHAT'S ON •

To returning guests and first-timers alike: welcome! Here's a look forward in time into your day ahead at Picocon.

Throughout the day there will be talks from our illustrious **Guests of Honour**, as well as a panel discussion — chaired this year by the brilliant **Yasmin Benoit** — followed by book signings.

Meanwhile, other exciting activities are happening across the campus:



### **DESTRUCTION OF DODGY MERCHANDISE.**

@Queen's Lawn 16:00 - 16:30

Join a bidding war and contend for the right to rescue pieces of misguided merchandise from terrible death—or to personally exact their destruction by way of liquid nitrogen and giant hammer. All proceeds go towards charity: this year we are collaborating with the LGBT+ helpline **Switchboard**, and the LGBT rights charity **Stonewall**.



### **TABLETOP & GAMING.**

@Blackett 1004 16:00 onwards

Imperial College Gaming returns to Picocon this year to provide another set of entertaining diversions, with consoles in Blackett 1004 from 4PM into the evening running some of our most popular games.



### **SCI-FI LIBRARY.**

@Beit West Basement

The Sci-Fi Library—home to a collection of over 9800 books, 2600 DVDs, and more than 500 graphic novels—is open throughout the day. Pay a visit during a break and say hi to the residents.

Absent from this list, as you might have noticed, is a fish duel. This is because a fish duel is not something that happens at Picocon.

# • SCHEDULE •

10:00	Front desk / registration opens	
10:30	<b>Guest Talk: Roz Kaveney</b>	Blackett LT1
11:00		
11:30	<b>Guest Talk: Tamsyn Muir</b>	Blackett LT1
12:00		
12:30		
13:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
13:30		
14:00	<b>Guest Talk: Juliet Kemp</b>	Blackett LT1
14:30		
15:00	<b>Group Panel</b>	Blackett LT1
15:30		
16:00		
16:30	<b>Destruction of Dodgy Merchandise</b>	Queen's Lawn
17:00	<b>Tabletop &amp; Gaming</b>	Blackett 1004
17:30	<b>Charity + Silly Games</b>	Blackett LT1
18:00		
18:30	<b>Harmless Fun <sup>†</sup></b>	Queen's Lawn
19:00	<b>Pub Quiz</b>	Blackett LT1
19:30		

---

<sup>†</sup>definitely not a fish duel.

## • GUESTS OF HONOUR •



• JULIET KEMP •

Juliet Kemp is a queer, non-binary writer. They live in London by the river, with their partners, kid, and dog. Their recent works include the fantasy novel *The Deep And Shining Dark* (featured on the Locus 2018 Recommended Reads list, under 'first novel') and the YA SF novella *A Glimmer Of Silver*. When not writing, child-wrangling, or dog-wrangling, Juliet knits, indulges their fountain pen habit, and goes bouldering.



• ROZ KAVENEY •

Roz Kaveney in her own words: I'm a bit older than most people in the fandom—I just turned 52. I have a long and complicated personal history which I am in the process of turning into a huge memoir; crucial facts are that I was reared Catholic but got over it, was born male but got over it, stopped sleeping with boys about the time I stopped being one and am much happier than I was when I was younger.

A UK resident who has lived in the US a bit, I have a certain distinction in the SF field as a critic, have at various points been seriously involved in civil liberties and anti-censorship politics and write for various reasonably reputable newspapers and periodicals.

I like moonlighting as a committed fan: I never had that much serious credibility to lose, and haven't lost what I had anyway. I spend too much time listening to an unholy mixture of Bach, Shostakovich, Springsteen, Patti Smith, Ella Fitzgerald and Lotte Lenya.



• TAMSYN MUIR •

Tamsyn Muir is a horror, fantasy and sci-fi author whose works have appeared in *Nightmare Magazine*, *F&SF*, *Fantasy Magazine*, *Weird Tales*, and *Clarkesworld*. Her fiction has received nominations for the Nebula Award, the Shirley Jackson Award, the World Fantasy Award and the Eugie Foster Memorial Award. She has spent the majority of her life in Howick, New Zealand, with time spent living in Waiuku and central Wellington. She currently lives and teaches in Oxford, in the United Kingdom.

## • VENDORS •

Discover artwork, trinkets, old books, new obsessions:

### **BEST IN GALAXY.**

@Blackett Foyer



*Best in Galaxy* started as a comedy sci-fi parody podcast in 2016, which morphed from a Star Wars parody into its own universe. It won a Parsec Award for Best Comedy in 2017 and gained a cult following, becoming a novel and audiobook in late 2019. Writer and co-creator Mark Restuccia is here today with paperback copies and info about the podcast and the *Best in Galaxy* universe.

