



NEWS DETECTIVES

TODAY'S NEWS STORY

Morris men march merrily around the maypole

KEYWORDS

- Centuries:**
Hundreds of years
- Cuckoo:** A bird
- Pagan:** The religions before Christianity came to Europe
- Blasphemous:**
Going against the laws of religion



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

May Day has been celebrated as the first day of summer around Europe for a long time. The ancient Romans, who gave the month its name, held a festival called Floralia. In ancient Ireland, a festival called Beltane also marked the beginning of May.

May Day is upon us, and people are celebrating summer coming in the same ways they have for **centuries**.

Cuckoo calling

The **cuckoo** has nearly started singing. It only does this for a few weeks, starting in May. In Britain, the cuckoo announces the summer, and a special holiday. It's May Day!

At the heart of May Day celebrations stands the maypole.

As you'd expect this is a pole.

But it's a special pole. For 700 years, people would put one up in their village to dance around.

Long history

You can find maypoles across Europe, including in Germany, Belgium, Sweden, and Denmark. Some people think they have roots going back to **Pagan** times.

That might be why, in England, maypoles were banned when Oliver Cromwell overthrew King Charles I in 1649. He thought maypoles were **blasphemous**.

Back around

But you can't keep a good pole down. When King Charles II replaced Cromwell, maypoles were back in fashion. People danced for joy. Some of those dances included Morris dancing, a traditional dance you do with bells on your feet!

May Queen

On May Day, some villages also choose a May Queen, who wears a white gown and leads a parade. So celebrate the end of spring in style and dance around the maypole!



INVESTIGATION OF THE DAY

IS SPRING THE BEST SEASON?

WHAT
is a May
Queen?

WHO
banned
maypoles?

WHERE
other than the
UK can you find
maypoles?

WHEN
were
maypoles
banned?

WHY
is Morris dancing
probably noisy?

HOW
do you use a
maypole?

1 CHECK YOUR FACTS

Make sure you have all the facts before you start your investigation. Can you answer these questions?

2 KNOW YOUR KEYWORDS

Can you remember what these keywords mean? Match the word to the correct meaning.

1=D

2=

3=

4=

1. Centuries

2. Cuckoo

3. Pagan

4. Blasphemous

A. Going against the laws of religion

B. The religions before Christianity came to Europe

C. A bird

D. Hundreds of years

3 LOOK AT ALL SIDES

There's always more than one side to every story. How might the people involved feel about the story?



People who do Morris dancing



People who live in cities



People from countries without seasons



People who live in villages



Happy



Sad



Calm



Excited



Surprised



Angry



Scared



Bored



Disgusted



Confused

4 DISCUSS THE QUESTION

Is spring the best season?

What do you think? Use the speaking prompts here to help you get started.

I disagree with...

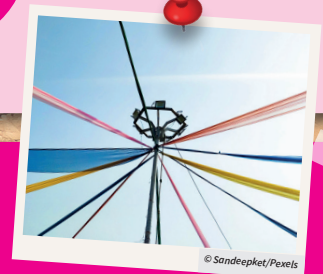
I agree with...

I'm not sure about...

I'd like to know more about...

I think that...

I don't think that...



5 REPORT BACK

Write, present or record a report that communicates your view. Share this with your class, family and friends. What's their opinion?