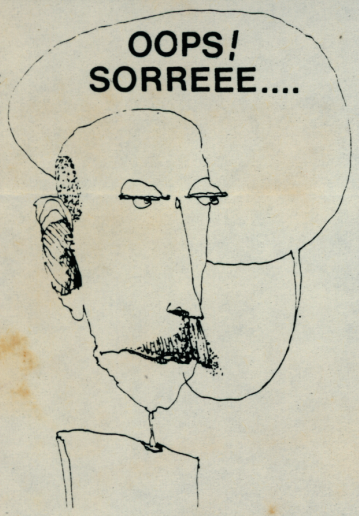
Semibrief

Newsletter of the Barleycorn Music Club

mäy 1991



If you have been paying attention you may have noticed that this edition of Semibrief is a little overdue. About 3 months, at a rough guess. There are some damned good reasons for this, too many to mention here, but unavoidable nonetheless

The Editor and his vast team of fawning lackeys and willing helpers (namely Pete van Heerden) regret the withdrawal symptoms you may have suffered. We hope this bumper edition more than makes up for the morning sickness, breast discomfort, urinary frequency (shurely shome mishtake ? Aren't theshe shymptoms of pregnancy? ....Ed) which have plaqued the Editor since January, and which indicate he is long overdue.

The Editor apologises profusely (holds peeled onion up to his eyes), and promises it won't happen again for at least the next 3 months.



"I'm setting my nervous breakdown to music".

!NATIONAL FOLK/MUSIC FESTIVaL!

South Africa's first NATIONAL Folk/ Music Festival was held at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth on the 11th and 12th of January. You know this already, of course, having read the last Semibrief which gave ample advance warning of it so that you could be there to support your Barleycorn contingent.

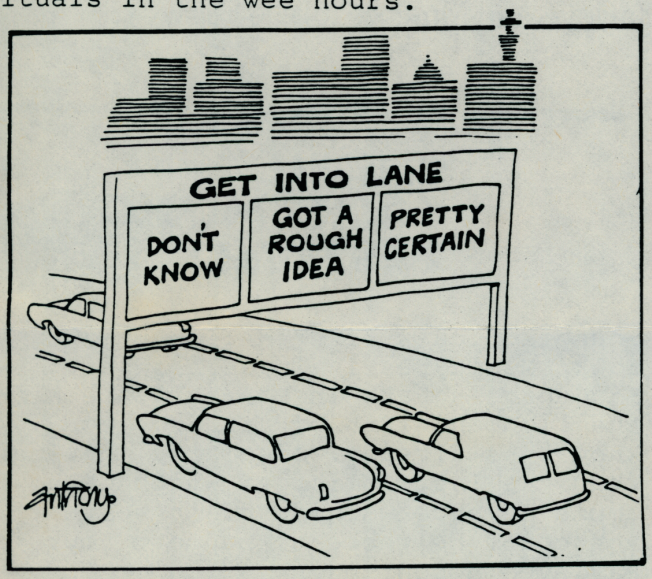
All five South African Folk/Music Clubs participated; Buskers, from the Burg of Johannes, the Durban Folk Club from somewhere or other, the Four Winds from Port Elizabeth (why not? They were in the neighbourhood) the String and Whistle from East London, and the Pietermaritzburg Folk Club (temporarily depriving that town of its only source of cerebral stimulation since the threatened Zulu impi invasion of 1842).

Your Semibrief Editor, fearing he would once again have nothing worthwhile to write, commissioned MATTHEW CURTIS to capture the flavour of this special event. Here are the images he brought back....;

" I spit in the eye of all those fair-weather, turn-coat, fading and bolshie Folkies who failed to make it to Port Elizabeth this year. It seems last years disaster thinned the ranks somewhat. 1991 was a huge success for the same reasons that 1990 was a festering bubo.

The sound quality started off a little shaky, but was soon sorted out by the cool hand of Dave Marx who enlisted our own Chairman, Pete Montgomery, as his loyal Blamee.

