



### **CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS**

Friends, as I ponder the content of my latest ramble whilst sat in a hotel room rather than either at home with the family or with the extended family up cart, I consider what Carnival has meant to me over the last 6 months or so and I am forced to conclude – strange.

Many of you will be all too aware as to why the March edition of the newsletter failed to occur, and you would not be alone to have wondered if it would be resurrected at all.

Just as it was due to be published back in March, our editor and friend Lynne Brimilcombe was tragically and unexpectedly taken from us much, much too soon. The sad news brought as all up short and so the deadline for the March edition came and went. Lynne was the driving force behind the newsletter which she pioneered and ran, with only a minimum of required help in the way of content.

Lynne has been a valued member of Quins since 2005 when she joined with Neil and Elly; taking part as cast member on 3 carts Theatreland, Disco Mania and Samba Carnival. Throughout all of her 11 years with us she has been a stalwart of the costume department, a keen fundraiser and someone we could all call our friend.

As we head into the 2016 on-road season I find it strange the things I now recall – not least the almost stand-up argument I had with Lynne over whether the Tortuga costumes should be 'dirtied up a bit', (she won, and they weren't), and I ponder who will now hold the stash of safety pins on Carnival day, for Lynne was always on hand to deal with the inevitable costume failure.

We now find ourselves in the dying days of August and so the September edition of Lynnes' newsletter is once again due – despite being behind, despite having a thousand other things to do – the show, and the newsletter, must go on – that is what she would want.

### **NEWS FROM UP SHED**

The notion of strange continues –

A first for Quins as we made the decision to change the chosen theme of this years entry around about the middle of February, which in essence delayed the start of building / costume construction by some 6 weeks.

Initially we kept ourselves busy with shed improvements whilst awaiting a new model which was constructed as a group effort from those who normally present such things. We therefore found ourselves at the beginning of April with a model we were content with and a commitment to make up the time lost.

Despite the good intentions, as I write this with 4 weeks to go we are still at least 6 weeks behind where we would want to be.

We can examine why, but in short we are where we are, and if we intend to be out to the standard we all want then within the next 4 weeks we have to achieve 10 weeks worth of work – ish.

Now yes this is a tall order and yes the next 4 weeks will be hard, but, and it is a big but – it can be achieved if we work as the professional, dedicated and amazing team that I know we all are.

With the slight doom and gloom put to bed the entry itself is starting to take shape. The generator is well underway, minus its roof, the cart is 80% there in metal with woodwork now making a charge and the tug has at least been started.

We have a huge amount of painting to do, we have a huge amount of electrics to do – hindered by the fact that in this department we are trying something a little different.

Costumes, as you would expect are looking stunning although even here we find ourselves at a disadvantage to time.

Now for the plea:- every member, full, silent, junior, helper or other. Time to work! Please.....

### **TREASURER'S UPDATE**

It had been suggested at an early meeting in the year that perhaps we should examine altering the clubs legal status to that of a Limited Company.

Much research prevailed and following the justification that we all would be better protected legally in the event of an accident the club voted to become Harlequin Carnival Club Ltd.

Of course we now have to dot the i's and cross the t's to make this process official and so much time has been consumed in this venture. New insurances, bank accounts and endless forms are the hidden extras from the chosen route – but will no doubt be overcome.

We have tried to be smart shoppers this year and have bought many materials in bulk to save costs. Whilst we have achieved this goal, spending more initially to save later has resulted in interesting cash flow dilemmas, a lack of liquid funds mid-season is,.... 'strange' but will no doubt pay off in the end.



## MEMBERS PROFILE

1. **Name:** Karen Williams

2. **Age:** 51

3. **How long in Carnival:**

On and off around 30 years; our children started entering carnivals from the age of 6 & 9 months, then with the children taking part belonging to two other carnival clubs (Spangles & Streamers) and finally Harlequin CC

4. **How long in Harlequin Carnival Club:**

About 20 years with break in between

5. **What do you do in Harlequin:**

I currently hold the post of Treasurer since 2013 and have also been on the fundraising committee. I coordinate the stewarding that we do at Glastonbury Festival as a fundraising event. I also look after our mice which take part in our fundraising mouse race events. I work at our outside bars serving behind the bar and washing up, as well as other fundraising events as necessary. I have also been a member of our ground crew walking with the cart at carnivals and even been allowed to be on a headset....the men had to tone down their language that night!

