

MAYDAY CELEBRATIONS 1978

Traditionally, on Mayday, children processed in pairs carrying a hoop garland of spring flowers and greenery between them. They were led by a 'Lord and Lady of the Garland' around the village to the Maypole. This custom was observed in Wheatley up to 1920 when 'children brought garlands into the village, (ref. Folklore 1929, p.82) The Wheatley Society revived this custom in 1976.

Maypole dancing formed part of the children's garlands but, unfortunately, this was no longer on the syllabus at Wheatley Primary School. Despite having little time to learn the dances, and having to borrow a maypole, some dancing was done on the village 'Green'.

The following year the Children's Garlands and Maypole dancing were held at the *Manor House* and, judging by the numbers who turned up to watch, was much appreciated. Then it was thought that Wheatley should have its own Maypole. Now, thanks mainly to the *Wheatley Morris Men* who raised the money, and the *Scouts* who made it, Wheatley no longer has to borrow a Maypole.

Appropriately, May 1st fell on the first Spring Bank Holiday in 1978, and it was obvious that a large site for the celebrations was required. The old village school made an ideal setting, and the *Scouts* set the new Maypole up here. A record number of garlands were made, and the children chose their own King and Queen. They led the *Garland Procession* round the village, with the *Morris Men* dancing the traditional 'Wheatley Processional'. The dancing round the Maypole was equally spectacular, now that this skill is being taught at the Primary School. The number of spectators has grown again, so a larger venue will have to be found - possibly the *Recreation Ground*. Thanks are due to all those taking part for making the revival such a success.