



## Dorking Folk Club

World famous guitarist and rock star Eric Clapton, TV personality and “closet” folkie Richard Digance, and performers of the West End show ‘Warhorse’ have all visited the Dorking Folk Club over the years.

Formed in May 1976 on the crest of the new folk revival, the Club has been through a few metamorphoses, name changes and venues over the years. It has always, though, been successful in bringing acoustic and traditional music to Surrey since that time.

The Club began life in what is now The Lincoln Arms in Station Road, a brief period in The Bull, Leatherhead, and in 1978 moved to a room in Dorking Hospital for quite a while, and was known as The Chanticleer Folk and Acoustic Club. It was at the hospital that the Club’s reputation began to grow, and Eric Clapton turned up to see Hamish Imlach perform, which illustrates the kind of interest and standing the Club enjoyed.

From 1992 the Club’s residency moved to The Watermill pub. The disastrous fire which closed it late in 2001 was actually on the afternoon of a Club night - there were frantic phone calls to find an alternative venue for the guest artist to perform in. Luckily Friends Life came to the rescue and offered a room for hire in their social club building, and the temporary move turned into a continuing successful cooperation since then.

Meeting every Wednesday night throughout the year – with short breaks in August for summer festivals, and December for the festive period – the aim is to keep folk and acoustic music live and available in the locality.

Now, as Dorking Folk Club, its regular members work together behind the scenes to offer as broad a cross-section of folk and acoustic music as possible to highlight the range of styles that constitute traditional music.

Guest artists have included John Renbourn, Davey Arthur (The Furys), Martin Carthy MBE, Spiers & Boden (Bellowhead), Richard Digance, Irish family band The Doonans, and many more including solo, duos, trios and small groups from the UK, USA and even Australia, a capella, banjos, guitars, fiddles, concertinas and melodeons, percussion and a host of well-known and up-and-coming talent from the wide field of folk.

Many of our guest artists are booked when on the verge of their careers and go on to wider acclaim. Both Bob Fox and Tim Van Eycken have performed in the London show Warhorse and also at Dorking Folk Club, and Bellowhead are now regularly played on Radio 2.

As well as the guest nights the Club also has a role in encouraging local non-professional musicians and singers to get together and perform traditional music themselves, in a more informal way. Although called “Singers Nights” these evenings are open to all – for musicians, singers, poems and monologues, any acoustic performer who would like to take a floor spot and perform a couple of items for the enjoyment of all. We also welcome non-performers on these evenings who just want to come along and listen. The Singers Nights players are of all abilities, and the Club actively encourages music-making by offering an informal, friendly and supportive atmosphere.

We always warmly welcome new attendees – you don’t have to be a member to come along on any night whether to support local performers or to enjoy the intimate, informal concerts of professional guest artists.

Details of the programme, and contact details for any further information is on the website [www.dorkingfolkclub.org.uk](http://www.dorkingfolkclub.org.uk)

