

SMOFCON 19
7th - 9th December 2001

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Welcome to York and the UK's second Smofcon. In the following pages you should find a basic introduction to the city and the convention. One of the themes of the convention – with the UK05 Bid in the near future – has been the organisation of convention committees, and what types of people – in an ideal world – should be on them. So you'll find a couple of articles in here inspired by that, as well as the where the bar is and where the food is survival guide.

Chairs Address Page 3

Hotel Details (Breakfast etc – where and when) Page 3

Running a Worldcon, Running a Bill, by Claire Brialey Page 4

An interesting parallel between running a Parliamentary Bill and running a Worldcon, by someone who's been foolish enough to try both. At the same time. (This is not a suggestion the UK05 committee should give it all up and go into politics. Really)

The Perfectionist as the Conrunner, by Sparks Page 9

At some point you've worked with someone who always left things to the last minute, if they did them at all. Ever wonder if they were a perfectionist?

It's in the Other Hotel, by Sparks Page 11

Split sites cause many problems, with a few of them covered here. Anybody got any solutions?

Welcome to York - this should cover all the basic requirements of mankind without taking you too far from the hotel

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CHAIRS ADDRESS

Welcome to York and Smofcon 19. It seems only a year ago we were gazing in wonder at the sky as the shuttle launched. As a convention opener, that's kind of hard to beat. So we aren't even going to try. What we can offer you here is History. Many parts of the city are of major historic interest. Come to the talk on Friday by Mark Steel, a local archaeologist, to get an idea of what we can offer you. As a bit of general advice while you are walking about, look up. Not everything is going on at street level.

We hope to examine ways of working with people as individuals and in groups to plan and put on a convention. We will look at Management Styles, and why they won't work when your work party is all volunteers. We will discuss how to identify the needs of the people we are working with, and how to meet them, as well as getting our own needs met.

But most of all, we are here to talk to each other and take a break. As usual, I have promised we will eat the hotel out of mushrooms and at least triple their bar takings. We have our own coffee lounge, with a limited corkage waiver, downstairs in the St Maurice suite, for tea and coffee and chat during the convention. This isn't a full North American style Con Suite, which is a feature of most Smofcons, but we do things different here. ☺

I would like to thank you all for coming and to thank my committee, without whom we would be just spending a weekend with friends in a foreign hotel!

I hope you enjoy yourselves and come away having learned something.

KIM Campbell
Chair Smofcon 19

HOTEL DETAILS (Where to find breakfast and so forth)

Breakfast is included in your room price and is served in the restaurant from 07h00 to 09h30 on weekdays and 07h00 to 10h00 on Saturday and Sunday.

Lunch is served between 12h00 and 14h00

Dinner is 18h30 to 21h30

Book lunch or dinner at Reception. Bookings can be made up to about 30 minutes before you want your meal. I recommend eating in at least one meal of your stay here. Everything we have tried on the menu has lived up to expectations.

The Bar menu is available between 11h30 and 21h30 and can be served either in the bar or anywhere in the lounge area.

We will have tea and coffee available in the Columbus room through out the con. At the time of writing this, I am expecting it to have sitting and chatting space. There may be munchies of an interesting kind in the later evenings.



Smoking

We ask that you restrict smoking to the bar or outdoors. The hotel itself has no policy on public smoking, but we have asked them to signpost the seating area just outside the bar as No Smoking and we ask you to respect this. KIM, the committee smoker, has set this policy.

Reception hopes you will be comfortable in your rooms and ask that if there is anything that needs putting right you get in touch with them as soon as possible.

Postage Rates

Postcards are .40p Airmail or .36p surface mail.

RUNNING A WORLDCON, RUNNING A BILL: Things Worldcon-runners should know about Acts of Parliament

OK, this is either an analogy that's going to work naturally or it's going to look strained from the start. The one key variation it's worth pointing out from the beginning is that the timeframes are different: with a Bill, the bidding stage typically takes about a year, the 'running' stage up to another year, and the 'event' stage doesn't always have a defined stopping point. There are a few bits of the Parliamentary process that I don't believe have direct analogies in a Worldcon process, and no doubt some aspects of running a Worldcon that I've missed out.

But the parallels are both extensive and instructive, and it alarms me that I never noticed this while I was working on a Worldcon and a Bill at the same time¹. I think it's because I didn't have sufficient control of either process that I couldn't see the shape of them; now I've had two Bills of my own to take through Parliament, I realise that some very important elements of the work and above all the skills that people need have a lot in common.

The people

The following groups of people will all be involved in a Bill and will all think it's theirs.

Government Ministers – the public face of the project; the ones whose role it is to win the bid, convince both the experts and the public that the Bill's going to work and that they want it to work in the first place, and the people who have ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the whole thing. They're also the people who make the big decisions.

Bill Team – a small team of people who manage the project; it's their responsibility to know everything. They need to know how all the different stages of work on the Bill are progressing, how Parliament works and what the implications of this is for the overall timetable, what the other people involved are capable of and how to help them. They're responsible for the timetable although they don't control events; they have to anticipate all the eventualities and be prepared.



