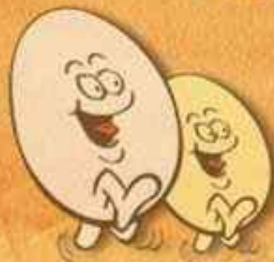
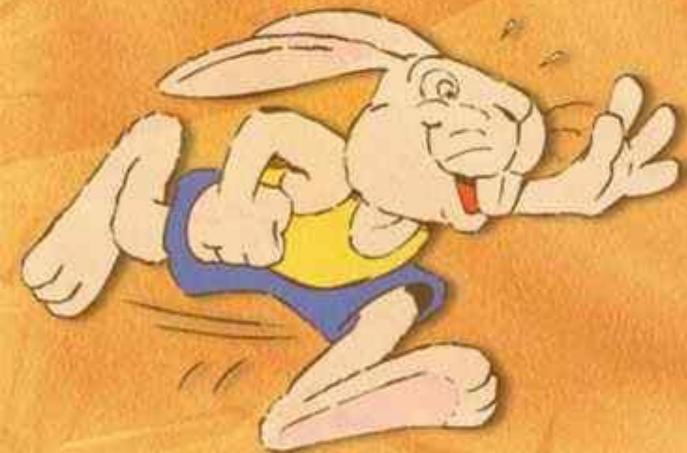




Happy Easter

Easter traditions in Great Britain



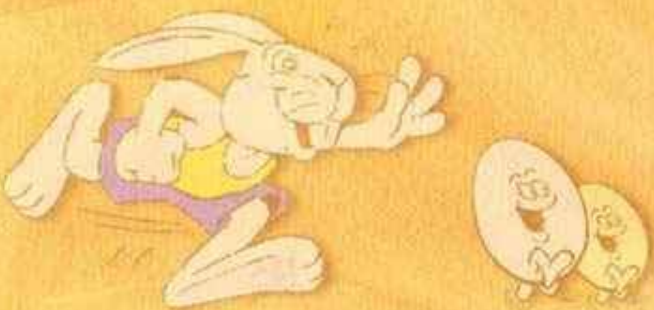
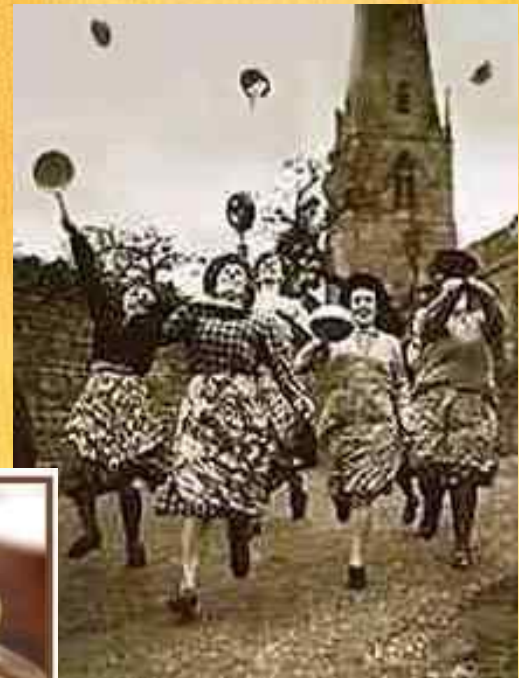
In the UK Easter is one of the major Christian festivals of the year. Easter eggs, Easter bunny and sending Easter cards are traditions not only in Britain.

It is preceded by forty days of **Lent. Shrove Tuesday**, also called Pancake Day, is the last day before the period of fasting which starts on **Ash Wednesday**.

The Sunday before Easter is called **Palm Sunday**. This is the beginning of Holy Week.



Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day



Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. In Britain, **the Queen** takes part in the Ceremony of the Royal Maundy. This involves the distribution of **Maundy Money** to deserving senior citizens (one man and one woman for each year of the sovereign's age), usually chosen for having done service to their community. They receive ceremonial red and white purses which contain coins made especially for the occasion. The white purse contains one coin for each year of the monarch's reign. The red purse contains money in place of other gifts that used to be given to the poor.









**Queen Elizabeth II presenting Maundy coins,
with some Maundy coins from various periods shown**

Maundy Thursday is followed by **Good Friday**. It is celebrated as a bank holiday, when people do not go to work. Britons eat the so called **hot cross buns** containing currants and marked with a cross.

