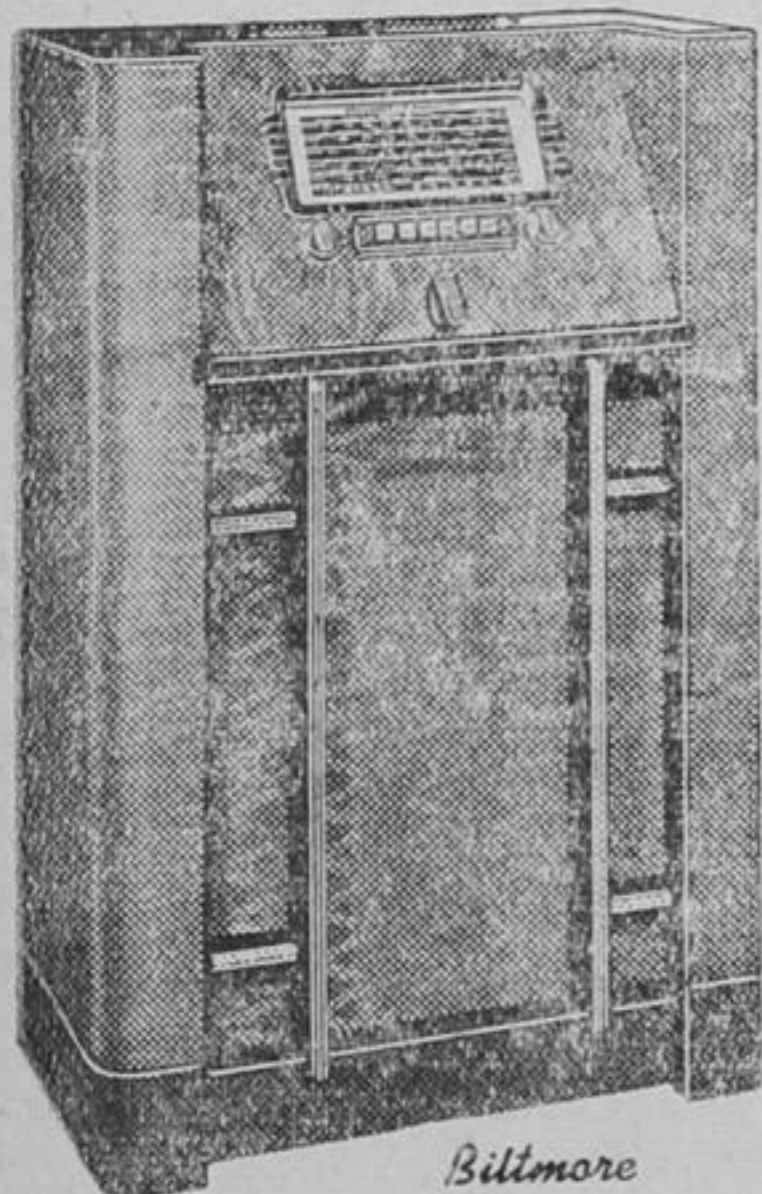


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Christmas in England Was Once Forbidden, But It Has Survived Along With Customs

Quaint Old-time Celebrations and Ideas Still Hold Good In Rural Britain

Parliament once banned Christmas for sixteen years! Three centuries ago the Puritans decided it was "superstitious," and resolved to have nothing to do with it. In 1644 the Lords and Commons accordingly ordered "so-called Christmas Day" to be kept as a fast instead of a feast. But it survived and many of its quaint, traditional customs have lasted into our own day.

Mari Llywyd, or Holy Mary, for instance, is still practised in some Welsh villages. A party of villagers, chosen for their quick wit and aptitude at rhyming, dress up as mummers, the leader covering himself in a long white sheet and horse's head adorned with coloured ribbons.

Round the village they go from door to door—these have been shut and barred to them—begging for permission to sing, telling of cold, hard winter days, and asking for food and drink. Those inside lament in turn that they are poor and have little to spare, and this leads to a merry contest in singing and rhyming, each party capping the other.

This may continue for half an hour until those inside fail to find a rhyming retort; then the door is opened and the revellers are welcomed inside.

