



# **The 21st British Filk Convention**

**6-8 February 2009**

**Ramada Grantham Hotel  
Swingbridge Road, Grantham NG31 7XT**

**Guest of Honour  
Richard "Hitch" Wheatley**

**International Guest of Honor  
Rand Bellavia and Adam English**



# Introduction

Welcome, one and all, to the first progress report for the 21st British Filk Convention, aXXI... um, hang on, I've just dropped my pen... ah, aXXIdental, that's it.

A 21st birthday should be characterised with plenty of merriment, entertainment, fine music and finer ale, and this special birthday of UK filkdom is no different. We've been lucky enough to get the same venue that has served us well for the last two years; they know by now how much we drink and how much noise we make, and hotel staff have even turned up to listen, so we hope that the only surprises of the con will be the marvellous programming, the wonder of our guests, and the chance to hear old and new members of filkdom.

So what are you waiting for, read on to find out more!

## Hotel

Our hotel for aXXIdental is the Ramada Grantham Hotel, formerly known as the Grantham Marriott hotel. This is situated in Grantham (surprisingly enough) in Lincolnshire. It has good access by road (just off the A1), by rail (Grantham is on the East Coast main line from London Kings Cross), and air (East Midlands airport is only 37 miles away, and is a reasonably easy route by public transport). The hotel has one large (150-seater) conference room, two smaller (50-seater) ones, and four small boardrooms near the largest room. It has 86 guest bedrooms, a large open bar area with plenty of seating, and a pool and sauna.

You can read up about the hotel on their website ([www.ramada.com](http://www.ramada.com)). Room rates will be published in the next PR.

# Guests of Hono(u)r

## UK Guest: Richard "Hitch" Wheatley



Richard "Hitch" Wheatley attended his first filk con, Contabile, in 1989 and has been at every UK filkcon since. With his strong tenor voice (most often heard within the a cappella filk choir, the n'Early Music Consort), dry sense of humour, and a massive and often obscure music collection, Hitch is sure to delight us in song, however other instruments may not be far from his hands. Active in medieval recreationalism, Hitch produced a tape of 16th century dances ("A Hitch in Time")

on which he plays shawm, recorder, keyboard and percussion. He has also been known to play clarinet and alto saxophone in a non-medieval context. Regardless of instrument or context, Hitch will charm you with a gentlemanly manner and a healthy dose of surrealism.

## International Guest: Rand Bellavia & Adam English

Rand Bellavia and Adam English are the young, dashing and downright madcap nucleus of Fandom's Own Rock Band, Ookla the Mok. They've been playing at sci-fi and comic book conventions all over North America since 1994 but this will be their first time at a UK convention. With witty lyrics, groovin' tunes, and an ability to mimic almost any power-pop, Rand sings and plays guitar and trombone, Adam sings and plays guitar, keyboards, accordion and trumpet. They both write the songs, so equally share the blame. I mean, credit.



# Programme

We are delighted to announce that this year's convention will include something special relating to the British filksong cycle, 'Before the Dawn'.



We have a lot of excellent sets and workshops lined up; in fact, the programme is nearly full! So, if you would like a 20 min set, let us know asap! We are also happy to have a stand-by list, where if we have any cancellations we'll put you in. Contact us for programming at [axxidental@hewett.org](mailto:axxidental@hewett.org).

Peter (he of the Programming)

## **We must be mad. We're doing another songbook.**

The aXXidental concon are producing a convention songbook; once again, Alison Richards has agreed to edit it. So, we're after songs and artwork.

### **Songs don't have to be new**

We'd like a good sampling of current material, of course, but there are plenty of good songs that date back years which have never been recorded or published. We'd like to include some of these, before they risk being forgotten.

### **Songs don't have to be in English**

The majority of songs at a UK con are in English - but not all. The songbook can be the same. We do ask that if you send something in a foreign language (whether it is in German, Greek or Geordie) you include a short note giving the gist of the song in English - if only so that we can get appropriate artwork.