An old rhyme was often sung by children awaiting their sugary treat:

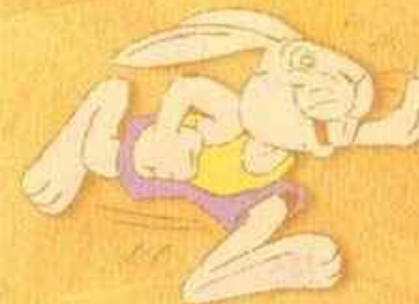
*Hot cross buns,
hot cross buns,
one a penny, two a penny,
hot cross buns.*

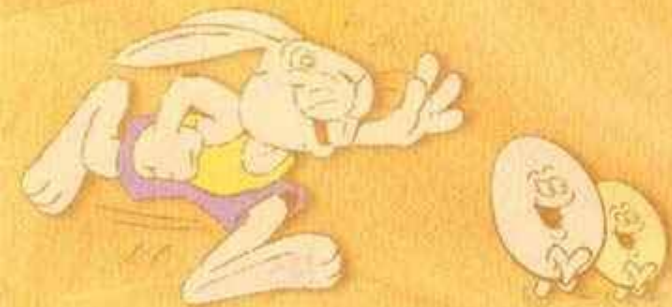
*If you do not like them,
give them to your sons,
one a penny, two a penny,
hot cross buns.*





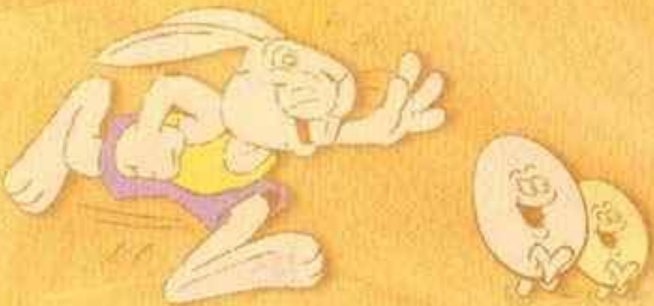
On **Easter Sunday**, which is the Christian feast of the Resurrection of Jesus, people eat Easter eggs. Many families gather together at dinner and organize **egg hunts**. Children have a lot of fun looking for dyed eggs hidden in the house and in the garden.





A traditional way of breaking the Lenten fast is to eat some **simnel cake**. These are raised cakes, with a crust made of fine flour and water, coloured yellow with saffron, and filled with a very rich plum-cake, with plenty of candied lemon peel, and dried fruits.





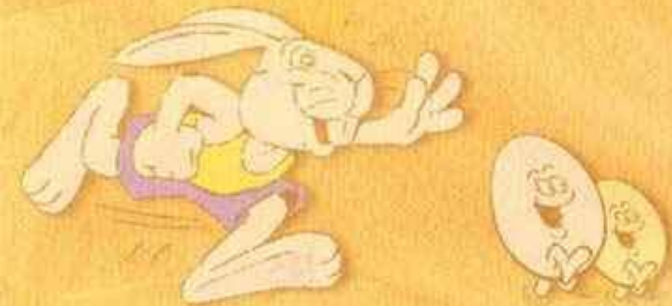
The day after Easter Sunday is known as **Easter Monday**. It is also a bank holiday in the UK. In some areas "**egg rolling**" is still popular today. People take the eggs to the top of a hill and roll them down. The first egg to get to the foot of that hill is the winner.

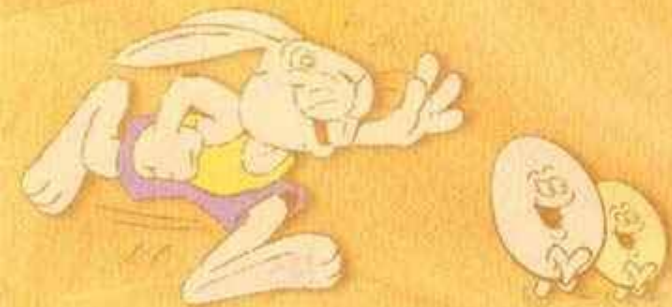




Dressing Up For Easter

Easter was once a traditional day for getting married, that may be why people often dress up for Easter. Women would make and wear special **Easter bonnets** - decorated with flowers and ribbons. Even today in Battersea in London there is a special Easter Parade, where hand-made bonnets are shown off.





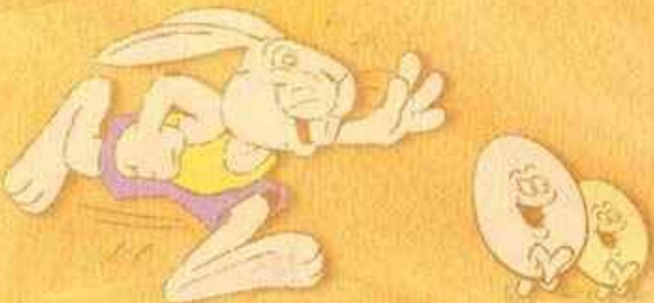
The Easter Bunny

Rabbits, due to their fecund nature, have always been a symbol of fertility. The Easter bunny (rabbit) however may actually be an Easter hare. The hare was allegedly a companion of the ancient Moon goddess and of Eostre.

Strangely the bunny as an Easter symbol seems to have its origins in Germany, where it was first mentioned in German writings in the 16th Century. The first edible Easter bunnies appeared in Germany during the early 1800s, they were made of pastry and sugar.

