

WICKHAM MORRIS

The village Morris side has been casting its net wide this year after success in the recruitment of some new and enthusiastic members, and a welcome association with the Tricollex Morris of Fareham, under the squiredom of Rev. Bob Swallow.

We have been able to accept many more invitations than in previous years, and dancing continues until the end of July, when it is traditional to hang up bells and baldricks until the Autumn.

We have been proud to include some new movements in our repertoire, including the much vaunted Fanny Frail, and our only horticultural dance, Bean Setting.

The season's inaugural May Day festivities, which have been reported elsewhere, were followed by a visit to Hambledon, where a first was claimed by Wickham with a performance in the Polling Station for the local elections. The Returning Officer showed some concern for the safety of his booths, but had to agree that there was no possibility of the electorate being influenced by the performance as there were no voters present.

Entertainment of the local Rotarians in Houghton's Barn was followed by a highly successful visit to the Elm Tree at Swanwick, where diners joined in with the apres-dance singalong with some vigour. Uvedale, our unicorn mascot, came into his own on this occasion, possibly in anticipation of his coming visit to Rotterdam in the hands of some Round Tablers who borrowed him for a Eurofest. Interestingly, his companion, Rory the lion, has been used as the model for the country's European Presidency logo.

The European theme continues with a visit to Villers s/Mer for their Kermesse (a weekend of celebrations in aid of the schools held at Pentecost), where "Les Morris Men" performed twice in tropical conditions, and all the way home on the NORMANDIE, the brand new Brittany Ferry. A large crowd gathered on the aft sun deck in beautiful weather, and in the ballroom later. All but one twelve year old girl (who thought we were out of tune) agreed that the music and singing was a splendid way of passing the five hour crossing.

We are fortunate now to have a strengthened band of musicians. Bob Randell on accordion, John Shillitoe on fiddle and Ted Fitzgerald on banjo and guitar have been joined by Graham Thomas on mandolin and guitar, and Martin Toomer on tabor. Kim Lees, recovering from his broken leg, has more than made up for the deficiency in the dancing section with his contribution on the tabor. The noise which they make is acceptable indeed.

Notable among the dancers is Andy Folkes, who has mastered the art of the Fool's Jig, and performs it regularly in the company of Bob Swallow.

The weekend after Villers, the men were at the Wickham Church Fete, again in blazing conditions. We were hot, but the blacksmith must have been hotter! Our latest date was in Wickham Square, where a large crowd included some members of the French Gendarmerie, on a course at Netley, who were roped in to perform the Shepherd's Hey.

This year's target for funds collected is the Ankylosing Spondilitis Society, for whom we hope to raise a tidy sum.

Future events include Wildern School on 10th. July, Wallington Fete on the 11th., Wickham Square again on Friday 24th. July at 7.30 p.m., Gosport Medieval Village on the 25th., Fareham Precinct at 11 a.m. on 26th. September with Tricollex, and the Titchfield Carnival on 26th. October.

We hope to see you there. Support your local Morris side!

Enquiries please to David Swayne,

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