



**PICOCON 39**  
**APOCALYPSE**

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# A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

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Hello there.

Welcome to Picocon! And this time it's in person! Which is a relief, as until only a month or so ago we weren't sure if that would even be possible. I'd like to give a huge thanks to our excellent Picocon Sofa, Thomas, and our exquisite Picocon Beanbag, Peter, for putting together a world-endingly fun event under fairly significant time constraints! And a big thanks to the whole committee for their unrelenting hard work and dedication. Shockingly, this is my first in-person Picocon, and I'm therefore eagerly anticipating today as I hope many of you reading this will be!

I'd hope that this year has been good for the society, and I cannot overstate how brilliant it is to be able to regularly use the Sci-fi Library again. While the Discord server brought the library into the realm of the internet, the atmosphere and cosiness of our library is difficult to replicate. We've been making liberal use of it by hosting film nights on an almost weekly basis, including the entire extended edition Lord of the Rings films, the Dark Knight trilogy, and a marathon of every Spider-man film (R.I.P. Uncle Ben, gone but not forgotten). Furthermore, opening the library during lunchtimes has allowed people to borrow books from our rapidly overflowing shelves once again, and it's wonderful to see the library being used as a proper library once more. I think this complements the Discord server quite well: with its many active alumni members, the society has a strong community sense both on and off campus, and long may it continue! After all, we never truly let you leave. We're also definitely not a cult.

Before I go, I'd like to wish you all a good day! I will also shamelessly plug our AGM at 5PM on the 16th of March in the Sci-fi Library (please please please please please please someone run for chair please ok thanks). If you would like to talk with me, I will likely be kicking over cardboard boxes at the bottom of Lecture Theatre 1 as an outlet for the stress caused by my degree. ΨΦ

**PHILLIP WARBURTON**  
ICSF Entity of Chairs



icsf.org.uk



facebook.com/groups/ICSF.Imperial  
Sci-fi talk, news and events, entertaining links.



@Picocon  
Announcements and hype for our annual convention.



@Imperial\_SciFi  
Our official Blue bird app account thing.



@Imperial\_SciFi  
Visions from the library.

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# THE SOFA'S RAMBLINGS

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Last years original theme was initially planned to be apocalypse until we were forced to move the event online due to covid.

Bearing that in mind, and full of optimism for some chance of an in person event this year I thought we should return to the theme of Apocalypse and Dystopia and give it thought it deserved but missed out on last year. I have always found dystopian and apocalyptic fiction highly interesting, with characters forced into wildly extreme actions by the exceptional situations; and I hope you'll find a lot of interest in the theme explored by talks from our excellent panel of authors.

With the success of running Picocon online last year we once again have authors from overseas joining us, AJ Flowers and Brendan Dubois joining us from North America to discuss their work and its relation to our themes of Apocalypse and Dystopia. Joining us in person we have Bryony Pearce and Louise Mumford whose talks will focus more on dystopian aspects as well as Gareth Powell and a shorter talk by Matthew Wraith. Following on from last year we are again streaming Picocon, and I am very thankful to have our tech-priest Anand making sure everything works and we don't accidentally create skynet.

As well as the talks I'm particularly looking forward to our building and crushing of a cardboard town. Who doesn't want to be godzilla smashing an apartment block? I guess all that's left for me to say is a big thank you to the rest of the committee who have put in loads of work to make today great, and I hope you all have a wonderful time. ΨΦ

**THOMAS BLORE**

Picocon Sofa

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# A WORD FROM THE BEANBAG

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As Thomas has already mentioned, the theme for this year's Picocon is the apocalypse.

This is obviously a pertinent topic with current world events, but humanity has always had a morbid fascination with world ending events. Every ancient civilisation has had some part of their mythos pertaining to some world ending event, however the association of the term "apocalypse", coming from the Ancient Greek word for revelation, with world ending catastrophe, is rather more biblically derived. As such we will have imperial's own Matthew Wraith to talk on the original, biblical apocalypse, and the overall religious aspects of apocalyptic sci-fi.