6. **What do you enjoy most about Carnival:**

Being able to spend time socialising with friends and family

7. **What interests do you have outside of Carnival:**

Grandchildren play a very important part of my spare time, they also love carnival....it's in their blood.

8. **What is your most memorable moment in Harlequin:**

HCC winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place at Glastonbury carnival for the first time in 2014, what a proud moment that was, especially as we had celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> year in 2013, it was a tribute to the hard work and efforts of every single person who had ever been associated with our club.

9. **What is your most embarrassing moment in Harlequin:**

Being awarded the coveted 'sick bowl' and it wasn't even during a carnival activity

10. **What is your favourite Harlequin Cart:**

Lion King – the music and atmosphere was fantastic....I may have gone on that cart myself although Fogg's World Tour was pretty spectacular last year.....round and round and round!

11. **What is your favourite Carnival Cart of all time:**

Ghost Ship, Gremlins...that was something special.

12. **If you found a £50 note, what would you spend it on:**

To be honest one of the most important things in our life at the moment is to say a huge thank you to CLIC, a charity very close to our family's heart....so I would donate it to them.

## FUNDRAISING



Fundraising of course is the very life blood of a carnival organisation.

So far this year we have had 27 fundraising events, including 15 Bars of one form or another, along with 6 mouse race evenings and of course the unforgettable Quiz and Curry night.

We have once again taken part in the Bridgwater College courses and the list is set to continue through to Christmas with work planned at Dingles and Santas Sleigh to name but two.

### Dates for your Diary

Date	Event
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> September	Bar – Combe Farm
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> October	Catering at Fairground Heritage Trust (FHT)
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> October	Mouse Race and Bar at Honiton
Sat / Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> December	FHT Christmas Event Weekend
Sat / Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> December	Collecting at Tescos Ilminster
TBC	Santa Sleigh

Here are some dates for your diaries for fundraising in the coming few months.

## Glastonbury



If not the wettest then certainly the stickiest is the way many of us will remember Glastonbury Festival 2016. Harlequins were once again asked to provide stewards at the Garage on the A37 which we did with no trouble or concern, other than the blocked roads which for once was nothing to do with us.

A number of members braved the mud to attend the festival proper and with acts such as Adele and Coldplay there was little disappointment.

## CARNIVAL PARK

The idea of a Carnival Park is still very much alive at a recent meeting and then Pre- Carnival Party held on the 20<sup>th</sup> August we were given the opportunity to see how much progress has been made this year.

An earlier meeting with Dillington Estates has ear marked 6 potential sites on their land of the possible location for a carnival park.

This is of course wonderful news but has opened the doors to more issues needing to be overcome including:

Plans, Planning Permission, Building Regulations, Highways, Water, Electricity, funding - to name but a few.

With Carnival fast approaching, time is getting tight and no doubt the scheme will have to take its place on the back burner once more. That said once Carnival is over we all need to encourage this project forward – sooner or later we are likely to require the dream that is the schemes current aim.

## Preparing for Battle

It was a Tuesday toward the end of July when I had the good fortune to find myself on the island of Jersey for a work commitment. It just so coincided with the hottest day of the year at that time - some people just get lucky.

Allegedly being somewhat of a Carnival enthusiast I thought the opportunity to good to miss and so following a few emails I found myself outside St Brelade Parish Hall, awaiting to be collected by my contact Margaret Fitzgerald and Husband Dave.

Introductions were soon made and new friends duly acquired, we set off on this small island (9x4 miles) towards our first stop of four that we were due to make that evening.

For those that don't know The Battle of Flowers Carnival takes place in August, this year the traditional parade took place on the 11th with the moonlit (illuminated) parade the following evening.



Of the 12 parishes on Jersey, 11 produce floats together with other groups making up some 30 main entries (including juvenile) alongside bands, walkers and similar.

I soon found myself at the Parish of St Peter and within their purpose built shed looking at their entry this year. Built on what was once a bus, the modified chassis now proudly displaying the chosen theme (Indian based).

With little more than a couple of weeks to go the float was well under construction with most metal and wood work tasks complete.

Of interest to me were the differences and similarities to our own carnival. The floats are all smaller than ours and dependant on class entered up to 45 feet in length by 15 feet wide and 17 feet high. They tend not to go in for mad twiddly bits as we do but the key difference is in where they put the driver and of course how they are decorated.

