

***Getting to Know Britain.***

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**I. GEOGRAPHY. CLIMATE.ECONOMY. VEGETATION**

**AND WILDLIFE.**

**THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

The United Kingdom is situated on the British Isles. The British Isles consist of two large islands, Great Britain and Ireland, and a great number of small islands. Their total area is over 244,000 sq km.

The British Isles are separated from the European continent by the North Sea and the English Channel. The western coast of Great Britain is washed by the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea.

Northern Ireland occupies one third of the island of Ireland. It borders on the IrishRepublic in the south.

The island of Great Britain consists of three main parts: England (the southern and middle part of the island), Wales (a mountainous peninsula in the west) and Scotland (the northern part of the island).

 There are no high mountains in Great Britain. In the north the Cheviots (the Cheviot Hills) separate England from Scotland, the Pennines stretch down North England almost along its middle, the Cambrian mountains occupy the greater part of Wales and the Highlands of Scotland are the tallest of the British mountains Ben Nevis, the tallest peak of the Highlands, is only 1,343 m high.

There is very little flat country except in the region known as East Anglia[[1]](#footnote-1).

Most of the rivers flow into the North Sea. The Thames is the deepest and the longest of the British rivers, it is over 300 km long. Some of the British greatest ports are situated in the estuaries of the Thames, Mersey[[2]](#footnote-2), Tyne[[3]](#footnote-3), Clyde[[4]](#footnote-4) and Bristol Avon[[5]](#footnote-5).

The warm currents in the Atlantic Ocean influence the climate of Great Britain. Winters are not severely cold and summers are rarely hot.

The population of the United Kingdom is over 58 mln people. The main nationalities are: English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. In Great Britain there are a lot of immigrants (black and coloured) from former British Asian and colonies.

**OFFSHORE ISLANDS**

There are between 120 and 130 offshore islands which can be classified as part of England's natural geography. Some are privately owned, some are inhabited, while others are only known to lighthouse-keepers, sailors and naturalists.

The attraction of these islands is different to different people. Ornithologists for example might want to study a rare sea bird; archaeologists might be interested in a prehistoric or early Christian site; sociologists might study why certain islands have been deserted or resettled.

*The Isle of Wight* is the largest island off the south coast. Charles I was once imprisoned here, and there is a large prison, Parkhurst, on the island today. A lot of its attractive scenery has formed as a result of a thick layer of chalk - the white teeth of the ‘Needles’ are the most famous example.

Many of the inhabitants travel daily to the mainland to work. Those who work on the island are usually involved with the tourist industry because the island is visited by thousands of tourists every year. A favourite activity is yachting.

*The Isles of SciIly* can be found 28 miles (45 km.) southwest of Land’s End. There are between 50 and 100 ‘islands’ in the group (some are just large rocks) but only six are inhabited. In early spring, they export beautiful flowers to the mainland.

*St Michael’s Mount* is linked to the mainland at low tide by a causeway. It was a base for the tin trade at one time and, because of its religious connection with Mont-Saint-Michel in France, it was also a trading and migration centre from the earliest days of Christianity.

Finally, between the coast of Devon and South Wales is theisland of *Lundy* , which is three miles long and half a mile wide. At one time it was almost a pirate kingdom, but today it is a bird sanctuary, with a resident human population of about twelve.

**CLIMATE**

The climate in the UK is generally mild and temperate due to the influence of the Gu1f Stream. The southwestern winds carry the warmth and moisture into Britain. The climate in Britain is usually described as cool, temperate and humid.

The weather is so changeable that the English often say that they have no climate but only weather. Therefore it is natural for them to use the comparison as changeable ”as the weather” of a person who often changes his mood or opinion about something. The weather is the favourite topic of conversation in the UK. As the weather changes with the wind, andBritain is visited by winds from different parts of the world, the most characteristic feature of Britain’s weather is its variability.

The English also say that they have three variants of weather: when it rains in the morning, when it rains in the afternoon or when it rains all day long. Sometimes it rains so heavily that they say ‘It's raining cats and dogs'. [[6]](#footnote-6)

Rainfal1 is more or less even throughout the year. In the mountains there is heavier rainfall than in the plains of the south and east. The driest period is from March to June and the wettest months are from October to January. The average range of temperature (from winter to summer) is from 15 to 23 degrees above zero. During a normal summer the temperature sometimes rises above 30 degrees in the south. Winter temperatures below l0 degrees are rare. It seldom snows heavily in winter, the frost is rare. January and February are usually the coldest months, July and August the warmest. Still the wind may bring winter cold in spring or summer days. Sometimes it brings the whirlwinds or hurricanes. Droughts are rare.

So, we may say that the British climate has three main features: it is mild, humid and changeable. That means that it is never too hot or too co1d. Winters are extremely mild. Snow may come but it melts quickly. In winter the co1d is humid cold, not the dry one.

This humid and mild climate is good for plants. The trees and flowers begin to blossom early in spring.

In the British homes there has been no central heating untill recently. The fireplaces are often used, but the coal is not used as it’s very expensive. Britain has no good coal now and imports it itself’. Many schools and universities have no central heating either, and the floors there are made of stone. The British bedroom is especially cold, sometimes electric blankets or hot-water bottles are used.

**VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE**

The humid and mild climate of Great Britain is good for plants and flowers. Some of them have become symbols in the UK. Probably you know that the poppy[[7]](#footnote-7) is the symbol of peace, the red rose[[8]](#footnote-8) is the national emblem of England, the thistle is the national emblem of Scotland and the Edinburgh International Festival. The daffodils[[9]](#footnote-9) and the leek[[10]](#footnote-10) are the emblems of Wales, the shamrock[[11]](#footnote-11) (a kind of clover)[[12]](#footnote-12) is the emblem of Ireland.

