

Questions

- What is the probable origin of Halloween?

Halloween dates back to the early pagan celebrations for Samhain at the same time of year. At that point of the year, the ancient Celtic people believed that the spirits of the recently dead would roam the earth.

- Why were masks originally worn during the All Hallow's Eve period?

Masks were worn to fool the spirits into passing by the people they met. This led to the tradition in Scotland of children blacking their faces. In northern Europe, masks were worn to connect with the spirits of the dead.

- What was 'guising' or 'mumming'?

Guising' and 'mumming' were the traditions of groups performing carefully choreographed dances and songs for communities, often in exchange for food and drink.

- Who was the Lair Bhan?

The Lair Bhan was a traditional creature also known as the 'white mare'. One man would dress as the 'white mare' and parade around the village with attendants. If he was offered food, good luck would bless the house. If he did not receive anything, bad luck would reach the household.

- What happens on 'Punkie Night'?

Still celebrated in Somerset and other areas of the south west of England, Punkie Night consists of children walking around villages following a Punkie King and Queen. Lanterns are often used. The children sing songs and ask for money.

- What do children in Mexico say instead of 'trick or treat'?

Children in Mexico ask for a sugar skull as a treat on Halloween: "Me da me calaverita?"

- What is 'Trunk or Treat'?

Trunk or Treat' is a new way of celebrating Halloween in America. Some church and community groups hold communal get-togethers in local car parks. Car boots are decorated and children can pass between them and receive sweets.

- Give one reason for soul-cakes being given.

The cakes could be given for two reasons: either to represent the dead or to give to the hosts in exchange for the promise of praying for dead loved ones.

- Why was Halloween known as 'Cabbage Night' in some American cities?

The night was called this because some cities had a tradition of tossing rotting vegetables on this night, particularly cabbages.

- Explain one literary association with 'trick or treat'.

There are two in the article. Shakespeare mentions trick-or-treating in Two Gentlemen of Verona and Athenaeus of Naucritus wrote about an ancient Greek tradition on the island of Rhodes that was similar to trick-or-treating.