

NORFOLK
FOLKLORE
SOCIETY

Sunday
2 August 2026

BLACK
SHUCK
FESTIVAL



Present



Janine Connor
May Queen Crafts
Mell Dolls and Maidens



Before combines rolled across the fields and harvest became a matter of machinery, it was surrounded by ritual, superstition and celebration.

Join straw worker and straw craft enthusiast Janine Connor for a fascinating journey into the lost harvest customs of Britain and Ireland, exploring a world where the final sheaf was treated with reverence, harvest workers competed to cut the last standing corn and beautifully crafted straw figures carried the luck and spirit of the harvest from one year to the next.

Discover the stories behind mell dolls, corn maidens and other traditional straw ornaments, and learn how these remarkable creations connect us to centuries of rural belief, community and seasonal celebration.

Richly illustrated with examples of traditional straw work, this talk uncovers a landscape of customs, folklore and forgotten traditions that once lay at the very heart of country life.

A chance to see the harvest not simply as a season, but as a world of ritual, symbolism and living folklore.