

# ♪ Quarter Tone ♪



*1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2013*  
*The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual UK Filk Convention*  
*Ramada Grantham Hotel, Grantham*

# ***Welcome to PR1 for Quarter Tone!***

Twenty five years.

It's a remarkable achievement: the UK filk community has been hosting an annual convention for a quarter of a century (more than one in some years). A very few people have made it to *every single one* of these, as our community has grown in strength and diversity. Hopefully, in another twenty five years, we'll still be saying the same.

Over this time we've heard: guitars, harps, strings, brass, woodwind, kazoos, towels, keyboards, instrumentals, vocals; poetry, folk, rock, blues, operetta and opera; English, German, Greek and Mongolian songs; seen concerts, musicals, games and a TV series. We've had themed concerts, open concerts, and circles from dusk 'till dawn - and beyond. We've made friends from this country and from all around the world. No, not just made friends – met family.

It's a great privilege to be on the committee for the 25<sup>th</sup> con, but a responsibility, too: how should we celebrate? Look back at all the past cons? Look to the present, and the current community? Look to the future? Ideally, we'd do all three, but with only a single weekend to pack everything in we'll have to be more selective. The programme isn't decided yet, so if you have any bright ideas for ways to celebrate, now would be the time to let us know.

We're going to produce a convention songbook, but as well as the usual mix of current material, we're hoping to include as many as possible of the past award-winning songs. Many are becoming hard to get hold of: we run the risk of losing some of our classics.

We have two excellent guests this year. From the UK we have Tom "FanTom" Nanson, an accomplished songwriter, costumer and performer. From the US we have the songwriter Cat Faber, winner of multiple Pegasus awards. Full biographies will be included in the Programme Book, but there's a brief teaser about each included here in PR1.

The annual UK filkcon is always one of the highlights of my year; now is the time to start preparation for 2013, and what I hope will be a highlight of your year, too.

*Mike Richards*

## ***UK Guest of Honour***

Tom “FanTom” Nanson discovered fandom in 1987 after being tricked into going to his first convention by a devious older brother. He quickly became a member of the filk community and has been a regular attendee at UK Filkcons since Treble in 1991. He was on the Obliter-8 committee in 1996.

An accomplished costumer, Tom is often found at conventions dressed in historical outfits; previous examples include a Napoleonic uniform and a gentleman of the 1760s. He regularly exhibits artwork at Eastercon artshows.

Tom has a love of puns and wordplay, an interest in the etymology of words and fascination in the utilisation of polysyllabic constructions.

As well as writing original songs, Tom has a fondness for setting new words to old tunes, from Mozart via Gilbert and Sullivan to Andrew Lloyd Weber. He also holds the distinction of being the first person to have filked Minstrel’s classic *Boy in a room*. He has produced a single album to date, “FanTom Voices”, now something of a rarity.



## ***Overseas Guest of Honour: Cat Faber***

Cat Faber is the offspring of a sasquatch and a space alien, which gave her a unique perspective on things like sports and religion (if those can be said to be separate subjects). Her taste in music is likewise unusual, combining a love for the folksong style with an interest in subjects like science and magic. This made her such a natural for filk that it is astonishing she didn't discover it until she was nearly full grown. She sang from babyhood, though her sasquatch parent maintains she was tone-deaf until about the sixth grade.

Originally from the Pacific Northwest region of the US, Cat is a performer and songwriter known for her versatility and award-winning songs such as *Acts of Creation*. From 1997 until 2003 she played and sang with Callie Hills as the duo *Echo’s Children*. Having moved to eastern Tennessee, Cat remains a prolific songwriter and is now working on a new album. She has been awarded the Pegasus award for Best writer/composer twice.

# ***The Songbook***

We are once again doing a convention songbook, and Alison Richards has again agreed to act as editor. It seems likely that there will be a Worldcon in the UK about a year after Quarter Tone, and that there will be a songbook for that as well. So we're asking for contributions for both, and if (when!) we get inundated with new material we can spread the work between the two. If there isn't a UK worldcon, we'll do one or two songbooks anyway.

To celebrate the **25th anniversary of Contabile**, and to distinguish it from the Worldcon songbook, for the Quarter Tone songbook we're looking for a mix of current and older songs. We're hoping to gather as many as possible of the songs that have won Sams (best serious, best silly, filk gold), as well as Pegasus award-winning songs that are regularly performed in the UK. We're also looking for classic hits that are now hard to find, even if they have already been published. We're also after newer material that hasn't been published.

**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, and 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.

We can handle a wide variety of formats for lyrics (and hardcopy almost always works). We're keen to publish tunes and chords for songs with original tunes - we use Noteworthy Composer and can also accept MIDI files or hardcopy; if all else fails we can attempt to transcribe from a recording. We're happy to publish songs "to the tune of" and poetry (filkish poems).

Of course we're also after artists willing to contribute a few drawings. Typically these are either generic fillers, or we supply a song and a gap and invite you to fill the gap. We try to match the songs to the artist.

Songs can be sent to Alison Richards at [mike.and.alison@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mike.and.alison@blueyonder.co.uk) or by post to via the convention address.

Please note: we hope to get songs from many people, so we cannot offer a contributors copy without charging an unrealistic amount for non-contributors.

