

Dunton
Folk

Dunton Wassail

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For it's our wassail, jolly wassail

The wassailers gather in the farmyard where they are given lyric sheets and where they can avail themselves of the mulled cider, mulled apple juice, ale, hot dogs and soup on offer. The MC for the evening welcomes the assembled crowd and explains what the night will entail. The crowd are encouraged to echo "Wassail!" as loudly as they can every time the word is used by the MC during the evening. This is always taken up with enthusiasm.

The morris dancing then starts with two or three morris sides (most recently Letchworth Morris, Bedford Morris and Hicca Hoodlums) performing their favourite dances. They each perform two or three dances, at the end of which the wassailers are encouraged to join in with one of the dances led by Letchworth Morris (usually Shepherds Hey or Bonnie Green Garters). In an interval between the dance sets singers perform for the crowd. Singtastic, a local choir, Jack In A Barrel or The Biggleswade Barnacles have performed over the years.

Once the dancing is finished, The Barfront Guizers perform their mummers play which again include some participation from the younger members of the audience. The festivities in the farmyard are completed by the appearance of Bedford Morris Men with a full set of deer antlers to perform the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. The farmyard is silent as the dance proceeds from one side to the other eventually leading a procession from the farmyard into the orchard. As the wassailers enter the orchard they collect toast which they dip in cider to be hung in a tree of their choice. Once everyone that wants to wassail the trees is in the orchard (some people at this point head off to the village hall for beer and cider and to start the evening of songs and music), The Apple Tree Wassail and Here We Come A Wassailing are sung before the throng joins in with the wassail toast. The wassail is finished off with the wassailers making as much noise as possible (with tea trays, saucepan lids and wooden spoons, football rattles) to wake up the trees and to scare off any evil spirits, thus ensuring a good apple harvest for the following year.

As the crowd dissipates, some go home while others walk the short distance to the village hall to continue the evening with copious amounts of singing, more music and a glass or two of something cheering.

the dunton garden



Bedford Morris
Men



Brafront
Guizers