

The
BOOK

of the
FAIR

1700~1825

by **KEITH WEST**



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An eBook Sampler from **THE BARTHOLOMEW PRESS**

A Sampler of
THE BOOK OF THE FAIR, 1700-1825
by Keith West

This newly-published eBook edition details the rich history of eighteenth and early nineteenth century English fairs, and provides a fascinating glimpse into an earlier era.

Profusely illustrated with original artwork of the people and artifacts of the early fairs, this book also contains detailed illustrations of merchants' stalls, theatrical booths and costumes, and even merry-go-rounds and swings. Food and drink, street vendors, games, amusements, musicians and their instruments and diversions, legal or otherwise, are explained with contemporary descriptions and humorous anecdotes, providing the reader with a living picture of the fun and frolics of the Old English Fairs.

This new (2010) eBook edition contains New Material and Color Illustrations.

- **eBook (PDF Format), 236 Pages.**
- **Landscape Format, optimized for Laptop and Notebook Computers**
- **160 Illustrations, several in Full Color.**
- **Pub. Date: September 1, 2010**
- **Publisher: The Bartholomew Press**

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Detail from *The Cries of London*, a print published by Bowles and Carver, ca. 1789. Twelve different types of mongers and their cries are here represented: (upper row) “Shoe-black,” “Song-

book,” “Earthen Ware,” “Plumb Cakes,” “Roasted Apples,” and “Sheeps Heads;” (lower row) “Water Cresses,” “Live Lobsters,” “Chesnuts,” “Birch brooms,” “Stockings,” and “Tunbridge Ware.”



This etching of *The Fair on the Frozen Thames* (1814), by Luke Clennell, shows many diversions more commonly found at fairs on dry land. Left to right, a game of skittles lies idle; the perennial fa-

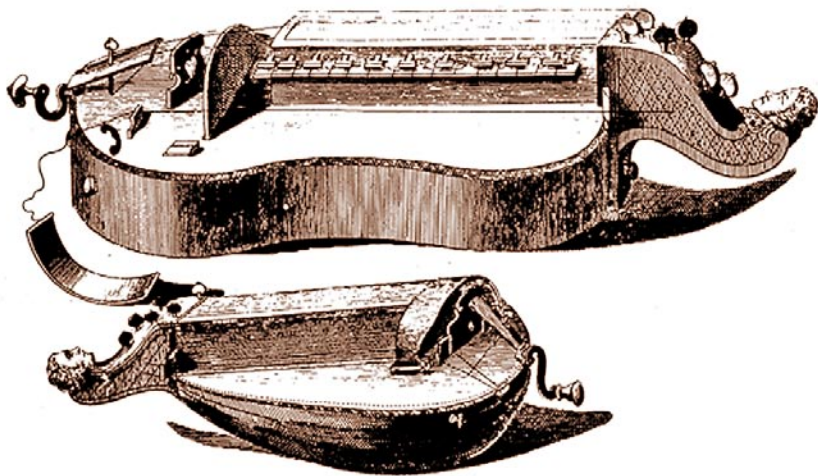
vorite game of “knock-em-downs” is played with rapt attention; and swings are propelled to great heights. This 1814 event was the last Frost Fair to be held on the frozen river.

SIDE-SHOWS: *Acrobats*



Rope dancers and tumblers from a Dutch print of the mid-eighteenth century. Rope dancers were arguably the most popular performers at the fairs, from the middle ages until the early nineteenth century, when their acts were absorbed by circuses

The Hurdy-Gurdy



(Left) Woman playing a hurdy-gurdy from Johann Christoph Wiegel's *Musicalisches Theatrum* (1700). (Upper Right) Guitar-type hurdy-gurdy from the *Encyclopædia d'Alembert et Diderot* (1751-1778). (Lower Right) Lute-type hurdy-gurdy from the *Encyclopædia*.

Transportation



Another common type of transportation in the eighteenth century was the stage wagon or caravan. Although primarily used for hauling freight, wagoners would frequently allow passengers to ride along established routes for a minimal fare. These heavily-built wagons, with broad tires to traverse rutted roads, afforded an uncomfortable



ride. Both wagons and tumbrils were fitted with crude benches to accommodate passengers. (Left) Loading a stage wagon, a sketch after Rowlandson ca. 1800. (JG) (Right) Etching of a stage wagon with roller wheels (to traverse pot-holes), by William Henry Pyne, ca. 1805.

SIDE-SHOWS:

Conjurers



(Right) Conjuror from the late eighteenth century, performing the popular “cups and balls” illusion originally dating back to Ancient Egypt. He is wearing the traditional conjurer’s apron, the *gibeciere*, or “bag of tricks,” used to hold various props and provided a convenient place for objects to “vanish” to.

SIDE-SHOWS:

Trained Animals



(Above) “Toby, the Learned Pig,” in an early nineteenth century print. “Educated” pigs and horses were trained to count and identify playing cards by following a subtle system of signals from the trainer.

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*is just a very small example of
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