The UK was originally a land of vast forests, mainly oak and beech[[13]](#footnote-13) in the Lowlands and pine and birch in the Highlands, with great stretches of marshland and smaller areas of moors.[[14]](#footnote-14) In the course of time, much forest land was cleared and almost all the Lowlands outside the industrial areas were put under cultivation. Today only about 6 per cent of the total land area remains wooded.

Extensive forests remain in eastern and northern Scotland and in southeastern and western England. Oak, elm, ash, and beech are the commonest trees in England, while Scotland has much pine and birch. The Highlands with thin soil are largely moorland with heather[[15]](#footnote-15) and grasses. In the cultivated areas that make up most of Britain there are many wild flowers, flowering plants and grasses.

The fauna or animal life of the UK is much like that of northwesternEurope, to which it was once joined. Many larger mammals such as bear, wolf have been hunted to extinction, others are now protected by law. About 50 land mammals are sti11 found in the UK. There are many foxes. Otters are common along rivers and streams, and seals live along much of the coast. Hedgehogs, hares, rabbits, rats and mice are numerous. Deer live in some of the forests in the Highlands of Scotland and England. There are severa1 small lizards, two or three kinds of snakes, and several kinds of frogs and toads.

You may think that there are crocodiles in the British Isles if you read that’... a traditional jazz band led the three-mile crocodile in a musical protest to l0 Downing Street’. But it is not a real crocodile. It is what the English usually say about pupils of a girls’ school, walking in procession, two by two.

Some 230 kinds of birds live in the UK, and another 200 are regular visitors, many are songbirds. The most numerous are blackbird, sparrow and starling. Robin Redbreast is the national bird of theUK. The number of ducks, geese and other water fowl has diminished during recent years. Partridges, pheasants and other large and rare birds are protected by law. Gulls, geese and other sea birds nest near the coast.

There are many threats to wildlife and ecological balance around the coast. The biggest threat to the coastline is pollution. Even much-loved Blackpool is not officially safe. More than 3,500 million tons of industrial waste is pumped into the North Sea every year. “We cannot continue to use our seas as a dustbin and expect our coastline to survive”, says Creenpeace. Many other ecological problems may be caused by privatization of the coast. The past decade of Tory rule has seen a decline in the quality of rivers. Many of them are “biological1y dead”, i.e. unanble to support fish and wildlife.

**ECONOMICAL FEATURES**

The United Kingdom has few mineral resources, of which the most important are coal and oil. The largest coal fields are in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire. The oil-fields are situated in the North Sea along the northeastern coast of Scotland and England.

Other minerals are clays, shale, chalk, iron ore, lead, zinc, etc.The United Kingdom is one of the world's most industrialized countries. Metallurgy, chiefly iron and stee1, is vital to other key industries, such as shipbuilding, mechanica1 engineering, the automotive industry, electrical engineering and electronics. The country is the fourth largest exporter of manufactured goods.

The main industrial centres are Sheffield and Birmingham where iron structures are made, also Manchester, the cotton centre of Great Britain. The district round Birmingham is known in England as the Black Country for its smog.[[16]](#footnote-16) The district round Manchester is dotted with cotton mills. Leeds is the country’s wool producing centre.

The largest cities of the country are London, Birmingham Manchester, Cardiff, Glasgow.

The important ports are London, Cardiff, Glasgow. Though the United Kingdom is an industrialized country, agriculture remains a major sector of economy. Britaingrows wheat, barley, oats, fruit, vegetables.Great Britain is a high-tech[[17]](#footnote-17) country, with the world-famous Royal Society or, more fully, the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge, founded in 1660. It occupies a unique place in Britain’s scientific affairs and is equivalent to national academies of sciences in other countries.

Research and development (R & D) has progressed impressively since World War II.

There are many universities, colleges, libraries, museums and theatres in the country. The most famous universities are Cambridge University, Oxford University, Glasgow University; museums and libraries: the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Radcliffe Library; theatres: the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the Old Vic, the National Theatre and others.

**II. THE HISTORY OF EARLY BRITAIN**

**EARLY BRITAIN**

Britain has been many centuries in the making. The first inhabitants of the island were the Iberians. This race is supposed to have arrived from the Iberian Peninsula (the North of Spain). Soon after 700 B.C. Britain was invaded by the Celts. In the 1st century B.C. when the Celts still lived under the primitive communal system, the Roman Empire became the strongest slave-owning state in the Mediterranean. The Romans ruled all the civilized world and in the 1st century A.D. they conquered Britain. Britain was a province of the Roman Empire for about four centuries.

There are today many things in Britain to remind the people of the Romans: towns, roads, wells and the words.

After the departure of the Romans Britain was attacked by the Germanic tribes of the Jutes, the Saxons and the Angels. The conquerors are generally referred to as the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxons made up the majority of the population in Britain. The Anglo-Saxon language, or English, has been the principal language of the country since then.

In 793 the Danes from Denmark and the Northmen from the Scandinavian peninsula (frequently called as the Vikings) carried out first raids in Britain. At last all England was in their hands. The Kingdom of Wessex alone was left to resist them. King Alfred (ruled 871-901) gathered his men and defeated the Danes. In the 11thcentury England was invaded by the Normans. This was the fifth and the last invasion of England. The pretext for the invasion was the claims of Duke of Normandy, William, to the English throne. He gathered a numerous army and landed in the south of England. The battle between a numerous army and the Anglo-Saxons took place in 1066 at a little village near the town now called Hastings. The Anglo-Saxons were defeated. Thus the Norman Duke became king of England - William the Conqueror. He ruled England for 21 years (1066 - 1087). The Normans had to put down many rebellions in different parts of the country and the rebels were punished severely.