¹ Hint: This is a bad idea.

They make decisions about process and about what people need to do. And, since they know everything, they have to make sure everyone else knows everything they need to know, when they need to know it.

Officials – the people who do a lot of the work, and who know the details of the actual policy that the Bill will give effect to. There are a lot of them, including policy experts (from a number of different Government Departments), lawyers, and Parliamentary draftsmen. They're the ones who work up the options and advice for Ministers so that they can make decisions, who provide the information Ministers need in Parliament, and who are responsible for all the details of the Bill which will make it work in the end – or not. They effectively take decisions on the policy, but they need to persuade Ministers to agree. Many of them don't get on desperately well with one another and are suspicious of what the others are doing and whether they're any good at it.

Parliament – the people who need to be convinced that the Bill is going to work in the way that Ministers say it will, and that that's a good idea in the first place. Some of them will be experts in the subject covered by the Bill. Some of them will be expert in the way that Bills work. Some of them will just think it's their responsibility to make sure Ministers aren't doing anything stupid. Some of them will think that everything Ministers do is stupid.

The public – the people who are actually going to be affected by the Bill and for whose benefit it's being taken forward. Different Bills will affect different groups of people, be they employers, children, companies in a particular industry, people working in England, or absolutely every citizen of the UK

So a rough read-across would be:

Bill	Worldcon
Government Ministers	The Chairs
Bill Team	The Executive
Officials	The Staff
Parliament	Active Fans
The public	Attendees (or, sometimes, potential attendees)

This won't hold up at all stages, e.g. in some parts of the bidding stage I'll describe below. And it doesn't make a split between the bidding committee and the operational committee, because for a Bill that would create a lot of problems. But bear with me.

One further point: for the sake of argument, you might think of the House of Commons as conrunners and the House of Lords as fanzine fans. This is an analogy that works astonishingly well and I could keep myself amused for some time developing it, but I'll spare you.

The process

Bidding

If officials realise that they need legislation, they must first convince their Ministers to bid for a Bill. They provide sufficient information for Ministers to think they've got a good case, and



Ministers then argue for it in Cabinet. If the Bill is accepted into the provisional programme (which would happen about a third of the way through this stage), a Bill Team will be set up to manage the project and officials will start work to develop the detail of the Bill. Throughout this stage the Bill Team needs to make sure officials are keeping up with the timetable and to get as much information from them as they can in order to convince Ministers that everything's on track and that it will all be ready in time.

About two months before the end of the 'bidding' stage (i.e. with about five-sixths of this stage completed), Ministers will begin to get serious about the provisional programme to decide what wins and what doesn't. They'll make their decision on a range of factors, including:

- Is the Bill ready to be introduced to Parliament?
- Does it have public support?
- Has as much as possible been done to convince Parliament that it's a good idea and that it's going to work?
- Has anything more important cropped up which needs Parliamentary time (e.g. a Bill to improve anti-terrorist measures)?

A great deal of information needs to be provided for Ministers at this final stage, and even more information needs to be provided to Parliament for introduction of the Bill if Ministers decide to go ahead with it. This involves a lot of work in a short space of time by officials and by the Bill Team, and when it's all over everyone heaves a huge sigh of relief and wants to go off for a long holiday. But they can't, because now the Bill's in Parliament.

(This is a point which demonstrates, I think, why splitting the bid committee from the operating committee is a good idea. But the amount of expert knowledge of both policy and process bound up with a Bill means that it is impossible in this case.)

The Bill in Parliament

First of all the Bill needs to go through the House of Commons. The Government has a majority in the House of Commons, so if the Opposition force a vote on any aspect of the Bill the Government would usually expect to win. However, they need to keep all their own supporters on side; some MPs who are on the Government side may find that measures in the Bill would disadvantage their constituents, and will want something changed to take account of that. Some MPs might think that the Bill threatens an aspect of Life As We Know It which is very important to them – they may even think that the Government is betraying its principles. So supporters of the Bill will still need to be convinced that some of the detail is right; and opponents of the Bill will also raise valid arguments which need to be addressed – as well as sometimes trying to wreck it.

Real opponents will be in a minority. Sometimes their opposition comes from a principled objection to what the Government's trying to do or the way it's trying to do it. Sometimes it's just because they're on the opposite side to the Government and it helps to point out all the ways the Government are in the wrong. Sometimes they, like concerned Government supporters, want to correct things about the Bill that won't work in practice or that will cause problems for people who shouldn't otherwise be affected by the Bill.

The point is that they all get the opportunity to argue a lot about whether, when the Bill becomes law, it will work in the way it's meant to so that the people who are meant to benefit do, and they have a chance to improve the way it's working. Behind the scenes, the officials are working away



to take account of all the proposed changes and to work out whether the suggested problems are real and whether they need to make more changes to take account of them.

