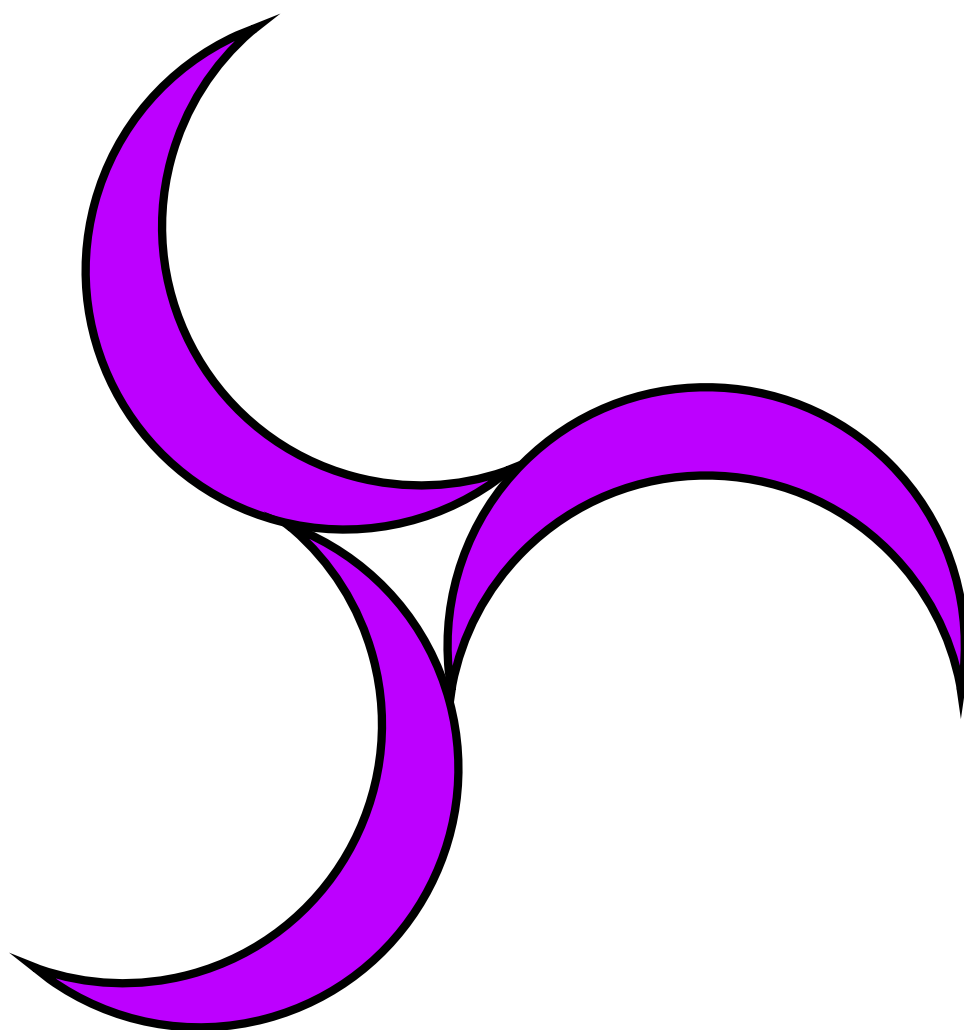


# **BiCon 2008**

# **Handbook**



**Leicester University**  
**(Oadby Campus)**

**28th—31st August 2008**



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# Key Contacts

## Venue Contact Details

Gilbert Murray Conference Centre  
University of Leicester Conference Services  
Stamford Hall  
Stoughton Drive South  
Leicester  
LE2 2LG  
0116 271 9933

## The BiCon 2008 team are:

- Ian: BiCon team leader, venue liaison and Friday's entertainments
- Natalya: Bookings, finance, website, accessibility and deputy-everything
- Tonnvane: Workshops and finance
- Libby: PR, marketing and handbook
- Alison: Registration desk coordinator and all round useful person
- Katy: Saturday's entertainments and room allocations

## Contacting the team during BiCon

If you need to contact the organising team during BiCon, go to the registration desk. Out-of-Hours in an emergency you can call the team member on duty on 07531 365 796. Please note this number will only be available during BiCon.

**In a real emergency call 999 for the appropriate services before contacting the organisers.**

## Emergency and helpline Numbers

- Oadby Campus Security: 0116 2522 888
- NHS Direct: 0845 4567
- Leicester LGB Helpline: 0116 255 0667
- The Samaritans: 0116 270 0007
- Turning Point (for confidential drug advice): 0116 506 1111
- Leicester Rape Crisis: 0116 255 8852
- Leicester Victims of Crime: 0116 255 0107
- Local Police: 0116 222 2222

## Booklet credits

Booklet edited by Libby Baxter-Williams. Thanks to past BiCon organisers for the basis of the Code of Conduct, to past handbook editors and everyone who contributed material.

All information contained in this booklet is, to the knowledge of the BiCon 2008 team is correct at the time of going to print. Attendees should regularly check the BiCon 2008 website (before the event), and the information displays at BiCon Reception (during the event), for updates.

# Room Names Explained

Over the years BiCons have developed a habit of calling rooms strange names, from Teletubbies to planets, famous bisexuals to famous computers. This year our rooms are named in honour of Joe Orton.

Joe Orton was born in Leicester seventy five years ago, living about two miles from our venue until he was 18. He won a scholarship to RADA, where he met Kenneth Halliwell. They became lovers, moved in together and started writing novels.

