Harsh sentences hit Ruardean pockets!

•The bench discusses legal intricacies.

SOME rough justice was meted out on Saturday when the Ancient Lord Mayor's Court sat at Ruardean.

One Ralph Cole, chairman of the Parish Council, faced two charges, one of ploughing up snow in front of the Mason's Arms pub so that the landlord had to shovel snow for two hours before he could get in, and the other charge related to leaving straw in the village hall.

Peggy Wilkins faced a charge of sitting on a prize of belly dancing classes, thereby preventing her husband Don taking up the lessons and perhaps featuring on Britain's Got Talent.

Trevor Hale, Ron Arkell and W Hatton faced the joint charge that while on holiday they abandoned their wives on a shopping trip and had to be found in a violent thunderstorm, "under a table with three pints, grinning like Cheshire cats".

Julie Duberley was charged with writing a false appeal for a lost dog called Lucky, making her husband Reg put it in his butcher's shop window, while Stanley Davis allegedly proposed to the Lord Mayor's wife. Finally Stanley Davis faced the charge of verbally abusing Father Christmas.

Most of the defendants were found guilty, many having to dig deep for fines of a pint or more of beer.

"It was a great night and we raised £213," said organiser Reg Duberley. He said £100 of this would go to the church repair fund.

•Prosecutor Rev Canon Cliff Davies reads out the charges.

•Sword-bearers greet the court officials.

•Evidence...Don Wilkins shows how good a belly dancer he might have been, given a chance