In the old days in Wales, when the festive Christmas company gathered round the flaming Yule log, you looked furtively at the shadows of your friends flung on the wall. If the shadow appeared headless its owner would die within a year. If a hoop fell off the cask of cider in the cellar on Christmas Eve, someone in the house would die before next Christmas.

The West Country has been rich in ancient customs. One of the most picturesque was that of visiting the principal orchards on Christmas Eve, saluting a chosen tree with an incantation, then sprinkling it with cider or dashing a bowl or jug of it against the trunk. This was to ensure plentiful bearing in the ensuing year. At Warleggan the trees were hailed with:

Figs to thee, old apple tree!
Hats full, packs full!
Hurrah! And fire off the gun!
Sugar cakes were often laid on the branches to propitiate the spirit of the apple harvest.

Wassailing, a custom of Scandinavian origin, is still observed by shepherds and farm laborers in some parts of the North of England. They go from door to door singing quaint rhymes and carrying "mazers" or

wooden bowls decked with evergreens and ribands for offerings. Some of these mazers, curiously carved, have been handed down from father to son for generations and date from the reign of Charles I.

There are still people in remote parts of Ireland who believe that on Christmas Eve Judas Iscariot is allowed to re-visit the earth, and anyone who looks into a mirror that night will see either Judas or the devil peering over his shoulder.

Another Irish superstition is that on Christmas Eve the Holy Child is out alone in the dark and cold. To light him on his way, candles are placed in the windows.

CHRISTMAS DESSERTS TO SUIT ALL TASTES

PIE—fruit cake—or plum pudding. Which shall it be? Any of these desserts are appropriate for the holiday season and all have their champions. So that all tastes are served, we give the following recipes:

PUMPKIN PIE.
1½ cups steamed and strained pumpkin
2/3 cup brown sugar
2 eggs
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. ginger
1½ cups milk
½ cup cream

Mix ingredients together and bake in one crust. This pie is especially good baked in gingersnap pie crust.

GINGERSNAP PIE CRUST
20 gingersnaps crushed fine
1 tbsp. sugar
1/3 cup butter
Mix sugar and gingersnaps with softened butter and press firmly against the sides and bottom of a pie plate that has been well buttered.

CRANBERRY PIE
Line a pie pan with plain paste. Fill with cranberry sauce. Roll the pastry for the upper crust and cut into ¼-inch strips, arranging in lattice fashion across top. Bake in a hot oven.

PLUM PUDDING
5 oz. finely chopped suet
½ cup sugar
2½ cups bread crumbs soaked in 1 cup scalded milk
½ cup dark corn syrup
3 tbsp. fruit juice
4 well beaten eggs
1 tsp. salt
½ cup flour
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. nutmeg
¾ tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. cloves
¼ tsp. mace
2 cups seeded raisins cut small
½ lb. citron sliced
2 cups currants
¼ cup blanched almonds cut into strips

Sift together the flour, salt, baking powder and spices. Cream the sugar with the suet. Add the soaked crumbs, syrup and eggs, then the dry ingredients and last the koured fruits, and nuts. Mix well. Steam 6 hours in oiled molds. Figs or dates cut into strips and chopped, candied orange peel may replace some of the other fruits.

SUET PUDDING
3 cups flour
1 tsp. soda
1½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. cloves
½ tsp. cinnamon
1 cup finely chopped suet
1 cup molasses
1 cup sour milk
1 cup raisins or currants or half and half

Sift the dry ingredients together. Combine the suet, molasses and milk. Add the dry ingredients gradually, stirring the fruit into the last of the flour. Pour into oiled molds, filling only 2/3 full. Steam 3 hours. Serve hot with hard sauce.

War-time Farm Efforts Call For Better Seed

Better seed means heavier yields of improved grain without increasing acreage says Ont. Dept. of Agriculture in opening patriotic drive for increased production of cereal grains in 1940—Good seed grain plentiful.

A campaign to impress every Ontario farmer of the war-time necessity of producing every bushel of cereal grain possible in 1940 will be carried on during the winter months by the Ontario Dept. of Agriculture through County Crop Improvement Associations and other organizations.