Accomodation was comfortable and secure, with most people dwelling in small, music-saturated bungalows. Some, less-gifted folks, were made to camp some distance away and could be heard carrying out strange a-tonal rituals in the wee hours.



Friday night was characterised by the usual shouts and hugs of greetings. Scientists from the nearby University were there to study the unusual behaviour, and took samples of the great variety of transmissable diseases which were freely shared.

Being press-ganged into a compere's position, I had little time to enjoy the music. Some acts did, however, impress the audience (who by this time were hardly visible behind structures made of beer. One of the afore-mentioned scientists said this must be the famous Lager Formation).

Pete van Heerden, Fiona Tozer, Colin Shamley and Willem Fourie were my favourites and I'm sure I wasn't the only one to wake up with one of Willem's tunes doing the Wall Of Death around the inside of my skull.

Saturday dawned cloudy and wet with a moody, weak sun struggling to do a chin-up on the horizon. Fortunately, I was up at 5.00am and sent it back, to be replaced by a superb day, full of promise.

Musicians could be found behind bushes and on open grasslands, butting machine-heads to establish dominance. They were keenly documented by David Attenborough and a nervous film crew.

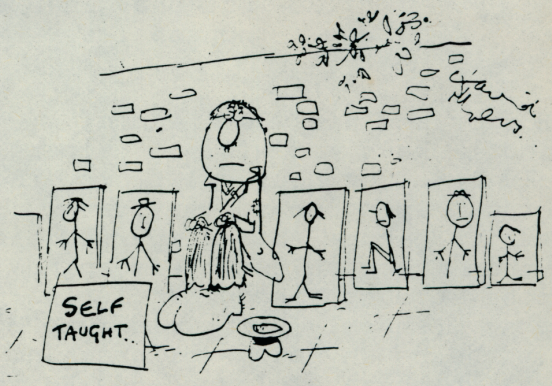
Once the music picked up pace, at about 4.00pm, it sped on until midnight. More wildlife enthusiasts came to film the show for the antennae of TV 1. The microphone they were using was a 3-foot long furry giant, and I was relieved to note that it was on a lead.

The music was of an unusually high quality, with some interesting new acts like Sam Miennie from Jeffreys Bay, a most spirited guitar mangler.

Cape Town had a strong influence on the quality of both music and new disease strains, and the Barleycorn can be justifiably proud of itself. The After-Party was a washout, due to lack of planning and and even greater lack of energy.

We all made it back safely".

MATTHEW CURTIS



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dear Dr Bell,

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you most sincerely for you kind invitation to him to attend the first National Folk/Music Festival in Port Elizabeth.

Unfortunately, as you know, Mr Major has been somewhat busy attemting to extract Iraqi's from his Gulf and planning how to spend all the money he hopes to get from the Arab nations to re-build Britain after the wa

Mr Major extends best wishes to all at the Barleycorn, and will definitely pop in for a pint and a sing-along when he visits his friend Frederick in Cape Town.

Yours sincerely,

Lt.Colonel "Buster" Gussett,
Principal Private Secretary.

Anchors*Aweigh!

The Barleycorn bade farewell to JONATHAN WARREN in December last year A loyal and hard-working committee member, we will miss his perfectionist approach, his artistic contribution to everything from poster design to Barn Dance decorations, and his voluble contributions at committee meetings. There is some dissent as to whether we will miss his fiddle-playing!

Editorial note; Jonathan's flair for stirring a little healthy controversy (see Semibriefs of May and November 1990) gave rise to some noteworthy debate and mirth in these columns. Ever one to appreciate that even serious issues may have a lighter side, his Semibrief contributions in particular, will be not be forgotten.

Jonathan has left to persue his nautical career, and in this we wish him much happiness. We reproduce his letter of resignation here below, as an example of his talent.

