

February 27 Threepenny Day

A number of English gentlepersons managed to create a holiday by means of wrought¹⁾ bequests²⁾ in their wills. One of these was Provost Bost, administrator of the public school, Eton. Upon his death in 1504, it was revealed that Bost had willed a sum of money that was earmarked³⁾ to provide tuppence⁴⁾ a year in perpetuity⁵⁾ for each of Eton's "collegers." (Collegers are boarding students whose families live far away; the remainders are town boys or "oppidans⁶⁾.") The money was to ensure that the boys would get enough to eat. At the time of Bost's death, tuppence bought nearly half a sheep, and it was an Eton tradition, dating back to the reign of Henry VI, that collegers were to be fed no meat except mutton.

Provost Lupton, Bost's successor, added his own posthumous⁷⁾ bequest to the original charity so that the annual dole⁸⁾ would amount to thruppence. Every February 27, the collegers gather — a dignified cadre of jackets, vests, and ties — in College Hall for the Threepenny Ceremony. Each boy in turn plucks his threepence from the crown of a tall silk hat. As consideration for the gift, each boy must recite a prayer for Bost's soul.

2月27日三便士纪念日

有几个英国人通过立遗嘱创造了一个节日。在遗嘱中他们精心安排了遗赠。其中一人是伊顿公学的主管，博斯特院长。1504年博斯特死后，有人发现他立下了遗嘱，将一笔钱专门拨出来，永久供给伊顿公学受资助的学生用，每个人一年两便士。（受资助的是家住很远的住校生，其余的则是家住城里的男生或“走读生”。）这笔钱用来保证他们能够吃饱。在博斯特去世的那个时代，两便士几乎可以买到半头羊。在伊顿公学有一个传统可以追溯到亨利六世朝代，那就是住校生除了羊肉不供给其他的肉食。

博斯特的继任者，卢普顿院长，在原有的捐赠中又加上了自己的一份遗赠，使每年的钱变成了三便士。每年2月27日，受资助的住校生都集合起来——庄重地排成队，身穿外衣和背心，打着领带——在学院礼堂里举行三便士典礼。每个学生依次从高丝绸帽的帽顶取出他的三便士。每人都必须背诵一段祷词，以此告慰博斯特的英灵。

NOTE 注释：

wrought [rɔ:t] adj. 精心制作的

bequest [bi'kwest] n. 遗产，遗赠

earmark ['iəmə:k] vt. 指拨（款项）

tuppence ['tʌpəns] n. = two pence 两便士

in perpetuity [ˌpɛpɪ'tju:ɪti] 无尽期地，永远

oppidan ['ɒpɪdən] n. (英国伊顿公学的)校外寄宿生

posthumous ['pɒstjʊməs] adj. 死后的，身后的

dole [dəʊl] n. 救济金

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