I hope you all enjoy the day, and do take the time to relax, after all this day may well be your last . . . ΨΦ

**PETER ROBSON**

Picocon Beanbag

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## WHAT'S ON

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To all the unfortunate souls who have been damned to witness the world's end before your very eyes... I invite a warm welcome to the 39th Picocon, Apocalypse!!!

As the world of man falls around you over the course of the day, we have many exciting talks from our **Guests of Honor**, as well as a **Guest Panel**\* later in the day.

After lunch, we will be destroying a cardboard city in an act of frenzied fury and a severe impulse for Godzilla role-play. After which will be, of course, **Destruction of Dodgy Merchandise (DoDM)** ©<sup>TM†</sup> which as per usual, will definitely include **Liquid Nitrogen**, you can tell its liquid nitrogen cause of how cold it is, if you look it's got icecubes in it, that's pretty cold, right!‡

As is also tradition, we will be having the shivering horror that is **Turkey Readings** after we finish brutalizing cities and merch, if you wish to submit yourself to such suffering, you are sadly free to. All donations to keep the poor aching ghouls on stage speaking (or to get them to please oh god stop) will be going to **RAG**, the fundraising arm of Imperial College Union.

In addition to all of this **Femtocon!!!** (our annual smaller convention within our larger convention) will be running!!! Many thanks to the members of the **Tabletop Gaming Committee** (myself most definitely not included \*wink\*) for offering their time to run this event, I cannot recommend enough that you check out their society events (the full details of which will be included momentarily).

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## TABLETOP GAMING

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Continuing our traditional close relationship, Tabletop gaming will be running Femtocon!!! An all day Board games session with a selection of our **very** expansive board game collection (over 190 games!!!)

We run weekly events for LARP, RPGs, Board games and MTG. so if you enjoy our session, or are interested in any of the other things we have to offer, please check out timings for our sessions on our union page or on our discord.

We hope you have an excellent convention, and if during the day you want a break, come on up to **Blackett room 741** for some fun times with friends!!! 🎲

**LUKE CONMY**

IGSF-Editor Head of Boardgames -  
Tabletop Gaming Society

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\*Perhaps... of doom...?

†Not actually a trademark (yet)

‡Sadly, I must inform you that it is not liquid nitrogen, it is in fact rather gaseous nitrogen with certain trace amount of regular liquid water (with added ice cubes)

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# SCHEDULE

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09:15	Front Desk / registration opens
10:00	Guest Talk: <b>Bryony Pearce</b> Blackett Bulding LT1
10:55	
11:00	Guest Talk: <b>Matthew Wraith</b> Blackett Building LT1
11:45	
11:50	Guest Talk: <b>Louise Mumford</b> Blackett Building LT1
12:35	
12:40	Guest Talk: <b>Gareth Powell</b> Blackett Building LT1
13:15	
13:20	<b>Lunch</b> Wherever you want really  <b>Cardboard city apocalypse and destruction of dodgy merchandise!!!</b> Blackett Building LT1  <b>Turkey readings</b> Blackett Building LT1
14:55	
15:00	Guest Talk <b>AJ Flowers</b> Blackett Building LT1
15:55	
16:00	<b>Guest Panel</b> Blackett Building LT1
16:55	
17:00	<b>Quiz</b> Blackett Building LT1
18:00	

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## GUESTS OF HONOUR

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**BRENDAN  
DUBOIS**

Brendan DuBois is the New York Times bestselling author of twenty-four novels including the dark victory sci fi trilogy. He has won the Shamus Award from the Private Eye Writers of America, two Barry Awards, two Derringer Awards, the Ellery Queen Readers Award, and three Edgar Allan Poe Award nominations from the Mystery Writers of America.



