

## WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE



### THE QUARTER JACK'S CHALLENGE

Wimborne Minster, Millennium Eve 1999

#### CAST

The Quarter Jack

The Saint (St Cuthburga) with Bible

The King Maker and Educationalist (Lady Margaret Beaufort) with scroll

The Wise Woman (Alicia Payntere) with herbs

The Entrepreneurs (Isaac and Elizabeth Gulliver) with brandy

The Keeper of the Keys (Mrs Henrietta Bankes) with bunch of keys

The Servant (Alice Maud Baker) with trinket box

The Wessex Writer (Thomas Hardy) with book

Hannah (Judge from the Audience)

Children of Alicia Payntere

#### Procession

*The characters make their way to the Minster whilst singing "Wassail".*

*The Quarter Jack is at the front of the Minster assembling the audience. The challengers line up at the entrance to the Minster.*

#### At the Minster

*The setting is a long table made of rostra blocks covered with a cloth to the floor. Seven chairs round the table. Banners.*

*Challengers enter and sing the Wassail song (with gestures), accompanied by bagpipes.*

#### SONG (Millennium Pie)

Wassail, Wassail, all over the town!

Our coat it is white, and our ale it is brown

Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;

With the Wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

And here is to Dobbin and to his right eye,

Pray God send our master Millennium Pie,

Millennium Pie that may we all see;  
With the Wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,  
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock!  
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin,  
For to let these jolly Wassailers in.

*Bagpiper processes down the aisle. The Quarter Jack moves into the pulpit. Drum roll.*

Quarter Jack: Welcome to the Quarter Jack's Challenge. Good people of Wimborne, I am Jack o'Clock at your service. As you know I am usually referred to as the Quarter Jack of Wimborne on account of the fact that I have guarded this town for the past few hundred years, marking every quarter of an hour. You may be surprised to see me in this rather unusual location, ladies and gentlemen. But, as tradition tells, it is my custom on special occasions to parade about the town and, ladies and gentlemen, this is such a special occasion, is it not? Not every day we get a new Millennium, eh, is it? *(waits for audience response)* Thank you. So to proceed. Hear ye, hear ye! On this day the 31<sup>st</sup> of December nineteen hundred and ninety nine, I, the Quarter Jack, issue a challenge. We have arranged, at great expense, to bring to you today through time a selection of Dorset worthies, all who have contributed in some way to the wellbeing and development of this wonderful town of Wimborne. *(Drum roll)* Come on, let's hear some applause for Wimborne! *(pause for applause)* Each worthy comes bearing a gift for you all as well as some well-chosen words and when they've finished, you must decide who will be the Wimborne Personality of the Millennium. A statue will then be commissioned to stand in the heart of the town. At the threshold of the new, remembering the old, linking the past and the future. Right then, time to meet the contestants.  
*(as he introduces them to a drum roll, each contestant walks down the aisle waving and showing gift. They position themselves standing behind the table from left to right: Isaac Gulliver, Elizabeth Gulliver, Alicia Payntere, St Cuthburga, Margaret Beaufort, Mrs Bankes with Alice standing behind, Thomas Hardy)*

Let's have a warm Wimborne welcome please to... *(drum roll)*

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the wise woman of Cowgrove, Alicia Payntere and her family!

Ladies and gentlemen, I leap forward to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, please welcome, King Maker and Educator, Lady Margaret Beaufort!

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whose tomb is down there on the right, ladies and gentlemen, well known entrepreneurs and some say smugglers, Isaac Gulliver, his wife Elizabeth and their horse, Dobbin!

Next from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup>, representing the landed gentry, Mrs Henrietta Bankes of Kingston Lacy, and her servant, Alice!

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, we have an outsider but erstwhile temporary resident of Wimborne, in The Avenue to be precise. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it's the Wessex poet himself, Mr Thomas Hardy!