The Chairman & Committee of the
BARLEYCORN MUSIC CLUB:

19th December, 1990.

Dear Colleagues & Friends,

I am forced to resign from the Committee, I have been appointed Second Navigating Officer of the Research Ship "Africana" & will be sailing on the 4th of January next year. I will also not be able to join you in Port Elizabeth.

It has been both a pleasure & a privilege being part of the Committee. I thank you.

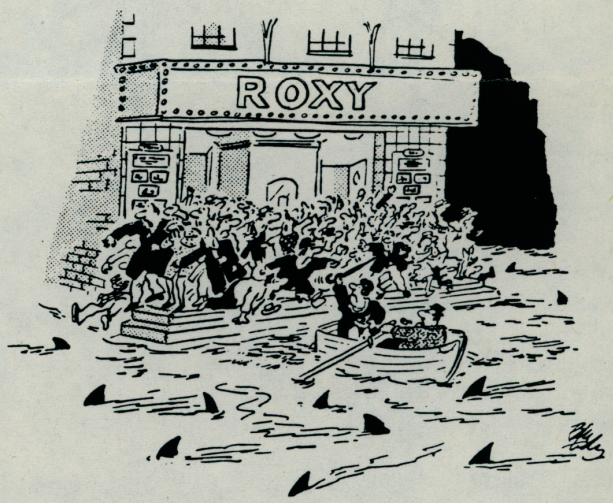
Faithfully,
Jonathan Warren

Jonathan's vacancy on the committee has been filled by KEVIN GOTSCH, and we welcome him to our ranks. Kevin hails from East London and is employed as a pleasant pheasant plucker by Farmer Brown, but his talents at the Barleycorn are confined to managing the Record Library, an under-used facility if ever there was one.

RECORD LIBRARY

We have a large collection of great music on record, gathered since the Club first began. This is available to members AT INTERVAL on a Monday night at the Club, at a cost of R2.00 per withdrawal. You may take no more than TWO records out each time, to be returned the following Monday night.

Failure to comply will result in vital anatomical structures being removed by the Barleycorn resident surgeon, without benefit of an anaesthetic, OR a fine of R2.00 per week for those offenders who have already lost vital bits and for whom the sight of blood is punishment enough.



"I thought it was disappointing, Martha. Not a typical Hitchcock ending!"

No Urban Myth

by **Matthew Curtis**

Although this tale is true, feel no guilt should you find yourself doubting it. Sometimes, the wonder of life distances us from some of its more playful moments.

Gary Hemmings, known to some in Cape Town as the energy behind various Port Elizabeth endeavours such as the '89 - '91 festivals, was on one of his many travels around the country. Having heard of a planned party in Plettenberg Bay, he ensured that he would be there in time to attend it.

Now Gary around alcohol is rather like a sponge thrown into a warm bath, even in texture and appearance. After this no doubt punishing thrash, he and some friends decided to spend the night on the nearest stretch of staggerable beach.



Upon waking the next morning, it was discovered that all their kit bags, clothes, cameras and OH MY GOD NOoo! Gary's entire Bob Dylan collection on tape, had been stolen while they slept.

This shock was too much for the poor man. His life was in ruins. He started drinking even more (SAB shares rocketed). He spent lonely nights at home (Durex shares plummeted) and he was, basically, very distraught.

One miserable afternoon at the military swimming pool, Gary overheard a woman calling her young son away from the waters edge. The childs name was Dylan.

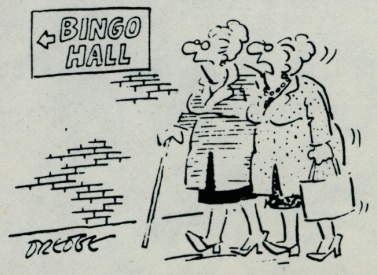
Curiosity aroused (among other things) Gary approached the woman and asked what had prompted her to name her son Dylan. She told him that her late husband had chosen the name because he had been a fanatical Dylanist.