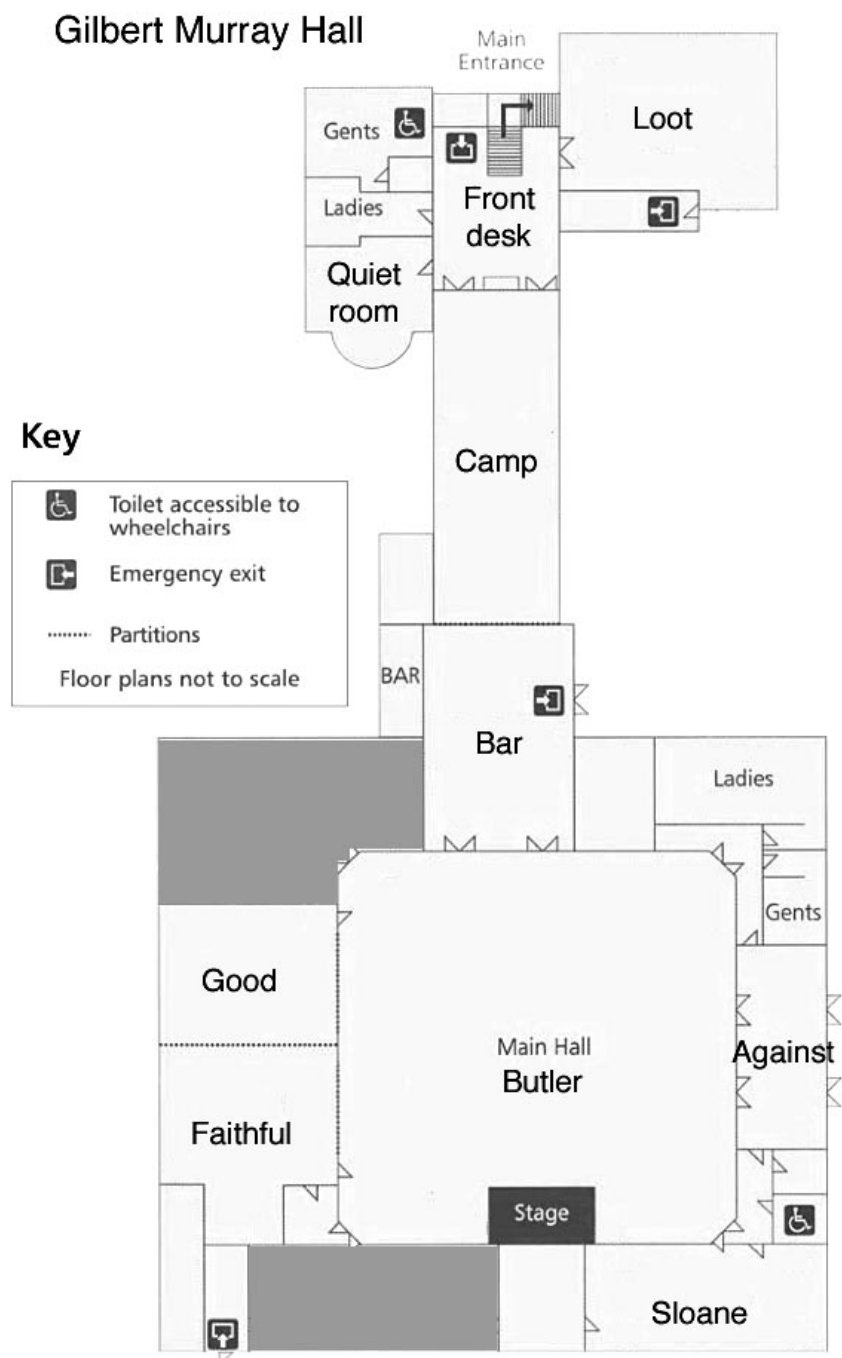
When those failed to attract a publisher, they moved on to rewriting the blurbs on book dust jackets on books borrowed from Islington Library. When these were discovered, they were charged with theft and malicious damage and imprisoned for six months. (Ironically, the books are now far more valuable than they would have been without their 'damage'.)

In the early 60s Orton started writing plays, and it was these which were much more successful. In 1967, Halliwell murdered Orton and then committed suicide. Jealous of Orton's success, Halliwell probably also feared (correctly) that he was going to leave him.

Orton's diary, revelling in his delight for casual gay sex, was used for his biography, 'Prick Up Your Ears', adapted into the film starring Gary Oldman in one of his best performances.

His plays live on. Dripping with bisexual characters, it's appropriate that we've used the titles of some to name the session rooms:

- Entertaining Mr **Sloane**
- **Loot**
- The Erpingham **Camp**
- The **Good** and **Faithful** Servant
- What the **Butler** Saw
- Up **Against** It



# Welcome to BiCon 2008!

## **Hello and Welcome.**

2008 finds BiCon back in Leicester. Every BiCon is run by a team of unpaid volunteers; your team have been working hard over the past two years to make sure that BiCon 2008 is just as fantastic as ever.

We've got a packed timetable of meetings, events, workshops, entertainments and parties to keep you as busy as you want during BiCon, and we hope you have a wonderful time!

Whatever happens, what makes a good BiCon is the attendees – you!

Every BiCon is run by the bisexual community, for the bisexual community, and it's a chance to meet friends old and new, learn a little, laugh a lot, and celebrate what a wonderful and diverse bunch we are.

## **So here's to a wonderful BiCon!**

All the best,

The BiCon 2008 Team

## **All About BiCon**

### **So what's a BiCon anyway?**

BiCon is an annual festival for bisexual people, their friends, partners and allies. Held in a different UK location each year, BiCon attracts between two and three hundred people and is the single biggest event in the UK bisexual calendar.

### **About this booklet**

This booklet contains various things we can already tell you before BiCon starts. If you get your copy before BiCon, do have a look through it. It contains information about the venue and local area, as well as about BiCon itself. As well as giving you some idea what to expect, it may help you to decide what to bring.

The main thing not here is the complete timetable and details of sessions and entertainments: that will be finalised and we'll print that information just before BiCon in the programme booklet you will receive when you arrive.

In the meantime, see the outline timetable on page 14 of this booklet for a glimpse of activities taking place at BiCon.

# On Site Sources of Help

## Reception Desk

This is a good first point of contact for anyone with any questions. Desk volunteers may be able to answer queries, provide assistance or contact members of the organising team for you.

## The BiCon team

If there's anything you need over the weekend, please talk to us (refer to page one for details of how to contact us). Besides knowing where to find First-Aiders and Counsellors, we have lots of other practical information, and we can liaise with the venue staff about any problems that they should be dealing with.

## Identifying the team

People wearing purple sashes are 'on duty'. Anyone wearing a purple sash is a good person to ask if you need help or resources.

## Security

The Security Office is staffed twenty four hours every day. The campus is regularly patrolled by security staff, day and night. The night porter can be called on 0116 2212035 and security can be called on 0116 2522 888.

## First Aid and Counselling

Some BiCon-goers are trained First-aiders or Counsellors and have volunteered to be available during the weekend. If you have a need for a sticking plaster (whether physical or emotional), we will try to find someone who can help. Please ask at BiCon Reception or call the BiCon mobile phone on the number in the front of this booklet.

# Providing feedback or information

## Organisers' postbox

We will check the postbox at least once per day (shortly before the announcements plenary session), and sometimes more often. It will be in BiCon Reception or somewhere nearby. It can be used for anything you want to communicate to the organisers (and perhaps also to the whole of BiCon). For example:

- A suggestion about how things could work better.
- A problem you want us to be aware of.
- Something you want to tell us anonymously.
- Something you'd like brought to everyone's attention at a plenary, but don't want to say yourself.
- Thank you to someone (on the team or not).
- How much you're enjoying yourself!

Leave your name and some way of contacting you (email, telephone number) if you want us to know who sent the message (e.g. if you want us to get back to you) or not if not.

If you particularly do want or don't want your message to be mentioned or read out at the plenary, please say so; otherwise we'll use our own judgment on that.

# Getting External Help at BiCon

For emergencies call 999.

## Medical

We have access to the University's medical facilities for use in non-emergencies. They are open Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm. Surgery Telephone Number: 0844 815 1105.

Freemen's Cottages,  
161 Welford Road,  
Leicester  
LE2 6BF.

## Hospitals & Clinics

The nearest hospital with an A&E Department is the Leicester Royal Infirmary  
Infirmary Square

Leicester  
LE1 5WW

Telephone: 0116 254 1414

The nearest GUM (Sexual Health) Clinic is also at Leicester Royal Infirmary

A walk-in service is available every weekday morning, or appointments are available in the afternoon. Please be aware that you may have a long wait at the walk-in clinic.

