

Poole, Robert (1984) Lancashire Wakes Week. *History Today*, 34 (8). pp. 22-29.

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## **Lancashire Wakes Week By Robert Poole**

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Robert Poole examines the continuity over centuries of a tradition in northern England.

There is no mistaking the lads and lasses of Lancashire [he wrote]. They dress like other people, but their speech betrays them. Their utter disregard of conventionality is a striking trait in their character. Every train bring 'huge crowds of them, with huge carpet bags, boxes, and bundle handkerchiefs, which they carry to their lodgings. These people mean business, and intend to play at least a week; in some cases ten days... It is the habit of half a dozen families to go the seaside together, and to take tea at each other's lodgings.

Hospitality, it seems, was another wakes tradition which was carried on in a new way in the resorts. The railways did not 'kill' the Lancashire wakes; they simply transferred it, lock, stock and barrel, to the seaside.

In the 1930s the holiday camp, perhaps the ultimate commercial answer to the mass demand for holidays, was developed. Cunningham's Camp, a tented city on the Isle of Man, was annually colonised for a week by the youth of Oldham who appeared undeterred by its strict rules on drunkenness, bedtimes and contact with the opposite sex, even though offenders could be summarily expelled. The 1960s brought a boom in foreign wakes-time travel as people flocked to continental coasts. Ostend, in the words of one Manchester travel agent, became 'a sort of Belgian Blackpool'. As in the past, new developments in holiday-making are in many ways variations on a familiar theme. ...