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Folk Britian

A Field Guide to Curious Customs

Tom Howells

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- Organized seasonally, this is both a field guide for tourists keen to participate in unusual traditions and a lively, illuminating history of British folk culture

Each May in Gloucestershire, contestants embark on an ankle-shattering pursuit of an enormous wheel of cheese down a 26-degree hill. In August, a man utterly covered in burdock seeds and burrs ambles 9 miles through Queensferry, getting progressively drunker on whisky offered by locals. On Bonfire Night, November 5th, foolhardy residents of Ottery St Mary process through the streets with flaming tar barrels on their backs. These are just a few of Britain's folk customs, many of them centuries old. From the profound to the baffling, this handbook brings together over 100 rituals and traditions that mark changing seasons, unite communities and offer insight into Britain's wonderfully weird cultural identity.

Tom Howells is the author of *An Opinionated Guide to Weird London* and *An Opinionated Guide to Wine London.* He's happiest when wandering the Neolithic barrows and stones of the Isle of Wight, and once got locked in Carisbrooke Castle.

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