In the UK children believe that if they are good the "**Easter Bunny**" will leave **(chocolate) eggs** for them.





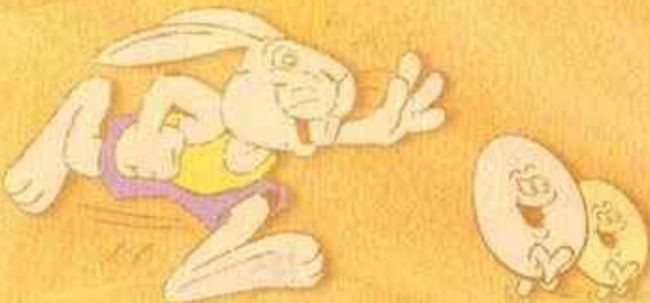
Easter eggs

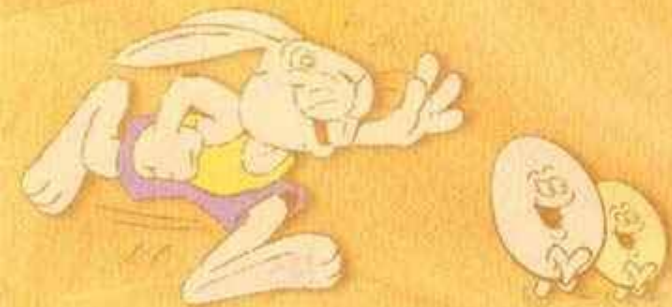
Throughout history, eggs have been associated with Easter celebrations. In ancient times, the egg was a symbol of fertility and new beginnings. Christians adopted this to represent their Saviour's resurrection.

The **tradition of colouring eggs in bright colours** - representing the sunlight of spring - goes back to the Middle Ages and is still an important custom for many Christians. In Germany it's traditional to paint eggs green and eat them on Maundy Thursday while in Greek and Slavic cultures eggs are dyed red as a symbol of the blood of Christ.

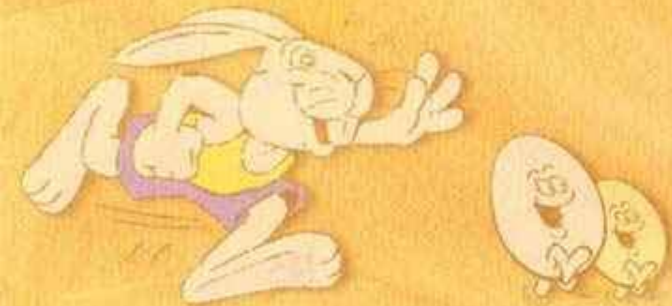
As time has gone on, the decoration has become more elaborate with colourful patterns, images of flora and fauna, and in some cases delicate gold and silver leaf details. The most famous and ornate of Easter eggs must be the jewelled and enamelled eggs that Fabergé was commissioned to make for the Russian tsars.







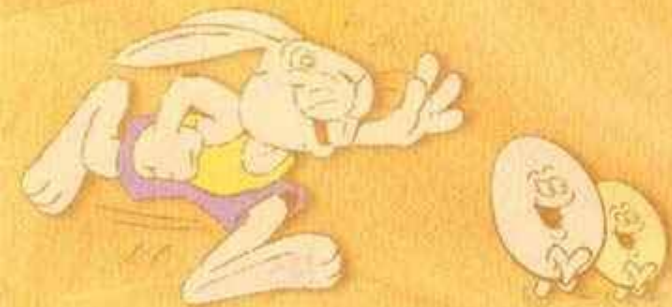
Other Easter Traditions



As a part of Easter tradition, there is a trend among British people to eat yummy **hams**, in order to commemorate **the Easter Sunday**.



In England, special
springtime dance troupes are
called upon, to give exclusive
Morris dance performances.
This trend of holding dances
is not new; rather it is a
century old tradition.



Morris Dancing

Morris dancing is a traditional English form of folk dance which is also performed in other English-speaking countries such as the USA and Australia. The roots of morris dancing seem to be very old, probably dating back to the Middle Ages.

In the dance men dress up in costumes with hats and ribbons and bells around their ankles. They dance through the streets and one man often carries an inflated pigs bladder on the end of a stick. He will run up to young women in the street and hit them over the head with the pigs bladder, this is supposed to be lucky (men)!



In a small town of England called Olney, the tradition is of conducting **pancake race** on every **Shrove Tuesday**. It is an event that is celebrated on a large scale and people have a real gala time enjoying this unique day also addressed as Pancake Tuesday.





Churches are beautifully decorated with different color flowers. White lilies are placed on the altar and these gorgeous flowers are also displayed on the graveyard.



Special **Easter parades** are held in Britain and the parade conducted at Battersea Park in London is a very popular one.



New York Parade























THE END OF THE ROAD



HAPPY EASTER