These are the contenders today on the 31<sup>st</sup> December for the title, ladies and gentlemen. Each will speak in turn and try to persuade you of their claim to fame. But first we need a chief arbiter from our audience. A principal judge. Come along now – let's have a volunteer! (*ad lib*) No, too young, young man, no no.. Come along, goodness me. In that case, we'll have to choose ourselves. Now let's see. I think we'll have... YOU! (*points at Hannah*)

All: YOU! (*pointing*) Yes, you!

Hannah: Me!

All: Yes, you!

Quarterjack: Step forward. At the double. 2 foot, 2 foot, 2 foot.. (*Hannah comes forward*)  
Name?

Hannah: Hannah.

Quarterjack: Rank?

Hannah: Student teacher.

Quarterjack: Perfect. Absolutely fine. Now, I suppose you need your scoring sheet. And you know a lot about Wimborne, do you?

Hannah: Not a lot.

Quarterjack: You'll know more in a minute. Right, take these sheets and take your positions. (*All sit*)  
Now then, you, Hannah of Wimborne, must decide who will speak first by looking at the selection of gifts on the table. Hold your gifts aloft, please. (*All wave objects and vie for attention*) You have a choice..

Hannah: What should I choose?

Quarterjack: A book, a scroll, a Bible, some herbs, some brandy, the keys...

Hannah: I think I'll choose this one. (*picks up scroll*)

Quarterjack: She has chosen the scroll, ladies and gentlemen. Hold it aloft, Hannah of Wimborne, so that all may see it. The scroll, ladies and gentlemen, belongs to Lady Margaret Beaufort. She will speak first. Ladies and gentlemen, (*drum roll*) Lady Margaret Beaufort! (*drum roll*)

*Lady Margaret Beaufort comes forward.*

Margaret: Educare, educare, educare! (*general confused murmuring*)

Quarterjack: What does that mean then, madam?

Margaret: It means Education, Education, Education, young man!

Quarterjack: Hadn't heard that before. Educare - file that away, children.

Margaret: My memory is not what it was. (*reads from scroll*) What greater gift can one give than that of knowledge? And I have bestowed the gift of learning to many over the last five hundred years. (*to Isaac Gulliver*) Unfortunately this young man doesn't seem to have taken advantage of it.

I was born in Kingston Lacy and had but one child, a son, born to me when I was 14 and already a widow. I imagined that my legacy would be that of the dynasty of my flesh, the House of Tudor, but it was not to be. (*All sigh in sympathy*) My true legacy began with the chancery I founded in memory of my beloved parents, John and Margaret Beaufort, Duke and Duchess of Somerset, now at peace in the great Minster. Having survived four of my husbands .. (*All gasp in surprise*) Yes, four - I had no family to call on my fortune and so devoted myself and my wealth to founding many places of learning. My bequests grew and evolved over the centuries and there is one of local significance here in Wimborne. I wonder if you can guess? It was made even greater than I had anticipated when it was granted a Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth I, my great granddaughter, and sadly the last of my line. It even became known by her name. Have you guessed yet? Queen Elizabeth's School. By 1850 fifty pupils were taught and in 1970 it moved to its present site, where I am pleased to say it educates 1245.

Hannah: I went there.

Margaret: My gift to education was the most lasting of my life for I have learned that the flesh is weak and turns to dust but a thought that is taught lives on.

All: A thought that is taught lives on!

*Applause.*

Quarterjack: Well, Hannah, have you scored?

Hannah: I haven't scored yet, no. But it is New Year's Eve so you never know.

Quarterjack: The contest!

Hannah: Oh sorry! There were never any teachers like that when I was at QE. Actually, I do remember the celebrations a couple of years ago.

Quarterjack: Time to choose the next gift. Hold up those gifts again, please. Let's see them all. That's it - the book, the keys, the Bible, the herbs..

Hannah: I choose the herbs.