## **Songs don't have to have original tunes**

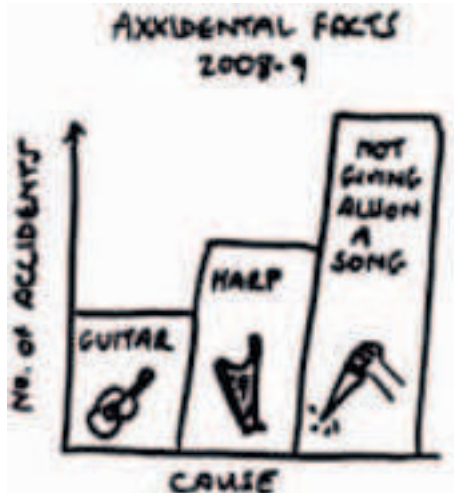
We're happy to publish original tunes (we use Noteworthy Composer and can also accept MIDI files; if this means nothing to you, talk to the editor) and chords; we're also happy to publish songs "to the tune of". Pietry (filkish poems) are also acceptable.

## **Songs can have been published before**

We're looking for songs that aren't widely available in the UK already. This does not preclude ones that have, for example, been published in a US hymnal not typically sold on this side of the pond.

We can handle ASCII, various Word and Open Office formats, and that most flexible and portable of formats - hard copy.

We'll also be looking for volunteers to help with artwork (thanks to those people who have already volunteered!) once the songs start to arrive.



Any profits will be going to the filk fund. We're hoping to arrange a discount for contributors but that will depend on what material we actually get.

Contributions should be sent to Alison and Mike directly at:  
[mike.and.alison@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mike.and.alison@blueyonder.co.uk)

Alison and Mike Richards  
(They of the songbook savvy)

# Who are you guys anyway?

Ladies and gentlemen, the people running your con this afternoon are:

## **Miki Dennis (Hotel Liaison)**

Miki has been involved with folk and then filk for around 25 years. She managed to avoid organising the first filk con by being inconspicuous but since that was one of the only times in her life she achieved this she has since been on 3 committees and the last Glasgow Worldcon. This is slightly unusual as she can't sing a note and disguises this by writing and performing poetry [or 'pietry'.] She is also a high ranking noble of the Far Isles Medieval Society and has run many of their events as well as being an award winning sci-fi costumer.

## **Mich Sampson (Guest Liaison, Publications)**

This is Mich's first time on a filkcon committee, following helping run the filk-stream at Harmuni 3 / Recombination / UniCon 2007. Having been a GoH at filkcons in the UK and US, she's in a good position to look after aXXidental's guests and indulge their every whim (I mean, support them in their efforts to entertain you, gentle filker!). When not committee-ing, Mich plays piano and sings, performing by herself, or as filk-folk duo 'Playing Rapunzel', or with the n'Early Music Consort (nMC).

## **Peter Westhead (Programme)**

Resident Mad Scientist and self-confessed anachronism, Peter has been going to cons since he was six weeks old. When not working hard on his concom debut, he likes to spend his time on all things fannish, most notably gaming, costuming, larp, unicycles and filk. He is a standing (or sometimes sitting) member of the band Chimes and forms anywhere from a third to a quarter to sometimes less of the group, depending on who's been conned into joining this time. As a true native of filkdom and fandom, he has taken on the job of organising the programme.

### **Rick Hewett (Finances, Memberships)**

Rick had a brief encounter with fandom back in the late 70s when he was at university, but escaped, and remained mostly free of fannish influence for the next couple of decades. Then, in an unguarded moment, he asked the question "What, exactly, is 'filk'?" and the hook was set. In mid '98 Annie Walker hauled him out of the Harp List into Filk\_UK. By the end of the year he'd been to three SWiGGLeS, two house-cons, one convention, and joined the nMC. He helped organise the Harmuni 2 filk track at ConteXXt UniCon 2002, and these days can often be found tangled up with tech folk at filk cons, or in the Green Room at Eastercons.

[Ed: Rick's unofficial job seems to be keeping the rest of us on the straight and narrow or, at least, reasonably productive.]

### **Mike Westhead (Without Portfolio)**

Ex-rocker, ex-hippie, ex-mod and international man of mystery, Mike harkens back to the era where sci-fi authors gathered to discuss such new and strange notions as global warming. A veteran of fannish and con-running activity, Mike is the eternal "Wasn't he here a minute ago?" His job is to spot the deliberate mistakes of the rest of the committee before anyone else does.