## Pharmacists / Dispensing Chemists

- Boots the Chemist – 35 The Parade, Oadby, 0116 271 7514
- Severn Chemists – 40 Severn Road, Oadby, 0116 271 9053
- J&A Pharmacy – 19-21 Main Street, Evington, 0116 273 6047

## Dental Surgeons

Please call for an appointment and directions

- Dr G.K Kee - 0116 272 1800
- K Suida - 0116 271 2591
- Lebens, Ziff & Associates - 0116 271 4792

## Opticians

Please call for an appointment and directions

- Davies Hill Opticians – 0116 271 7456
- Vision Care Optometrists – 0116 272 0230
- York & Cooper – 0116 271 2310

## Police

Oadby Campus is served by Oadby Local Policing Office — 0116 222 2222

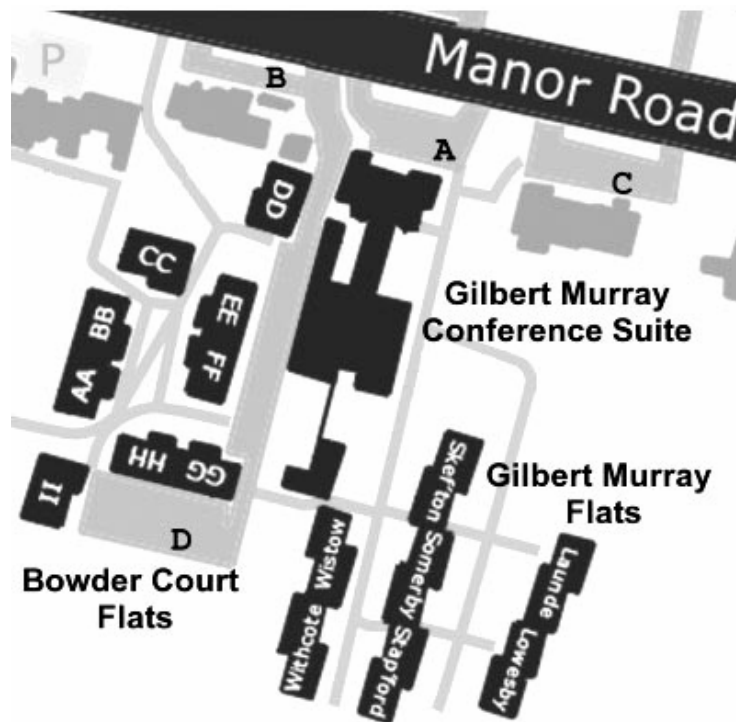
5, Leicester Rd  
Oadby  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE2 5BD

# Venue

Oadby campus is a 40 acre site, complete with beautiful landscaped grounds. The location combines impressive early nineteenth century houses with modern facilities. The campus is an enclosed space, and very peaceful and secluded.

## Daytime

For all of the daytime and evening programme we will be using the purpose built Gilbert Murray Conference Centre, which includes a chillout zone and social areas. All of the workshops and plenaries will take place in this building. The BiCon Reception desks for registration and information will be in the foyer.



## Evening

Our evening entertainment events will take place in the Gilbert Murray Bar and main hall (the same place we'll be holding plenaries). BiCon will have exclusive use of these areas for the weekend.

## BiCon Accommodation

BiCon accommodation will be in Gilbert Murray, Bowder Court and John Foster Flats across the road.

BiCon accommodation is loosely divided into party, medium and quiet flats where possible based on what you've told us about your preferences.

# Venue Facilities

## Car Parking

There is a plenty of car parking available on campus (see map).

Please note that car parks A, B and C are set aside for people with access difficulties.

Drivers with any access needs should contact BiCon prior to the event by emailing [bookings@bicon2008.org.uk](mailto:bookings@bicon2008.org.uk) or ask to speak to an organiser at the reception desk.

## Gym

There is a little-used sports ground adjacent to the campus, and a fully equipped gym, The Green House, next door. For more information, ask at BiCon reception desk.

## Internet Access

If you are bringing your own laptop, WiFi access is available in the main buildings with wired access available in rooms. Access is free, but please provide your own RJ45 network cables as these are not provided. Instructions for connecting to the wireless Internet will be provided when you register for BiCon.

## Cashpoints and Banks

There is no ATM on site; the nearest ATMs are on London Road and at the local ASDA, both about a ten minute walk away.

**Please note that BiCon Reception will not be able to provide attendees with cash or change for machines.**

## Laundry

Laundry facilities are available for BiCon attendees at the laundrette next to the conference suite. Costs are approximately £1.50 for a wash and 50p to dry.

# BiCon Accommodation

## Kitchen

This accommodation is self-catering, and a kitchen is provided in each flat. Please keep the kitchen clean and tidy for other attendees who may be sharing the flat with you.

Each flat has a kitchen with the necessary white goods:

- Kettle
- Toaster
- Fridge
- Freezer
- Microwave
- Cooker with oven and electric rings (en suite only)
- Two-plate hob and grill (standard only)

**Pots & pans, crockery & cutlery, utensils and glassware are NOT provided.**

Rubbish and recycling bags are provided in each kitchen for your use.

## Bedrooms

Bedrooms are provided in corridors of 7 or flats of 6. In standard flats two corridors of flats will share kitchen facilities. In ensuite rooms, flats will be of 6 people.

Bedrooms have the following provided:

- One single bed with blankets and two pillows
- Wardrobe
- Writing desk plus desk lamp
- Two towels (one bath, one hand)
- A welcome toiletries pack
- Tea and coffee making facilities (standard rooms will have these in the kitchens)

A welcome leaflet is also provided detailing emergency contact numbers and useful information.

**Please note that electrical sockets within rooms are 2 Amp fused and are not suitable for power equipment.**

Every room has a smoke or heat detector. When activated, you will hear the fire alarm. All occupants must evacuate the building and muster at the designated fire assembly point. Please familiarise yourself with evacuation procedures in your room. Please do not re-enter until told to do so.

It is an offence to use safety equipment such as fire extinguishers unless it is an emergency. Remember that smoke detectors can be quite sensitive to perfume spray, incense, burnt toast etc. Please take care to avoid the inconvenience of false alarms.

## Accessibility

A limited number of rooms equipped for people with additional needs are available. If you require any extra assistance please contact [bookings@bicon2008.org.uk](mailto:bookings@bicon2008.org.uk) before BiCon. It is unlikely one of these rooms will be available after BiCon has started.

# Health and Safety

## Smoking

Smoking has been illegal inside enclosed public spaces in all of the UK since July 2007. You cannot smoke inside any University buildings including the accommodation.

Anyone caught smoking in the flats will face a fine of £60 from the venue. BiCon will not cover this cost.

If you are smoking outside, please dispose of cigarette ends etc. in the sand buckets or litter bins provided.

## Animals

We can't allow animals on-site, except for registered assistance animals.

# Plenaries (announcements and decision-making)

The word 'plenary' is from a Latin word meaning 'full'.

