

## Padstow May Day

These notes are based on research undertaken for a thesis on Cornish folk traditions which included interviews, observation and field recordings between 2005 and 2010 together with archive photographs courtesy of Padstow Museum

Padstow May day is held on the 1st May Annually unless this falls on a Sunday in which case it is the following Monday.



The festivities start at midnight on the evening before May day with the “night singing” outside of the Golden Lion beneath the

Clock Tower. The Blue Oss comes out from the Institute at 10am and the Red Oss from the Golden Lion at 11am. They process around the town accompanied by a band of accordions and drums and a procession of mayers some of whom dance an approximate version of the



teasers dance. The teaser accompanies the Osses and a master of ceremonies leads the whole procession. The May Day song is sung throughout along but when the Osses “die” this is done unaccompanied by the musicians until the point of resurrection marked by the beginning of a drum beat.

Each procession takes about two hours before returning to their “stables” for a rest and return about an hour later. The last processions start at around 6pm and are complete by 9pm.



There are two principle routes for the Mayers, one that goes through the Church and on to Prideaux House to the North of the town, and one that leads around the Harbour area up to the housing estates to the south of the town and back via the Social Club. At some stage in each route the Osses dance around the Maypole in the centre of the town.