Gradually the Normans mixed with the Ang1o-Saxons and the Danes and from this mixture the English nation finally emerged. For many centuries this country was simply known as England. To the west and north, Wales andScotland fought for their independence so passionately that it took hundreds of years to bring them under English domination.

# THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The conquest of Eng1and by the Normans began in 1066 with the battle of Hastings, where the English fought against the Normans. The conquest was complete in 1071.

Who were these Normans who conquered England? Some 150 years before the conquest of England they came to a part of France, opposite England, a part which we now call Normandy.

There they adopted the Christian faith, the French language and the Roman law of their new home in France. They became French.

What did the Norman conquest do to England?

It gave England French kings and nobles. The Normans also brought with them the French language. After the Norman conquest there were three languages in England. There was Latin, the language of church and the language in which all learned men wrote and spoke: the kings wrote their laws in Latin for some time after the Conquest. Then there was French, the language which the kings and nobles spoke and which many people wrote. Finally, there was the English language which remained the language of the masses of the people.

Some men might know all these languages; many knew two; but most of the people knew only one. There were some people who understood the French language though they could not speak it. Rich people who owned land, the landowners, often knew French and Latin. But poor people, the peasants, did not understand French or Latin. They understood only English.

In time, however came the general use of the English language. About l350 English became the language of law. At that time lived the first teacher who taught his boys to read and write English and to translate not from Latin into French, but from Latin into English. Then, between l350 and 1400, lived Wycliffe who made the first complete translation of the Bible into English, and Chaucer, the Father of English poetry.

## III. THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

The population of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is over 57 million people. The population lives mostly in towns and cities and their suburbs. Four out of every five people live in towns. The distribution of the population is rather uneven. Over 46 million people live in England, over 3 million in Wales, a little over 5 million in Scotland and about 1,5 million in Northern Ireland.Greater London, the south and the southeast are the most densely populated areas. Only London’s population is over 7 million. Most of the mountainous parts of the UK including much of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Pennine Chain in northern England are very sparsely populated.

The UK is inhabited by the English, the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish who constitute the British nation. The British are the descendants of different peoples who settled in the British Isles at different times.

The earliest known people of Britain were of Iberian origin.

Then followed a long succession of invaders including the Celts, the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes and at last in 1066 the Normans. It was the last time Britain was invaded.

Now there are also many people of all colours and races in the UK. These are mostly former inhabitants of the former British colonies. These people, called “the coloureds”, came to the UK in search of better living standards as their own countries had been impoverished by centuries of the British colonial oppression.

English is the official language of the UK. Besides standard literary English there are several regional and social dialects. A well-known example is the cockney of East Londoners. The Scottish and Irish forms of Gaelic survive in some parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Wales is officially bilingual, Welsh is spoken by about a fifth of its population. Welsh is the first language in most of the western counties of Wales and at least formally has the same status as English. Nowadays there is a growing movement in Wales and Scotland for a revival of national culture and languages.

## SCOTLAND

At the beginning of the 6th century, Scotland was ruled by Scottish kings and queens, but was divided between different groups of people. The Picts and Celts, who were the oldest inhabitants, the Scots, who came from Northern Ireland, the Britons, who were driven north by the Anglo-Saxon invaders of England, and the Angles, who originally came from what is now Germany. The Romans had left two centuries earlier.

England and Scotland were finally united when, in 1603, the son of Mary Queen of Scots became James 1 of England. This was because Mary’s cousin Elizabeth 1 of England had left no heir when she died. Today Scotland is part of the United Kingdom and is governed from London. There is a special minister in the Government, the Secretary of State for Scotland, who is responsible for education, local government and other important matters in Scotland. Although the legal, education and banking systems are slightly different from those in England, life is very similar to the rest of the United Kingdom. All the inhabitants speak English although about 100,000 still speak Scottish Gaelic. Many of the Scottish accents of English are very strong, and visitors from abroad (or even England) sometimes have difficulty in understanding them!

**SCOTTISH FESTIVALS**

**Hogmanay**. At midnight on 31st December throughout Great Britain people celebrate the coming of the new year, by holding hands in a large circle and singing this song:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot For auld langsyne, my dear,

And never brought to mind For auld langsyne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot à We’ll take a cup of kindness yet,

For the sake of auld langsyne.For the sake of auld langsyne.

‘For auld langsyne’ means‘in memory of past times’ and the words were written by Scotland’s most famous poet, Robert Burns. He wrote much of his poetry in the Scots dialect of English.

New Year’s Eve is a more important festival in Scotland than it is in England, and it even has a special name. It is not clear where the word ‘hogmanay’ comes from, but it is connected with the provision of food and drink for all visitors to your home on 31st December. In addition, many people believe that you will have good luck for the coming year if the first person to enter your house after midnight is a ‘tall dark stranger’. It is also thought lucky if this person brings a piece of coal and some white bread! Most Scots take part in a *ceilidh* (Gaelic for ‘dance’) on New Year’s Eve and there is much dancing and singing until the early hours of the morning.

Burns’ Night 25th January is celebrated all over the world by Scotsmen wherever they are, as it is the birthday of Robert Burns. As at hogmanay, a special meal of haggis, potatoes and swede is eaten, washed down by lots of whisky! The haggis is carried into the dining room behind a piper wearing traditional dress. He then reads a poem written especially for the haggis!

### NATIONAL EMBLEMS.

**The Rose.** The red rose was the emblem of the Lancastrians, the white rose that of the Yorkists, the two contending Houses for the English throne in the Wars of the Roses (1455-85). All rivalry between the Roses ended by the marriage of Henry VII, the Lancastrian with Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, the Yorkist. The red rose has since become the national emblem of England.