Quarterjack: The herbs it is, ladies and gentlemen. Alicia Payntere, the wise woman of Cowgrove! *(drum roll)*

*Alicia climbs on to the table to speak.*

Alicia: Well, a piece of vellum's a fine thing to touch and sniff so I've been told but what's the use of books for those of us who don't read? But the truth is that all these remedies and recipes, rhymes and spells, puzzles and potions that I've learned over the years came from the mouths of cunning men and wise women who remembered all of it down the ages with no need for writing down. And so I told my own sweet children so they would have the strength of knowing.

*Alicia goes into a trance and suddenly turns to Lady Margaret Beaufort.*

Alicia: I could cure you, you know.

Margaret: Oh no, no!

Alicia: Doing my charms and cures was a way of making a living of sorts for myself and my children. But because we lived poorly with a great quantity of herbs around and a muddle of jars and gourds all over the house, people did point and whisper. *(all point at Alicia and begin whispering)* Because we were different, they started making things up about me which weren't true. *(All start gossiping to each other)* "That woman put the evil eye on Agnesse Abbott's cow", said my neighbour, and his neighbour, then his neighbour's neighbour. Then half the village believed Agnesse Abbott's cattle had a spell put upon them. But I knew and my children knew that the poor beast was sick with a bout of pox. No one listened to me so I was taken before the Moot Court at Cowgrove and sentenced, *(all slam the table)* burnt *(all stand and start slapping hands like flames increasing in volume)* before my very own children who raged, raged day and night against their mother's unjust death.

Children: NO!

*Clapping dies down and all return to their seats. During the following speech, Alicia and the children walk down the aisle and back handing out herbs to the audience)*

Alicia: And so I should hope that today you all favour the great goodness the earth offers. And do teach the old ways of tuning into nature's mysteries. And if you do not, that would be my gift to you - that you should all grow some herbs by your back doors and learn the healing qualities they offer you. Come children, I have done. *(Returns to seat)*

*Applause.*

Quarterjack: Alicia Payntere, ladies and gentlemen. Hannah?

Hannah: That's terrible. Imagine being burnt in front of your children. And she was trying to heal people. Terrible.

Quarterjack: Are you ready for the next challenger?

Hannah: I think I'm going to choose the book.

Hardy: Ah, that's fine. Thank you.

Quarterjack: Mr Thomas Hardy, everyone! *(drum roll)*

*Thomas Hardy comes forward.*

Hardy: There you saw the wonderful magic of this wise woman's potions, but I bring you a very different kind of magic. Magic born from the imagination, using words to create images in the mind that will be cast into the next millennium. I recall one day as I sat sketching the architecture of this fine Minster church that the shades and shadows began to draw in round me and out of those shades and shadows began to emerge characters from Wimborne's past. I left off my sketching and I wrote this poem. Here, let me read it to you. *(He climbs onto the table)*

*The drone and bell are played by the Quarterjack throughout the poem. Other characters are attentive to the reading.*

Hardy: How smartly the quarters of the hour march by  
That the jack-o'-clock never forgets; *(Quarterjack begins to ring bell)*  
Ding-dong; and before I have traced a cusp's eye,  
Or got the true twist of the ogee over,  
A double ding-dong ricochetts.

Just so did he clang here before I came,  
And so will he clang when I'm gone  
Through the Minster's cavernous hollows--the same  
Tale of hours never more to be will he deliver  
To the speechless midnight and dawn! *(Quarterjack stops ringing bell)*

*Hardy moves behind the others drawing them up "shade by shade". They make arches. Slowly to the sound of the bell and the drone, they dance round the table.*

I grow to conceive it a call to ghosts, *(All move round Hardy like ghosts)*  
Whose mould lies below and around.  
Yes; the next "Come, come," draws them out from their posts,

And they gather, and one shade appears, and another,  
As the eve-damps creep from the ground.