A plenary is simply a gathering open to all BiCon delegates. There are several plenaries during the weekend. You don't have to attend all, or any, of them, but they will probably help you to know what's going on.

The plenaries are:

- An **opening plenary** to welcome everyone to BiCon
- A **daily** plenary where announcements can be made (for example, about late changes and additions to the programme).
- A **decision-making plenary** - this is the Annual General Meeting of BiCon, where we agree the venue and organising teams for future BiCons, discuss the finances, and review any changes to the BiCon Guidelines (the 'constitution' of UK BiCons).
- The **closing plenary**, where everyone says thank you to the organisers (hopefully!) and says goodbye.

## Some notes on The Decision Making Plenary from David Matthewman.

The Decision-Making Plenary (DMP) is the session at BiCon that ... well, makes decisions on issues. The 'issues' it decides on are things like who's going to run BiCon in future years, whether there are any bi projects that BiCon should help to fund, and whether any changes need making to the BiCon Guidelines (see below).

The debate can get heated, and occasionally veers into pedantry, but it's a very necessary part of BiCon and it's not always the nightmare its reputation would suggest. Because it's so important, it's never scheduled against other sessions, which allows everyone at BiCon to come to it – this year it's on Saturday evening.

If you want to raise an issue at the DMP, you should if at all possible bring it to the pre-DMP session on Friday. The purpose of this session is twofold. Firstly it allows the issues to be discussed in a smaller, more manageable group, where suggestions can be made and the ideas may be refined. Secondly, it allows the issues to be publicised on the notice board on the Saturday so that BiCon attendees can read the notices and know what is coming up. Please do read these notices (they'll be posted at or near the reception desk) if you're intending to come to the DMP – it will make things run more smoothly if everyone knows in advance what's going to be discussed.

If you can't make the pre-DMP session for any reason, and can't find someone to go in your place, please leave a note with reception before the end of Friday so that I can at least publicise the issue. Some small issues may be raised at the DMP without prior warning (it's not that formal), but not changes to the Guidelines, as those really do require more notice.

## Making proposals at the decision-making plenary

The decision-making plenary tends to run more smoothly if the proposals being presented have 'had the corners knocked off' beforehand. This year, this is the structure we've set up to help that to happen. At Thursday's evening plenary, we'll invite anyone with an idea for a proposal to stand up and outline it. We won't debate it then; this is just a 'heads-up' so that people with an interest in that issue know it's worth their while to go to the workshop the next day. The proposals will go on display afterwards for the benefit of people arriving later.

On Friday, interested parties get together in a 'knock the-corners-off' session (Pre DMP). This may mean that the original form of the proposal changes, or even that a completely different and better idea is invented. After that session, we put up a list of the proposals in their evolved form, along with the proposers and perhaps any main opposers who want to be named, at BiCon Reception. This allows for people to approach the proposers and opposers as individuals if there's a point they want cleared up, even if they missed the discussion. People may also want to put up written arguments for and against, for people to read while browsing the notice boards.

At Friday's evening plenary, we'll read out the list, so even if you hadn't had a chance to look at the noticeboards, you'll know what the hot topics are. If anything's really unclear we can hopefully make it clearer, but there won't be a big debate. With any luck this process will mean that things appear at the decision-making plenary on Saturday in a form that is clear to vote on, where the substantive issue has been identified and the undergrowth of 'yes buts' and 'what ifs' cleared away. It also gives people time to think about the stuff and/or discuss it and/or get clarification before they turn up to debate & vote.

## **The BiCon Guidelines by David Matthewman**

The BiCon Guidelines, written and agreed at the 1998 BiCon, are guidelines describing what BiCon is and how it should be run. They're intended to make things easier for teams running BiCon rather than being restrictive, and to make sure that any BiCon covers the bare minimum of requirements for content and accessibility.

Occasionally they get added to and amended at the DMP; this requires the approval of two consecutive BiCons. This year there's a proposed amendment carried over from last year which reads ***'The intent is not that the Equality Fund be how unwaged people generally attend BiCon'***; if that seems overly gnomic to you, feel free to track me down sometime before the DMP and I'll discuss it, or come to the DMP itself for a debate and a vote.

The full text of the BiCon Guidelines is available on-line here: <http://www.bicon.org.uk/guidelines.html> and will be available at the reception desk and at the pre-DMP session. Bear in mind that they're not intended so that you can walk around BiCon ticking them off and awarding marks to the current BiCon team, you'll make yourself very unpopular if you do that.

**Please do come to the DMP, though. It's important that decisions made on behalf of BiCon are made by as many people at BiCon as possible.**

## **Workshops**

Most or all of the sessions (or workshops – we'll use the terms interchangeably) at BiCon are run by attendees who have a skill to share or a hot topic they want to talk about. Some facilitators have lots of experience of running groups; others are running their first session this year.

Usually sessions are offered before BiCon starts, so that the organisers can work out a timetable and print a programme with details. However, it's also common for a few more to be added as BiCon goes on. Perhaps you wanted to get a sense of the BiCon vibe, or see what was already in the timetable, before making your offer. Or perhaps the idea for the subject was a spin-off from a discussion during the weekend.

If you decide during BiCon that you'd like to offer an additional session, tell BiCon Reception about your idea for a subject, and they'll find out whether there is space available for you to do this.

# Entertainments

**All evening entertainments are included in your day or weekend ticket.**

## **BiCon Bar**

The bar is open from noon each day, serving tea, coffee, soft drinks, alcohol and snacks for BiCon attenders. There are comfy seats for people to sit around on and socialise throughout BiCon.

Please note that under 18s will not be permitted in the bar area after 8pm.

## **Quiet Space**

There will be a quiet room with comfy seating available throughout the time that the Gilbert Murray Conference Centre is open—approx 9am to midnight each day. We ask that people are quiet in here, so no noisy games or conversations.

## **Games**

We will have games in the bar and some of the workshop rooms; there will be board games for people to borrow. If you have any games you fancy playing with others please bring them along.

## **Thursday and Friday nights**

On Thursday night our resident DJs will be playing some sets while giving BiCon attenders a chance to settle into the BiCon vibe.

Friday night will be Ian's slightly themed disco.

## **Saturday Night: The 'Circus of the Bizarre' BiCon Ball**

This year the ball is themed upon the 'Circus of the Bizarre'. Fancy dress is not mandatory at this event, but it is encouraged! Take your inspiration from Moulin Rouge, Cabaret, The Circus of Horrors, Victorian music halls, the Big Top or anything else that springs to mind. Come as a burlesque beauty, emcee, strong man or whatever takes your fancy. We want you to feel free to use your imagination but some people might not feel comfortable being near clowns/masks etc, so please consider their feelings.

**Under 16s are welcome at the BiCon Ball until 9pm.**

**Watch out for announcements for any unscheduled events.**

# BiCon Programmed Events

## '-Only' spaces

A few sessions may have restrictions on the people that may attend: for example, 'women only' or 'bisexual men only'. This will be indicated in their description in the programme.