 St George the Martyr is the patron saint of England and his cross is the symbol of England and the Church of England. In ancient days the standard of St George was born in battle before the kings of England. In his name the most highest order of English knighthood the Order of the Garter was instituted by Edward III about 1348.

**The Thistle.** The thistle is the national emblem of Scotland. This is how, according to a curious legend, that homely plant came to be chosen as a badge, in preference to any other.

In very ancient times the Norsemen once landed somewhere on the east coast of Scotland, with the intention of plundering and settling in the country. The Scots assembled with their arms and took their stations behind the river Tay, the largest in Scotland, at the only practicable ford. As they arrived late in the day, weary and tired after a long march, they pitched their camp and rested, not expecting the enemy before the next day.

The Norsemen however were near; noticing that no guards or sentinels protected the camp, they crossed the river Tay, intending to take the Scots by surprise and slaughter them in their sleep. To this end, they took off their shoes so as to make the least noise possible. But one of the Norsemen stepped on a thistle. The sudden and sharp pain he felt caused him to shriek. The alarm was given in the Scots’ camp. The Norsemen were put to flight, and as an acknowledgement for the timely and unexpected help from the thistle, the Scots took it as their national emblem.

**The Leek.** Welshmen all over the world celebrate St David’s Day by wearing either leeks or daffodils, The link between the leek and St David is the belief that he is supposed to have lived for several years on bread and wild leeks. There is a conclusive evidence that Welshmen wore leeks on St David’s Day in Shakespeare's time. In “Henry V” Fluellen tells the King.

 “If your Majesty is remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps; which, your Majesty knows, to this hour is an honourable p1edge of the service; and I do believe your Majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon Saint Tavy’s day!”

At Jesus College, Oxford, where there is traditionally a large contingent of Welsh students, the wearing of leeks on St David’s Day is’ de rigueur’, just as officers and men of the Welsh Guards and the Welsh Regiment proudly display leeks on this nationa1 day. The daffodi1 is also closely associated with St David’s Day, due to the belief that it flowers on that day. It became an alternative to the Leek as a Welsh emblem in the present century, because some thought the leek vulgar.

**The Shamrock.**What the red rose is to Englishmen and the leek and daffodil to the Welsh, the little shamrock is to the Irish, and no Irishman worth his salt fails to wear this national emblem on St Patrick’s Day, March 17. It is worn in memory of Ireland’s patron saint, whose cross is embodied in the Union Jack by the thin red one under the cross of St George.

A popular notion is that when preaching the doctrine of the Trinity to the pagan Irish St Patrick used the shamrock, a sma11 white clover bearing three leaves on one stem as an illustration of the mystery.

 Shortly after the formation of the Irish Guards in 1902 the custom of presenting the national emblem to the new regiment on St Patrick’s Day began. An equally tenacious observance on St Patrick’s Day is Wetting the Shamrock, the convivial aspect of Irish loyalty to their patron saint.

# PATRON SAINTS

The patron saints of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland are to be seen in large mosaics displayed over the four doorways leading out of the Central Lobby in the Houses of Parliament.

The mosaic panel over the south door, represents St George, the patron saint of England and of the Order of the Garter, with the dragon at his feet; on his right is a figure symbolising Fortitude, carrying St George’s banner in her left hand and a club in her right hand; on his left is a figure symbolising Purity, bearing St George’s helmet and a bunch of white lilies.

The panel over the north door, representing St David, shows the saint carrying the Bishop’s cross, with the dove alighting on his shoulder and two angels as supporters, one carrying the harp and the other a lamp, symbolising Harmony and Light.

The panel over the east door depicts St Andrew, the fisherman, standing in the centre, holding his staff and net, with the diagonal cross behind him. St Margaret, Queen of Scotland, on his left, carries the Bible and a black cross. On his right stands St Mungo with Bishop’ s mitre and crozier, and at his feet a salmon with a ring in its mouth.

The pane1 over the west door represents St Patrick, standing with clasped hands, clad in the robes of a Bishop, with the Rock of Cashel behind him, on which is engraved the word “Omba”, the Erse name for Ireland, and the shamrock at his feet. On his right is St Columba, representing the North of Ireland, with a shield at his feet, on which is the Red Hand of Ulster; on his left is St Bridget with the Irish Harp at her feet”.

**IV. THE POLITICAL SYSTEM**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

**TEXT I.** The British method of government has developed very slowly over hundreds of years. This is perhaps why it can be rather difficult to understand. For example, the Queen is the Head of State, but she has no real power.

 Parliament is the real government of Britain. It has two “Houses”, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. The “Lords” are members of the old aristocracy, bishops, lawyers, and retired politicians. They have little power now, but they can suggest new laws and change or delay laws that the House of Commons wants to pass.

 The House of Commons makes laws, agrees on policy, and decides what taxes the people must pay. The British people choose the 650 members of the House of Commons every five years. In each area there are usually two or three main political “parties” to choose from. The party who gets most members into parliament makes the new government.

The Prime Minister is the leader of the winning party. Only party members (not the whole British people) choose their leader. The Prime Minister chooses the members of the Cabinet, who are called ministers. Each minister has a special job to do, for example education, or health, or transport.

**TEXT II.**The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. This means that it has a monarch (a king or a queen) as its Head of State. The monarch has very little power and can only reign with the support of Parliament. Parliament consists of two chambers known as the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Parliament and the monarch have different roles in the government of the country, and they only meet together on symbolic occasions such as the coronation of a new monarch or the opening of Parliament. In reality, the House of Commons is the only one of the three which has true power. It is here that new bills are introduced and debated. If the majority of the members are in favour of a bill it goes to the House of Lords to be debated and finally to the monarch to be signed. Only then does it become law. Although a bill must be supported by all three bodies, the House of Lords only has limited powers, and the monarch has not refused to sign one since the modern political system began over 200 years ago.