And everyone also needs to bear in mind what the public think. Has the Government convinced them that the Bill's a good thing? Has something the Opposition have said convinced a lot of members of the public that the Bill's a bad thing – even if that's really not true? What needs to be done to keep their support? Sometimes the Bill won't have been quite ready when it got through the bidding stage and entered Parliament, so officials are trying to get Ministers to fix things in Parliament without making people think that they don't know what they're doing and shouldn't be trusted.

The Bill Team just needs to control all of this... They need to make sure that everything's ready in time to keep the Bill on track, that no one's having a nervous breakdown, that everyone's co-operating who needs to, that things are being done which will be important in three months' time as well as the things which are really important right now, and that all of the arcane rules and procedures of Parliament are being attended to.

So eventually the Bill emerges from the House of Commons a bit changed, a bit improved, a bit more ready to do what it's meant to be doing – and then it goes to the House of Lords. The Government doesn't have a majority in the House of Lords. This is only partly because of party politics; the Conservative Government did have a Lords majority but they still lost votes, because the Lords are strong-minded (or sometimes bloody-minded) and take the whole process of scrutinising Bills very seriously. There are also even more rules and strange procedures in the Lords, and if things aren't done just right the Government will have lost points before anyone even looks at the Bill.

The Government have to work very hard to convince the Lords that the Bill is not only a good thing in principle but that it really is going to work. They need to talk to them, and write to them, and meet them on their own terms. The Government will have to provide a lot more detail to individual members of the House of Lords than they might in the Commons – and the key thing about the Lords is that they are individuals. So the Government needs to convince their own side, who might otherwise desert them. They need to convince the Opposition that, at the very least, the Bill isn't going to do a lot of damage to things that the Opposition in the Lords care about. They need to convince the Independent members of the House to support them, many of whom have particular interests and hobby-horses of their own that they want to see included or protected. And these people know how legislation works. Some of them might be a bit past it, but they've got major experience in government. They'll have read all the debates in the Commons, and they'll have a good idea about the things they think are wrong and that they want to concentrate on.

The House of Lords can easily vote against the Government; they can change major parts of the Bill, and - although the Government can change it back again in the House of Commons - the Lords can seriously affect public opinion and make the public question the Bill a lot more than they would have done otherwise.

Eventually, though, most Bills get through Parliament. And they become Acts of Parliament. And at this stage, everyone involved with the Bill heaves a sigh of relief again, and collapses. But this is actually where the really important stuff starts.



The event

So there you are. All the preparation is done; officials (the staff) have organised things in a way they think will work, Parliament (the fans) have agreed it all, most of the public (potential attendees) are convinced it's worthwhile and are ready for it to happen, Ministers (the Chairs) have had their reputations changed for ever, one way or another, and the Bill Team (the executive) are exhausted and obscure and largely unthanked. Yeah, guess what my role's been.

So now you have an Act of Parliament – or a Worldcon – and it's really going to happen, and that's what most people care about. The officials know that some of it's a bit creaky, but it'll basically work; if they'd known what they were aiming for at the beginning, the legislation would be more elegant and a bit less complicated, but the effects will be the same and very few people will actually notice. The Bill Team remember what a nightmare it was to get this far, but at least it's done now and, again, very few people will know quite what was going on in the background. And quite a lot of other people are involved now in making it happen, so if a lot of the expertise that's been developed drifts away as people take a break and decide to do something different now, that doesn't really matter – does it?

So why does any of this matter?

Where I think this analogy becomes important is because of what it says about the people you need to have involved and the skills they need to work effectively without killing themselves or other people.

You need people who can be the public face of your Worldcon, who can present it all intelligently and convincingly (and, one hopes, honestly), who are in a position of real responsibility so they can both affect the big decisions and have a feeling of ownership and accountability about making things happen in the way they're selling it to active fandom, and to all the other potential attendees.

You need people who can do all the different aspects of the work that it takes to put the Worldcon on, making sure it fits together and that it actually works on the day. They need to know their own area, and enough about other people's areas to keep it joined up, and they need to be able to cooperate. They need to be able to concentrate on details. They need to be quite organised, but some of them won't be. And that doesn't matter too much because someone else is going to be very organised indeed, and what the staff need to be able to do is to trust that someone else to tell them the truth and help them – and respond accordingly.

So you need people who can manage the project. They need to be able to see the big picture and a lot of the details. They don't need to be expert in any of the detailed areas of work that are going on, but they need to understand what they are, how they fit together, what the relationships are of the people working on all these things and where the pressure points will come. They need to know what and how much the people right at the top need to know, when to involve them, and how to deliver what they've decided is essential. They need to understand not just the deadlines and the milestones in the timetable, but all the dependencies. And they need to be able to communicate all of this in a way that commands respect, and which is reassuring but realistic, and they need to be able to motivate people and sometimes they need to be pretty tough and make themselves unpopular. But not so unpopular that people stop working.