**A.J.  
FLOWERS**

A.J. Flowers is a USA Today Bestselling fantasy author based out of Detroit. She writes young adult and epic fantasy books as well as post-apocalyptic thrillers under the name Eva Storm. She usually writes shorter stories traditionally published, and longer stories self-published, available mostly on amazon and kindle.



**LOUISE  
MUMFORD**

Previously a teacher, Louise was discovered as a writer at the Primadonna festival 2019. Her debut novel, Sleepless, a “frighteningly inventive” thriller inspired by her own insomnia, was published in December 2020 by HQ HarperCollins and became a UK Amazon Kindle bestseller.

Look out for her new book **The Safe House**, out May 2022!



**BRYONY  
PEARCE**

Bryony Pearce is a multi-award-winning novelist working in both the YA and Adult markets. She writes science fiction short stories, adult thrillers and a mixture of young adult dystopia, horror and thrillers.

She teaches the course writing for children at City University and has performed at the Edinburgh Literary Festival, The Wychwood Festival, Comicon, YALC, the Sci Fi Weekender, The Just So Festival and a number of other festivals and events.

Look out for her newest book **Little Rumours** an adult thriller out 31st March!



**GARETH  
POWELL**

Gareth Powell is an award winning British Sci-Fi author, most well known for his two Trilogies **Embers of War** & **Ack-Ack Macaque**. To date he has written and published nine novels, two short story collections, and has even tried his hand at screen-plays and comic.

Gareth has also written freelance for **The Guardian** amongst others, and is a regular columnist for **The Engineer**.



**MATTHEW  
WRAITH**

Matthew Wraith is a teacher in the humanities department at Imperial College London and is lecturer for the Science fiction Horizons course. He wrote his PhD in 2011 on information and the senses in early twentieth-century society and modernist culture, with a particular interest in the works of H.G. Wells.

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# QUEST OBJECTIVES

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Via chance (or manufactured chance as supplies demand) you have been allocated one of the following three teams: **Toby Maguire**, **Andrew Garfield**, or **Tom Holland\***. If you have not been allocated a team (and want to be (why wouldn't you though (we're all nice people here))), then please come back to the desk you obtained this magazine from.

On the next page, will be a list of highly valuable, dangerous, evil, or perhaps even silly items and/or abstract concepts. Find any of these items, bring evidence to the front desk and win incredible prizes... such as points for your team!!! And uh... Nothing else... Whoever earns the most points gets to go home proud knowing they managed to spot as many inane concepts this committee managed to scrounge from our brains.

Enjoy scavenging, for good fun and profit†!!!

This year's teams are (drumroll):



## THE MAGUIRES

I'm sure MJ will only ever act in the best interests of those she cares about.



## THE GARFIELDS

Mondays Amiright?



## THE HOLLANDS

It's actually Tom Netherlands.

- 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.

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\*Definitely not a Dutch imposter.

†The profit being points of course!!!‡

‡Why do you look so disappointed?