### **Mike Richards (Without Portfolio, Harp Perpetrator)**

It all started so innocently. First, it was tapes and CDs. Then, on to conventions. Soon, he was borrowing other people's songs and, without a qualm, mutilating them - in public. He dragged other people in too, shamelessly corrupting them with the harp. Now, see the pitiful wreck. Every few years, when the craving gets too strong, he helps with the organisation. Four music cons stand in mute testimony to this sad case (mute, at least, until the evidence is admitted in court). Mike isn't sure what his role is, but people keep referring to him as the token responsible adult, which is worrying.

**Contact the committee at [axxidental@hewett.org](mailto:axxidental@hewett.org), or by post to  
aXXidental, 15 St. Catherine's Cross,  
Bletchingley, Surrey, RH1 4PX.**

# Membership List

Being the list of reprobates who have already signed up to this convention as of 5 June 2008...

|       |                |      |                   |      |                       |
|-------|----------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|
| GoH 1 | Rand Bellavia  | A 32 | Square Bear       | A 63 | Azakir Devaris        |
| GoH 2 | Adam English   | A 33 | Emily Raftery     | A 64 | Soir Blackwing        |
| GoH 3 | Hitch          | A 34 | Rafe Culpin       | A 65 | Smitty                |
| Com 4 | Miki Dennis    | A 35 | Alison Richards   | A 66 | Diana Joan (D.J) Bass |
| Com 5 | Mich Sampson   | A 36 | Anke              | A 67 | Michael Bernardi      |
| Com 6 | Mike Westhead  | A 37 | Peter Tyers       | A 68 | Vera's Zimmerframe    |
| Com 7 | Peter Westhead | A 38 | Barbara Stewart   | A 69 | Vera Emlyn            |
| Com 8 | RickH          | A 39 | John Stewart      | A 70 | Franklin              |
| Com 9 | Mike Richards  | A 40 | Rhodri James      | A 71 | Jenny                 |
| A 10  | Matt/Budrick   | A 41 | Roger Robinson    | A 72 | Paul B. =:o}          |
| A 11  | Marion         | A 42 | Tim               | A 73 | JewelSong             |
| A 12  | Tricia         | A 43 | Annie             | A 74 | Nancy Freeman         |
| A 13  | Sue Edwards    | M 44 | Jared             | A 75 | Donna Cat             |
| A 14  | Alexa          | C 45 | Ellie             | A 76 | Hilary Ann            |
| A 15  | FanTom         | A 46 | Andrew Barton     | A 77 | Ωmega                 |
| A 16  | Teddy          | A 47 | Kate Soley-Barton | A 78 | Nat                   |
| A 17  | Dave           | A 48 | Kathy Westhead    | A 79 | Hamster Girl          |
| A 18  | Janet Maughan  | A 49 | Karen Westhead    | A 80 | Bridget Wilkinson     |
| A 19  | Robert Maughan | A 50 | Tony Rogers       | A 81 | Debbie Levy           |
| A 20  | Jessica Prett  | A 51 | Bill              | A 82 | Simon Fairbourn       |
| A 21  | Dave S         | A 52 | Brenda            | A 83 | Talis Kimberley       |
| A 22  | Rika           | A 53 | Leo Sands         | M 84 | Corwin Kimberley      |
| A 23  | The Magician   | A 54 | Kathy Sands       | M 85 | Pippa                 |
| A 24  | Deborah        | A 55 | Ju                | A 86 | Lissa                 |
| A 25  | Melusine       | A 56 | Keris             | A 87 | Phil                  |
| A 26  | Valerie        | A 57 | Liz               | M 88 | Alex                  |
| A 27  | Chris Bell     | M 58 | Alistair          | C 89 | Amy                   |
| A 28  | Gwen Funnell   | M 59 | Abi               | A 90 | Sib                   |
| A 29  | Peter Wareham  | M 60 | Rachel            |      |                       |
| A 30  | Kathy Songbird | A 61 | Anna              |      |                       |
| A 31  | Colin Tuckley  | A 62 | Marilisa          |      |                       |