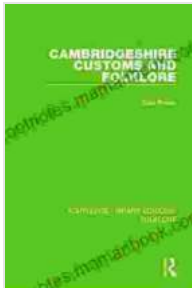


Cambridgeshire Customs And Folklore: RLE Folklore Routledge Library Editions



Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore (RLE Folklore) (Routledge Library Editions: Folklore) by Eliza Knight

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 216300 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 611 pages



Nestled in the heart of East Anglia, the county of Cambridgeshire boasts a rich and diverse cultural heritage that has been shaped by centuries of tradition and folklore. From quaint customs to intriguing superstitions and enchanting legends, Cambridgeshire's folklore offers a captivating glimpse into the lives, beliefs, and imaginations of its people throughout the ages.

Customs and Traditions of Cambridgeshire

The customs and traditions of Cambridgeshire are a testament to the county's deeply rooted history and sense of community. One of the most well-known customs is the annual Straw Bear Festival held in the town of Whittlesey.



During this unique festival, a man dressed in a costume made entirely of straw parades through the streets, accompanied by musicians and dancers. The origins of the festival are unclear, but it is believed to date back to pre-Christian times and may have been connected to ancient fertility rites.

Another notable tradition in Cambridgeshire is the Fen Raft Race, which takes place on the River Nene each June. This race features teams of people racing on rafts made from reeds and other natural materials. The race is a celebration of the county's fenland heritage and the importance of the river to the local community.

Superstitions and Beliefs in Cambridgeshire

The people of Cambridgeshire have long held a variety of superstitions and beliefs that have been passed down through generations. One common superstition is that it is bad luck to cross paths with a black cat. This belief is thought to have originated in the Middle Ages, when black cats were associated with witchcraft and evil spirits.

Another superstition is that it is unlucky to spill salt. This belief is said to date back to the ancient Romans, who believed that salt was sacred and that spilling it would bring misfortune.

In addition to these superstitions, there are also a number of beliefs about fairies and other supernatural beings in Cambridgeshire. One such belief is that fairies live in the ancient earthworks known as Devil's Dyke, which is located near the town of Newmarket. It is said that if you walk through Devil's Dyke at night, you may encounter a fairy or even be taken away to the fairy realm.

Legends and Folktales of Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire is home to a rich collection of legends and folktales that have been passed down through generations. One of the most famous legends is the story of Hereward the Wake, a legendary outlaw who fought against the Norman invasion of England in the 11th century. Hereward is said to have been born in Bourne, Cambridgeshire, and his story is still celebrated in the county today.



Another popular legend is the story of the Witch of Wicken Fen. This legend tells the tale of a wicked witch who lived in the fens of Cambridgeshire and terrorized the local people. The witch is said to have been able to fly and transform herself into animals, and she was feared by all who knew her.

In addition to these legends, there are also a number of folktales about ghosts and other supernatural beings in Cambridgeshire. One such folktale tells the story of the ghost of a monk who haunts the ruins of Ely Cathedral. The monk is said to have been murdered by his fellow monks, and his ghost now roams the cathedral at night, seeking revenge.

The customs, folklore, and legends of Cambridgeshire offer a fascinating glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of this historic county. From quaint traditions to intriguing superstitions and enchanting legends, Cambridgeshire's folklore provides a unique window into the lives, beliefs, and imaginations of its people throughout the ages.

If you are interested in learning more about the customs and folklore of Cambridgeshire, there are a number of resources available. The Cambridgeshire Folklore Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the county's folklore. The society hosts a variety of events throughout the year, including talks, workshops, and guided walks.

You can also find a wealth of information about Cambridgeshire's folklore online. The Cambridgeshire County Council website has a dedicated page on folklore, which includes a number of articles and resources. You can also find a number of books and articles about Cambridgeshire folklore at your local library.

Whether you are a lifelong resident of Cambridgeshire or just a curious visitor, I encourage you to explore the county's rich and fascinating folklore. It is a treasure that is worth preserving and celebrating.

References

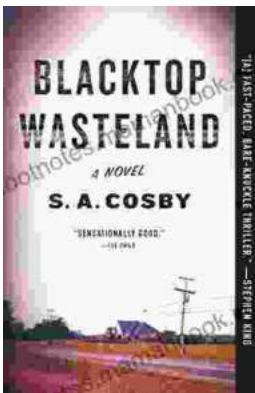
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2. Cambridgeshire County Council:
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/culture-and-leisure/folklore>
3. *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore* by E.A. Armstrong (Routledge Library Editions)



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