And you need to bear in mind that there are a lot of fans out there who are potential allies, if only you take account of the things that matter to them. They might only be able to help in a limited way; they might only be able to lend public support without working on the con itself. They might, at best, be convinced to be neutral. And some fans are never going to think it's a good idea, and are certainly never going to help, and they'll resist it all the way as a matter of principle. Accept it, but don't dismiss them. Some of what they say will be valid, and some of it will affect wider fannish and public opinion whether it's valid or not. But this is fandom, and all of this is part of what people are here for.

Think about it?

A few final thoughts:

Another difference between Worldcons and Bills is about people's motivation to get involved. Everyone involved with a Bill, except the public, get paid to do it. Most people enjoy their involvement with a Bill, but it's hard work, tiring work, and sometimes profoundly unrewarding work. It does have a lot going for it, though, mostly to do with getting more involved with Parliament and feeling that you're a part of something which affects you in your own daily life. And that bit might be an analogy to why fans get involved with Worldcons, for some people at least. Nonetheless, when it comes down to it a salary is more of a motivator than fannish zeal, and this doesn't just apply to motivation. A Worldcon is dependent on volunteers, and it's harder to manage volunteers. It's also harder to turn them away, even if they're not people you'd actually employ if you had more of a choice. So you might not have the best people available for the jobs you need doing. And if you don't appreciate them or use them effectively, they can leave. And that's not going to help to attract the people you really want to have involved.

There's a lot more I could say about that, but not here.

And then there's the question of whether I'd get involved again, with either a Worldcon or a Bill? In both cases: only if I could define my own role. And the people involved count for a lot too.

THE PERFECTIONIST AS THE CONRUNNER

Since I started my research into Perfectionism for my doctoral thesis, I've observed an interesting phenomenon. Every time I mention my research area I get told that the person I'm taking with either, is a perfectionist or their aunt / boss / wife / dog is one. Now I'm not saying they aren't, but that means everybody I know is a perfectionist or knows somebody who is. That's a lot of perfection in the world!

In reality it all depends on how we define a perfectionist. As in many cases the psychological definition may not be what the layman is thinking of when they describe their boss as a perfectionist. For example Marc Hollender in his paper *Perfectionism* (1966) defines perfectionism as "*The practice of demanding of oneself or others a higher quality of performance than is required by the situation*". To this he adds the proviso that the perfectionist must characterise their behaviour as perfectionist. This is a difficult area since self-report may be flawed.

At this time perfectionism was regarded as a variant of obsessive compulsive disorder and linked to



“oral masochism” (what ever that is!!!). Hollander set out to differentiate between compulsiveness and perfectionism. To do this he examined the clinical background of patients. Hollander separates those who strive to do well and derive pleasure from a job well done from those who are “*exacting for the sake of being exacting*” He argues that the former are not perfectionists, although other researchers have argued against this since. For example in 1979 Hamacheck was postulating the difference between what he termed “Normal” and “Neurotic” perfectionism. This built on differences noted by W.H. Misseldine (1963), who suggested that there were differences between those who gained satisfaction from striving and whose best efforts were still not enough suggesting that this striving is a form of perfectionism.

Hamacheck states that a distinction between neurotic and normal perfectionism is that neurotic perfectionists demand a higher performance from normal perfectionists. This higher performance is rarely achieved, which in turn reduces the chances of such people feeling good about themselves. Normal perfectionists appear able to create boundaries to their performance and take into consideration the fact that they themselves have limitations. In general “... *neurotics worry about their deficiencies and concentrate on how to avoid doing things wrong, the normals focus on their strengths and concentrate on how to do things right*”.

The normal perfectionist is reported as reflective in attitude and more relaxed and careful than their neurotic counterparts. Neurotics on the other hand are seen to be more anxious and confused as well as, “*emotionally drained before a new task is even begun*” (pp28). This pre-task stress is interesting and may be responsible for the procrastination reported in perfectionists by Burns (1980), Sorotzkin (1985) and Frost (1990). The desire for perfection and the need to avoid failure leads to avoidance strategies. Although Frost reports a correlation between procrastination and Overall Perfectionism as measured by the Multi-dimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS), he measured not the extent of procrastination but whether the subject reported it as a problem. He also found a correlation between his subscale Personal Standards and frequency of procrastination rather than the extent to which it was a problem. Frost’s findings suggest that there is a larger correlation between perfectionism and fear of failure than with task evasiveness.

It is this fear of failure and procrastination that we need to consider when we look at the perfectionist as a conrunner. The stereotype of the perfectionist is a person who plans everything to the last detail and must get things right. Often they are thought of as workaholics. But as we’ve seen there is more than one type of perfectionist. The neurotic perfectionist is as far from this stereotype as can be. My own research has split them further into Anxious Perfectionists who are worried about their own performance and the Irritable Perfectionist who is worried about the performance of those who work for them. Both are equally damaging to themselves and others.

