



These hand-painted stocking face dolls dressed in French peasant costumes of Normandy and Brittany are part of a special display of antique dolls, doll furniture, building blocks and other pull-toys on view in a seasonal exhibit called A Canadian Child's World of Toys at the Royal Ontario Museum's Canadiana Building during the Christmas season. Some of the toys are manufactured imports while others are modest homemade products, but altogether they reflect a charming view of a Canadian child's Christmas.

## Old pagan traditions still honor 12th night

Twelfth Night is the popular English name for the Feast of the Epiphany, which falls on January 6, just 12 days after Christmas. The word "Epiphany" comes from a Greek word meaning "Appearance," usually used in reference to the appearance of a deity in visible form.

The earliest reference to the festival, according to the editors of the Encyclopedia Americana, was in the later years of the 2nd Century, when Clement of Alexandria, in Egypt, spoke of certain Christians observing the 6th of January in memory of the baptism of Jesus. The actual date seems to have been chosen in order to rival some of the popular pagan festivals of that day.

By the beginning of the 4th century, orthodox Christians in the East were observing the festival as a triple celebration. It became an all-inclusive feast, honoring the birth and baptism of Christ, and His first miracle at Cana of Galilee.

### Arrival of the Magi

In the West, however, the particular commemoration assigned to Epiphany was the visit of the Magi. During the Middle Ages, the Epiphany festival was widely observed by the performance of miracle plays in the churches about the Three Kings or Magi. Particularly in England, the day was marked by dramatic productions, though not necessarily religious ones, and this custom survived into the Elizabethan period. Shakespeare took the popular name of Twelfth Night for his play of that title, which was written to be performed on that date.

Since Epiphany concludes the Yuletide festi-

vities, and its date coincides with many ancient pagan customs, it was often celebrated with strange ceremonies in which those customs mingled with Christian rites. Some of these old ceremonies still exist in parts of Europe, where fixed rituals have have origins, often with an overlay of magic, that are lost in the past.

**Up-Helly-Aa** is Norse. Still celebrated in the Shetland Islands is an old Viking ceremony known as "Up-Helly-Aa." The name means "end of the holiday," indicating that the event comes some time after Christmas, actually at the end of January.

The ceremony itself is very dramatic, since it takes place at night, by torchlight. Men in the old wild Viking costumes, complete with high horned helmets, tow a huge 30-foot Norse long-boat through the town. In a torchlight procession... then the boat is set ablaze on the beach.

### Haxey Hood Game

Haxey is a place in Lincolnshire, where they still play this famous old hood game, on January 6. Its origins hark back to pagan times, and the "hood" itself is thought to represent the head of a bull.

In the game, 13 men take part, one called the "fool," another the "lord" and the eleven others, "boggins." A two-team scrimmage takes place, the object being for each man to succeed in placing a folded

canvas hood into a particular goal, one after the other. The very last hood, the 13th, called "The Haxey," has to be fought towards the final goal—an inn where there are ale drinks for all.

### Wassailing the trees

This unusual torchlight ceremony still is observed in certain parts of England on January 17, which is the date of "old 12th Night." It's another survival from very ancient times.



Lots of old fashioned cheer to our friends and neighbors. Thanks:

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## Ontario meats for holiday meals

Choosing meat for special holiday dinners deserves careful consideration. Meat is usually the most expensive item on the menu, and to a great extent will determine the rest of the menu.

There is a wide variety of Ontario meats to choose from, say the food specialists at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. For poultry, select from turkey, chicken, goose, duck or pheasant; or choose beef, or pork cuts such as boneless pork loin or smoked ham. For a change, why not try fresh Ontario lamb, rabbit or a freshwater fish such as rainbow trout.

Once you've decided, you'll need to determine how much of it to buy. As a guideline, bone-in roasts usually provide about two to three ser-

vings per pound, and boneless roasts provide three to four servings per pound. Allow one to two servings per pound for turkey and three to four servings per pound for fish. If you like to serve leftovers the next day in sandwiches, casseroles or soups, include this when calculating quantities.

Once you've made these decisions, you may wish to purchase the meat now and keep it frozen. However, if you plan to cook turkey, ham or fish you should buy these close to Christmas.

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