

Lammas Day

In English-speaking countries in the Northern Hemisphere, August 1 is **Lammas Day** (loaf-mass day), the festival of the first wheat harvest of the year. On this day it was customary to bring to church a loaf made from the new crop. In many parts of England, tenants were bound to present freshly harvested wheat to their landlords on or before the first day of August. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, where it is referred to regularly, it is called "the feast of first fruits". The blessing of new fruits was performed annually in both the Eastern and Western Churches on the first, or the sixth, of August. The Sacramentary of Pope Gregory I (d. 604) specifies the sixth.

In mediæval times the feast was known as the "Gule of August", but the meaning of "gule" is unknown. Ronald Hutton suggests that it may be an Anglicization of *gwy/ aust*, the Welsh name for August 1 meaning "feast of August", but this is not certain. If so, this points to a pre-Christian origin for Lammas among the Anglo-Saxons and a link to the Gaelic festival of Lughnasadh. 'Gule' could also come from 'Geohhol' (Old English form of 'jule') and thus Lammas Day was the 'Jule of August'.

There are several historical references to it being known as Lambess eve, such as 'Publications of the Scottish Historical Society' 1964 and this alternate name is the origin of the Lambess surname, just as Hallowmass and Christmas were also adopted as familial titles.