



It just goes to show how much summer we have been experiencing in late October. Barb Bryanton was up to Lorneville near Londonderry and found a large patch of wild strawberries and lots of new blossoms. She figures it is an “awesome find”. (Bryanton Photo)

# BE SAFE ON HALLOWEEN

By Chris Urquhart

‘Tis Hallowe’en, the lamps are lit, and round the fire we children sit, a telling ghost stories bit by bit ‘til sister Jane says “HUSH!” - As the song says, it is almost Hallowe’en and soon the children will be out trick or treating at our doors. It will be dark by the time most of them get to your house so please do your best to have well lit areas for them. It’s fun to decorate your yard but remember to look at it at night from a child’s perspec-

tive so that nothing too scary or too clingy is out there to frighten them off. Most of the fun of Hallowe’en for us adults is seeing the children in their costumes travelling from door to door getting candy.

As for our trick or treaters - be sure to wear a mask you can see out of properly, not one that obscures your view. You never know where a rock or stick or someone’s dog or cat may be if you can’t see them! It’s no fun to trip and rip your costumes! Small children

should never be out without an adult with them and even the “larger” goblins should be careful to stick in groups.

We have never had any trouble on Hallowe’en here in Masstown but there is always a first time. Don’t let this year be it. Carry a flash light, have reflective stripes on your costumes and be careful walking in the dark. Keep your eyes peeled for cars which may be full of other trick or treaters wanting to get out and visit the

houses you are passing, or may just be trying to get down the road without hitting you!

Parents - you need to be sure your child is ready and prepared to go door to door either with you waiting on the walk way or travelling in a group. Make sure you check their treat bags and ask which house they got any suspicious treats.

For those of you staying at home and answering the door - enjoy the experience of all those kids coming in and out of your home. Be sure to keep any unfriendly pets out of sight. Often our dogs and cats get disturbed by the strangeness of Hallowe’en so reassuring them and keeping them in a safe environment is your best bet.

**Have a Safe and Happy Hallowe’en!**

# HALLOWE’EN

## One Of World’s Oldest Holidays



By Chris Urquhart

Did you know that Hallowe’en is one of the world’s oldest holidays? It is celebrated in the United Kingdom, although with a surprising a distinctive British twist. In Mexico, Latin America, and Spain, All Souls’ Day, the third day of the three-day Halloween observance, is the most important part of the celebration for many people. In Ireland and Canada, Hallowe’en, which was once a frightening and superstitious time of year, is celebrated much as it is in the United States, with trick-or-treating, costume parties, and fun for all ages.

The word itself, “Hallowe’en”, actually has its origins in the Catholic Church. It comes from a contracted corruption of All Hallows Eve. November 1st, “All Hallows Day” (or “All Saints Day”), is a Catholic day of observance in honor of saints. But, in the 5th century BC, in Celtic Ireland, summer officially ended on October 31st. The holiday was called Samhain (pronounced sow-in), which means “end of summer”, the Celtic New Year.

The custom of trick or treating probably has several origins. During Samhain, the Druids believed that the dead would play tricks on mankind and cause panic and destruction. They had to be appeased, so country folk would give the Druids food as they visited their homes.

An old Irish peasant practice called for going door to door to collect money, breadcake, cheese, eggs, butter, apples, etc. in preparation for the festival of St. Columbk Kill.

Also a ninth-century European custom called souling. On November 2nd, All Souls Day, early Christians would walk from village to village begging for “soul cakes” made out of square pieces of bread with currants. The more soul cakes the beggars would receive, the more prayers they would promise to say on behalf of

the dead relatives of the donors. At the time, it was believed that the dead remained in limbo for a time after death, and that prayer, even by strangers, could expedite a soul’s passage to heaven.

Here’s how some of our customs got started: Bobbing for Apples - when the Celts were absorbed by the Roman Empire, many rituals of Roman origin began. Among them was the worship of Pomona, goddess of the harvest, often portrayed sitting on a basket of fruits and flowers. Apples were the sacred fruit of the goddess, and many games of divination involving them entered the Samhain customs. The Witch’s Broomstick - the witch is a central symbol of Hallowe’en. The name comes from the Saxon wica, meaning wise one.

When setting out for a Sabbath, witches rubbed a sacred ointment onto their skin. This gave them a feeling of flying, and if they had been fasting they felt even giddier. Some witches rode on horseback, but poor witches went on foot and carried a broom or a pole to aid in vaulting over streams. In England when new witches were initiated they were often blindfolded, smeared with flying ointment and placed on a broomstick. The ointment would confuse the mind, speed up the pulse and numb the feet.

When they were told “You are flying over land and sea”, the witch took their word for it. Jack-O-Lanterns - Irish children used to carve out potatoes or turnips and light them for their Hallowe’en gatherings. They commemorated Jack, a shift Irish villain so wicked that neither God no the Devil wanted him.



# Salute to NATO Veterans

By Billy Willbond (NVO 2009)

Canada had sent her troops far away over seas,  
And as a young soldier, I was one of these.  
With the British Army on the Rhine  
We NATO troops held the freedom line.

A friend in Deutschland’s cold soil he lays,  
Reminding me of those far away days.  
Farewell my best friend, Rossie Roussell,  
In youth you served your country well.

Your name is now listed in the 7th book,  
Col. John Stuart did a search; he took a close look;  
In the Peace Tower your name is now written there.  
Canadians, they remember, and Canadians care.

570 of our military are buried o’er their too.  
The NATO cost was great, t’was not just a few.  
In Afghanistan there’s another brand of brothers;  
Canadian troops fight hard; they’re like no others.

Now the KIA’s are brought back home by air  
To the Highway of Heros where our grief is shared.  
They are on overpasses awaiting the jet-black cars  
Bringing our KIA NATO troops home from Kahdahar

*Excerpted from NVO Newsletter dated June 2009  
produced and edited by Thom Jordens (now deceased)*



Rejected by both the sacred and profane, he wandered the world endlessly looking for a place to rest, his only warmth a glittering candle in a rotten turnip. Hallowe’en Masquerade Mask - from earliest times people wore masks when droughts or other disasters struck. They believed that the demons who had brought their misfortune upon them would become frightened off by the hideous masks.

Even after the festival of Samhain had merged with Hallowe’en, Europeans felt uneasy at this time of the year. Food was stored in preparation for the winter and the house was snug and warm. The cold, envious ghosts were outside, and people who went out after dark often wore masks to keep from being recognized.

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