

**OLD ENGLISH
SPORTS; PASTIMES
AND CUSTOMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649539314

Old English Sports; Pastimes and Customs by P. H. Ditchfield

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

P. H. DITCHFIELD

**OLD ENGLISH
SPORTS; PASTIMES
AND CUSTOMS**

OLD ENGLISH SPORTS

OLD ENGLISH SPORTS

Pastimes and Customs

BY

P. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY; RECTOR OF BARKHAM, BERKS

HON. SEC. OF BERKS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ETC.

Methuen and Co.

18, BURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.

1891

[All rights reserved]

TO THE
ASSOCIATION

DA 110
159

" For Sports, for Pageantrie and Playes
Thou hast thy Eves and Holydayes ;
On which the young men and maids meet,
To exercise their dancing feet :
Tripping the comely country round
With Daffodils and Daisies crown'd.
Thy Wakes, thy Quintals, here thou hast,
Thy Maypoles too with garlands grac't :
Thy Morris-dance : thy Whitsun Ale :
Thy Sheering-feast which never fail."

HERRICK'S *Hesperides*.

61 511

TO

Lady Russell

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S
KINDEST REGARDS.

615586



PREFACE.

ENCOURAGED by the kind reception which his former book, *Our English Villages*, met with at the hands of both critics and the public, the author has ventured to reproduce in book-form another series of articles which have appeared during the past year in the pages of *The Parish Magazine*. He desires to express his thanks to Canon Erskine Clarke for kindly permitting him to reprint the articles, which have been expanded and in part rewritten. The Sports and Pastimes of England have had many chroniclers, both ancient and modern, amongst whom may be mentioned Strutt, Brand, Hone, Stow, and several others, to whose works the writer is indebted for much valuable information.

The object of this book is to describe, in simple language, the holiday festivals as they occurred in each month of the year; and the sports, games, pastimes, and customs associated with these rural

feasts. It is hoped that such a description may not be without interest to our English villagers, and perhaps to others who love the study of the past. Possibly it may help forward the revival of the best features of old village life, and the restoration of some of those pleasing customs which Time has deprived us of. The writer is much indebted to Mr. E. R. R. Bindon for his very careful revision of the proof-sheets.

BARKHAM RECTORY,
1891.





CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

JANUARY.

	PAGE
Dedication Festivals—New Year's Day—"Wassail"—Twelfth Night—"King of the Bean"—St. Dystaff's Day—Plough Monday—Winter Games—Skating—Sword-dancing	1

CHAPTER II.

FEBRUARY.

Hunting—Candlemas Day—St. Blaize's Day—Shrove-tide—Football—Battledore and Shuttlecock—Cock-throwing ...	13
--	----

CHAPTER III.

MARCH.

Archery—Lent—"Mothering" Sunday—Palm Sunday—"Shere" Thursday—Watching the Sepulchre	25
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

APRIL.

Easter Customs—Pace Eggs—Handball in Churches—Sports confined to special localities—Stoolball and Barley-brake—Water Tournament—Quintain—Chester Sports—Hock-tide... ..	36
---	----

CHAPTER V.

MAY.

Mayday Festivities—May-pole—Morris-dancers—The Book of Sports—Bowling—Beating the Bounds—George Herbert's description of a Country Parson	44
--	----