*The music stops and the characters become themselves once more, shivering from the ghostly cold. The "ghosts" return to their seats, taking Hardy with them. All shake themselves and sit.*

Quarterjack: Mr Thomas Hardy, ladies and gentlemen.

*Applause.*

*Isaac and Elizabeth Gulliver come forward.*

Elizabeth: I expect they're all a bit thirsty after all that dancing, all those ghostly shades.

Isaac: I got a right shiver down my spine after that.

Quarterjack: This is Mr Isaac Gulliver, ladies and gentlemen. *(drum roll)*

Isaac & Eliz: At your service! *(they bow)*

Elizabeth: Oh, I say, this is a nice tablecloth, isn't? I remember that time in our younger days when I had you laid on the table.

Isaac: You don't want to be talking like that, Elizabeth. We're fine, respectable people now. You keep our married life quiet.

Elizabeth: Oh, Isaac, that's not what I was talking about. I was remembering that time when that enthusiastic customs officer, young Abraham Pike, came so close...

Isaac: So close to what?

Elizabeth: To finally capturing you!

Isaac: I got to give that young gobloo credit. He never gave up easily but we outsmarted him at every turn, lass. *(to the audience)* Now, here's a tale that will demonstrate to you good people of Wimborne what quick wit and daring can achieve. You will surely realise why Isaac Gulliver and Elizabeth should be your choice for our town's new statue.

Elizabeth: It was a particularly cold night but the sky was clear and studded with stars.

*All make wind noises.*

*(to others)* It were windy but it weren't gale force! Isaac had been out for some time waiting for his lugger the Dolphin to drop anchor off Branksome Chine.

Isaac *(on hobby horse coming up aisle)*: Ho there, John! Tell them to load those casks carefully into the wagons! We don't want any spillages of brandy tonight! Here, bring me one of those casks. I'm going on ahead tonight to see my lovely lady wife, Elizabeth. *(The Quarterjack passes him a cask)* Look out for any trouble and I'll meet you at St Andrew's church in Kinson. *(ad lib until he returns to table)* You take care now; I'll see you; and we're heading home to Elizabeth, etc.

Isaac: I galloped across gorse and heather homeward bound to Elizabeth. As I reached the crossroads. I heard the sound of horses' hooves and a sharp cry rang out.

Voices: Stop in the King's name!

Isaac *(to his horse)*: Ha! Ha! Come on, lass, quicker.

Elizabeth: The gobloo chased him over the heath but Isaac gave him a good run for his money and arrived home minutes before him.

Isaac *(to maid)*: Unsaddle the horse and turn her loose into the paddock!  
*(he bangs on the door)* Elizabeth, open this door! Hurry, woman!

Elizabeth: Isaac, what's going on?

Isaac: Don't just stand there, woman. Revenue men coming. Open the trap door.

Elizabeth *(to maid)*: Open the trap door.

Isaac: Quickly.

Elizabeth: Get your master inside. Revenue men coming. *(they hide Isaac under the table cloth)* Quick, quick, quick. And then there was a banging on the door such as you've never heard.

*Knocking sound made by other characters.*

Voices: Open up in the King's name. Open up.

Voice 1: I know you're in there.

Voice 2: You smuggling swine.



Elizabeth: He was shouting and banging and raising the households throughout Kinson with his cussing. (to maid) Alice, stay calm and let him in! Oh, just a minute...

*Elizabeth and maid throw brandy cask between them in a panic.*

Elizabeth: I know what I'll do. Oh, do I have to? Right then, calm down, girl. (*she sits with the cask under her skirts*) Right, open the door and let 'em in.