### **PAUL COUPER.**

@Blackett Foyer



A reader/collector of SF/Fantasy, selling at Picocon to clear duplicates built up whilst collecting and upgrading. My collection is now over 12,000 paperbacks, but still has many gaps: if anyone has collectibles for sale, or wants to buy, or indeed just wants a chat, stop by during the day.

### **CLOCKWORK FIREBIRD DESIGNS.**

@Blackett Foyer



I am a self-taught, ever-evolving tailor, leather worker and costume maker with a penchant for creating monsters. I attend Live Action Role-Play (LARP) events and Anime/Comic conventions as both a trader and attendee on a regular basis. I've been doing leather work since 2008, and selling since 2011. I recall learning to sew when I was 6 years old and I've not really stopped since. Within the shop you may find armour, masks, trinkets, painted artworks, soft toys . . . anything I bring to mind or feel like turning my hand to! I am still finding my feet, and I am always learning new techniques.

### **ELSEWHEN PRESS.**

@Blackett Foyer



Elsewhen Press are a small independent publisher specialising in Speculative Fiction. Their Earth-based operations are headquartered in the UK, in the South East of England, whence they publish titles in English in print and electronic editions—including works by Guest of Honour Juliet Kemp.

## • QUEST OBJECTIVES •

On your way in, you should have been assigned to one of three teams—*Jughead*, *Captain Jack Harkness*, or *Sulu*—and given a sticky badge to wear with newfound pride. If somehow you slipped through the net, or misplaced your badge, then go and politely berate the receptionists until they give you one.

On the next page, you will find a list of dangerous, potentially impossible items. Find any of these items, bring the evidence back to the front desk, and win fabulous prizes—in the form of points for your team. Whichever team ends up with the most points will be declared the finest, the greatest, and most importantly, the *winners!*

Now go for great justice.

This year's teams are (drumroll):



• TEAM •  
**JUGHEAD**



• TEAM •  
**CAPTAIN JACK  
HARKNESS**



• TEAM •  
**SULU**

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS.

- Items can be submitted to the Front Desk for Fun Points™ after 11am.
- Pictures are (usually) not admissible.
- Objectives involving people must only be undertaken with the person's permission.
- The front desk reserves the right to keep the submitted items.
- Unless otherwise noted, each faction may claim an item on the list only once.



## • LIST OF DANGEROUS, POTENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE ITEMS •

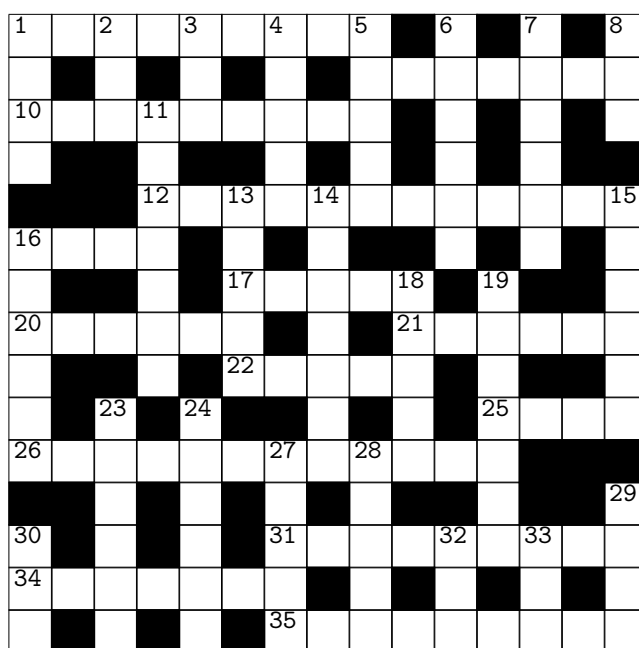
1	Little Green Pygmy Solders <sup>E</sup>	1	The solution to the next item on the list <sup>E</sup>
1	Hugs (per person)	-1	The solution to the previous item on the list <sup>E</sup>
30	Picocon	10	Donations of a themed plastic abomination
20	A non-ICSF fresher at Picocon	5	A demon bear (bonus points if fluffy)
Age+5	Ex-ICSF Chair <sup>M</sup>	5	A member of the Family of Blood
Age+5	Ex-ICSF Librarian <sup>M</sup>	5	A little fall of rain
Age+5	T-shirts from Picocons past <sup>M</sup>	5	Origami
10	Previous Guest of Honour <sup>E</sup>	20	Dinosaur origami
10	Half of one (1) Dave	8	A Non-Euclidean triangle
5	The blood of a Picocon first-timer	5	A snake eating its own snake tail, or snail.
20	The Mabbott set	5	Tribble
8	A phylactery	60	Tribble (functional)
80	Dave Clements' phylactery	5	A nanosecond
100	The Picocon Sofa, frantic	10	An accretion disk
50	The Picocon Beanbag, calm	30	A terrifying technological terror
15	Tea, Earl Grey, hot	3	A good hat
25	A good drink <sup>FD E</sup>	5	A correctly fitted top hat
10	A less good drink <sup>FD</sup>	5	Convincing closet cosplay
-5	Unsatisfactory drink <sup>FD</sup>	10	Convincing actual cosplay
5	Delicious blood <sup>FD</sup>	10	Pretty trinkets <sup>FD</sup>
15	Spirits from beyond	3	The start of something beautiful
1000	£100 <sup>E</sup>	30	The phone from a castle
7	The contents of my pocketses	20	The phone from a police box
5	Good news <sup>FD E</sup>	50	Happiness, $\geq 0.1M$ concentration
-5	Bad news <sup>FD E</sup>	n(n-1)	n Interlocking cogs (functional after being poked) <sup>M</sup>
1	A funny joke <sup>FD E</sup>	10	Out of place kerning
-1	A bad pun <sup>FD E</sup>	20	An unaired TV pilot
25	A competent barbershop quartet <sup>FD</sup>	20	An untelevised air pilot
5	Any song sung in the style of William Shatner	30	A control crystal (with demonstration)
50	A barbershop quartet in the style of William Shatner	40	Three quarters of a planck length
50	Any door to London Below	20	A demonstration of Zeno's paradox
3	Newly acquired merchandise	10	An aesthetically pleasing key <sup>FD</sup>
5	A teleological proof of the existence of a higher power		