If you're not included, don't gatecrash. (If it's not clear who is or isn't included, please confer with the session organiser in good time before the session. People at BiCon Reception can help you find them.)

## Content

Some sessions will deal frankly with topics that some people find offensive or difficult. It's fine to leave quietly if a session isn't what you expected, or you realise you're not in the mood for it. If you feel that the content breaches the Code of Conduct, please tell the BiCon organisers.

## Mobile phones

Unless you are on call as a volunteer counsellor or First Aider, please turn off your phone before joining a programme session. Members of the organising team will have their own mobile phones or the team phone on at all times, though these will be switched to 'silent' or 'vibrate' mode during workshops.

## Session Confidentiality

As stated on page 19 under 'confidentiality': feel free to discuss the content of sessions with people who weren't there, but don't name names, or describe someone in a way that identifies them. It's also good manners not to assume that just because someone talked about a particular issue in a session, they'll want to carry on talking about it somewhere else later.

## When a session is 'closed'

Some sessions may become 'closed' either when a certain number of people have arrived or after a certain amount of time. This will be indicated by a notice on the door. If a session is already closed, please don't try to join it.

## Additional tips for good manners in sessions:

- Turn up on time, or slightly early. There's a 15 minute break between sessions to give you plenty of time.
- Don't interrupt or talk over other people.
- In discussions, be aware of how much you're speaking, compared to other people. Help the session organiser to make sure that the quieter people get a turn to speak if they want to.

# Outline timetable

## Thursday: Bi ReCon

Registration opens at 10 am for Bi ReCon, and at 3pm for BiCon.

A day of workshops, presentations, research seminars and activities aimed at bringing together members of the bisexual community with key organisations, and researchers who study the experiences and needs of this group. Recent sexual equalities legislation specifically recognises bi people and outlaws biphobic activities and discrimination. Therefore organisations now have to pay attention to the 'B' in LGBT, but may not know what specific issues bi people face.

This day aims to address these issues and to build bridges between bi communities, researchers and key organisations and groups.

Bi ReCon is a jointly run event by the BiCon 2008 team and BiUK. BiUK is a group of researchers and activists who are committed to studying bisexual matters and working with bi communities.

### 10:00-17:30 Bi ReCon

### 18:00-21:00 BiCon introductory sessions

## Friday:

- 09:45-10:10 'Opening' plenary
- 10:15-11:30 Workshops (75 min)
- 11:45-13:00 Workshops (75 min)
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch (90 min)
- 14:30-15:45 Workshops (75 min)
- 16:00-17:15 Workshops (75 min)
- 17:20-17:30 Announcements
- 17:30-18:45 Evening Meal (75 min)
- 18:45-20:00 Workshops (75 min)

## Saturday:

- 10:00-10:10 Announcements
- 10:15-11:30 Workshops (75 min)
- 11:45-13:00 Workshops (75 min)
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch (90 min)
- 14:30-15:45 Workshops (75 min)
- 16:00-16:20 Photo
- 16:30-17:30 DMP inc announcements (60 min)
- 17:30-18:45 Evening Meal (75 min)
- 18:45-20:00 Evening Session

## Sunday:

- 10:00-10:10 Announcements
- 10:15-11:30 Workshops (75 min)
- 11:45-13:00 Workshops (75 min)
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch (90 min)
- 14:30-15:30 'Closing' plenary (60 min)
- 15:30-17:00 The clean-up begins. We'd love volunteers!

## Preparing for BiCon

### Things you might like to bring to BiCon

***“Reminds me of my safari in Africa. Somebody forgot the corkscrew and for several days we had to live on nothing but food and water” - WC Fields.***

- Comfy clothes.
- Clothes to dress up in, if you like to dress up. This could include fancy dress (maybe an outfit for the BiCon ball), or any other clothes you like, especially ones you wouldn't usually get the chance to wear.
- Your favourite board game or card game.
- Knitting/sewing if you enjoy them (there will be a "Stitch & Bitch" space, as well as costume workshops before the BiCon Ball on Saturday).
- Any sports equipment e.g. yoga mats, juggling balls, swimming things, walking boots.
- Proof of your date of birth, if you look young for your age.
- Kitchen equipment, such as pots & pans, crockery & cutlery, basic utensils and glassware.

# Finding your BiCon feet - Advice for first-timers

With so much to take in and so many people you don't know, it can take a while to 'find your BiCon feet'. Even people who come back year after year have their moments of feeling a bit anxious or 'alone in a crowd'.

Here, we'll try to give you a little of the flavour of BiCon, and tell you some useful things to help you settle in at your own pace.

## Ice-Breaker Activities

### Food for thought – the Noshers' Network

#### What if you want company for lunch?

At meal breaks, there's usually a Noshers' Network get-together. Meeting Points and times will be posted on the noticeboard at BiCon Reception. The idea is very simple: people who want the same kind of food get together.

That might mean going to a supermarket or takeaway and then back to the kitchen in someone's flat, or if the weather's good perhaps having a picnic, or walking into Oadby for a pub lunch.

The group doesn't necessarily all go to the same place - it depends what people want. Aside from finding people to chat with, this can be a good way of getting to know the local places to go for food.

### Meet & Mingle zones

Look out for '**Meet & Mingle**' signs. The idea is that in those areas, you can go and join a table where you don't know the other people (yet) and join in. Obviously you could do that anywhere, but this way you know in advance that you're not interrupting a private conversation as people sitting there will be specifically welcoming other people.

#### Meet & Mingle rules:

- Anyone is welcome to sit down and join in the conversation.
- Once you're in the Meet & Mingle zone, look out for passers-by or people who've recently come into the room, and invite them to join you.

Maybe you want to create your own Meet & Mingle zone – perhaps one with a theme, such as 'Stitch & Bitch' (for both keen knitters, and people who just want to have a go), or card games.

Ask at BiCon Reception if you want pens & paper to create your own Meet & Mingle sign with a particular theme.

### Meeting new people

#### You are not alone!

Approximately a third of the attendees each year are there for the first time, so even though you might feel alone when you arrive, it won't be long before you meet people. We've all been there, and we'll try to make sure that there are plenty of icebreaker-type opportunities to help ease things along. And hopefully, by the time you leave, you'll have made some good friends.

## **Don't know what to do?**

It's helpful to go to daytime sessions as a good way of meeting people. You won't necessarily make friends instantly in the sessions, but the discussion topic can lead into some interesting conversations then or later.

This year, as with previous years, we will be running sessions that are particularly aimed at first-timers, although these will be open to anyone who wishes to attend. It is expected that these sessions will include icebreaker-type exercises as well as offering advice, reassurance, and a chance for you to ask any questions you may have.

## **Everybody needs good neighbours**

Unless people have specially asked to be with a friend (whom they've named), we usually aim to put newcomers together in the flats with other newcomers, and/or other people from the same geographical area.

## **Want to help?**

BiCon is run by volunteers, some of you will already know we are looking (as always) for people with specific skills, such as counselling, first aid and signing. In addition, we're going to need general helpers for the event – staffing the reception desk or being a 'gopher' (general helpful person).