If Ontario is to keep faith with the Motherland in increased production of bacon, Ontario must produce the grain to feed more hogs, and this can most easily be accomplished by sowing better seed, which, of course, will give higher yields without the necessity and work of increasing acreages.

Ontario farmers, it is pointed out, are just as patriotic and just as anxious as the soldier, munition worker, laborer and business man to bring the war to a successful conclusion and while these latter individuals are doing their bit in city and town, the farmer can and will do his duty by increasing production to the limit on his own individual farm. To do this he must in the first place plant good seed.

Agricultural officials state that experimental work over a long period of years has definitely proved beyond any question of doubt that use of good seed does increase yields and the quality has been greatly improved as a result of using this good seed.

The Ont. Dept. of Agriculture is making a survey of seed supplies in every county in Ontario and will shortly issue press releases as to varieties, sources of supply and other information that will aid the farmer in obtaining the best possible seed near at home.

THE SWEET THING!
The man in the queue for the theatre felt some one touching his back. Turning round, he saw a girl about to leave the line.
"I'm going across the road to get some candy," she said.
"Well, that doesn't interest me," said the man.
"I know," was the reply, "but I've put a chalk mark on your back in case I forget my place!"

YORK MARKET

Turkey prices were the talk of North York market this week. The birds were selling from 25c. to 32c. lb., a sharp advance from the previous Saturday when the general quotation was 25c. Only two producers ventured a forecast of prices for the Christmas market on Friday and Saturday of this week; one predicting 35c. lb., the other from 28c. to 35c.

Poultry was slow, geese sold at 22c., ducks 25c., chickens 23c. Meat prices were the same as last week, with fresh pork selling well. Beef was 15c. to 25c. lb., lamb 17c. to 25c.; pork, 15c. to 25c.

The fish market was well patronized, and had a nice variety. Whitefish was 20c., fillets 28c., trout 20c., steaks 28c., B.C. salmon 20c., steaks 22c., smelts 20c., ciscoes and fillets of haddie 20c. Dressed rabbits were 20c. and 25c. lb. Butter sold at 30c., 32c. and 35c. lb., and eggs were 30c. for pullets, 35c. medium, 38c. large, 42c. extra, and some specially large ones which were too big for the ordinary egg boxes fetched as high as 50c. Cream cheese, old and new, Canadian cheddar and limburger were on the market.

Young carrots found plenty of buyers at two bunches for 5c., the larger kind were 15c. basket, and baskets of mixed carrots and parsnips were the same price, turnips were 5c. each, cabbages 5c., celery 10c. bunch, spinach 10c., squash from 5c., potatoes 20c. basket. Hothouse tomatoes were 15c. a box, imported broccoli 20c. bunch, beans 25c. box, peas 40c. for 6 quarts, mushrooms 29c. lb.

Christmas cooking was much in evidence, cakes selling at 45c. and 50c. lb., shortbread 25c. and 50c. each, and pudding 35c. and 40c. lb. Preserved citron at 35c. jar and berry jelly were other specials for the season.

Among the apples, most of which sold from 20c. to 30c. basket, were some Christmas boxes of McIntosh or Spies at 90c. half bushel and \$1.75 a bushel. The flower stands were well filled, mums selling from 35c. to \$1 bunch, poinsettias from 35c. each up, paper white narcissi 25c. bunch. Bunches of Canadian holly berries or mixed berries and evergreen, sold at 25c. each, evergreen wreaths with cones and berries, 35c., and Christmas trees from 50c. each up.

Buy British — Buy Canadian!

Sale Register

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 20 — Auction sale of 100 acre farm, farm stock, implements, furniture, etc., the property of the estate of the late Elizabeth Jones, east half of lot 30, con. 3, Vaughan Township. Terms Cash. No reserve, everything must be sold to close Estate. Sale at 1 o'clock. C. E. Walkington, auctioneer.

SATURDAY, DEC. 16TH—Auction sale of Farm Stock, Implements, Feed, etc., the property of W. N. Price, Lot 8, Con. 3, Markham Twp., half mile south of No. 7 Highway. Terms Cash. No reserve. Sale at 1 p.m. J. H. Prentice, auctioneer.

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