14	A clowder of one cat	10	A working AI (safely demonstrated)
5	The man they call Jayne (or his hat)	1000	Time machine (points were awarded 15th Feb 6pm, ICSF Library, password is 'Yttrium')
-50	The source of the mysterious ticking noise		
400	The World Turtle	25	A swordfish
800	The World Turtle, with orbiting bodies	35	A fishsword
10	A surviving member of the Imperial Steampunk Society	10	A Swan
50	A book ICSF lacks (and wants)	4	Nerf Guns
1	The light at the end of the tunnel	3	NERV guns
5	A crowning moment of awesome	10	Lab stuff
17	Proof humanity's reach extends beyond its imagination	-50	Per fatality
70	A lost Doctor Who episode	10	The Staff of Ra
3	Famous last words (subject to checking)	3	Positronic brain
-1	Anything irrelevant <sup>E</sup>	3	Observable Brownian Motion
-5	Anything irrelephant <sup>E</sup>	5	A fluffy dragon
4	An Ed (picked up)	7	A plasma generator
3	Galaxy	5	Ion cannon (demonstrated)
2	A practical application for General Relativity	-20	Spontaneous combustion whilst dancing <sup>E</sup>
4	Transcendent understanding	5	A Henry <sup>E</sup>
10	A point in the complex plane	10	A Wild Henry
5	A working AI (demonstrated)	10	A completed nonogram
		15	A completed crossword

FD	Front Desk Person's Discretion <sup>†</sup>
E	This item may be claimed multiple times per faction ('each')
M	For each faction, the highest of their scores will be used

<sup>†</sup>This actually applies to everything; where it is noted, it indicates that you're unlikely to change anyone's mind with your cunning arguments.

# • CROSSWORD •



## ACROSS

- 1 Gender-fluid time traveler (3, 6)
- 9 Astronomical event, time of prophecy (7)
- 10 Picocon Sofa & Beanbag (9)
- 12 Ancient thunderdome (12)
- 16 Vital organ and supervillain in web serial *Worm* (4)
- 17 Images of a false god (5)
- 20 Half the title of a *Discworld* book (6)
- 21 To join Starfleet (6)
- 22 Wise severed head who gives counsel to Odin (5)
- 25 Oracle (4)
- 26 *Gideon the Ninth*: \_\_\_\_ in Space (12)
- 31 Achilles's boyfriend (9)
- 34 Chemical element & blacksmith in *Steven Universe* (7)
- 35 An important aspect of LGBTQ+ events (9)

*Crossword created  
by Henry Wild & the  
Sci-Fi Library.*

## DOWN

- 1 Cross-dressing Norse god (4)
- 2 Stock fantasy race. Hates 3 DOWN (3)
- 3 Stock fantasy race. Hates 2 DOWN (3)
- 4 e.g. People who deliberately use incorrect pronouns (5)
- 5 Time loop (5)
- 6 Bruce Wayne's surrogate father (6)
- 7 Tiny fairy & carbonated drink (6)
- 8 Malediction (3)
- 11 Brings a story to life (7)
- 13 Splits sunlight (5)
- 14 'I am \_\_\_\_.' (4, 3)
- 15 Simon Pegg in *Doctor Who* episode *The Long Game* (6)
- 18 Author of *The Left Hand of Darkness* (6)
- 19 Esteemed, exemplary work (7)
- 23 Frequently denied to hackers (6)
- 24 Octarine, superviolet, and the one out of space (6)
- 27 The beginning (5)
- 28 She-Ra's nemesis/love interest (5)
- 29 *The Twelve \_\_\_\_ of Dragon's Blood*, by Albus Dumbledore (4)
- 30 Employer of Mulder & Scully (3)
- 32 Mithril, Tritanium, Unobtainium (3)
- 33 e.g. 'Bisexuals don't exist' (3)