*Alice opens the door.*

Why, sir, this is an unaccustomed pleasure to be receiving a distinguished looking gentlemen as yourself on such a cold night. Oh, it's my husband you've come to see, is it? Well, sir, I'm afraid he's not at home. What's that you say? No, sir, it would be wasting your time waiting for him for I know his business will detain him at least until the morrow. Search my house! Surely sir, you do not presume that I am some slip of a girl who knows no better than to let you in without a warrant from the magistrate. Now off with you, young sir! It is not seemly to be visiting respectable married ladies at this hour without the master of the house present. And off he went. (*banging noises from Isaac under the table*) Oh, the master. I forgot about him. Right, let him out. Let him out. He's gone.

Isaac (*emerging from under the table*): Oh, my brave and clever girl. (*they embrace*) But now he's found his way here, the rogue will be back. Of that I'm sure.

Elizabeth: And the very next day, with his document clutched in his hand, he was back, banging on the door and shouting. Oh dear, now what we going to do?

*Knocking sound made by other characters.*

Voices: Open up in the name of the King!

Voice 3: I demand entry to search this property!

Voice 4: I have a magistrate's warrant!

Voice 5: Open up, I tell you!

Isaac: But once again, my clever wit...

Elizabeth: *Our* clever wit.

Isaac: Our clever wit outsmarted him at every turn.

Elizabeth: Isaac, come here and lay down.

*Chain reactions of shock from all.*

Isaac: Lay on the table! Not in this lovely Minster place! Elizabeth, my dear, this is hardly a good time for ..

Elizabeth: Isaac, just shut up for once and do as I say. *(he lies down)* Pass me that box of wig powder.

Isaac: Wig powder!

Elizabeth: Lay still! Are you ready? *(she applies powder to his face)* Right, Isaac, lie as still as a corpse, my dear.

Isaac: *(sitting up)* A corpse!

Elizabeth: A corpse, for that is what you are, my dear. We are mourning your sudden demise of the plague.

Isaac: The plague!

*She liberally applies the powder to his face and hands. She crosses his arms over his chest and rehearses her look of acute grief. Isaac coughs and splutters then lies perfectly still. The banging and shouting continues throughout.*

Elizabeth: Alice, open the door and let the gentlemen in! *(all start crying)* Oh sir, little did I think when last we met that our next meeting would be such a sorrowful one. Sir, you intrude upon our grief. Yes, you may see my husband but you'll not hear a word from him. He's dead. Felled by the merciless hand of the plague. My own dear husband, his cheeks so pale, his life blood drained, his warmth and vigour – all gone. Come, sir, see for yourself his cold stiff plague-ridden corpse! What, sir, you do not wish to approach further? You must depart so soon? Then leave us with our grief for soon they will come to take his body from me! *(She breaks down completely)*

Isaac *(sitting up)*: Oh, you little beauty. Come here. *(they embrace)*

My burial took place with a coffin filled with stones and I left Kinson for a few months just to let matters settle down. We could tell you a few more tales of near-misses with them philistines.

Elizabeth: We could!

Isaac: But I tell you this, ladies and gentlemen, in all my exploits, never once did we resort to this *(holds up pistol)* and never once did our brave men resort to violence to further our trade. We continued our business providing hundreds of stately folks as well ordinary folk like yourselves fine wine, brandies, gins, silk, lace and tea all at very reasonable prices.

Elizabeth: Very reasonable prices. Very.

Isaac: So, Wimborne, we leave you this.

Elizabeth: A bottle of brandy!

Isaac: And our gift to the Millennium of gentlemanly conduct, quick wit and enterprise. Thank you. *(they bow)*

*Applause. They return to their seats. Following exchange ad-libbed as they move.*

Isaac: They made me Esquire, you know, Elizabeth. We made it, girl. Buried in the Minster. A person of great speculating genius that Customs Officer called me, etc.

Elizabeth: Yes, yes, and I suppose I had nothing to do with your success? Come on, Isaac, sit down and let the next story begin.

Quarterjack: Well, Hannah, what do you say?

Hannah: Well, that certainly was a very amusing story. Now then...

Quarterjack: She's making her choice, ladies and gentlemen. The keys!

Hannah: Who do they belong to?