Ask at BiCon Reception if you'd like to help; we're glad for a hand from anyone willing to lend one. Volunteering is a great way to meet people, especially for people who are attending BiCon for the first time.

# **Food**

## **Food available on site**

There will be tea, coffee, juice and a small selection of snacks available at the conference centre. You will also find soft drink and snack vending machines in the bar.

## **Supermarket**

The nearest supermarket is an ASDA which also has cashpoints. This is about 10-15 minute walk or short drive from the BiCon venue. The opening hours are 8am-10pm Mon-Sat and 10am-4pm on Sundays.

BiCon reception will have lists of people offering or requesting lifts to the supermarket. If you are able to offer seats or would like seats in someone's car please ask at reception.

If you wish directions to the ASDA these will be available from the reception desk.

## **Takeaways**

There are takeaways, cafes and restaurants aplenty in Oadby. We hope to have some delivery menus at BiCon Reception throughout the weekend.

# BiCon Code of Conduct

## Context

By its nature, this section can sound like a long list of "Do this, do that, don't do this, please do that". We hope you will read it in the spirit it's meant; having these guidelines spelt out from the start is intended to prevent a sticky moment or misunderstanding which might spoil someone's BiCon.

## Your responsibilities

Everyone has a part to play in making BiCon a safe space. If you notice an incident of harassment, or anything else that doesn't belong at BiCon, please report it to BiCon Reception or the nearest organiser as soon as possible. If you don't feel comfortable bringing an issue to us directly, you can put a note in the organisers' post-box at Reception.

## The BiCon organisers' responsibilities

The organisers have final say. We will try to deal fairly and respectfully with any issue that is brought to us. Breaches of this Code of Conduct will, in most cases be, met with a warning from a member of the organising team. If warnings are ignored, or in the event of serious misconduct, we reserve the right to ask anyone to leave BiCon, and if asked to leave you will not receive any refund.

## Respecting difference

- People are welcome to attend BiCon regardless of how they define their sexuality.
- Transgender people are accepted at BiCon for all purposes as the gender they choose to present.
- Remember that some people are new to BiCon. Be helpful if you can.
- Racism, sexism, heterophobia and other bigoted behaviour will not be tolerated at BiCon.
- Respect the choices people have made regarding their beliefs, gender or sexuality, and how they choose to express them.

Access is not just a matter of wheelchairs. Different aspects of the environment affect different people, e.g. some people may be lip-reading, some need smoke-free space, some find busy crowds difficult.

You can't always know without being told, but try to be aware of what the people around you might need to make BiCon accessible to them.

## Boundaries / harassment

### No means no

No-one at BiCon should be put under any pressure to join in with things they don't want to. Obviously this includes any sexual behaviour, but it also includes hugs, touching, playing a game, being in a photo, disclosing information or even having a chat.

It's fine to ask someone once if they would like to do something. Pestering someone counts as harassment; if someone asks you to leave them alone, do so.

In public, "**no**", "**stop**", and "**don't do that**" will be taken at face value by the BiCon organisers, regardless of any safewords\* within BDSM games/scenes. (\*For explanations of "BDSM" and "safeword", see the Community Info Zones; you can safely skip over the above paragraph for now if they're not ideas you're already familiar with.)

## **Personal space**

Don't invade people's personal space without being invited to. A useful phrase is "*Would you like a hug?*"

## **Public behaviour**

Please keep any public behaviour legal and consensual. Remember that consent includes any audience, and that the audience may include not just attendees, but venue staff too.

BiCon should be a place where people feel free to express their sexuality, but we ask that overtly sexual behaviour, particularly 'kinky' or BDSM activities, be kept out of the public areas. (For explanation of "BDSM", see the Community Info Zones.)

# **Confidentiality**

## **Within BiCon**

Not everyone at BiCon wants to be 'out' about their sexuality to the whole world.

Ask permission before identifying anyone in a public write-up of BiCon. For the avoidance of doubt, 'public' includes personal web sites and blogs including those with restricted audiences.

## **Photography**

Please do not take any photographs of people without their express permission. It is your responsibility to make sure everyone in shot is happy to be photographed.

If you give permission for your photo to be taken, assume it may end up online linked to you by name as people may not remember your preferences after BiCon.

If you believe someone has taken your photograph without your permission you may ask them to delete the image or report this to the reception desk and an organiser will ensure that any images are deleted where possible.

## **Within discussion sessions**

No photography, recording or filming is permitted in programme sessions unless it's specifically stated in the programme.

Bear in mind that very personal issues may be raised in discussion sessions. Feel free to discuss the content of sessions with people who weren't there. But don't name names, and don't describe someone in a way that identifies them unless you have already checked they're OK with it.

## **Passes**

People attending BiCon should wear their pass to all events; if you don't, your right to attend may be challenged. Different passes will indicate under-18s. If you're over 18 but look younger please bring proof of your date of birth.

People involved with the organisation of BiCon who are 'on duty', are identifiable by their purple coloured sashes. You can learn more about this on page 5.

## **Press Policy**

Members of the press should identify themselves to BiCon Reception and at the start of any sessions they attend. If not everyone is happy with their presence in a session, the session organiser may ask them to leave.

## Children at BiCon

BiCon is primarily an event for adults. However, children are welcome with a parent or carer. There may be some workshops suitable for children, however we cannot guarantee suitability of the others.

### **During BiCon**

You retain responsibility for your child(ren) throughout the event. As this is a conference based around a shared sexuality, conversations taking place around your child may be adult in nature; if you do not want your child to hear these conversations, you are responsible for removing them from earshot.

Adult behaviour at BiCon should remain legal and comply with BiCon's guidelines at all times, but we cannot force people to, for example, stop swearing or showing affection. Please think in advance about what you are happy for your child to see. This applies particularly to evening events.

If you feel worried by the behaviour of anyone towards your child, please report this to the reception desk people know and the team will intervene if you want us to.

Please do not leave your child with anyone you don't know and trust.

Some sessions may have age limits, such as over-16s or over-18s. These will be indicated in the programme and/or on the door of the session room.

Some sessions, such as crafts or dance, may be appropriate for people of any age. However, parents attending with their children are encouraged to use their discretion on what is acceptable for their children to see and hear.

Exempting Family Day events, session organisers may ask a parent to remove their child(ren) from a session if discussion topics take an unexpectedly explicit turn.

Babes in arms are welcome at all sessions unless otherwise stated.

### **Childcare**

Children are welcome throughout the event, but as no one has requested it, we aren't providing childcare ourselves.

## Family Day

On Saturday, we will have a family-friendly day with some child-friendly workshops, a picnic, face-painting and other activities.

We can put people who are bringing children to BiCon in touch with each other. Just contact us, and we'll add you to the mailing list to discuss whatever you want - e.g. arranging shared resources such as toys and games, finding out who else has children of a similar age to yours, or perhaps getting together to volunteer a session on queer parenting.

We realise that you may wish to discuss with other parents the option of sharing some childcare at BiCon on an informal basis; please note that BiCon does not formally suggest this course of action and cannot take any responsibility for any arrangements made.