**The BritishConstitution.**Unlike most other countries, Britain does not have a written constitution set out in a single document. Instead, the constitution, which has evolved over many centuries, is made up of Acts of Parliament, common law and conventions. The constitution can be altered by Act of Parliament, or by general agreement to change a convention. It can thus adapt readily to suit changing circumstances.

The House of Commons and the electoral system.The House of Commons is made up of 650 elected members, known as Members of Parliament (abbreviated to MPs), each of whom represents an area (or constituency) of the United Kingdom. They are elected either at a general election, or at a by-election following the death or retirement of an MP. The election campaign usually lasts about three weeks. Everyone over the age of 18 can vote in an election, which is decided on a simple majority - the candidate with the most votes wins. Under this system, an MP who wins by a small number of votes may have more votes against him (that is, for the other candidates) than for him. This is a very simple system, but many people think that it is unfair because the wishes of those who voted for the unsuccessful candidates are not represented at all. Parliamentary elections must be held every five years at the latest, but the Prime Minitster can decide on the exact date within those five years.

**The House of Lords.** The House of Lords has more than 1,000 members, although only about 250 take an active part in the work of the House. There are 26 Anglican bishops, 950 hereditary peers, 11 judges and l85 life peers, and unlike MPs they do not receive a salary. They debate a bill after it has been passed by the House of Commons. Changes may be recommended, and agreement between the two Houses is reached by negotiation. The Lords’ main power consists of being able to delay non-financial bills for a period of a year, but they can also introduce certain types of bill. The House of Lords is the only non-elected second chamber among all the democracies in the world, and some people in Britain would like to abolish it.

**The Monarchy.**The powers of the monarch are not defined precisely. Theoretically every act of government is done in the Queen’s name - every letter sent out by a government department is marked “On Her Majesty’s Service”- and she appoints all the Ministers, including the Prime Minister. In reality, everything is done on the advice of the elected Government, and the monarch takes no part in the decision-making process.

**Local Government.** Parliament in London is responsible for deciding national policy, but many public services are provided by local government. The United Kingdom is divided into administrative areas known as “counties” and each county has a “county town” where the offices of the local government are located. Local government is responsible for organising such services as education, libraries, police and fire services, road- building and many others.

**The Commomwealth.**Once the British Empire included a large number of countries all over the world ruled by Britain. The process of decolonisation began in 1947 with the independence of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Now, apart from Hong Kong and a few small islands, there is no longer an empire. But the British ruling classes tried not to lose influence over the former colonies of the British Empire. An association of former members of the British Empire and Britain was founded in 1949. It is called the Commonwealth. It includes many countries such as Ireland, Burma, the Sudan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others. The Queen of Great Britain is also the Head of the Commonwealth, and so the Queen of Canada, Australia, New Zealand...

**Procedure of Passing Bills.** A law passing through Parliament is called a bill. It becomes a law, an Act of Parliament, when it is passed by Parliament.

Preparing a bill for submission to Parliament may take many months, and it may be preceded by other government publications. A Green Paper sets out various alternatives or discussion. Pressure groups make their views known. Government departments concerned are also consulted. The Government then issues a White Paper containing its definite proposals for legislation.

Any member of the House of Commons may introduce a bill. When the bill is introduced it receives its formal “first reading”[[18]](#footnote-18), after which it is printed[[19]](#footnote-19) and circulated to members. The first reading of a bill is scarcely[[20]](#footnote-20) objected to as there is no debate or amendment allowed at this stage, but a date is fixed for the second reading. At the “second reading” the bill is debated. When this second reading takes place, the member who has introduced the bill makes speech explaining the proposed new law and his reasons for bringing it forward[[21]](#footnote-21) . Some members may support the bill, but others may oppose it. There may be a discussion. If the bill passes this stage it is sent to a Committee when details are discussed and amendments generally made.

Finally the bill is given a “third reading”. The House of Commons may be unanimous in favour of [[22]](#footnote-22) the bill or not. The Speaker must then call for a division[[23]](#footnote-23) . If the bill has a majority of vote it will go before the House of Lords.

The House of Lords can not reject bills passed by the House of Commons. The Lords can merely delay[[24]](#footnote-24) bills which they don’t like. A bill becomes Act of Parliament when the Queen signs it.

**The Party SYstem.** The British democratic system depends on political parties, and there has been a party system of some kind since the 17th century. The political parties choose candidates in elections (there are sometimes independent candidates, but they are rarely elected). The party which wins the majority of seats forms the Government and its leader usually becomes Prime Minister. The largest minority party becomes the Opposition. In doing so it accepts the right of the majority party to run the country, while the majority party accepts the right of the minority party to criticize it. Without this agreement between the political parties, the British parliamentary system would break down.

The Prime Minister chooses about twenty MPs from his or her party to become Cabinet Ministers. Each minister is responsible for a particular area of government, and for a Civil Service department. For example, the Minister of Defence is responsible for defence policy and the armed forces, the Chancellor of the Exchequer for financial policy, and the Home Secretary for, among other things, law and order and immigration. Their Civil Service departments are called the Ministry of Defence, the Treasury and the Home Office respectively. They are staffed by civil servants who are politically neutral and who therefore do not change if the Government changes. The leader of the Opposition also chooses MPs to take responsibility for opposing the Government in these areas. They are known as the “Shadow Cabinet”.

### The Parliamentary Parties.The Conservative and Liberal parties are the oldest, and until the last years of the 19th century they were the only parties elected to the House of Commons. Once working-class men were given the vote, however, Socialist MPs were elected, but it was not until 1945 that Britain had its first Labour Government. At this election, the number of Liberal MPs was greatly reduced and since then Governments have been formed by either the Labour or the Conservative party. Usually they have had clear majorities - that is, one party has had more MPs than all the others combined.