## LIST OF DANGEROUS, POTENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE ITEMS

15	A Bear	5	A horde of geese – minimum 3
1	Hugs (per person)	TBD	A dramatic cliffhanger
30	Picocon	30	Uncle ben
20	A non-ICSF fresher at Picocon	100	Uncle ben's corpse
Age+5	Ex-ICSF Chair <sup>M</sup>	33	A mourning Peter Parker <sup>E</sup>
Age+5	Ex-ICSF Librarian <sup>M</sup>	45	An object which is bigger on the inside than it is on the outside
Age+5	T-shirts from Picocons past <sup>M</sup>	10	The fourth dimension
10	Previous Guest of Honour <sup>E</sup>	20	Even further dimensions <sup>E</sup>
1000	The Apocalypse	-1000	The novel coronavirus
66.6	A poem by a demon	66.7	Gravitational lensing
10	A dance from Thriller	-20	A very awkward moment <sup>FD</sup>
30	A zombie horde – minimum 3	20	A functional lightsaber
10	A Clockwork Orange	10	A working laser blaster
100	The Picocon Sofa, frantic	5	A nanosecond
50	The Picocon Beanbag, calm	30	A bad ghibli movie (impossible) <sup>FD</sup>
15	A Bowler Hat	30	A terrifying technological terror
15	Your Best apocalypse fashion	3	A good hat <sup>FD</sup>
10	Famous Last Words	1	The fall of man
10	Famous First Words	10	Eldritch music
20	Chocolate to be eaten by the committee <sup>E</sup>	5	A book ICSF lacks (and wants)
-10	Chocolate to be eaten by yourself <sup>E</sup>	-5	A book ICSF lacks (and does not want)
1000	£100 <sup>E</sup>	-10	A book ICSF owns (and does not want)
7	The funniest joke in the world <sup>FD</sup>	30	A colour out of space
500	The One Ring	10	A fishman
25	A socially distanced barbershop quartet	20	Spite
5	A Cardboard building <sup>E</sup>	n(n+1)	A book series with n books <sup>M</sup>
-5	A smashed Cardboard building <sup>E</sup>	20	The death of innocence
15	2 greek letters	20	A dragon's real name
50	A complete spelling of sci fi with letters from 5 different places	10	A healthy obsession
50	The plural of apocalypse according to the committee member currently at the desk <sup>FD</sup>	-10	An unhealthy obsession
20	The answers to the quiz – cannot be submitted after 5	20	A vengeful forest spirit (who has yet to rise up against humanity)
50	A comically large spoon <sup>FD</sup>	20	An extra - terrestrial
		40	A friendly extra - terrestrial

15	1 kg Uranium-235 <sup>E</sup>	10	A doomed time clone
15	99 kg Uranium 238 <sup>E</sup>	25	The true timeline
-10	A portal to hell <sup>E</sup>	35	A fishsword
10	A murderous member of the committee	10	A gazebo
40	A non-murderous member of the committee	42	The answer to life the universe and everything <sup>FD</sup>
1	A survivor <sup>E</sup>	10	A good rendition of 'plagues' from Prince of Egypt
5	A doomsday prepper <sup>E</sup>	-10	A bad rendition of 'plagues' from Prince of Egypt
5	Horseman of the apocalypse <sup>E</sup>	-50	Per fatality
15	A god of doom and death	10	Medium rare human steak
20	A monument to humanity's hubris	5	DOOOOOOOOOM
70	A lost Doctor Who episode	3	An unobserved tree falling in the woods
3	An understood reference <sup>E</sup>	5	A Matt
-3	A misunderstood reference <sup>E</sup>	10	A wild Matt
25	A shoggoth <sup>E</sup>	5	The war of wrath
15	A sleeping editor (wake him up)	-20	Spontaneous combustion whilst dancing <sup>E</sup>
10	A sandworm	5	An ajar jar jar jar
10	Spice Melange	10	Real liquid nitrogen
4	The cosmic gears holding our fates in place	12	Simon Pegg
10	True love	10	A completed nonogram
10	True hatred	15	A completed crossword
10	At least three creme eggs		