# Where is information provided?

## Notice Boards

There will be some notice board space available for attendees to use. As well as the workshop timetable and general information, there's space for you to put up a notice for other attendees. Feel free to advertise for other people to meet up, e.g. from your geographical area or sharing a particular interest.

## Plenaries

You might also like to make a brief announcement at an evening plenary session, or ask for your announcement to be read out by the team.

## Prior to BiCon

This year's BiCon web site is at [www.bicon2008.org.uk](http://www.bicon2008.org.uk), and there's one at [www.bicon.org.uk](http://www.bicon.org.uk) which links to info about past years and next year.

You might consider introducing yourself on the BiCon community on LiveJournal, <http://community.livejournal.com/bicon>. There usually seem to be at least one or two newcomers who say hello there before BiCon, and more afterwards. If you don't have a LiveJournal (a.k.a. LJ) yourself, you can still join in the conversation there by commenting on someone else's post. A lot of regular and recent BiCon-goers read this group, including many of this year's organising team, so it's a good place to get questions answered.

## Community Info Zones

Coming to BiCon can be quite a learning curve in terms of different words and different communities. For instance, BiCon-goers include people who identify as transgender, transsexual, deaf, disabled or Goth. You might also hear words and abbreviations like polyamory (or poly), BDSM, genderqueer and so on.

Look out for Community Information near BiCon Reception - written displays which try to answer the basic questions about these various areas. You won't be the first person who's wondered what those words mean.

## Who are these people in the strange clothes?

One of the wonderful things about BiCon is that it's a very non-judgmental place when it comes to dressing up. Leather, latex, purple velvet; corsets, drag, sparkly things; BiCon's seen it all (especially in the evenings).

Sometimes it's easy to get the impression that these dressed-up people are of a different, cooler species, or indeed strange alien weirdos. However, they're mostly much the same as anyone in ordinary life, as you'll find out if you get chatting.

In a display of true BiCon diversity, you'll also see plenty of people in their favourite ordinary comfy clothes, especially in the daytime but even on the dance floor.

## Not necessarily bi

Not everyone who comes to BiCon identifies as bisexual. Some non-bi people come to BiCon as the partner, friend or relative of a bi person. Some people visiting are questioning their sexuality. Some people don't like the word 'bisexual', and some don't like labels at all; others have found creative ways of identifying their preferences.

## Terms and Unfamiliar Jargon

You will probably hear a number of terms you have never heard before, and you may find that coming to BiCon helps you make sense of your own sexuality. Some non-bi people feel at home here thanks to the accepting attitude to other non-mainstream things. There may also be a few people with a professional interest in bisexuality, e.g. academic researchers (though anyone at BiCon as a journalist must identify themselves). In short, don't assume that everyone you meet at BiCon is bi.

There is an Allies workshop where being non bi at BiCon will be the main theme of the workshop. Look out for it in the workshop timetable.

## Sex and no sex

Just like in life outside BiCon, there are those who like to talk about their sexual activities, and those who don't. BiCon is certainly a sex-positive environment, but you'll also find plenty of people who, just like Boy George, "*would rather have a cup of tea*".

Because BiCon is such an accepting and non-judgmental environment, many people who attend take the opportunity to be open about other aspects of their sexuality, some of which might not be so openly discussed in the outside world.

If you want to take the opportunity to learn about these aspects, you will probably find many people who will be happy to talk to you about them. Some things will also be covered in workshops. If you are not interested in kinks or fetishes, that's fine too!

## What's your pronoun?

Although the majority at BiCon are conventionally gendered, it also attracts a lot of gender diversity. Some people identify (and live full time) as a gender you wouldn't necessarily have predicted from their appearance; others are just playing with a different role for an evening.

To be respectful, use the pronouns (he, she, her etc) which people prefer themselves. But how do you know which those are? Sometimes you can guess from the person's name or appearance, but sometimes the only way to know for sure is to ask. So don't feel you ought to know by some secret sign, and don't worry if you get it wrong sometimes, as long as you were doing your best to be polite. By the same token, if you want to be known by a different pronoun than someone's guessed for you, let them know. See also Community Information Zones.

## What if I'm not bi enough?

Perhaps because there are so many different ways to be bi, it seems to be a common thread among bi people to worry sometimes that they don't quite qualify as a 'real' bi person. Let's just say that we're not going to be asking for some mythical certificate of bisexual authenticity!

Besides, as we already mentioned, BiCon is open to people who don't even consider themselves bi. So don't worry - if you can respect the diversity of others then you're welcome at BiCon, whatever the element of bisexuality in your life.

Many bisexual people have experienced forms of prejudice and intolerance because of their sexuality, and know first hand how difficult it can be to accept yourself when others do not. As a result, people at BiCon try to be accepting and non-judgmental.

## **Take it easy**

Because BiCon is such an exceptional experience, it can feel like you don't want to miss a moment. It might sound obvious to say this, but do remember to eat and sleep a reasonable amount.

Most people don't go to things in every session, but take time out in the day to chat, snooze, ring home, have a bath or go food shopping. It's not possible to do everything - if you didn't fit in everything you wanted to, well, you'll just have to come back next year.

## **Counselling**

Being at BiCon may stir up big feelings of one kind or another. Some BiCon-goers are trained counsellors who have volunteered to be available over the weekend to provide non-directional non-judgemental listening services.

If you need a confidential listening ear, ask at BiCon Reception or ring the BiCon mobile phone on the number in the front of this book.

## **After BiCon**

A lot of people have a sense of post-BiCon comedown a day or two after the event ends. It's also common to be fired up with activist inspiration and feel you can't wait to hook up again with some bit of the bi community. Or both!

It can be useful to think in advance about how you might feel when you get home, and build in a few plans to take care of yourself. Some people book a day or two off work after BiCon finishes, to unwind and catch up on sleep (though if you're already at BiCon when you read this, it may be too late to arrange for this year).

If where you live is somewhere you're not out as bi, it can be good to stay a night with a friend where you can talk freely and let off steam. You might want to fix up your next bi social event before you leave BiCon, to have something to look forward to. If there's nothing going on near where you live, you could still plan to stay in touch with people by phone or to join one of the internet groups.

Towards the end of the weekend, we'll be offering a 'Re-entry' session, offering advice about returning to 'normal life', and what to do with that leftover BiCon buzz.

# Travelling to Bicon

## Car

Try these websites for travel directions from wherever you're coming from (your destination postcode for the venue is LE2 2LG):

- [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com)
- [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- [www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)

## Rail

Leicester London Road station is served by Midland Mainline, Virgin and Central Trains.

All platforms at the train station have lifts to get onto and off the platform and into the main part of the station.

Booking a specific train will give you the cheapest fare – it is often best to book two singles rather than a return. You can get rail fares and times on 08457 48 49 50 or by looking at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) .

Please note that East Midland trains leaving from London St. Pancras sometimes leave up to five minutes before the listed departure time or have a large queue before the check-in gate. We advise that people using these services plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before the listed departure time.