 The Conservative Party can broadly be described as the party of the middle and upper classes although it does receive some working-class support. Most of its voters live in rural areas, small towns and the suburbs of large cities. Much of its financial support comes from large industrial companies. The Labour Party, on the other hand, has always had strong links with the trade unions and receives financial support from them. While many Labour voters are middle-class or intellectuals, the traditional Labour Party support is still strongest in industrial areas.

 In 1981, some MPs left the Labour Party to form a new ‘left-of-centre party - the Social Democratic Party (SDP) - which they hoped would win enough support to break the two-party system of the previous forty years. They fought the 1983 election in an alliance with the Liberals, but only a small number of their MPs were elected. They (and other small minority parties in the House of Commons) would like to change the electoral system; they want MPs to be elected by proportional representation. Under this system, the number of MPs from each party would correspond to the total number of votes each party receives in the election.

# V. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

# The Education System.All children and young people between the ages of 4 or 5 and 16 must receive full-time education. About a half of three-end four-year o1d children receive nursery education. Some 9 million children attend 34,800 state and private schools. About 93 percent receive free education from public funds and the rest attend private fee-paying schools. Education in Britain is provided by the Local Education Authority (LEA) in each county. It is financed partly by the Government and partly by local rates (a kind of property tax). Educational planning and organization are not controlled as much by central government as in many othercountries. Each LEA is free to decide how to organize education in their area.

# Schools.The average pupil-teacher ratio for schools is about 17 to 1. There are over 500,000 teachers in British schools. Teacher training courses involve experience in the classroom as well as academic work.

 Boys and girls are taught together in most schools. In England and Wales non-selective comprehensive education caters for children of all abilities. There are also a few schools specialising in science and technology. Nearly all pupils in Scotland attend non-selective schools. Secondary schools in Northern Ireland are largely selective.

# Nursery Education (under 5 years).Children do not have to go to school until they reach the age of five, but there is some free nursery-school education before that age. However, LEAs do not have nursery school places for all who would like them and these places are usually given to families in special circumstances, for example families with one parent only. Because of the small number of nursery schools, parents in many areas have formed play groups where children under 5 years can go for a morning or afternoon a couple of times a week.

## Primary Education( 5 to 11 years). Primary education takes place in infant schools (pupils aged from 5 to 7 years) and junior schools (from 8 to 11 years). (Some LEAs have a different system in which middle schools replace junior schools and take pupils aged from 9 to 12 years.)

**Secondary Education** (11 to 16/l8 years**).**  Since the 1944 Education Act of Parliament, free secondary education has been available to all children in Britain. Indeed, children must go to school until the age of 16, and pupils may stay on for one or two years more if they wish.

 Secondary schools are usually much larger than primary schools and most children over 80 per cent - go to a comprehensive schoo1 at the age of 11. These schools are not selective - you don’t have to pass an exam to go there.

In 1965 the Labour Government introduced the policy of comprehensive education. Before that time, all children took an exam at the age of 11 called the ‘11+’. Approximately the top 20 per cent were chosen to go to the academic grammar schools. Those who failed the ‘ll+’ (80 per cent) went to secondary modern schools. A lot of people thought that this system of selection at the age of 1l was unfair on many children. So comprehensive schools were introduced to offer suitable courses for pupils of all abilities. Some LEAs started to change over to comprehensive education immediately, but some were harder to convince and slower to act. There are a few LEAs who still keep the old system of grammar schools, but most LEAs have now changed over completely to non-selective education in comprehensive schools.

**Comprehensive Schools.** Comprehensive schools want to develop the talents of each individual child. So they offer a wide choice of subjects, from art and craft, woodwork and domestic science to the sciences, modern languages, computer studies, etc. All these subjects are enjoyed by both girls and boys. Pupils at comprehensive schools are quite often put into ‘sets’ for the more academic subjects such as mathematics or languages. Sets are formed according to ability in each subject, so that for example the children in the highest set for maths will not necessarily be in the highest set for French. All pupils move to the next class automatically at the end of the year.

***MySchool****.A typical day at school starts at 8.40 a.m., with the first of the many bells ringing throughout the building .Pupils must then go to registration, which lasts until 9 o’clock.*

*After registration, lessons begin. Sixth form pupils must attend the subject lessons that they choose, either at ‘O’ level or ‘A’ level standard. My first lesson on a Wednesday morning is English. During this lesson, we usually read a set ‘A’ level textbook, and then comment and discuss the language and style. After this I have two free study- periods.*

*The courses chosen by sixth formers are all mixed, and occupy different amounts of time every week. Therefore students usually have a number of periods in which they may study privately. After my two free periods, I have three lessons of Geography, one before morning break and two afterwards. During break, pupils may buy drinks, sweets, and crisps from the school tuck-shop.*

*For lunch, many pupils bring sandwiches, but hot and cold meals are available in the school canteen. At 1.15 on Wednesday, school band practice is held. It is quite a big band with about thirty members.*

*Lessons recommence at two o’clock. Most Lower Sixth pupils have social education on a Wednesday afternoon, which is held in the library, and taken by the head master. This lesson lasts until quarter past three - the end of school.*

**NationalCurriculum.** Educational standards are being raised by the introduction of a national school curriculum consisting of English, mathematics, science, history, geography, technology, music, art, physical education and, for older pupils, a modern language. In Wales the Welsh language forms part of the national curriculum. Similar reforms are being introduced in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Religious education is available in all schools, although parents have the right to withdraw their children from such classes.

**Examinations**. The main schoo1 examination, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), is taken in England, Wales and Northern Ireland at around the age of 16. If pupils are successful, they can continue to more advanced education or training.