A long conversation about the poet finally ended when the woman took Gary to her home and presented him with a HUGE Bob Dylan record collection, explaining that it had been her deceased husband's pride and joy, and that she knew he would approve of Gary having it.

With skin a-prickle, Gary thanked her and nearly gave himself a hernia carrying all of the 40-odd records home. The collection contained more than what Gary had lost in the tape collection stolen at Plettenberg Bay.

When he told me this story, Gary's eyes shone with the knowledge that he was propagating a folk legend.



"I've been coming here since nineteen clickety-click!"

LETTERS

to the EDitor_____!*?**&

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, we protest vehemently that your Barleycorn Music Club allows the performance of so-called Irish "folk" music.

The tapping of feet to the lilting melodies and gentle rhythms of the Irish peasant can incite innocent people to fire mortar bombs and rockets at this address, as has happened in recent weeks.

As guardians of freedom, Her Majesty's Government hereby requests that you desist forthwith from allowing this inflammatory music to be performed at your Club, and suggest that you revert to the more traditional English folk music, such as that propagated by Mr Sidney Vicious and his Sex Pistols.

Yours faithfully,

John Major, Esq.
Prime Minibus,
WPBTA

The following was hand-delivered from the "Old Detonator", a pub known for its patrons loyalist tendencies.

Mr Editor, Sor,

Listen, lad. We've bin arroiving along ta yoor Club fer a gude few weeks nae, an' there's not bin much a' the lilting melodic Oirish music at all, at all.

Ye may no' be knowing, but without th' soothing comfort o' some music from te Emerald Isle, we tend tae want to blow something up, prefrably British.

Sa if yae want ta carry on playing music at all, at all, an' ye's don't want th' Kimberley Hotel ta be re-situated all over Cape Town (after a short warnin' fram an anonymous caller in a phone booth) ye'll knae whats gude fer ye's.

Ye'd better be getting them fiddle an' mandolin an' bodrhun players back in, an' look sharp ya hear?

Mine's a Guinness,

Seamus O'Timing Device,
Padraigh O'Trocity,
Occasional I.R.A.

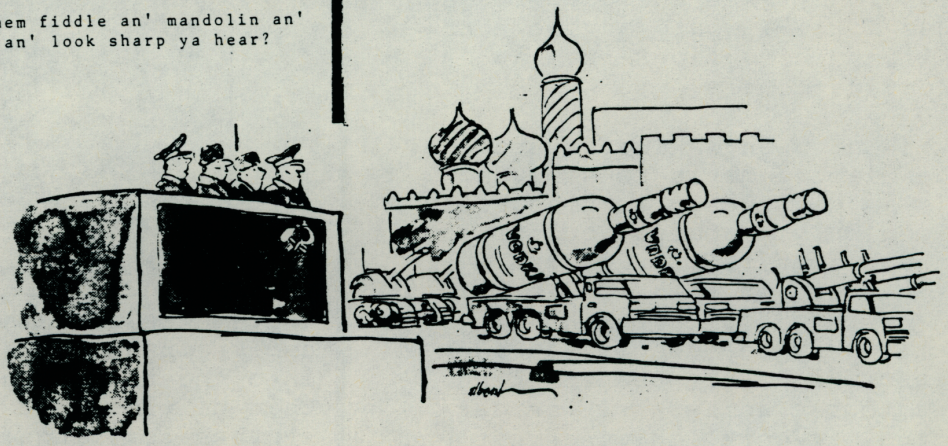
evenings ahead

Here are the names and home telephone numbers of the committee members who are hosting the shows on forthcoming Monday nights. If you wish to play, or if you know someone who would like to play and can be persuaded to do so, please phone the relevant host well in advance so that a little forward planning can be done.

NEW PERFORMERS ALWAYS WELCOME !
In fact, it is one of the Club's most important functions to encourage new musicians/singers/strip-tease artists (shurely shome mishtake?...Ed.) to air and share their talent, so get your A into G and get on with it.

