



Media Release #18

Dublin 2019 - An Irish Worldcon
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, 23 June 2019

Scientist-Astronaut Candidate Norah Patten joins Dublin 2019

Irish Scientist-Astronaut Candidate Dr Norah Patten will be a Special Guest at [Dublin 2019 – An Irish Worldcon](#).

Born in Co. Mayo, and now based in Dublin, Dr Patten became fascinated by space and space travel after a visit to a NASA facility at age 11. She earned a PhD in aeronautical engineering at the University of Limerick in 2011 following internships at Boeing and Bell Labs. She has participated in several citizen science campaigns with [Project PoSSUM](#) including microgravity research flights, spacesuit testing and evaluation, hypoxia training and spacecraft egress. Project PoSSUM prepares their candidates to perform research on commercial space missions.

Dr Patten's interest in space and education led her to organise the first Irish student experiment sent to the International Space Station in 2014. The [experiment](#) was designed by four teenagers from St Nessan's Community College in Limerick, investigating the effects of microgravity on reinforced concrete. She currently works as a programme manager at the Irish Composites Centre.

Dr Patten has been a lecturer and project manager at the University of Limerick and has served on the [faculty](#) of the International Space University since 2012. In 2017 she founded [Planet Zebunar](#), a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) education company focused on space stories. Her children's book [Shooting for the Stars](#) is forthcoming from

O'Brien Press in September. She won the 2018 PoSSUM Science Educator award. Dr Patten will be our first Special Guest and will attend the convention on Saturday and Monday.

"Worldcon is about keeping in touch with the factual as well as the fictional aspects of science," Dublin 2019 chair James Bacon said. "It's wonderful that we are going to hear about cutting-edge developments in space research from a scientist of Norah's calibre."

Dr Patten can be found at SpaceNorah on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Panels, talks and presentations with scientists and engineers form a major programme track in a distinguished tradition at Worldcons. Dublin 2019 will be the 77th annual World Science Fiction Convention, the first to be held in Ireland and the eleventh in Europe.

Dublin 2019 - An Irish Worldcon will take place in the Convention Centre Dublin from August 15 to August 19. More than 6600 people have already signed up as members, including more than 5200 attending members. More than 830 people will be attending Worldcon for the first time.

Other activities at the Dublin Worldcon will include the 2019 Hugo Awards, the world's leading awards for excellence in science fiction and fantasy, as well as the spectacular Masquerade costume display. There are typically 650 to 800 separate programme items, including author readings and autograph sessions, films and videos, academic presentations, and panel discussions on speculative literature and other media, many involving fans and audience.

Guests of Honour for Dublin 2019 include YA author Diane Duane, and screenwriter and Hugo winner Ian McDonald, as well as game designer Steve Jackson (Melee, Chaos Machine, Munchkin) and editor Ginjer Buchanan. Science Guest of Honour will be Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, who discovered radio pulsars in 1967 as a postgraduate student and in 2018 was awarded the Special Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics. Bill and Mary Burns will be fan Guests of Honour.

More information and membership registration for Dublin 2019 are available at <https://dublin2019.com>. Follow us on Twitter at @dublin2019.

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The World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon) is a five-day event that has been held annually since 1939, apart from a four-year break during the Second World War.