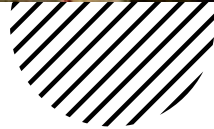


Easter Day

Bogdanova Yaroslava





EASTER IN THE UK

In the UK Easter is one of the major Christian festivals of the year. It is full of customs, folklore and traditional food. However, Easter in Britain has its beginnings long before the arrival of Christianity. Many theologians believe Easter itself is named after the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn and spring - Eostre.

In Britain Easter occurs at a different time each year. It is observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. This means that the festival can occur on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25. Not only is Easter the end of the winter it is also the end of Lent, traditionally a time of fasting in the Christian calendar. It is therefore often a time of fun and celebration.

The Friday before Easter Sunday and the Monday after are a bank holiday in the UK. Over Easter schools in the UK close for two weeks, just enough time to digest all the chocolate.

Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. Christians remember it as the day of the Last Supper.

In Britain, the Queen takes part in the Ceremony of the Royal Maundy, which dates back to Edward 1.

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.



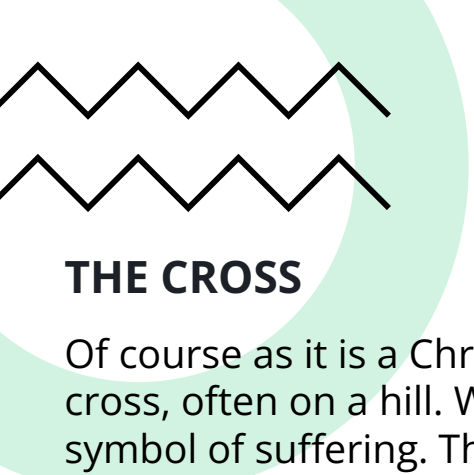
GOOD FRIDAY

On the Friday before Easter, Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is a day of mourning in church and special Good Friday services are held where Christians meditate on Jesus's suffering and death on the cross, and what this means for their faith.



Calling it 'Good Friday' may seem a bit bizarre, but some people think that it was once called God's Friday or Holy Friday.





SYMBOLS OF EASTER

Many of the symbols and traditions of Easter are connected with renewal, birth, good luck and fertility.

THE CROSS

Of course as it is a Christian festival one of the main symbols is a cross, often on a hill. When Jesus was crucified, the cross became a symbol of suffering. Then with the resurrection, Christians saw it as a symbol of victory over death. In A.D. 325, Constantine issued a decree at the Council of Nicaea, that the Cross would be the official symbol of Christianity.



PALMS

The week of Easter begins on Palm Sunday. Why *Palm* Sunday? Well, in Roman times it was customary to welcome royalty by waving palm branches, a bit like a ticker-tape parade. So, when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on what is now known as Palm Sunday, people welcomed him with palm branches carpeting the streets and waving them. Today, on Palm Sunday, Christians carry palm branches in parades, and make them into crosses and garlands to decorate the Church.



Easter eggs are a very old tradition going to a time before Christianity. Eggs after all are a symbol of spring and new life.

Exchanging and eating Easter eggs is a popular custom in many countries. In the UK before they were replaced by chocolate Easter eggs real eggs were used, in most cases, chicken eggs. The eggs were hard-boiled and dyed in various colors and patterns. The traditionally bright colours represented spring and light. Sadly, nowadays if you gave a child in Britain a hard-boiled egg on Easter Sunday, you would probably end up wearing it!

