

# SATURNALIA



HW1900 Festival warmly invites you to help us celebrate Saturnalia!

*A wall-wide Community Knees up to celebrate the Roman festival Saturnalia and mark the end of an amazing year of the 1900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.*

We have created this Saturnalia Pack to encourage and support you in making your own Midwinter Merriment for Saturnalia. The activities are designed to be enjoyed by individuals, families and communities. They might also lead you to create Saturnalia festivities of your own with friends and neighbours around the hearth, the kitchen table, the village hall or town square.

*Turn over for ideas!*

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HADRIAN'S WALL  
**1900**  
FESTIVAL  
24 JANUARY - 23 DECEMBER 2022





There are 7 activities included here:

A World in my Window  
Gathering Games  
Sing a song of Saturn  
Dress up and Dance: Crowns  
Dress up and Dance: Masks  
Roman Recipes  
Make and Decorate

Choose to do a part or all of them!

Share your creations with us using the hashtag #hw1900 on your posts on social media and tag us @VisitHadriansWall on Facebook and Instagram.

Find out more about the Hadrian's Wall Saturnalia events at;  
[1900.hadrianswall.co.uk/saturnalia](http://1900.hadrianswall.co.uk/saturnalia)

If you decide to create your own Saturnalia event, remember to let us know by visiting the Saturnalia page on our website.

### What is the Hadrian's Wall 1900 Festival?

Throughout 2022, Hadrian's Wall 1900 Festival has been celebrating the 1900<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the beginning of the construction of Hadrian's Wall with a packed programme of activity from communities, volunteers and organisations throughout the World Heritage Site and beyond.

### What is Saturnalia?

The Hadrian's Wall 1900 Festival closes with **Saturnalia** – a wall-wide knees up which invites anyone to create their own Saturnalia events to help us draw a close to the yearlong Festival.

Saturnalia was possibly the most popular Roman festival and is most closely associated with Christmas and merrymaking. It was celebrated from 17 to 23 December and it was held in honour of the God Saturn, who was described as the god of time, growth, abundance, agriculture and peace.

Role reversal was a large part of the festivities and slaves were given the freedom enjoyed by ordinary citizens including being allowed to join in the celebrations and reverse roles with their masters.

**Saturnalia** was presided over by a 'king', chosen especially for the occasion, known as the *Saturnalicius princeps* or the 'Lord of Misrule'. Usually selected from the lowliest members of a household, or in some cases chosen by hiding a coin in a cake, the Lord of Misrule was responsible for organising merrymaking and mischief during the celebrations. They were seen as the ruler of chaos, in direct contrast to the normal orderly manner of Roman life.

Traditional Roman clothing was cast aside in favour of *synthesis* – brightly coloured fabrics such as red, purple, and gold – and everyone wore a *pileus*, which was a felt hat, so that everyone was equal.

Plants, garlands and wreaths of ivy and holly, pinecones, candles and nuts were placed on windowsills, doorways and in stairwells to decorate the house.

At the end of the celebrations, gifts were shared such as candles, jellied figs, and especially the small terracotta figurines or *sigillaria*.