• **NONOGRAM** •

[illegible]

*Nonogram created by Henry Wild.*



icsf.org.uk



ICSF.Imperial



@Picocon

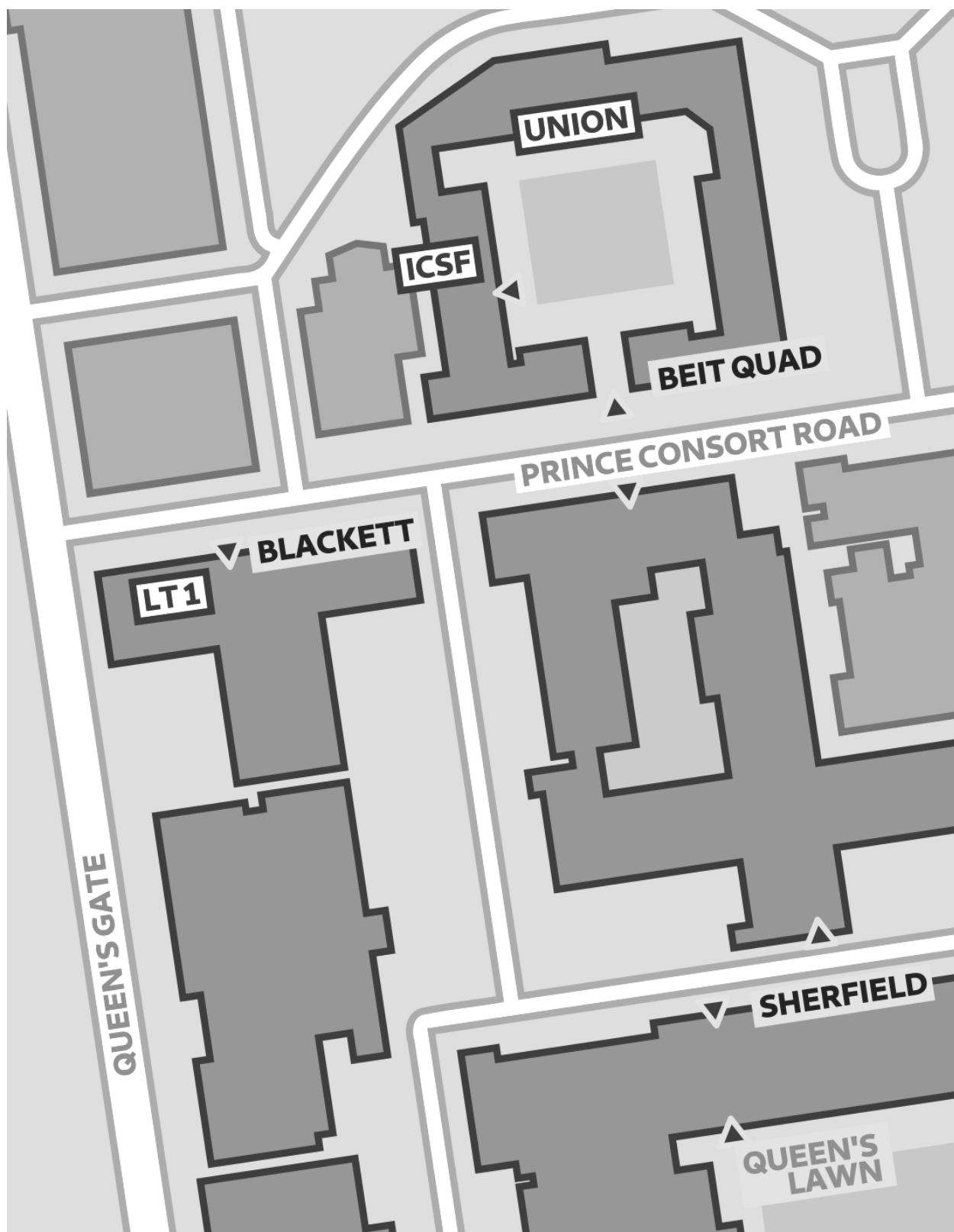


@Imperial\_SciFi



@Imperial\_SciFi

## • DIRECTIONS •



- For help/information, find the front desk at the Queen's Gate entrance of the Blackett Building.
- Blackett 1004 is on the tenth floor.