

## **Peckvillercher**

Among the many festivals that pepper the culture of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is Emaischen, a celebration of the potters' guild as well as a celebration of spring.

On Easter Monday, potters sell small terracotta birds, called peckvillercher, which, when blown, sound like cuckoos and nightingales. These birds, made of baked clay, are only sold on the one day, celebrating new life.

Whistles dating back to the 16th century have been found in Luxembourg, and written records from 1827 show a celebration of the potters' craft at St. Michel church in Luxembourg City. Potters attended a mass in their honor and then sold their wares outside the church on Easter Monday. By the beginning of the 20th century, the celebration nearly died out, and then was re-established in 1957.

Peckvillerchers were connected to the village of Nospelt, where pottery production began about 1458 A.D. According to tradition, the peckvillerchers were made from small lumps of clay left over after the day's pottery production.

In the 19th century, 19 different potters' shops made the village the center of ceramics production in the Grand Duchy. The last pottery shop closed in 1914, but in 1937, Jean Peters of Reckental began pottery production again. His whistles showed a German or Belgian influence, and were extremely popular; Peters sold thousands of peckvillercher during his career as a potter.

The Emaischen market in Luxembourg City offers food, drink, music, folklore dance performances, and sales of pottery including peckvillerchers.

In Nospelt, (population 754) located in the southwest corner of Luxembourg close to the town of Capellen, the festival includes a pottery workshop, music groups, a bouncy castle, face painting and a balloon artist.

Both Emaischen celebrations were cancelled for 2021, but hopefully will be rescheduled for 2022.

The Luxembourg Heritage Society of Northwest Iowa will meet April 10, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. at the Alton Public Library meeting room. This will be the Annual Meeting, with election of officers, and final plans for Lux Fest, June 5, 2021, will be made. Anyone interested in helping with Lux Fest is encouraged to attend. Additional information can be found at the organization's website, [nwialux.org](http://nwialux.org), or on their Facebook page, Luxembourg Heritage Society of Northwest Iowa.