After a further two years of study the General Certificate of Education Advanced level exam is taken at the age of 18 and can be combined with the Advanced Supplementary level exam to provide a wider range of subjects. These exams are the main standard for entry to university education and to many forms of professional training.There is also a Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education for those staying at school for a year after the age of 16; this provides a preparation for work or vocational courses.

A separate exam system exists in Scotland.

**PrivateEducation**(5 to 18 years). Some parents choose to pay for private education in spite of the existence of free state education. Private schools are called by different names to state schools: the preparatory (often called `prep’) schools are for pupils aged up to 13 , and the public schools are for 13 to 18 year-olds. These schools are very expensive and they are attended by about 5 per cent of the school population. Eton College is probably the most famous public (i.e. private) school in the world.

**SchoolUniform.**The pupils at Lynn Faulkner’s school, like the pupils at most secondary schools in Britain, have to wear a school uniform. This usually means a white blouse for girls (perhaps with a tie), with a dark-coloured skirt and pullover. The colours may be grey, brown, navy blue, dark green or similar. Boys wear a shirt and tie, dark trousers and dark-coloured pullovers. Pupils of both sexes wear blazers - a kind of jacket - with the school badge on the pocket. They often have to wear some kind of hat on the way to and from school - caps for the boys, and berets or some other kind of hat for the girls. Shoes are usually black or brown and should be sensible - no high heels! Young people in Britain often don’t like their school uniform, especially the hats and shoes. Sometimes they do not wear the right clothes. Schools will often give them a warning the first time that this happens but will then punish them if they continue not to wear the correct uniform.

***Talking Points.*** *Do you think secondary education should be selective or comprehensive? What are the advantages and disadvantages of both systems? What do you think are the advantages of school uniform? And the disadvantages ?*

**LIFE AT COLLEGE**

**BritishUniversities.**  There are 46 universities in Britain. Good `A’ Level results in at least two subjects are necessary to get a place at one. However, good exam passes alone are not enough. Universities choose their students after interviews, and competition for places at university is fierce.

 For all British citizens a place at university brings with it a grant from their Local Education authority. The grants cover tuition fees and some of the living expenses. The amount depends on the parents’ income. If the parents do not earn much money, their children will receive a full grant which will cover all their expenses.

**Free at last!**  Most 18 and 19 year-olds in Britain are fairly independent people, and when the time comes to pick a college they usually choose one as far away from home as possible! So, many students in northern and Scottish universities come from the south of England and vice versa. It is very unusual for university students to live at home. Although parents may be a little sad to see this happen , they usually approve of the move, and see it as a necessary part of becoming an adult. Anyway, the three university terms are only ten weeks each, and during vacation times families are reunited.

**Freshers.** When they first arrive at college, first year university students are called ‘freshers’. A fresher’s life can be exciting but terrifying for the first week.

Often freshers will live in a Hall of Residence on or near the college campus, although they may move out into a rented room in their second or third year, or share a house with friends. Many fresherswill feel very homesick for the first week or so, but living in hall soon helps them to make new friends.

During the first week, all the clubs and societies hold a ’freshers’ fair’ during which they try to persuade the new students to join their society. The freshers are told that it is important for them to come into contact with many opinions and activities during their time at university but the choice can be a bit overwhelming!

On the day that lectures start, groups of freshers are often seen walking around huge campuses, maps in hand and a worried look on their faces. They are learning how difficult it is to change from a school community to one of many thousands. They also learn a new way of studying. As well as lectures, there are regular seminars, at which one of a small group of students (probably not more than ten) reads a paper he or she has written. The paper is then discussed by the tutor, and the rest of the group. Once or twice a term, students will have a tutorial. This means that they see a tutor alone to discuss their work and their progress. In Oxford and Cambridge, and some other universities, the study system is based entirely around such tutorials which take place once a week. Attending lectures is optional for ‘Oxbridge’ students!

After three or four years (depending on the type of Course and the university) these students will take their finals. Most of them (over 90 per cent) will get a first, second or third class degree and be able to put BA (Bachelor of Arts) or BSc (Bachelor of Science) after their name. It will have been well earned!

***Talking points.*** *Is it a good thing to leave home at the age of 18? What are the advantages and disadvantages?*

*Many British people believe that if you do nothing more than study hard at university, you will have wasted a great opportunity. What do they mean and do you agree?*

*How do British universities differ from universities in your country? What do you like and dislike about the British system?*

**OXFORD**

**Town and gown.**There has been a town where Oxford now stands for many centuries - even before, 912 , the first written record of its existence. The University began to establish itself in the middle of the l2th century, and by 1300 there were already 1,500 students. At this time 0xford was a wealthy town, but by the middle of the l4th century it was poorer , because of a decline in trade and because of the terrible plague, which killed many people in England. Relations between the students and the townspeople were very unfriendly, and there was often fighting in the streets. On 10th February 1355, the festival of St Scholastica, a battle began which lasted two days. Sixty-two students were killed. The townspeople were punished for this in two ways: they had to walk through the town to attend a special service on every St Scholastica’s day until 1825 . Worse than this, the University was given control of the town for nearly 600 years.

 Nowadays, there are about 12,000 students in Oxford, and the University and the town live happily side by side!

**City of dreaming spires.** The best-known description of Oxford is by Matthew Arnold, the l9th century poet, who wrote about ‘that sweet city with her dreaming spires’. However, Oxford is not only famous for its architecture. In the 20th century, it has developed quickly as an industrial and commercial centre. The British Leyland factory at Cowley, for example, is an important part of Britain’s motor industry. It is also an important centre in the world of medicine; it is the home of Oxfam, the charity which raises millions of pounds to help poor people all over the world; and its airport contains Europe’s leading air - training school.