<sup>FD</sup> Front Desk Person's Discretion<sup>†</sup>

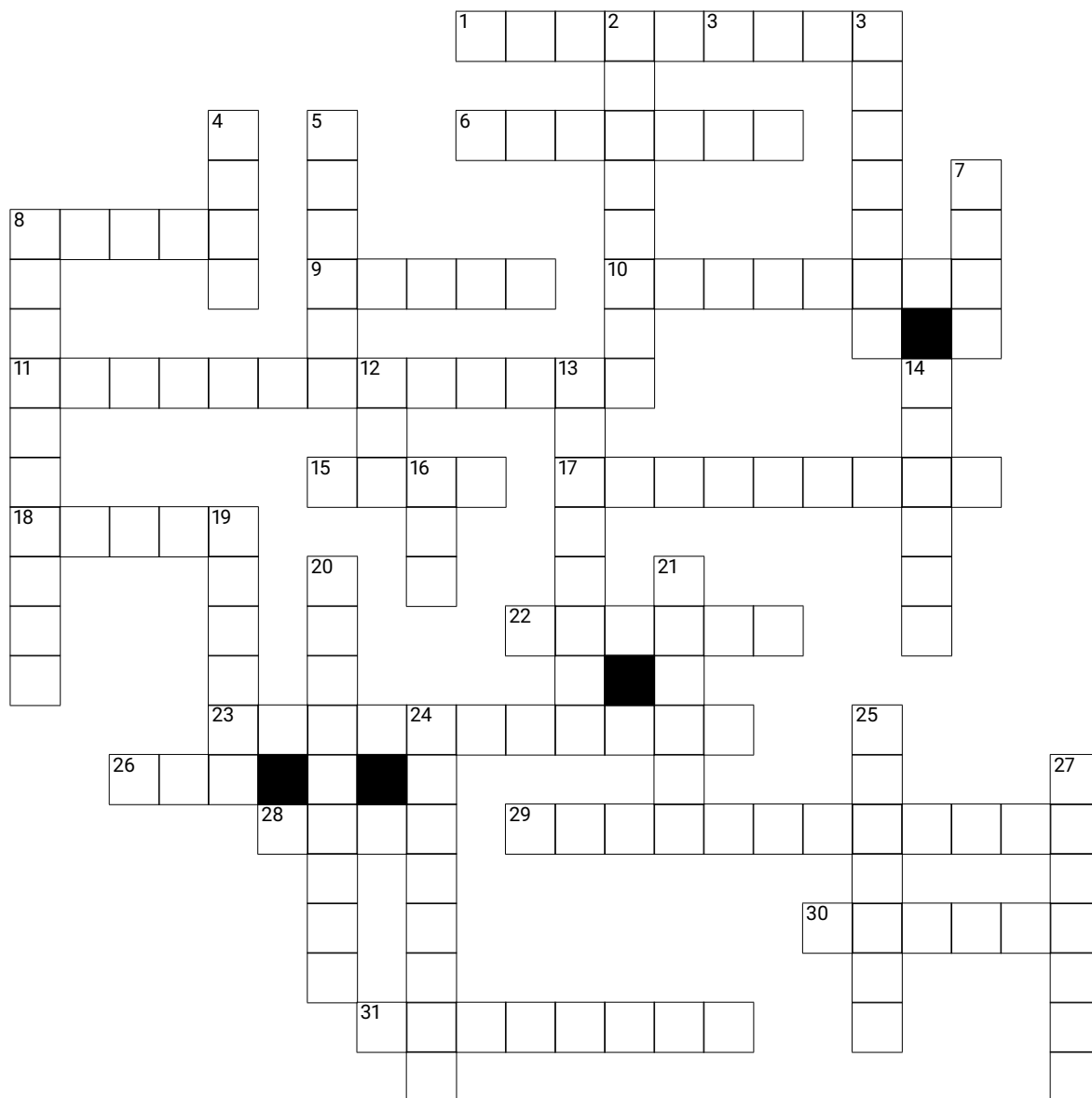
<sup>E</sup> This item may be claimed multiple times per faction ("each")

<sup>M</sup> 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.

[illegible]

# CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 1 Sickeningly sweet, and princess of post-apocalyptic kingdom. (9)
- 6 The society without the guiding hand of our glorious Chair. (7)
- 8 Blew the fuck up, trying to keep Chaos at bay. (5)
- 9 Fourth Horsey Boy. (5)
- 10 Thee olde timey namee fore apocalypse (8)
- 11 Makes the biiiiiig boooooom. (13)
- 15 Likes technology, lives in cubes, kinda weird. (4)
- 17 Blew [13] the fuck up. (9)
- 18 Almost caused the apocalypse in **Warhammer 40K** (5)
- 22 Third Horsey Boy. (6)
- 23 [3]'s catchphrase. (11)
- 26 Second Horsey Boy. (3)
- 28 Titanic's bane. (4)
- 29 Fictional(?) book for making friends at a graveyard. (12)
- 30 Age of \_\_\_\_, an often complained about version of **Warhammer**. (6)
- 31 First Horsey Boy. (8)

