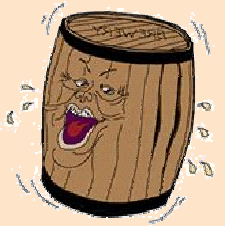


The third revival year of the traditional



GRANTCHESTER BARREL RACE



12 noon on Boxing Day, Tuesday 26 December 2006

Racetrack: along Coton Road, Grantchester

Mulled wine and hog roast at the Rupert Brooke pub afterwards



◀ Barrel racing in the 1960s ...



... and in 2005 ▶

***** GRAND CHALLENGE *****

We, the people of Grantchester, hereby challenge you, the people of Newnham, Barton and Coton : we want our trophy back !

In last year's first ever Barrel Race County Championships, Grantchester was cruelly beaten by a very strong team from The Red Bull, Newnham, led by its inspirational landlord Nico de Villiers. Still smarting from this humiliation, the Grantchester team is more determined than ever to win this year, and bring the trophy back home. Can Newnham retain the trophy? Or will Barton or Coton roll to victory, and take the trophy over the M11? Come and see, and cheer on your own village!

THE RULES

Four teams (with four members per team) will simultaneously roll empty wooden barrels up and down Coton Road, in a 4x4 relay race.

They'll start at 12:00 noon on Boxing Day at the junction with Burnt Close, race up to the junction with Stulpfield Road, change team member and head back again, and up and back once more.

There will be four races (see below), and the whole event will take about 40 minutes. Prize-giving will then be at the Rupert Brooke.

Training has been strictly forbidden! But watching should certainly be entertaining!

So please make a note in your diaries to come just before 12:00 noon on Boxing Day. It'll be a perfect way of banishing your Christmas hangover, and joining in the third year of a revival of an old village tradition.

RACE ORDER

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Competitors</i>	<i>Landlords/ladies</i>
1	Grantchester Men's	Four men's teams, representing the four Grantchester pubs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Blue Ball• The Rupert Brooke• The Green Man• The Red Lion	John Roos & Karolyn Reynak Simon & Gaye Stephens-Young Barry McKenzie & Hannah Gusterson Alan & Joanna Wainwright
2	Grantchester Ladies'	Four ladies' teams, representing the four Grantchester pubs	
3	Open race	Four mixed teams, with at least one lady per team	
4	County Championships	The Blue Riband Event. Four men's teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The pride of Grantchester• The Red Bull, Newnham• The White Horse, Barton• The Plough, Coton	Composite team Nico de Villiers Tom Williams Steve Thorpe

MULLED WINE, HOG ROAST AND OTHER DRINKS

There will be a marquee by the finish line in the Rupert Brooke pub car park, so that it will be quick and easy to get mulled wine, beer, and other alcoholic and soft drinks.

There will also be a hog roast serving roast pork in bread rolls, so if you don't feel like cooking lunch on Boxing Day, you know where to come...

HISTORY

The Grantchester Barrel Race was run between 1967 and 1973, initially organised by Bill Townsend, landlord of The Rose & Crown (since then renamed The Rupert Brooke). Bill gathered the sixteen competitors (four teams of four each) largely from regular drinkers at his pub. A separate ladies race was started in 1970. Years before, the race had been run down to The Blue Ball (perhaps it went from pub to pub?) but from 1967-73 it went along Coton Road, as a relay race, back and forward from the bottom of Burnt Close to the bottom of Stulpfield Road.

Bill Townsend left The Rose & Crown in 1971 and so 1972's race was organised by his successor. But there seems to have been controversy over who won that year, and accusations of underhand practices. This seems to have clouded enjoyment, since the race fizzled out after one more running in 1973.

The barrels they used were firkins or kilderkins; the former holds 9 gallons and the latter is twice as big. The generally-acknowledged racing technique was to start the barrel off with a sharp kick, and then keep it moving, either by kicking or with gloved hands. "They were heavy old things and used to go all over the place, spinning off everywhere – that was half the fun" says an ex-competitor.

We revived the race in 2004. We used old whisky barrels from Scotland, as sadly we couldn't find any wooden beer barrels. For the first time in over three decades we enjoyed the sounds of barrels rolling along the road, with 500-600 cheering spectators. In 2005 we added the Country Championships, when the Pride of Grantchester challenged the three neighbouring villages – and lost!

ORGANISATION

This revival is organised by Grantchester PCC in aid of The Grantchester Tower Appeal (charity no. 245456), and there will be collecting buckets for the appeal on the day. Please donate generously, if you feel able. For more information, see www.grantchester.info or email barrelrace@btinternet.com