MAY		
6th	Ian Bell	686-3478
13th	Liz Taylor	92-2418
20th	Kevin Gotsch	(no phone yet)
27th	Gail McDermid	686-8432
JUNE		
3rd	Matthew Curtis	738771
10th	Charmaine Treherne	47-7180
17th	Pete Montgomery	797-1234
24th	Pete van Heerden	794-4138

By then, we will be having an ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, and who knows? Maybe the Committee will change completely? Maybe there'll be NO Committee? It all depends on YOU and YOUR support for YOUR Club.



"We still haven't totally stamped out alcoholism in the armed forces"

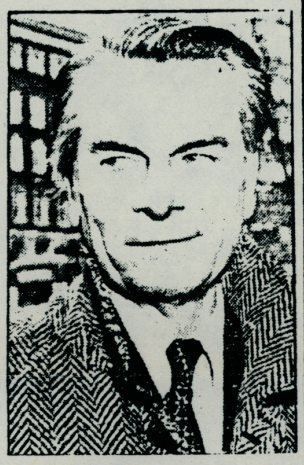
'quotable quotes'

Liz Taylor, at a committee meeting, when calling her husband Kevin... QUOTE; "He's deaf in one ear, and he can't hear a thing with the other".

Charmaine "Charming" Treherne, eyeing the masculine talent at Roger Lucey's concert at the Little Theatre... QUOTE; "I have a funny feeling my sex-life is about to blossom forth, I just don't know who with".

For people who own motor vehicles of inscrutable Nipponese origin, an extract from a booklet given to tourists who hire cars in Japan. QUOTE; "When passenger of foot heave into sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage, then tootle him with vigour".

A.DOCTOR WRITES;



On Vigorous Tootling as a remedy for an Obstacled Passage;

"I am often asked whether this practice is bad for the health or the ozone layer.

Provided one takes adequate roughage in ones diet, I would advise that there is nothing finer than a rip-roaring tootle.

First thing upon waking, exert a little diaphragmatic tension and tootle as vigorously as possible. This not only prepares you for the day ahead, but tells the world exactly what you think of it.

There is only one danger, to quote Professor Heinz von Beanz; "Eine grosse tootle in zer key von der G-string, iz werklich wunderbar und healzy alst long az der fartz does not set fire to den duvet".

NEW MUSIC REVIEW

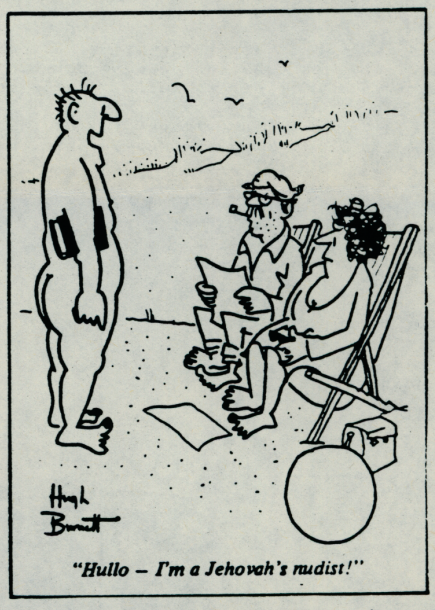
NEW STREET: DAVE GOLDBLUM.

Right. Pay attention. It takes something more than just a little special for the jaded, cynical Editor of this rag to get serious. But this is it. A collection of 12 tracks by our own DAVE GOLDBLUM, on a tape called "New Street"

Any good reviewer of an artistic endeavour goes out of his/her way to distance him/herself from the subjective, and give damned good objective reasons why it is worthy of everyone's attention.

