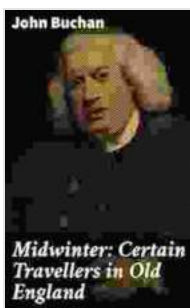


# Midwinter: Certain Travellers In Old England

## A Journey Through Myth, Ritual, and Folklore

As the days grow shorter and the nights creep longer, we find ourselves drawn to the allure of Midwinter. This ancient festival, celebrated around the winter solstice, is a time of mystery, magic, and transformation. It is a time when the veil between the worlds grows thin and the supernatural walks among us.



## Midwinter: Certain Travellers in Old England

by Larry Thornberry

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 465 KB

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 124 pages

Lending : Enabled



In *Midwinter: Certain Travellers In Old England*, author Ronald Hutton takes us on a captivating journey through the rich tapestry of English folklore, myth, and ritual during this darkest time of the year. From the ancient origins of the winter solstice to the enigmatic figures of Father Christmas and the Mari Lwyd, Hutton weaves together a mesmerizing tale of a time when the supernatural was an ever-present force in people's lives.

## **The Origins of Midwinter**

The winter solstice has been celebrated for thousands of years, dating back to the Neolithic period. For early humans, the winter solstice was a time of great uncertainty. The days were short and the nights were long, and the sun seemed to have abandoned them. It was a time when food was scarce and the cold could be deadly.

In response to these fears, early humans developed a variety of rituals and customs to protect themselves from the darkness and cold. These rituals often involved fire, light, and feasting, all of which were believed to have the power to drive away evil spirits and ensure the return of the sun.

## **The Folklore of Midwinter**

Over the centuries, the folklore of Midwinter has evolved and changed, but many of the ancient traditions have survived to this day. In England, Midwinter is associated with a number of mythical figures, including Father Christmas, the Mari Lwyd, and the Holly King.

Father Christmas is one of the most well-known figures of Midwinter. He is a jolly old man with a white beard and a red suit, who is said to bring gifts to children on Christmas Eve. The origins of Father Christmas can be traced back to the medieval figure of Saint Nicholas, who was a bishop known for his generosity and kindness.

The Mari Lwyd is a Welsh folk character that is associated with the New Year. It is a horse-like creature with a white mane and a long, flowing tail. The Mari Lwyd is led by a group of singers who go from house to house, performing songs and asking for gifts. The Mari Lwyd is believed to bring good luck to those who welcome her into their homes.

The Holly King is a mythical figure who is said to rule over the winter months. He is often depicted as a young man with green hair and a crown of holly leaves. The Holly King is associated with the forces of nature and the wild.

## **The Rituals of Midwinter**

In addition to the folklore, Midwinter is also associated with a number of rituals and customs. These rituals often involve fire, light, and feasting, all of which are believed to have the power to protect against evil spirits and ensure the return of the sun.

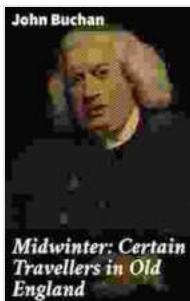
One of the most common Midwinter rituals is the lighting of a Yule log. The Yule log is a large log that is burned in the fireplace on Christmas Eve. It is believed that the burning of the Yule log will bring good luck and prosperity in the coming year.

Another popular Midwinter ritual is the wassail. A wassail is a hot drink made from ale, wine, and spices. It is often served in a large bowl and passed around among friends and family. The wassail is believed to have the power to ward off evil spirits and ensure a healthy and prosperous new year.

## **The Legacy of Midwinter**

Midwinter is a time of mystery, magic, and transformation. It is a time when the veil between the worlds grows thin and the supernatural walks among us. The folklore, rituals, and customs of Midwinter have been passed down from generation to generation, and they continue to be celebrated today.

Midwinter is a reminder of our connection to the natural world and the cycles of the seasons. It is a time to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. It is a time to celebrate the darkness and the light, and to embrace the mystery of the unknown.



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