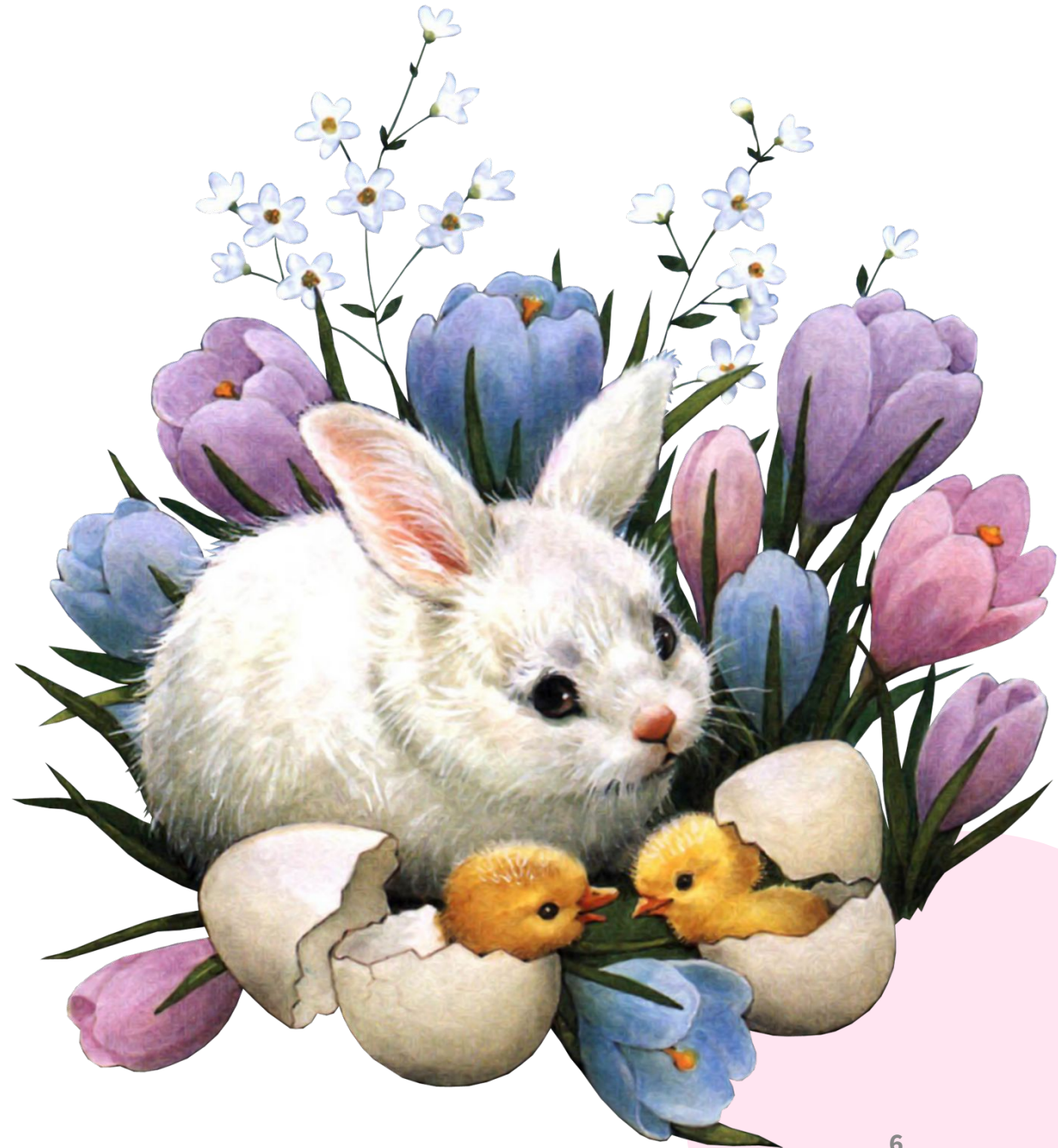


THE EASTER BUNNY

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.

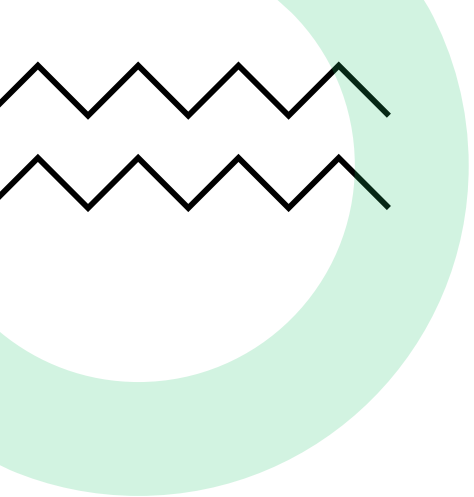


MORRIS DANCING

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)!





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.

HOT CROSS BUNS

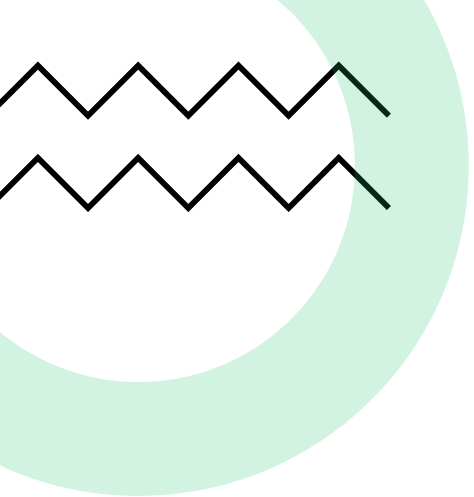
Hot cross buns, now eaten throughout the Easter season, were first baked in England to be served on Good Friday. These small, lightly sweet yeast buns contain raisins or currants and sometimes chopped candied fruit. Before baking, a cross is slashed in the top of the bun. After baking, a confectioners' sugar icing is used to fill the cross.



SIMNEL CAKE

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.





Thank you for attention!

