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Arcadia Britannica: A Modern British Folklore Portrait



Synopsis

Wonderfully odd portraits of contemporary British folklore enthusiasts in their strange and spectacular costumes Drawing on pagan Celtic, Germanic, and early Christian rites and beliefs, British folklore is a vibrant aspect of Britain's cultural heritage that continues to flourish today. Notable for their music, storytelling, and particularly for the terrific display of costumes revelers wear, Britain's folk festivals are at once great entertainment and a link with the nation's rich cultural history. Arcadia Britannica is the product of photographer Henry Bourne's repeated trips to some of Britain's greatest folk events: striking color portraits capture an eccentric collection of individuals in inventive outfits, including arboreal costumes, pagan-inspired creations, and historical garb. These were captured at events like the annual Jack in the Green festival held in Hastings in May, for which the town and its people are decked in green to welcome summer, and the Easter Sunday celebration in Bacup, Lancashire, where fiercely proud Britannia Coconut Dancers (or "Nutters") perform their traditional seven dances. An accompanying text by Simon Costin provides the historical backstory and explains the folklore behind this wacky, inspiring collection of images. 125 color photographs

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The photographs are wonderful! However, as an American, I was hoping for more information. The introduction is just that - very introductory. Not much by way of details. I would have loved to hear about what these individuals did to celebrate the festivals and why they were called to do so. Where did they get their ideas for the outfits? Is it part of the traditions? And what are those traditions?

This is a collection of photographs taken by Henry Bourne at many British folklore festivals. These festivals are well known for not only their music and story telling, but also the wonderful display of costumes worn by the revelers. This isn't a book you pick up to read. As another reviewer stated, it is a 'coffee table book'. There is a short introduction at the beginning of the book but other than that, it is full of colorful photographs of various costumes depicting modern day interpretations of British folklore. While looking through this book the first thing that popped through my head was...Look at all the wonderful costume ideas. I am already putting some of the costumes onto pattern.

Old-School, down-home weirdness! I wish there was more detail about the events - there are several dissertations worth of anthropology studies in these traditions!

Great pictures. Not enough writing on this fascinating topic.

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