Mrs Bankes: Ah, the keys. Come, Alice. The keys are mine.

Quarterjack: Mrs Bankes of Kingston Lacy, ladies and gentlemen. *(drum roll)*

*Mrs Bankes comes forward and addresses the audience from the aisle.*

Mrs Bankes: These keys represent duty. These are the keys to the estate of Kingston Lacy built by my family. For generations the Bankes family gave employment to the people of this town. Through all these years we have brought stability and prosperity. Sometimes it was a struggle but I never shirked my duty. I was a widow for many years with only my children Ralph, Daphne and Viola..

Alice: Oh, dear Miss Viola..

Mrs Bankes: Don't interrupt, Alice. ..only my children for comfort and company but I carried out my husband's wishes and managed the estate diligently. When Ralph, my beloved son, came of age I was proud to hand over the estate to him. And he gave you the finest gift of all – the land for you all to enjoy. *(Applause)* I haven't finished yet.

*(Land of Hope and Glory starts playing)* A beautiful park to walk in with its bluebell woods and gardens and the church of St Stephen's. And the house

of Kingston Lacy with all its treasures – paintings by Velasquez, Rubens and Vandyck. One of the finest art collections in England! Wouldn't you agree, Mr Hardy?

Hardy: Quite so, Madam.

Mrs Bankes: Wonderful gifts for the whole town. The key to civilisation is duty.

Isaac: I never pay no duty.

Mrs Bankes: Do not forget this as you move into the new millennium. A sense of duty will serve you well. That is the end of my address, ladies and gentlemen. Come, Alice. *(they start to return to seat)*

*Applause.*

Hannah: Hang on a minute. Stop. What about her servant? She hasn't told us her story. *(holds Alice back)*

Alice: Oh please, you must forgive me but I haven't much of a story to tell.

Quarterjack: She's just one of the servants, Hannah.

Alice: But I haven't even brought a gift.

Hannah: That doesn't matter. Everyone's got a story to tell. I would really like to hear yours. Go on, girl.

*Alice steps forward.*

Alice: Well, if it please you, ma'am. I was in service to the Bankes family who resided at Kingston Lacy as a nursery maid to their dear young ladies Miss Daphne and Miss Viola. I confess that I was particularly fond of Miss Viola. In fact I even gave her a pet name. I used to call her Cissie. Oh, please don't think me impertinent but I do sincerely believe Miss Viola was fond of me too, because on my birthday, which was just any other day to everyone else, she gave me this.

*Alice produces a trinket box, shows it to the audience and holds it affectionately before passing it to Hannah.*

Quarterjack: Tell us what it is, Hannah.

Hannah: A little trinket box.

Alice: Oh, how I treasured it! I never had much time to look at it though because being a nursery maid was very hard work. My favourite part of the day was just before I had to put the little ones to bed. I used to love brushing Miss Viola's hair. *(starts brushing child's hair)* She always cursed it for being so wiry but to me it was the most beautiful hair in the world. A mass of chestnut brown cascading down her back with golden curly ends.

*Music starts. All sway. A sudden drum beat and Alice doubles up in pain.*

It was on such a night that I started to get stomach pains. Of course I knew there was something wrong but how was I supposed to know it was appendicitis?

Anyway, the next day Nurse Stanley scolded me for coming so late to the nursery. I tried to explain but because it hurt so much when I bent over the grates to blacken them it took twice as long. As punishment she wouldn't let me see the children. I never saw Miss Viola again. *(music)*

The only gift that I can humbly give to you for the future is that of dedication. Dedicate yourselves not only to your work but more importantly to each other as I dedicated my life to Miss Viola.

*Hannah and Alice join hands at the front. St Cuthburga comes and stands on the table behind them with arms outstretched and hands on their shoulders.*

Cuthburga: Take comfort, child, for the meek shall inherit the earth.  
*(sung)* I am Cuthburga  
Founder of this Minster church.

