

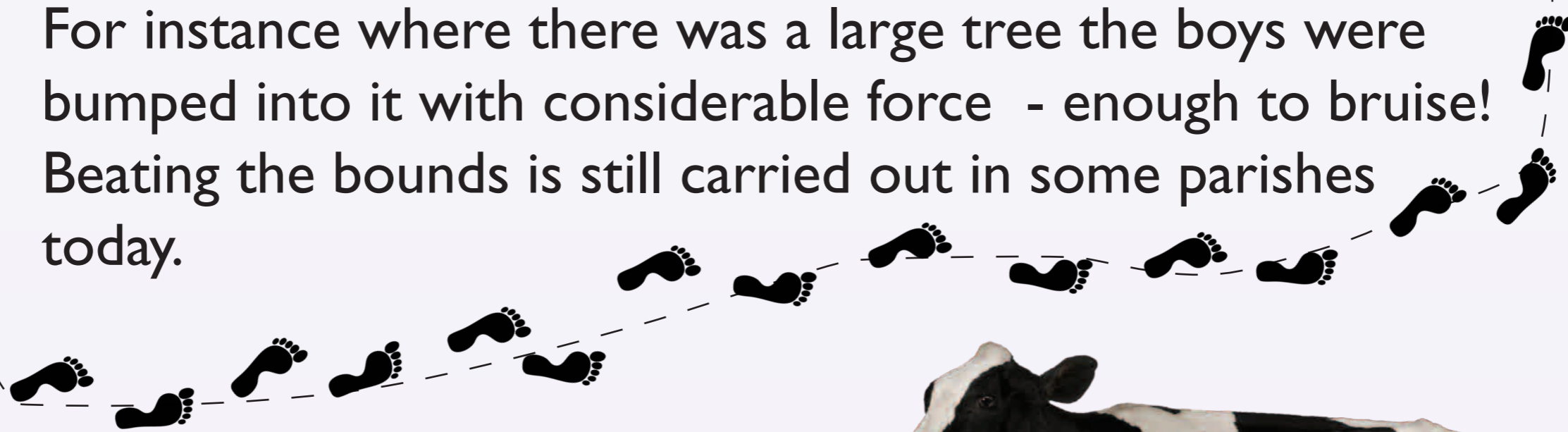
Forgotten Customs

Over a hundred years ago, Shrove Tuesday used to be a half day holiday. A church bell, called the 'Shriving Bell' was rung, to signal the start of the holiday and to call people to church for confession. When the bell rang, housewives would be reminded they needed to prepare their pancake batter and so the bell became known as the 'Pancake Bell'. It was rung at noon in Ashwell, Baldock, Hitchin and Hoddesdon.



Guy Fawke's Day – Bell ringing would take place on 5th November, and was recorded in the 1730's at Broxborne and Hoddesdon.

An ancient English custom, recorded in many parishes, called 'beating the bounds', involved members of a community walking the boundaries of their parish, with younger members led by the elder. Some unusual methods were used to make sure the boys remembered the route. For instance where there was a large tree the boys were bumped into it with considerable force - enough to bruise! Beating the bounds is still carried out in some parishes today.



It was the custom in Hertfordshire to milk a cow on a Sunday morning, so that "she will always calve in the day time". This was recorded in 1759.



In 1784, the funeral procession of Sir Barnard Turner was stopped and his body was arrested for debt, until such time as it was settled by his friends. We do not know the outcome of this.

A drummer was paid to drum every year on 15th October, when St Albans Grammar School broke up. This custom dates back to 1662.



There was a curfew bell rung in Hoddesdon. It would wake people at four in the morning and proclaim the evening curfew at eight. This custom started in the 18th century and continued as late as 1837.