# ***The Committee***

## **Miki Dennis**

Miki Dennis 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.

## **Rick Hewett**

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 un-guarded 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 aXXIdental, the 21st UK Filk Con, in 2009. He can sometimes be found helping (after a fashion) in the Green Room at Eastercons, and he's often tangled up with tech folk at filk cons.

## **Mike Richards**

Mike found fandom via filk at university, when a friend loaned him a tape to see if he liked it. Curiosity got the better of him and he was gradually hooked. A supply of tapes provided an initial fix, but then he discovered conventions, and has been going to UK filkcons since Transept. After toying with a few different instruments he bought a harp, and has stuck with the instrument ever since. Several people hold Mike responsible for taking up the harp themselves.

An unwise comment on the Filk-UK email list ("What does running a con involve?") has seen Mike on multiple convention committees, mostly at the same time as Miki Dennis.

# ***Programming***

The programme is, at the moment, a blank slate, waiting to be filled. With this PR you'll find a form that you can use to request a concert slot; please don't assume that we'll automatically give your group a slot without asking us: while the convention mascot may have a good memory, the committee are only human. Of course, we cannot guarantee to fit everyone who wants a slot in, but we'll try our best. It's particularly important to let us know if you will need significant set-up or tear-down time, or have constraints on timing.

There will, of course, be the usual Main Concert at which anybody is welcome to sign up for one or two songs, as well as open circles through the evenings and into the night.

## ***Themed Concert***

In addition to the open Main Concert, we will have a Themed Concert. We're looking for songs on the theme of **Silver** (which can be interpreted very loosely).

## ***The Hotel***

Our hotel for Quarter Tone will be familiar to anyone who has been to a recent UK filkcon: once again we are going to the Grantham Ramada Hotel, surprisingly situated in Grantham in Lincolnshire. This 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 rooms with huge double beds throughout. They prepare very reasonable bar snacks and evening meals and provide Proper Beer and Cider. They do their best to try and accommodate *reasonable* requests so if you do need something a little out of the ordinary let us know and we will try to arrange it for you. Please go through the con rather than contacting the hotel direct if possible.

For those of you who haven't stayed here before it is rather outside the town: be prepared for a bit of a walk for shopping or outside restaurants.

# ***Volunteering***

Any folk con relies on the good offices of volunteers to keep everything running... if not smoothly, then at least in the same direction. This includes holding down Registration, helping set up the room, and running Tech. If you're willing and able to help, please let us know, either via the Volunteer form or by email.

## ***Tech***

The Tech equipment is there to help you sound as good as possible. The techies can use it to best effect if they know what you want, and it will help them a lot if they know this **in advance** so they can bring the right equipment.

If you would like a slot, here are some of the questions you should answer - preferably in your set request:

- How many performers?
- What sort of space will the performers need?
- What instruments will the performers be playing?

It will also help the techies if you can provide a set list. If it's complicated then it will help if they have it before the Con, but for simpler sets it's OK to give it to them just before you do a sound check. Ideally, the set list will answer the questions above and a few more, like these:

- Where on stage do you want your performers?
- Who sings in each song?
- Who plays which instruments in each song?
- Will your performers sit, stand, dance, or...?
- What backing tracks (preferably on plain old ordinary audio CD!), or other techie-controlled effects are needed in each song?

Concise, clear information will help. If your set list strays over onto a second page then it's probably too complicated!

## ***Recording***

Full details of our recording policy will be in a later PR and the programme book, but will essentially be: personal use, get the performer's permission, bring your own kit, don't leave it unattended, and turn it off if asked to do so.

## ***Membership as of July 30, 2012:***

|                      |                 |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Cat Faber            | Heike           | Smitty          |
| FanTom               | Rick Hewett     | Songbard        |
| Aileen               | Ju Honisch      | Barbara Stewart |
| Alex Allcock         | Katie Howe      | John Stewart    |
| Amy Allcock          | John G.         | Bill Sutton     |
| Lissa Allcock        | Kate            | Brenda Sutton   |
| Phillip Allcock      | Debbie L        | Teddy           |
| Diana Joan (DJ) Bass | Liz             | Thomas          |
| Michael Bernardi     | Mad Logician    | tiggy           |
| Chavalai             | The Magician    | Peter Tyers     |
| Ewan Clark           | Aunty Marion    | Valerie         |
| Countess Axylides    | Melusine        | Peter Wareham   |
| Abi Crook            | Minnow          | Karen Westhead  |
| Alistair Crook       | Nall            | Kathy Westhead  |
| Rachel Crook         | Zander Nyronnd  | Mike Westhead   |
| Rafe Culpin          | Rhodri          | Peter Westhead  |
| Deborah              | Alison Richards | Anne Whitaker   |
| Miki                 | Mike Richards   | James Whitaker  |
| Katie Draisbach      | Rika            | Mike Whitaker   |
| Sue Edwards          | Roger Robinson  | Dale Williamson |
| Ferret               | Tony Rogers     | Ωmega           |
| Gwen Funnell         | Silke           | ♪               |

Membership costs £35 for waged and £22 for unwaged. Children under 5 are free. Discounts for under 18s. Prices are valid until the end of November 2012.

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