We have all spoken. Mr Hardy of his love for this church revealed through poetry, Mistress Alicia of her healing herbs, the enterprising Gullivers, Elizabeth and her husband Isaac who ended his days as church warden of this Minster.

Quarterjack: It's true indeed.

Cuthburga: And Mrs Bankes and the servant girl, Alice, both intent on duty and on dedication to their different callings. Lady Margaret shares with me a love of education and of learning.

*(sung)* From this place  
The great Leoba went to Frankish lands  
To spread the word of God  
These many different people and countless others  
Throughout all generations  
Have made this town the special place it is.  
For we are all important,  
Those that came before  
And those who will come after.

This has been a holy site for more than one thousand years. May it please God to keep it so for many years to come. This is my gift to you.

(sung)            May he grant us peace  
                      Dona nobis pacem  
                      Dona nobis pacem  
                      Amen!

All:                        Amen!

Quarterjack: So, Hannah, you have indeed heard all the challenges. Now it is time for you to speak. You from the end of this twentieth century who face a new age. Time for you to decide whose gift should be chosen and carried across the divide. Whose statue will you choose to make to stand on our green in years to come perhaps to remind people of this last millennium? Remember, Hannah..

All:                        The choice is yours. *(all point at Hannah)*

Hannah:            I don't know. *(to audience, ad lib)* Which one shall I choose? They were all brilliant..

Quarterjack: I will have to hurry you, Hannah. Time waits for nobody.

Hannah:            I know. I've got it!

*Music – Millennium Pie. Hannah starts to arrange the challengers as a frozen statue.*

Quarterjack: Hannah appears to be making a statue, ladies and gentlemen.

Hannah:            Yes, there, I've done it.

Quarterjack: Wait a minute. Hannah, you were asked to choose *one* personality. They can't all be winners, can they?

Hannah:            Well, I couldn't just choose one. They were all important in their own right. Each of them is different. Like Cuthburga said, they were all important - Christianity, education, dedication, duty, healing, business sense, poetry. Although I have to say in the case of Alice I think she was robbed. You shouldn't have to suffer in silence. Just think of all the wars that have been fought this century all in the name of duty. It's important to take on board all of these traditional values but at the same time we have to add new ideas. The past and the present shouldn't be separate. They've got to go hand in hand.

Quarterjack: And so, good people of Wimborne, the Quarter Jack's Challenge ends. It is time for the wassailing to begin. The words are in your programme, so please join in.

All: *(sing)*                   Wassail, Wassail, all over the town!  
Our coat it is white, and our ale it is brown  
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;  
With the Wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

And here is to Dobbin and to his right eye,  
Pray God send our master Millennium Pie,  
Millennium Pie that may we all see;  
With the Wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,  
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock!  
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin,  
For to let these jolly Wassailers in.

*Cast bow.*

### Epilogue

Quarterjack: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, people of Wimborne, that is not quite the end of the celebrations, needless to say. You are humbly requested shortly, if it is still fair in spite of all dire predictions, to join us in a circle dance on the Minster Green where we will honour our ancestors who passed before us and remember them. But before this we invite you to pause and think of your wishes for the coming Millennium. What things that we have not covered would you wish to be remembered in the future? And you may write them with a pencil provided to your programme and then give them to the character of your choice who most coincides with your wishes or leave them on the special table at the front. While you are doing that I believe the Gullivers have arranged for some apple pies and punch to be served in the rear of the Minster. Is that right, Mr and Mrs Gulliver?

Elizabeth: Quite right, sir.

Isaac: All duty free.

Quarterjack: Turn to someone next to you and discuss with them. Would you have chosen everybody and what wishes you have, what hopes for yourself, for your families, for Wimborne, for Dorset, for England, for the world? And the musicians will play while you do that. Thank you, good people of Wimborne.

*Circle Dance and Conga round the Minster Green*

*The End*