

**Shrovetide festivities in the Hall-Wattens region  
Witches kick winter out, the "Spiegeltuxer" dance to welcome in  
spring, while a tap on the shoulder could boost your fertility  
- February 8<sup>th</sup> 2009, Thaur**

**Hall-Wattens - Hunted by witches, in combat with bears, invited to take a schnapps with a hairy monster and, if you get a tap on the shoulder, your fertility boosted - so being part of the Shrovetide celebrations in the Hall-Wattens regions could be an interesting experience. Visitors and locals never cease to be overwhelmed by this impressive spectacle involving extravagant, meticulously-maintained costumes and centuries-old customs. Inhabitants of the villages don grand costumes to become bears, witches, "Spiegeltuxer", or "Zottler" and enact the eternal duel between good and evil, light and dark, right and wrong.**

The villages in the Hall-Wattens region take turns in holding a traditional procession, where in accordance with the old customs, winter - in the form of the "Zottler" - is forced out by spring, embodied by the "Tuxer". In earlier times, such wild goings-on were forbidden. But despite all the rules, the Tyroleans did not let this tradition go. It was never forgotten, demonstrating how deeply rooted in the people's minds this custom was ... and still is. In bygone days these encounters mostly used to take place in the farmhouse parlours; it was not until the 20th century that this interaction between *Zottler* and *Tuxer*, bear and bear-beater was taken out on to the streets, where it became accessible to a wider audience. Reference is made to a *Matschgerer* procession in a "Tiroler Volksboten" newspaper article dated 4.2.1926.

Accompanied by the music from various local regional bands, the *Matschgerer* bring the fun and games back to village life through ancient folklore. Every year hundreds of visitors flock to the see the spectacle involving Mils, Volders and Absam *Matschgerer*, Thaur *Muller*, Baumkirchner *Lallen*, Wattens *Schellenschlager* and various other traditional floats.

Wearing a heavy 12kg headdress made from feathers and flowers with a large mirror in the middle, the *Spiegeltuxer* dressed in lederhosen embody the approaching spring and summer. The purpose of mirror is to drive away evil winter spirits.

The tough, cold and never-ending winter is portrayed by the frightening figure of the *Zottler*. An outfit made from jute thread, a head-dress of peacock feathers and fur gives him a really wild look. His stamping, trampling and raging movements emphasise the severity of the past months.

The bear, the witches and the *Kraneter* represent winter. The bear gives the beater, who is trying to subdue him, a difficult time by behaving uncontrollably. But in the end master finally

overcomes bear, in the same way that spring always wins out over winter. The *Kraneter*, accompanied by a witch, drags through the streets a heavy costume of juniper twigs weighing up to 45 kg. Severe-looking masks and a long stick underline his wild and frenetic appearance.

The *Zagglers* representing autumn and dressed in colourful costumes adorned with threads, tassles and bells attempt to keep winter at bay. These fine figures wear a head-dress of black cocks' feather and a hat covered with fox or hare fur.

Hall-Wattens has mastered the fine art of seduction like no other region in the Tyrol. Every year, the eleven towns and villages of Absam, Baumkirchen, Fritzens, Gnadewald, Hall in Tirol, Mils, Thaur, Tulfes, Volders, Wattenberg and Wattens welcome visitors from all over the world. Breathtaking wonders of nature meet up with historic town centres and an unparalleled programme of cultural events. Valued traditions and idyllic villages coupled with a lively cosmopolitan atmosphere. And last but not least, ultra-modern hotels, delightful guest-houses, cosy pubs and superb restaurants powerfully reflect the region's special character.

For more information, contact:

Tourismusverband Region Hall-Wattens  
Wallpachgasse 5  
A-6060 Hall i.T.  
Tel.: +43 (0)5223 45544-0 Fax: -20  
office@regionhall.at  
www.regionhall.at