



## Appendix 4: The History of the Cestrian Music Tournament

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## Appendix 4 - History of the Cestrian Music Tournament

The Cestrian Music Tournament was first held in 1887, at the ‘Prancing Parson’ pub in the centre of Chester. It was sponsored by a local fishmonger, Ely Slapflipper, who took great delight in singing to his fish while he gutted them. His singing soon attracted other like-minded fishmongers (and one recalcitrant florist), who were inspired to sing by the aroma of fish. And so was born ‘Ely and the Gills’.

Following accusations of lip-synching from the local tailor, Sigmund Stitchit, and his group of singing tailors, ‘The Trouser Wafters’, Ely sent out a challenge to any musical group in Chester to meet them in a tournament that would decide who really was the best.

Word of the challenge spread and feverish excitement gripped the city. The owner of the Prancing Parson, Ivor Bigbottle, offered his establishment as a venue, and the ‘Chester Trumpet’ newspaper ran a plethora of articles and advertisements.

The list of contestants grew, with the final line-up as follows:

<b>Ely and the Gills</b>	Vocal harmony group (featuring Hilda Ribber on fish bones)
<b>The Trouser Wafters</b>	Vocals and rhythmical zipping
<b>Stan Anvil and the Pots</b>	Instrumental percussion (a group of ironmongers who are credited as the founders of heavy metal)
<b>Penelope Poodle’s Parsnips</b>	Lady’s quartet of musical vegetables
<b>The Cheesesniffers</b>	Musical cheese sniffing* and cheek slapping
<b>Wally Washboard’s Scrubbers</b>	High-energy melodic clothes cleaning with three-part harmony vocals
<b>Brassy Bill and the Bottlers</b>	Tuba and bottle-blowing

\* *Cheese sniffing was not considered a crime in 1887.*

On the night of the contest the city was wild, the Prancing Parson was packed, and the first ever merchandising stall was opened by Timmy Tout. A raffle was held to select the judging panel, with controversy infiltrating events not for the first time. Objections were raised and some mild protests descended into scuffles, but it was agreed that the results of the raffle stood. And so, John Firmudder-Curlyfleece became the first sheep to ever sit on a judging panel of a music competition. He was joined by the Policeman, Bob Copbobby, and the Fireman, Andy Allablaze.

And so as the tournament got underway, the city bore witness to some astonishing music and some sterling cheese sniffing. After all seven acts had performed, the judges deliberated earnestly before selecting Wally Washboard's Scrubbers as the winners. However, the decision was tainted with controversy when Ely Gill accused the judges of accepting bribes by way of free clothes laundering. This was hotly refuted at the time, although rumours continued to circulate, particularly when a consignment of washboards arrived at the local Police and Fire Stations the following week.

Such was the popularity of the tournament, it was agreed by a select group of sponsors that it would be held again the following year. And so it has been ever since. Over the years there have been many success stories, and also much heartbreak. Worldwide stars have been born and some musical careers have been shattered. For every million-selling artist, such as Hoochie Coochie and the Coos, there are also sometimes painful stories of the losers, such as the tragic tale of Dick Down's Delicates, where defeat was met with disbelief, many tears and the public shredding of their stage underpants.

The Tournament is now recognised as the largest and most prestigious in the land and is beamed live across the civilised world, and also to Scotland.

Notable Recent Winners:

Name	Year	Notes
The Bonsai Brigade	1985	A punk rock band consisting of Bonsai trees, they wooed the audience and the judges with their eclectic style and multi-coloured bark. As their music is transmitted on a completely different level of consciousness, the listener is required to wear specially-adapted transducer leaves (one for each ear to get the true stereo effect).
Sid Skiffle and his Crooning Spider	1980	After emigrating from Scouseland to Denbigh, Sid hooked up with Sammy the Spider and a legendary act was born. Sid's banjo playing was a perfect accompaniment to Sammy's dulcet tones, and they were clear winners on all of the judge's scorecards. They went on to record three hit albums and would have surely recorded more, if not for Sammy's unfortunate accident with an open plug hole and running cold water bath tap.
Melanie Fleecetickler	1975	The first sheep to ever win the tournament, Melanie delighted everyone with her angelic baaing and dexterity on the acoustic guitar. She has since retired from music and now manages a successful chain of Shearing Salons.
Barnaby Humpypoke	1970	Much was made of the rivalry between Barnaby and Tam James, and indeed the pair had come to blows in a trouser-tightness competition the year before. Despite barely being able to hear Barnaby's singing due to the screams of ladies in the audience, the judges were unanimous in their verdict, with extra points being awarded for multiple pant-splitting.

Name	Year	Notes
Tam James	1968	‘The Singing Dwarf’ was already a star in his native South Wales and his entry into the tournament was considered by many to be controversial and inappropriate. However, Tam argued that wearing pants as tight as his gave the other contestants an advantage. On the night, his brilliant rendition of ‘Delia’s Deli’ was performed without any pant-splitting and received top marks from all the judges.
Felicity Floss and the Dentists	1967	Considered to be one of the tournament’s most unusual winners, with their mixture of flowery pop and rhythmical drilling not being to everyone’s tastes, the group nevertheless had a massive hit with ‘Open Wide Now’. Although the original line-up broke up in 1972, Felicity retained the rights to the name and re-launched the band in 1974. They still perform to this day, with their spectacular live shows including robotic dentist’s chairs and multiple root-canal surgery.
Charlie Cobbler’s Sole Brothers	1964	With their intoxicating brand of soul music with hobnail boot tap dancing, it’s safe to say that Charlie Cobbler’s Sole Brothers were one of the most popular winners ever. They also further endeared themselves to the audience by throwing out ‘two-for-one’ shoe repair vouchers at the end of their act.
Chucky Plum and the Gooseberries	1956	Drawing upon the rock ‘n’ roll revolution of the 50s, Chucky dazzled the crowd and judges with his all-energy show, including his now-famous ‘Pigeon Strut’. His sheer presence and astounding guitar playing on ‘Ta Ta Jimmy’ had the audience dancing in the aisles. Chucky went on to have an extremely colourful career and has served as a guest judge on the panel many times, even after being pronounced acutely deaf.

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