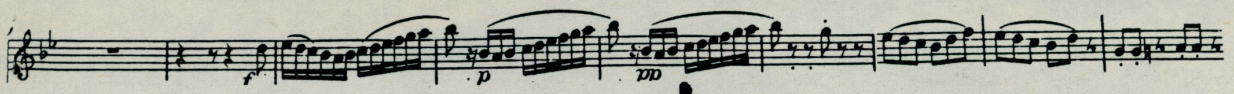
Well, to hell with that, I can't do it. This is a gut-reaction, from-the-heart review, and after you've read it and heard the tape you're welcome to disagree ... provided you don't mind being labelled senile and definitely deaf.

This is a GREAT collection of songs and pieces, and the best new music I've heard in a long while.



"Hullo – I'm a Jehovah's nudist!"

What makes it remarkable is that this tape represents Dave's first venture into the recording studio, and rather than be tempted to use 40 over-dubbed synthesiser flugel horns, cello's, Tibetan gongs and a drum machine, he has kept it neat, clean, uncluttered.



One acoustic guitar, double-tracked at times, one fretless bass, one voice, and thats it.

The strength of this collection lies undoubtedly in the lyrics. Dave is an astute observer of human nature, sometimes a little wry, sometimes whimsical, but his observations are most accurately rendered.

"Thin White Line", for example, is a melodic, thought-provoking song which touches on several contemporary issues, without the political hype. It is reminiscent for me of Bruce Cockburn at his best, and has, as an added bonus, some swooping soaring fretless bass playing by Colin Lyall, in the finest Stanley Clarke tradition.



Another surprise, was to hear just what a fine guitar player Dave really is. For some reason, this never struck me when I've heard him at the club. I was probably paying more attention to his lyrics then.

He has an enviable style - every acoustic players trick, used with great subtlety and panache, never overwhelming the pieces but underpinning them with an exceptional strength. A bit of Tony Cox here and there, a trace of the early John Martyn, even a touch of jazz when it suits the mood (as in "Bury my troubles"). Whatever his influences and inspirations, Dave presents an entirely original work.

I must mention what I think is easily the best track on the tape; "Come on back to me" is a bloody masterpiece! (stuck for words for a moment, those are the best I can come up with). A song about a lovers reunion, it is quite exceptional for its atmosphere, and on its own is reason enough to buy this tape.

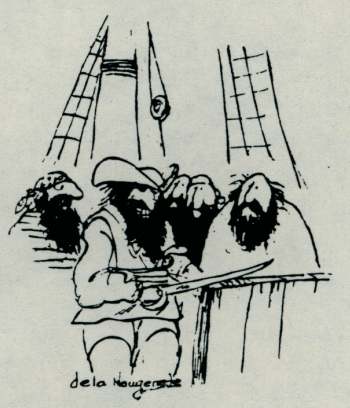
The last track, an instrumental, is the title piece "New Street", and if you have any aspirations as a guitar player, then listen carefully to this. It will either inspire you, or cause you to give up and take trombone lessons instead.

All things considered, this is a superb collection and one of which Dave Goldblum must be justifiably proud. I hope some record company or radio station will have the common sense to get hold of this and give it the promotion it richly deserves. I have done my bit, sending a copy to friends in London who produced Tony Birds most recent album

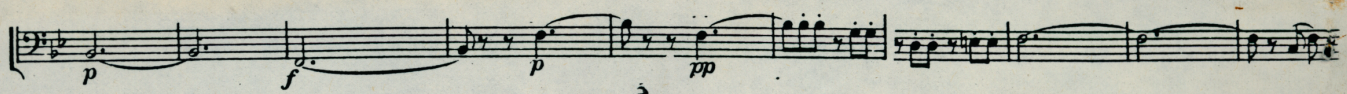
As far as I know, the tape is only available from Dave himself (or his lady Ilse) at the club on a Monday night, and costs R20.

IAN BELL

(How was that, Mrs Goldblum? Did I do okay? Sorry about writing "bloody" in paragraph 11, but I was lost for words. You can send the cheque and the case of Glenfiddich to me c/o;
The Ronald Reagan Home For The Chronically Bewildered,
P O Box 15746
Vlaeberg, 8018.