If you give an anxious perfectionist a task there is a strong risk that it will not be completed. There are two mechanisms at work here. Firstly the work may be done, but will never be of a standard that the perfectionist is happy with. They will revise it until they are satisfied. Unfortunately their nature is such that it will never be good enough to be satisfactory, hence it will need further revision and in the end will never get submitted. (This apparently happens quite often with PhD theses!) The second mechanism I call the Rimmer Effect (After the character in Red Dwarf). In one episode Rimmer has an exam to qualify as an officer. He has six months to study for the exam and starts to draw up a revision timetable. He revises the timetable and then revises it again, this is an extension the first mechanism however it is much more damaging since he spends so much time planning his revision he ends up with 30 seconds to revise before his exam. This is task avoidance



by planning. The perfectionist works out ways of completing the task but the plan is never completed partly for the same reasoning as the first mechanism but the Rimmer effect also gives a built in protection to the perfectionist self image. "The task was so difficult that I couldn't work out a satisfactory solution" in other words the task was impossible solutions were looked for but none would have worked. Rimmer tried to organise his revision but it was just too big a task!

The added problem of the Rimmer effect is that there is no real work done on the task itself. While if a perfectionist has at least done work on the task itself, as in the first example, others could step in and salvage what has been done. Often in these cases no further work needs to be done since it is already of a high standard. However, if you have an Arnold Rimmer on your committee then somebody has to take over the task, normally at a late date, and basically start from scratch. The perfectionist is not being lazy, they are protecting themselves from failure, often generating more work for themselves in the process than if they were able to do the task set them.

This fear of failure is also apparent in some people as fear of failure of subordinates. Not much work has been done in this area as yet and it has only recently been examined in a new scale developed at the University of York, Personality and Stress Research Group (i.e. ME!), but it is related with anxious and neurotic perfectionism measures. People who exhibit this behaviour can be very difficult and stressful to work for. They are demanding and tend not to tolerate the slightest mistakes from those who work for them. Obviously this is not the type of person you want as Con Chair (or is it?). At the moment there is no real examination of this type of personality but we hope to be working on it soon.

So the question is do we want perfectionists on a convention committee. Well all is not lost; we haven't looked at the "normal" perfectionists yet. My own research also threw up a group of perfectionists I termed Relaxed Perfectionists. These are people who although do strive for the best result are capable of accepting their short comings. They are comfortable in accepting that occasionally they will fail to reach the goals they set. This does not stop them trying the best they can, and it does not effect their self-image if they fail.

People like artisans and surgeons have been used as an example of how to view relaxed perfectionists. Their self image is robust enough to allow them to fail occasionally without the drop in their self esteem that affects neurotic perfectionists. If you give one of these people a task they will try and do it to their best ability within the time constraints given. The perfect committee member!

There is a rider to all this discussion however, Hollender states *Although perfectionism is a generally pervasive trait, it may be especially pronounced in certain areas while a few others may be entirely excluded.* In other words we all have our bugbears.

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All opinions are purely that of the author.



IT'S IN THE OTHER HOTEL!
(or in this case the other side of campus)

There has been a lot of discussion over the last few years about split site conventions. I attended a Trek convention held at a holiday camp back in 1992. This wasn't a real split site since the convention was held in one camp but it was a rather large camp and the programme items were spread over it quite liberally. I wasn't really that involved in the con, being taken there as an excuse to party after a particularly messy relationship breakdown, by some friends who thought that oggling the delightful Marina Sirtiss in a tight dress would cheer me up. (It did ☺). But even then in my early days of convention running I wasn't convinced that having the con spread over such a large area was a good idea. The increase in communication needs and response time for problems was obviously increased. Trying to track down a committee member or senior staff became a nightmare!

The problem for conrunners is obviously site against size of convention. There are fewer and fewer hotels and conference centres that can deal with the larger conventions. In the UK it is relatively easy to run a small con at a reasonably sized hotel. And many hotels like the custom. When considering the UK site for the UK 05 bid there were at least five sites we had under consideration. I won't discuss the ins and outs of the discussion to return to Glasgow with the bid that has been discussed elsewhere at length, other than to say that it appears that if another bid is run for the UK in another 15 years it may be a more varied (and difficult) choice, since many larger conference centres are coming into commission and hotel space is improving near them to accommodate the business. It is the Eastercon size conventions that are struggling to find sites (at least within the UK).

Back in 1999 The Eastercon was held in two hotels across the road from each other. A total of 20 yards apart. In practice it meant that at times programme items in different hotels were closer physically than programme items in the same hotel. However the feel of a convention isn't a physical thing. There needed to be two operations rooms, site liason was escalated on a logarithmic scale, fans seemed to feel that the social heart of the convention was split. The hotel bars obviously were centres of social activity but often there was no critical mass, as people quite often didn't know which bar to meet friends in, or if there was anything happening in the other bar. It was the first example of text messaging I saw at a convention – as people tried to locate their friends. Programme was also affected since travel between hotels meant that people often missed programme items or didn't bother with the hassle of going.

