

## MAZEY DAY 2010

Led by the dazzling Jaipur Kawa Brass Band, marching shoulder to shoulder at the front of the civic procession – the first parade of this year's Mazey Day – with the Mayor of Penzance, Cllr. Jan Ruhmund, I couldn't help reflecting on the twenty years it had taken me to gain promotion from the parade's final (tail-end Charlie) to its first rank. (Mayor's consort). Wearing my St. John's Wort buttonhole, courtesy of Town Clerk and well-known gardener Simon Glasson, with pride, with the sun blazing down, a far cry from the rain that all but washed away the first Mazey Day, recalling another early Mazey Day morning when someone called out to me, “Don't know what you're writing about this for boy, , it'll never last!” I couldn't help thinking how wrong he had been and what an important part of the town's life it has since become.

Although I have seemed to have said that each year has been the best yet, I've no hesitation in saying that this year's, the 2010 Mazey Day, was definitely the best yet.

From the assertion by the Town Crier, Phillip Rowley, that anything South Africa could do, Penzance could do better, and proved it by showing his virtuosity on the vuvuzela, together with the warm words of welcome from both the Town Mayor and the newly elected Mock Mayor, Ben Clooney, the youngest human Mock Mayor yet, who, believe it or not, turned down both Her Majesty the Queen and the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to be here, to three glorious parades, several thousands of people, and any amount of music, movement and laughter later, despite the restrictions of the recession, it was not only the best yet but the hottest in every sense.

One of those beautiful days when the shade offered by the trees in the town's Morrab Gardens and Penlee Park was a blessing, when you could walk where you liked in the town's traffic-free streets, there was so much to see and hear from the top of Causewayhead to the bottom of Chapel Street, not forgetting from the top to the bottom of Market Jew Street: more pirates in all shapes and sizes, those with and those without cutlasses, than Jonny Depp could have even dreamed of meeting in the Caribbean: more “Wild Life” from a pair of prancing blue horses to an extraordinary white unicorn, from an incredible basking shark to and even more incredible snake, to all manner of creatures, butterflies to dragonflies, than one could hope to meet anywhere, more banners and bands, burgers and bangers, than you could count, and more fun than you could possibly wish for. A Mazey Day which, as one of the several fantastic floats suggested, took one from Land's End to Nirvana and back again, I can still hear the drums, the singing, the laughter which seemed to come from every corner, the different accents and languages, voices from France to Nigeria, still see the painted faces, the dancers and stilt walkers, still feel the thrill of marching to the splendid music made by the “Men of Harlech” (aka Falmouth Marine Band) who, resplendent in their red coats and white topees looked as if they had marched to Penzance via Rorke's Drift, still feel the presence of former town clerk David Gallie's amazingly patient Red Setter in his Mazey Day coat made especially for the occasion by Judith Parkin, and still gasp in admiration at the tremendous efforts made by all those behind the scenes who made it happen.

Without the volunteers, the makers, the sponsors, the willing workers, and, of course, the staff and children of the many local schools who deserve all the applause that's going, there would be no Mazey Day.

A supremely successful 20<sup>th</sup> Mazey Day, the 21<sup>st</sup> will have to steam to beat it, the day was summed up for me by the members of a young family who, aptly enough, were from East London, South Africa. Taking time out from their celebration of that day's 55-11 clobbering by the Springboks (South Africa's rugby union side) of Italy, they were only too happy to admit that our Town Crier had it right when he claimed that whatever South Africa could do, Penzance could do better. “We have festivals”, they said, “But nothing like this. It's so different, it's great to see the children playing such a big part in it, it's been brilliant!”

Frank Ruhmund