"We've struck lucky, lads – she's carrying a full cargo of razor blades!!"



where are they now ?

A (HOPEFULLY) REGULAR FEATURE ABOUT NOTEWORTHY PAST MEMBERS OF THE BARLEYCORN COMMITTEE.

This is a new feature, in which we reminisce about the important folk who made the Barleycorn what it is today, i.e.... (inshert shomethinq marvelloush here pleashe...Ed).

In future columns, we'll focus on people such as Jessica Abrahams, Dr Dave Waters, Ruth Allen (alias Ruth Coetzee), Joe Pappas and Mammas, "Woody" Woodford, Miss Glenda Mew, Sergeant Muammar Gaddafi, Master Neil Harvey, Sir Jeremy Stephenson, etc.

For now, though, here is a short retrospective on, and a salute to our FIRST HONORARY LIFE MEMBER, and first Chairperson, Mr JAMES PURVIS, Esq;

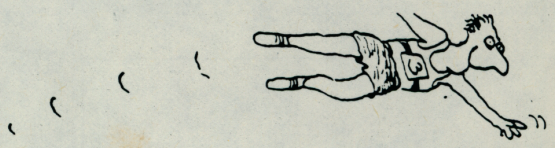
Jim was Chairperson of the Barleycorn from 1970-something until his return to his native Glasgow in the mid 1980's. Jim is an electron microscope expert and whilst in Cape Town he magnified several very small children at the Red Cross Hospital, and helped make them what they are today, i.e. midgets. At present he is doing much the same sort of thing in Sterling in Scotland.

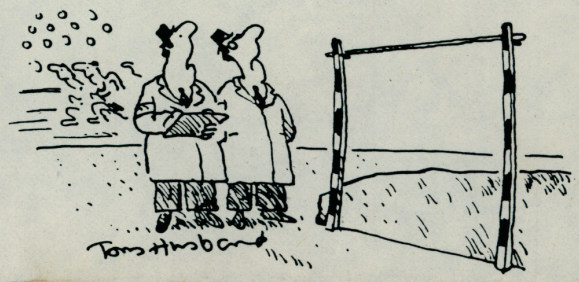
Jim was easily one of the hardest working people the Barleycorn has ever known, as was Jessica Abrahams. In fact, if it weren't for those two, I am sure we would not have a Barlecorn Music Club today. His calm, pragmatic problem-solving abilities and his organisational skills got the club through many a disaster threatened Festival, and legendary confrontations with management at the various venues the club occupied in those early years. It was indeed a sad day for the club when Jim announced his return to Scotland.

We still keep in touch with Jim by sending him a copy of Semibrief. Knowing he will be reading this, we say "Och Aye, Jim lad, and may the best of luck and good fortune always land on ya sporran!" And how about an article for Semibrief on the folk clubs of Scotland?

Our Barleycorn legal advisers have suggested that we do not divulge full details of Jims latest exploits until after the case come to court, since we may prejudice his chances of obtaining an acquittal.

It can be reported though, that the taxi driver and the busload of pensioners emerged unscathed from the incident on Hogmanay, while the topless dancers and the Miss Scotland semi-finalists are almost fully recovered. Jims bagpipes are being repaired by the reputable firm of Jock McFlatus of Edinburgh, and his Honorary Life Member itself is being treated by repeated immersions in a tincture of Dougals Triple Distilled "Old Fireballs" Highland Malt.





"Check that one for drug abuse"

this is your newsletter

Complaints, criticisms, contributions are always welcome, as are news of past and present members and views on whatever you like. Contact us at; P O Box 15746, VLAEBERG, 8018.

We'll be having an AGM sometime in June or July, and members will be notified in good time of that event.

We haven't notified people of lapsed membership this time, so if you AREN'T reading this edition of Semibrief, you have gone stale!

Ian Bell