Even in the US there are split site conventions. Earlier this year I attended Westercon in Portland Oregon, my first US con! It was split between two hotels about 300 yards apart at most. (There was even a bus to ferry you between sites if you preferred not to walk across the car park. Now again I wasn't too involved in this con other than to run a party, sit on the UK05 bid desk (spot the plugs) and ply strange colonial people with expensive whisky. (It's a hard life!). Again the same problems seemed to recur. Keeping track of senior staff and committee. Time between sites affecting the planning of an attendees programme viewing. No real social centre although this was alleviated partly by having a con suite.

Now I always planned never to run split site con and this august I was chair of the British Students S.F. Convention (Unicon), a small 100ish person convention that according to its articles must be



held on a college or university campus. Eboracon was planned to be held in one college of the University. With only one split (Friday night films shown in the campus cinema). Fine we thought a small easy compact convention. That was before we were approached by Harmuni. A small filk convention who we agreed to piggy back with us. Then the fun began. Site considerations became apparent - we couldn't have the filkers playing in residential area. Hence they had to be moved out of the college. We arranged initially for a lecture theatre to be used but this didn't fit the requirements of the musicians. So we arranged to use the theatre space situated in another college, on the other side of the campus lake about half a mile's walk.

This was the only solution open to us at the time. It gave us 24 hour use of the theatre but no bar within half a mile of the filkers. The filkers were also separated from the rest of the convention (now some may say that is a good thing...but not me...honest). It did work but only with the good humour and acceptance of the situation from the filkers as they trudged around the lake with their instruments in one hand and a tray with the mornings supply of beer in the other. We were lucky in that we ran as two distinct entities within one weekend of convention on the same nominal site, with our attendees being members of both conventions.

This lead me to think about the issues surrounding split site; Obviously the problems are apparent. Planning is the key. For example it is time consuming and not always the best idea to be constantly moving technical equipment between two sites. However it occasionally is the only solution if a fault develops and threatens the running of a programme item. Also techies are over worked at cons and running between sites is not efficient and leads to other problems. Having a tech team devoted to each site with spares and tools enough to service each site independently may be the way to go. An overseer techie may be an idea just as an extra level of management.

Taking this to extremes my solution would be to run on the Eboracon model. Run the two sites independent but linked. This means have a sub committee running each site. Organisationally-wise for the committee this requires communication and planning. But these are details, what concerns me more is that lack of a "heart" in split site conventions. At Eboracon/Harmuni both conventions had a focus independent of each other. They came together at certain times i.e. in the evening when we had a band playing with Harmuni guests performing. However this is pretty much a unique situation, each convention had it's own feel being separate from the other. In a normal split site convention it is a single entity with no real feeling of centre. It is something I think we as conrunners should be talking about since it is likely that cons of this sort are going to become more common.

Sparks



WELCOME TO YORK

York is an ancient and historic city. People have been living and working here for over 2000 years and remains of the past are everywhere. The city walls and bars are obvious, the Roman Bath pub on Samson Square has – yes a pub name that makes sense – a Roman Bath in the basement, open to the public during daytime, the Minster is the largest, but by no means oldest of the cities churches. Take a wander down Stonegate and you'll see signs for Barley Hall – a medieval town house preserved and restored in the city centre. Even if you don't go in, one wall is made of glass and you can look in on the hall itself. The best way to see York is to walk around the streets – of course at this time of year you'll be fighting with all the Christmas shoppers, so pick your times carefully.

WHERE TO EAT – some suggestions

This is one of the busiest weekends in York, so booking is advised for evening meals.

Italian

La Piazza, Goodramgate, Mid priced family restaurant with excellent service and a good wine cellar. 642641

Little Italy, Goodramgate, 623539

Ceasars, Goodramgate, 670914

Mamma Mia, Gillygate, 622020

Chinese

The Phoenix, Gillygate, Chinese 628069

Sit down restaurant with a good selection of both meat and vegetarian dishes. Booking advised for larger parties.

The Kings Castle, 33 Swinegate Fixed price buffet. But just so you remember those “starving children in China/India/Africa” that our mothers bade us to, a 50 pence surcharge is levied on any plates that aren't finished. This goes to Famine Relief. 633668

Vegetarian

Rubicon 5 Little Stonegate, 676076

Blake's Head Bookshop and Café. Micklegate. One of the finest vegetarian eateries in York.

Non-smoking and you are never short of something to read. (Lunch and Tea time only)

Tandoori Night, 21-23 Bootham, 612017

Moghul, 39 Tanner Row, (handy for the York Brewery) 659622

Viceroy of India, 26 Monkgate, 622370

British Eating

The Greenhouse, 12a Church St, English, Non-smoking, Lunch and early evening dinner. 629615

Russells of Coppergate, Carvery 644330

Also at Stonegate. 638857

Great for the carnivores amongst us. Great chunks of roasted animal parts, served with as few or as many cooked vegetables as one could wish, or cold salads. There is usually a good non-meat option as well. This is your best option for the traditional Yorkshire dinner of Roast Beef and Yorkshire pudding. Have a look in the window.

