

The following email was sent to one of the organisers of Cheltenham Folk Festival in February 2011 by a local Morris side whose members were not impressed with the reception they received:

“Jo,

On behalf of Silurian Border Morris I'm just popping this note across to say how sorry we were to have come on the wrong weekend! Worse than that, we had clearly arrived at an inconvenient time for the town, right in the middle of Scowl And Put Up The Beer Price Fortnight. It therefore came as no surprise that there were no obvious stewards to advise or assist us; nor that the sides we'd expected to dance with were not in evidence; nor that every place we went into had never heard of Morris dancing and had no intention of wanting to find out more!

If ever an invitation comes to participate in CFF again we'll be sure to check dates; check weather forecasts; check for folk friendly pubs; avoid the town centre. However, the experience was not entirely in vain. We did manage to upset a good few security guards and entertain some strangers, both in the street and outside the Town Hall. And a side member was moved to plagiarise the great Poet Laureate (**Ed:** The original can be found [here](#)) in order to summarise our feelings:

Cheltenham (with apologies to John Betjeman)

*Fall, friendly bombs, on Cheltenham!
That plastic, greedy, rain-soaked scam.
On festivals of Flim and Flam
Swarm over, Death!*

*Come bombs and blow to smithereens
The town that crushed Silurian dreams
Of friendly pubs and flowing streams
Of tuneful breath.*

*And smash those false and idle bars
Whose surly wenches, smiles like scars,
Pour icy water, not warm jars,
Banning song!*

Cheltenham

Written by S. Lough

Monday, 14 March 2011 13:32 - Last Updated Friday, 25 March 2011 22:02

*Demolish every dull arcade
Whose jobsworths sport Raybans and braid
Where hopes of indoor dancing fade;
"No! Dancing's wrong!"*

*But spare the passers-by who, bless,
brave rain and wind and M&S
to clap and smile and cry out, "Yes!
Border's fun!"*

*It's not their fault that everywhere
Are lurking stewards who don't dare
To talk or watch, advise or share
With Border Bums.*

*Rain down upon that moody place
Which lacks the simple wit or grace
For one weekend to find some space
For honest Folk.*

*Fall, friendly bombs on Cheltenham!
Consign it to the past; like Spam!
(Please bear in mind; like Cheltenham,
this pome's a joke!)*

No doubt we'll get an Arts Council Grant to turn it into a banner for next year's CFF...

yours etc,"