

## Annex 5

### Article for the Village News May 09 re Licence

Rownhams House:

Oops!....further opportunities for blunders.

The last contribution to the Village News concerned the perils of putting on a play in one's garden without the necessary paperwork.

I hope that I may have correctly completed this chore but I wouldn't bet a small glass of ale on it. I have sent off over 5lbs (or 2.5 kilos in new money) of paperwork to *seven* separate official bodies. Each contained a 35 page completed form and included 5 pages of plans and a 6 page Appendix. The funny thing is when you phone up and speak to representatives of these bodies they sound eerily human; terribly helpful and don't sound at all as if they have any part whatsoever in the preparation of this Code of Administrative Malice.

And it is clear that if someone wants to put on a Hell's Angels reunion complete with a performance by Metallica and Led Zeppelin, they would have to complete the same forms as someone inclined to offer a (small) glass of sherry to a giggly aunt for a quid. Still, perhaps this policy saves on paper... (?)

And did you know that "FIRE EXIT" signs should now be replaced by ones reading "Fire Exit?" Look carefully. Astonishingly I am advised that people (apparently) have difficulty reading CAPITAL LETTERS and that they prefer small letters. One is reminded of the old American quip that you can spot a communist on the New York Metro because they are the ones who can read the *New York Times* without moving their lips.

One of the many questions is whether you may wish to put on: a) "indoor sports" or b) "boxing and wrestling". Well that's dead easy ...you tick the "No" box. But then in the wee small hours of the night, that light suddenly blinks on in your brain ... idiot, Barber, you blithering idiot ... what happens if a couple of folks knock on your door and ask if you have a room in which they could hold a charity chess tournament? Oops.

And then there is another box to complete which asks if you wish to provide "late night refreshment" – and that means after 11PM. Again ones inclination is to tick the 'No' box. This question is principally there to supervise kebab/burger shop/vans where there could be a rowdy gathering of howling clubbers at 3AM. I will cheerfully admit that I'd be the first to chuck a tear gas canister out of my flat window. Anyway in a Rownhams setting once the 'bar' has closed at 11PM you need to have had applied for 'late night refreshment' so that you can offer someone a cup of tea, coffee or a jammy dodger. Another potential 'oops'.

Another concern has been “noise” and having spoken to both the Police and the local Environmental Health departments we have indicated our willingness to apply every requested safeguard. As a belt and braces exercise the writer used this as an excuse to use a rock musician’s ‘weapon of choice’ and set it up in a room set aside for amplified music. He proceeded to enjoy at least thirty Jimi Hendrix moments. Fantastic. His wife meantime patrolled the garden to check for ‘sound leakage’ and reported back that thick walls, trees and traffic noise had smothered the sound of adolescent dreams.

There was a wonderful programme on TV in the early 60’s called *What’s My Line* where celebrities were allowed to question members of the public to guess their occupations having just viewed a few moments of watching a mimed clue. Picture then an impecunious middle aged bloke playing ‘Air Guitar’ who claims to be a country house owner. You can’t be serious? Yes, I am.

It’s almost incredible what you have to do these days to preserve a quiet and beautiful place.

Roger Barber.