## DOWN

- 2 Famous Ring-maker's Abode. (8)
- 3 One of our library's resident murderbots. (7)
- 4 Almost drowned a couple thousand years ago. (4)
- 5 Quite good at predicting the end of galactic empires. (6)
- 7 Predicted the apocalypse to be 10 years ago, apparently. (4)
- 8 ♪ Now the dinosaurs are gone. ♪ (10)
- 12 Visitors from another world, can only be filmed in grainy footage. (3)
- 13 Blown the fuck up, just to prove a point. (8)
- 14 "Balanced, as all things should be." (6)
- 16 Rapid Eye Movement. Also a band. (3)
- 19 The Grim \_\_\_\_\_. (6)
- 20 Currency of the (post-apocalyptic) future! (9)
- 21 "\_\_\_\_ is coming." (6)
- 24 That one Chris Hemsworth movie where he tries to kill his sister, is enslaved and foments a revolution. (8)
- 25 Classic Apocalypse (7)
- 27 Probably the most likely end of the universe. (6)

## — A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR/ADVERT? —

Hello there reader, I hope you've enjoyed Wyrmtongue so far, you might be surprised to see that there is a note from the editor (me) here where there might usually be a blank page for notes. I am here to vigorously and shamelessly advertise for the fanzine which is usually also produced and released for **Picocon** but has not been for reasons I will now explain.

Sadly, this year we've not had many submissions for our fanzine, and likely not quite enough to properly fill out a whole separate magazine, this is likely my fault for advertising about a week away from the deadline (if you wish to make me human sacrifice in recompense, you may once I've sufficiently fulfilled current commitments), but regardless, I still would like to release a fanzine.

This is where you guys come in; if you have a concept for an apocalypse themed story or artwork or other assorted media format which may be printed on paper (hologram format not yet supported), then you're in luck! If you can get this work properly finished by March 31st, then it will be featured in our official very cool and impressive fanzine (release date TBD)!!!

I hope you enjoy the rest of Wyrmtongue, and the rest of today's events! **ΨΦ**

**LUKE CONMY**

ICSF Editor

## IMPERIAL SCI-FI AND FANTASY SOCIETY MEETS... THE APOCALYPSE

We at the ICSF committee were curious to learn how our society members and alumni would deal with The Apocalypse, so we conducted a devious and morally questionable social experiment in the form of.....a survey!! This survey contained a number of questions to collect valuable data on what the state of the society and its members would be, should an Apocalyptic scenario arrive, as well as finding out some general opinions on The Apocalypse. Whilst it is statistically invalid to represent all members and alumni of ICSF with the 16 survey responders, we are going to do so anyway.

Just over two thirds of ICSF survey responders believed they would not survive The Apocalypse, with an optimistic 31.3% hoping to live to fight (or more likely binge the latest Marvel series) another day. Hopefully, we will be able to dig a chair, secretary and treasurer out of these survivors, allowing the society to continue to run.

We asked responders to judge which style of apocalypse they believed would be the "coolest", and the overall winner (with 31.3% of the vote), was an Eldritch Apocalypse – the most typical example of this would be Lovecraft's works, but a more modern take could be Gravity Falls' "Weirdmageddon". Unfortunately, no one thought this was actually likely to happen. The runner up, with 18.8% of the votes, was a robot apocalypse, such as those portrayed in Terminator or the Matrix. In this case, ICSF would continue to run under the name "Extermination Society", as Miranda, Chance and Norfolk (the 3

Daleks currently residing in the library), would replace the existing committee.