Drivers are typically, entirely, encased with no more vision than that supplied by a TV screen and a radio link to a chap up the front and that includes driving to and from procession. With my VSO head on I can safely say we wouldn't get away with it, but I'm not sure I would want to either - very brave.

Of course the stand out feature is the decoration which sadly I only saw in part. Many of the floats when constructed are painted in base colours as shown, then in the final four days or so fresh flower heads are stuck to every available surface. 150,000 heads are not uncommon for some of the larger entries and all for two processions. Many members present were also busy applying hairs tails, (grass buds) to decorative artwork, of which they are allowed 25% on any one entry.



Our evening excursion continued to the marquee housing the parish entry from St Lawrence, a smaller yet dedicated team were present on what was a very warm evening. Videos of our carnivals were shared by the wonder of YouTube and iPhones before returning to the parish of St Brelades to view their Parish entry.



The St Brelades carnival association, as they call themselves, are proudly twinned with Crusaders. They took delight in showing us around and explaining that their Mardi Gras based theme is in fact built on a chassis made from 3 dust carts. One side of the entry was open, clearly exposing the driving position, amplifiers and generator, once enclosed, not a place I would want to be.

Finally on to Battle headquarters where no less than 5 clubs operate almost harmoniously under one roof. Common ground was found when I met Steve Bushard of the Optimists Club himself a regular patron of Bridgwater Carnival, and with more than a fondness for Gremlins. Discussions of days past, buying parrots from one of our founder members Brian Hooper and various other ties between Somerset and Jersey brought a memorable end to the evening.



It was a shame that I was unable to organise a work trip for battle day itself - maybe next year.

My thanks to all who made me feel very welcome on the night and especially Margaret for the guided tour.

**Harlequin's Entries from the past, looking back 10, 20, 30 & 40 years ago!!!**

**1976 Umbrella Mender's Dream**



Results from this year 4<sup>th</sup> Wellington, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ilminster, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Taunton. We were unplaced at Honiton carnival but were paid the staggering amount of £1.00 appearance money. The club did not take part in any of the County carnivals

The balance sheet from this year shows the total expenditure by the club of £604.84!!! wow how times have changed!



Can you spot any of our current members? (clue there are 5!!)

## 1986 Uncle Sam's Rollercoaster



This year was the first time that Harlequins won 1<sup>st</sup> prize in the Open Feature class at Bridgwater carnival. However in the South Somerset Federation results were very up and down. We were unplaced at Wellington due to light failure, 1<sup>st</sup> and best in procession in Ilminster, 4<sup>th</sup> in Chard, 1<sup>st</sup> in Taunton, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Yeovil and 1<sup>st</sup> in Honiton.

Unfortunately the rollercoaster was supposed to go around the track on the float, however this proved too much of a task and was welded up for safety sake.

This year also welcomed a new member to the club - Paul Retter



What a difference 10 years made - the balance sheet in this year was produced on a typewriter and shows how much the cost had increased with total expenditure being £3251.26

## 1996 – War Dance



1996 was a very successful year for the club winning the South Somerset Federation and a host of many other trophies (see photo below)



Music used on the cart was Adam Ant's "Kings of the Wild Frontier"  
A new member to the club in this year was Nigel Phillips. Although Nigel was not our main model maker in this year he did make some lovely totem poles for the cart.

## 2006 – Samba Carnival



Samba Carnival was another successful South Somerset Federation year for the club winning all the major trophies apart from the Crowd Cup which was shared with Gemini CC. The cart was the 9<sup>th</sup> year to be built at our previous home at Joe's (Parsonage Farm) and was designed by Andrew Bird.

A first this year was that cast members wore headdresses complete with moving parts and lights (very uncomfortable and not really that successful)

A new member to the club this year was Scott Larcombe. A few more pics of current members - have they aged in 10 years?



By Shane & Sarah Hooper

## **Harlequin Carnival Club Main Supporter for 2016**

Following their winning of the supporters raffle in 2015 the Fairground Heritage Trust have asked to remain as main Supporter throughout the 2016 season.

This is a relationship we are very proud of and there is much common ground between both organisations in terms of aims and activities.

The FHT (or Dingles as we all refer) is well worth a visit at any time of the year and with their collection of working attractions set to grow over the coming months we wish them every success.

Look out for their branding on our club sweatshirts and other places during 2016



**Yours comments and contributions are very welcome for the next addition, let us wish all Carnivalites a happy, safe and successful 2016 carnival season.**

**Look out for the next issue of Harlequin News due December 2016**

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