Betty's Tea Room: The shop on Helen's Square usually has queues around the block, except for very early morning coffee (about 10h30), and is one of The places to go in York. If what you really want is just a cup of tea and a cake, I usually go to Little Betty's in Stonegate. The quality and service are just as good, it only lacks the location. You can buy biscuits and cakes to take away.

Eating at Pubs

Most Pubs have two services of hot meals. Lunch is served from about 12h00 to 14h00 and dinner from about 17h30 to 19h00. Times will vary from pub to pub. Expect to spend between £5 and £10 for lunch and between £10 and £15 for dinner, including a pint or two. Some place will be cheaper, but few will be more expensive.

Typical pub fare would be Beef and Ale pie, Battered Fish, Cottage Pie, a roast of some kind. Expect everything to be served with chips and peas. Yes, even Lasagna.

Munch on the run

The Cornish Pasty Co. Kings Square or Coney St.

More varieties of Pasty and Sausage Roll than you have ever dreamed of. The Kings Square branch has a small seating area, otherwise try and find a seat in the Square and watch the street entertainment.

Dave's Hog Roast. Goodramgate. The originator of the hot meat sandwich. Roast meat in a white bread cake for just under £2.00.

Gillygate Fish bar Gillygate. There is a sitting place at the back, but eating your Fish and Chips in the open air from a paper parcel is part of the British experience. There are other Fish and Chip shops in York, but this is the one that Kat, Sparks and Kim go to for preference.

Thomas the Baker: a good variety of sausage rolls, meat pies and dangerous baked goods (cakes, buns and biscuits).

The Bakers Oven, Sausage rolls, sandwiches, biscuits and cakes.

WHERE TO DRINK - Eight of the Best in York

(A Very Personal Pub Guide, courtesy of Steve Lenton)

1. Bluebell: A Grade II listed Edwardian pub interior, the Blue bell is the city's only pub of truly national historic importance. Small cosy, sometimes crowded, it preserves the original fittings and panelling of a 1903 refurbishment.
53 Fossgate Beer rating *****
2. Black Swan - Mediaeval timber-framed house reputedly the birthplace of General Wolfe's mother. Some 17th century features and a major 1930s refurbishment.
23 Peasholme Green Beer rating ***.5
3. Swan: 1930s interwar refurbishment much in the Leeds style with a room sized central lobby.
16 Bishopgate Beer rating ***.5
4. The Three Legged Mare: Brand new pub in the shadows of the Minster, modern but sympathetic. The 2nd pub owned by The York Brewery and the first local brewery since J.J.

- Hunt in the 1950's. [The three-legged mare was a construction that allowed three hangings simultaneously. (See the re-creation in the small beer garden)]
 High Petergate Beer rating *****
5. The Olde Starr Inn: A popular tourist pub with good value meals. Victorian revamp in 1890's.
 Stonbow Beer rating ****
 6. Golden Ball: Basic style 1930s interior. A real gem as a representation of the dying breed of real drinkers' pubs. Beer garden and Bar billiards.
 2 Cromwell Rd, Bishopshill Beer rating *****
 7. The Phoenix: Used to be called "The Labour in Vain" until the mid 19th century. Probably purpose built in the 1830s, many Victorian features remain.
 75 George St. Beer rating*****
 8. The Minster Inn: Small turn of the century (1903) with original rooms still intact. With 3 original rooms near Museum Gardens and the River.
 24 Marygate Beer rating *****

Also worth noting:

The Golden Slipper, the Royal Oak, The Snickleway Inn and The White Swan, all on Goodramgate.
 The Maltings on Tanner Row, a Freehouse with a wide variety of beers from all over the world.
 The Achome, off Micklegate.

York is rumoured to have a pub for every day of the year, so if you don't find one of the above, you'll almost certainly find something else.

WHERE TO SHOP

In York, a gate is a street and a Bar is a gate. York has the normal range of British High Street stores, Debenhams, Marks and Spencer, Evans, Etam, River Island and Racing Green. Here are a few that are a little different. If there is anything specific you were hoping to find, ask KIM, Sparks or Kat. If we don't know, we can find out.

Clothing.

The Wooden Horse: 9 Goodramgate, Eastern clothes and trinkets
 Long Tall Sally, 44 Fossgate. Specialising in fashionable clothing for tall women, where 'tall' is over 5'9".
 Edinburgh Woollen Mills – mid range casual clothing. Good for woollen goods (oddly enough!). They have 3 stores in York. St Helens Square, The Shambles and Stonegate, each have a slightly different stock.

Sewing – Fabric – Notions

Beryls Fabrics – 3 Monkgate specialises in quilting.
 The Viking Loom – High Petergate Craft supplies, needle work kits and chart books etc.
 Craft Basics – Gillygate, Craft supplies, Knitting wool and pattern books, kits.
 Gillies Fabrics – 2 Peter Lane General high end range of clothing fabrics.