Next, we asked whether ICSSCF survey responders had a zombie apocalypse plan in place, and whether they had any form of reserve apocalypse supplies or bunker. Whilst 68.8% of responders had a zombie apocalypse plan, 56.3% admitted that it was very bad. 18.8% of responders selected the option “no of course not you are very weird”, so I guess we all know who to point and laugh at when the zombies arrive. When it comes to supplies and bunkers, only 12.5% had any. However, 68.8% said that they wished they did.

Obviously survival is one of the least important aspects of any potential apocalypse, so we started asking the crucial questions, starting with “will you be changing your fashion for the apocalypse / post-apocalypse?”. 31.3% thought not, but the rest mostly alternated between practical (wearing more layers or camouflage) and punk. Then there’s the one person who boldly stated “Parachute pants, for the inevitable post apocalypse 90s revival”. Sounds fun!

Fashion aside, terminology is also key. General consensus (31.3%) was that the plural of apocalypse was ‘apocalypses’, but the runner up answer ‘apocalypsicles’ (18.8%) is much more exciting!! Why not send a letter to the Oxford English Dictionary and see if they can do anything about that... food for thought.

To establish a narrative, we asked responders “Someone on the news just said the apocalypse is happening, and now the world is in chaos. What’s the first thing you do?” The results seemed broadly split between 4 trends: - Contact loved ones - Find a weapon! - Relax or go to sleep - Check secondary sources of information With the exception of the person who answered “perish” of course. From this we can unreasonably extrapolate that all members of ICSCF can be sorted, potentially via hat, into 5 broad categories: caring, violent, chill, pragmatic and dead.

We then went further into detail, asking what weapons our members would make use of in the apocalypse. Some responders opted for conventional apocalypse weapons, such as brass knuckles, baseball bats, machetes, frying pans, Molotov cocktails and hockey sticks, whilst there was also a leaning towards ranged weapons including rifles and bows. A couple of responders seem to view the apocalypse as an opportunity to play out their fantasy genre adventures, as we also had answers of a warhammer and a scythe. Probably the most comedic pair of answers, which when read together make a suspicious amount of sense were: - “I would use a comically large spoon. However, after I die, someone would use my corpse as a two-handed weapon” - “The chair Phil’s petrified corpse”

Thank you for your sacrifice, Phil...

But what about our beloved Library? What would become of it during the Apocalypse? Well, we asked our responders, and 37.5% of them thought it would be turned into some kind of bunker or safe haven. However, one person had a less cheerful (though possibly more realistic) view on this outcome: “A couple of students will shut themselves there and die because they cannot get out. A thousand years later the new people will discover the site and think it was some place of knowledge.”

Another responder theorised, “I feel like it’d be the source, i.e Cthulhu’s lair, ground zero

for zombies, nuclear strike site priority one". The ICSF committee would like to remind everyone, and in particular the person who stated that the Library would be "raided for snacks", that food is not left in the Library overnight. On an unrelated note, we would like to also ask members not to eat the books or DVDs. They are not silver cookies, and hold no nutritional value (that we are aware of).

In conclusion, it can be assumed that our society would continue in some regard, even if only in the hearts of the surviving third of our members. On a more sincere note, it was really exciting and interesting to see the massive range of answers, from the practical to the bizarre, so thank you to everyone who answered the survey! **ΨΦ**

**REBECCA ALLDAY**

ICSF Chair of Vice

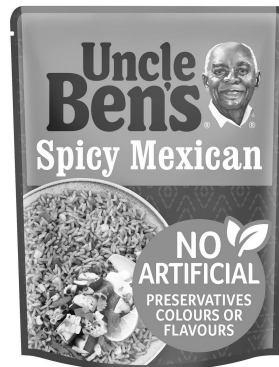
## **AN ELEGY FOR UNCLE BEN**

A loving uncle lost for his good deeds

The light of his grey hair is tainted red

He warned of power and the care it needs

And in the night was shot and left for dead



RIP UNCLE BEN

1952 - 1962/2002/2008/2012/etc.