## Bus

Long-distance bus services to Leicester are operated by:

**Megabus** direct from London only. Megabus fares start from £1. Book at [www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com) or 0900 160 0900 (60p/min from landlines).

**National Express** - from most UK mainland major cities, Book at [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com) or call 08705 808080 between 08:00 and 20:00 (max 8p/min from landlines), textphone 0121 455 0086.

Coach or bus services all arrive at St Margaret's Bus Station in Leicester City Centre.

## Air

The nearest Airport to Leicester is East Midlands Airport approximately 20 miles away. There is no direct rail link but there are coach services from the Airport to Leicester, Loughborough and Nottingham which all may be useful depending upon your time of travel. See [www.eastmidlandsairport.com/emaweb.nsf/Content/Bus](http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com/emaweb.nsf/Content/Bus) for more details.

Other popular airports in England are Manchester, Birmingham and Stansted all of which are close to cities with direct railway or coach connections to Leicester.

The address of the BiCon venue is:  
Gilbert Murray and Stamford Hall  
Manor Road  
Oadby  
Leicester  
LE2 2LH

## From Leicester Bus and Rail Stations

The 31/31A bus route passes both St. Margaret's Bus Station and Leicester London Road Railway Station every ten minutes. The destination bus stop is at the bottom of Stoughton Drive South which is about 10-15 minutes walk up a moderate slope to the BiCon part of the venue.

Taxis are available at a cost of approx £6.50 for black cabs and minicabs from the railway station; the bus station will be a few pounds more. We recommend taxis for attendees with mobility problems or heavy bags.

## By car

### From the M1:

- Exit at Junction 21, M1/M69 roundabout onto A5460.
- Filter left onto A563 Leicester South & East (Lubbersthorpe Way).
- Continue straight on A563 Outer Ring Road (Soar Valley Way).
- After 3.5 miles (5.6km), take the second exit off the roundabout onto A6 South (Leicester Road).
- Follow the signs for University Halls.

### From A6 North:

- Continue on A6 (Loughborough Road) towards Leicester.
- Follow the central ring road A594 towards Market Harborough/Leicester Railway Station.
- Pick up A6 towards Market Harborough.
- After 2.5 miles (4km), take the second exit off the roundabout.
- Follow the signs for University Halls.

### From A47 North:

- Follow A47 (Uppingham Road) towards Leicester.
- Turn left onto Spencerfield Lane (becoming Evington Lane).
- At the traffic lights, turn left onto A6030 Leicester South (Stoughton Drive).
- Take the first exit at the second roundabout.
- Take the second exit at the second roundabout (Stoughton Drive South).
- Follow the signs for University Halls.

## Things to see and do outside BiCon

Leicester University is home to the Harold Martin Botanic Garden. The University website describes it as '16 acres of lovingly-cultivated grounds with origins dating back to 1920'. 'The grounds are perfect for a pleasant walk and there are benches for those who simply wish to relax and admire the surroundings'.

Leicester also boasts the National Space Centre, Twycross Zoo, and Great Central Railway, the UK's only mainline steam railway.

More information on things to see and do in the area can be found at [www.visitleicester.co.uk](http://www.visitleicester.co.uk)

## Places of worship

- Baptist: Oadby Baptist Church, Leicester Road, Leicester, LE2 5BD
- Buddhist: Leicestershire Buddhist Society, 6 Half Moon Crescent, Oadby, LE2 4HD
- Church of England: St Peters, Wigston Road, Oadby, LE2 5QE
- Hindu: Swaminarayan Hindu Mission, 3 St. James St, Leicester, Leicestershire LE1 3SU
- Jewish: Jewish Progressional Congregation, 24 Avenue Road, Leicester, LE2 3EA
- Muslim: Masjid-ul-imam-il-Bukhani, Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LR
- Methodist: Bishop Street Methodist Church, 10a Bishop St, Leicester, Leicestershire LE1 6AF
- Roman Catholic: Church of the Immaculate Conception, New Street, Oadby, LE2 4LJ
- Sikh: Gurdwara Guri Guru Deshmesh Shib, Gipsy Lane, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 6RF
- Spiritualist: National Spiritualist Church, 82 Vaughan Way, Leicester, Leicestershire LE1 4SH

# Background of BiCon

## History and basics

The first national UK bi gathering was in 1984, although it wasn't yet called BiCon. This is the 26th. In recent years, they've all been on a university campus in late summer and lasted three or four days. There is no permanent BiCon organisation, although there is a permanent web site ([www.bicon.org.uk](http://www.bicon.org.uk)) and mailing address (BM BiCon, London WC1N 3XX).

Since its beginnings, the organisers of BiCon have never quite decided whether '-con' is short for 'convention' or 'conference'. There is a good reason for this: BiCon has elements of both. Some parts of the programme are aimed at celebrating bisexuality; other parts of the programme are aimed at more serious discussions. Each year, the organisers try to ensure that the programme is as varied as possible, so that you can make the event what you want it to be.

Each year, it's run by a new team of volunteers, sometimes a mix of past BiCon organisers and people new to the challenge. The formal hand-over from one team to the next is often at the BiCon closing plenary. The team is usually, but not always, based in the same city as the BiCon venue; these days, much of the planning takes place over the internet.

The essentials of a BiCon are defined by the BiCon Guidelines, formalised in 1998. If a team wants to run BiCon differently from these guidelines, they're supposed to say so up front when they say "we want to run BiCon in such-and-such a year". Usually that's in a plenary session at BiCon. The Guidelines can be seen on the web at [www.bicon.org.uk/guidelines.html](http://www.bicon.org.uk/guidelines.html).

If it happened that two groups both wanted to run the same year's BiCon, there would be a vote to decide, although in recent years that's never been necessary. Some years it's seemed like nobody wanted to do it; other years, there's been a kind of organically evolved consensus where word goes around that "so-and-so is thinking of such-and-such a year".

Usually most people in the organising team identify as bi, but straight & gay people can be and have been BiCon organisers too.

Several recent BiCons (though not all) have ended up with surplus money. Thus the next groups of BiCon organisers have been able to start off with seed money, e.g. to pay the deposit to the venue. What's in the bank also protects BiCon organisers from having to dip into their own pockets in the event of a financial loss.

The suggestion comes round regularly that BiCon (as a whole) should be formed into some kind of limited company; this is being looked into at the moment.

## Helping out

**We have a policy of inclusion, of involving anyone from the wider BiCon community who wants to help, to whatever extent they can contribute. So, if you'd like to help, let us know. We will certainly need additional help, especially as BiCon 2008 gets closer.**

## **The BiCon 2008 Team would like to thank:**

- Jen Yockney
- Grant Denkinson
- All the members of biconorganisers on LiveJournal
- Jo & Emma at The University of Leicester
- The Safe Organisation Ltd
- All the workshop facilitators
- All the DJs
- Volunteers for lending their time and talents
- Past BiCon team members for their support and advice
- All our partners, housemates and friends for their love, encouragement, patience and tea making capabilities

**Most of all, the BiCon 2008 team would like to you for coming and making BiCon what it is**

## Notes:

# Gilbert Murray Hall