Duttons for Buttons. Coppergate Just the thing you have been looking for. Buttons of all kinds, as well as needlework supplies, notions, ribbons kits. Upstairs, the 14th Century Roof beams have been exposed.

Boyes – Goodramgate – Budget Department Store with dress and furnishing fabrics upstairs

Chemists (Drug Stores)

Boots, has a number of outlets around the city. Good for toiletries that you may have forgotten.

The Coney Street branch has gifts as well as a Pharmacy

SuperSaver on Goodramgate for branded products at discount prices.

Eclectic

Christmas Angels – Petergate. This shop makes it Christmas all year around. Find a special bauble to take home as a reminder, or spend a fiver on trinkets as stocking stuffers. Or, adopt one of their life sized Teddy Bears!

The Teddy Bear Company 13 Stonegate. Teddies of all sizes and types.

Lakeland Plastic: All manner of storage options and kitchen toys/equipment.

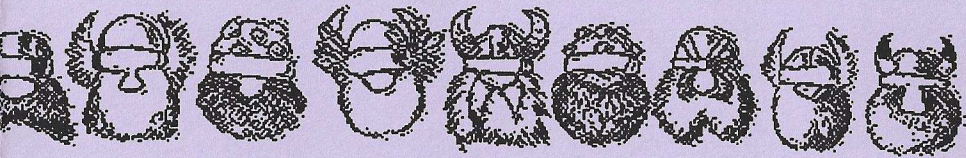
And Albert – Petergate. Eastern knickknacks, ornaments, clothes, furniture etc.

The nearest Supermarket is Sainsbury, behind the Hotel.

I haven't mentioned Book shops, because I figure, as fans, if I tell you they exist, you will find them! There aren't quite as many bookshops as there are pubs, but for second hand books try the Minster Gate Bookshop, off Petergate, several including the Barbican Bookshop (it looks very small on the outside . . .) on Walmgate, and several more on Micklegate.

The main Post Office is on Lendal and is open until 17h00 on Saturday, and opens again on Monday morning at 09h00.

York is packed full of small shops in the network of streets behind Stonebow, selling all sorts of things, and there is market in the centre that can be worth a look.



SMOFCON 19 MEMBERSHIP LIST

ID	Family Name	Known Name	ID	Family Name	Known Name
1	Olson	Mark	46	Woods	Katharine
2	Olson	Priscilla	48	McMurray	Pat
3	Lewis	Anthony	49	Briggs	James
4	Lewis	Suford	50	McIntee	Lesley
5	Whitmore	Tom	51	McIntee	David
6	Pins	Michael	52	Proctor	Judith
7	Olson	Erik	53	O'Shea	Chris
8	Bloom	Kent	54	Cochrane	David
9	Morman	Mary	55	Rogerson	Steve
10	Sachter	Ruth	56	Austin	Margaret
11	Kare	Mary Kay	57	Easterbrook	Martin
12	Docherty	Vincent	58	Langford	David
13	Yalow	Ben	59	Treadaway	Paul
14	O'Connor	Dea	60	Boucher	Stephen
15	Paul	Sara	61	Reap	Colette
16	Virzi	Dennis	62	Bellingham	Alan
17	McGuire	Christian B	63	Mann	Jim
18	Wolkoff	Lew	64	Mann	Laurie
19	Illingworth	Tim	65	Gelb	Janice
20	Illingworth	Marcia	66	Bemis	Judy
21	Sapienza Jr	John T	67	Parker	Tony
22	Sapienza	Peggy Rae	68	Dashoff	Todd
23	Daugherty	Kathryn	69	Dashoff	Joni
24	Daugherty	James Stanley	70	Quin	Jennifer
25	Jaffe	Saul	71	Hirai	Hirohide (Jack R.)
26	Siclari	Joe	72	Darragh	Al
27	Siladi	Michael	73	Simpson	Neil
28	Reeson	Sarah	74	Hoare	Martin
29	Brialey	Claire	75	Sorensen	Ian
30	Plummer	Mark	76	Mason	Sue
31	Jarvis	Athena	78	Brennan	Elaine
32	Jarvis	Peter	79	Gordon	Marc
33	Campbell	KIM	80	Skrivner	Joyce
34	Tabasko	Mary	81	Larson	Blars
35	Adams	Andrew A	82	Geisler	Deb
36	Capewell	Stuart	83	Furlong	Nigel
37	Sund	Bjorn Tore	84	Furlong	Sabine
38	Bradshaw	Bridget	85	Davies	Steve
39	Bradshaw	Simon	86	de Cesare	Giulia
40	Labonville	Zanne	87	Howlett	Craig
41	Harris	Colin	88	Harold	John
42	Jones	Jonathan D	89	Bourget	Robbie
43	Mullan	Caroline	90	Denis	Jane
44	Ameringen	Brian	91	Denis	Scott
45	Kilbane	Steve	92	Rennie	Mike

The St. Trinians
Quidditch Team
Chadwell (Capt)
Get Some Practice In...