**Oxford words.**The Oxford English Dictionary is well-known to students of English everywhere. It contains approximately 5,000,000 entries, and there are thirteen volumes, including a supplement. Some of the words are special words. For example, ‘bulldog’ in Oxford is the name given to University policemen who wear bowler hats and sometimes patrol the streets at night. They are very fast runners. ‘Punt’ is a word often used in both Oxford and Cambridge. It refers to a flat-bottomed boat with sloping ends which is moved by pushing a long pole in the water.

Oxford University Press, the publishing house which produces the Oxford English Dictionary, has a special department called the Oxford Word and Language Service (OWLS for short). If you have a question about the meaning of a word or its origin, you can write or telephone, and the staff there will help you.

***True or false?***

 *1 There was no town at Oxford before 912.*

*2 Oxford has always been a wealthy town.*

*3 The people of Oxford were punished for the trouble with the students.*

*4 The University used to be more important than the town.*

*5 Oxford is famous for its architecture.*

*6 Britain’s motor industry is based in Cowley.*

*7 The word ‘bulldog’ usually means ‘policeman’.*

*8 Oxford is a city of contrasts.*

**VI. RELIGION**

Throughout British history religion has been closely connected with kings, queens and politics. England was a Roman Catholic country until 1534. Why did this change?

**When a king and a pope quarrelled...** In I525 King Henry VIII decided to divorce his queen, Catherine of Aragon who, at the age of forty was five years older than Henry. Also, she had only given him a daughter, and Henry wanted a son. He fell in love with Anne Boleyn who was younger, but when Henry asked the Pope for permission to divorce Catherine, he refused. Henry was so angry with the Pope that he ended all contacts between England and Rome, divorced Catherine of Aragon without the Pope’s permission and married Anne Boleyn. In 1534 Parliament named Henry head of the Church of England. This was the beginning of the Anglican Church. This quarrel with Rome was political, not religious. The Anglican Church did not start as a Protestant Church and Henry certainly did not regard himself as a Protestant. In fact, the Pope had given Henry the title of ‘Defender of the Faith’ in 1521 for words he wrote attacking Martin Luther, the German Protestant. (British kings and queens still have this title , and you can see the letters FID DEF or F.D. on British coins today.) However the Protestant movement in Europe was growing very strong at this time. When Henry quarrelled with Rome and ordered the Bible to be translated into English, the way was open for Protestantism to spread in England. Over the next years many people changed to this new religion.

In 1553 Mary, Henry’s daughter by Catherine of Aragon, became Queen of England. Because she was a Roman Catholic, the country re-entered the Roman Church. While Mary was Queen, many Protestants were burned at the stake for their beliefs. She also put her non-Roman Catholic sister, Elizabeth (the daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn), into prison in the Tower of London. Because of Mary’s cruelty, Roman Catholicism became feared and hated in the country. Many people were glad when Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth became Queen. Elizabeth also became head of the Anglican Church, like her father, and Roman Catholicism was never again the established (official) religion in England.

**The Puritans.**After Elizabeth became Queen, a group of Protestants wanted to ‘purify’ the Church of England of all Roman Catholic influence. These people were called Puritans - they were the English Protestants. They dressed very simply and believed that all pleasures, such as fine clothes and the theatre, were wicked.

When James I was King (1603-1625) the Puritans were often put in prison and sometimes even killed. Some of them decided to leave England to find freedom in a new country. They sailed from Plymouth in 1620 in a ship called the ‘Mayflower’, and these ‘Pilgrim Fathers’ - as they were called - started a new life in America. The service which they held to thank God for their arrival, became a traditional annual festival in America, called ‘Thanksgiving’.

Under the rule of James 1's son, Charles I, the Puritans were treated even worse. Many people sympathized with the Puritans, and the Court was unpopular because it was suspected of being a centre of Roman Catholicism. (This was because Charles’s wife was a Roman Catholic.) This religious split between the Puritans and the Court was one cause of the outbreak of civil war in 1628 and the eventual execution of Charles I. Following this, from l649 to 1660, Britain was a republic for a short while.

**Religion today.**The Church of England - or the Anglican Church - is still the established church in England, and the British king or queen is still head of the Church. There are, however, many other churches to which people belong: for example Roman Catholics (6 million) and the basically Protestant Methodists(1,150,000) Congregationalists (372,000) , Baptists (338 ,000) and other smaller groups . The Methodists and Baptists are particularly strong in Wales.

In Scotland the Presbyterian Church (called the *Kirk)* is the established church and it is completely separate from the Church of England . The Presbyterian Church is based on a strict form of Protestantism which was taught by the French reformer, Calvin, and brought to Scotland by John Knox.

Although there is complete religious freedom in Britain today, there is still tension between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, where religion is still caught up with politics.

Britain’s immigrants have also brought with them their own religions which they continue to practise. There are Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs from the Indian subcontinent, Rastafarians from the West Indies, and the largest group of Jews living in Europe.

In spite of the great variety of forms of worship, only a minority of people regularly go to church in Britain today. Most people see Sunday more as a day for relaxing with the family or for doing jobs around the house and the garden.

1. **THE MASS MEDIA**

**TV AND RADIO**

Broadcasting in the United Kingdom is controlled by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). The BBC receives its income from the government but the private companies controlled by the IBA earn money from advertising.

National radio is controlled by the BBC, and listeners can choose between four stations. Radio l is a pop-music station with news and magazine-style programmes. Radio 2 plays light music and reports sport. Radio 3 plays classical music, and Radio 4 has news programmes, drama and general interest programmes. There are many local stations, some private and some run by the BBC. Their programmes consist mainly of music and local news.

The BBC has two TV channels. BBC 2 has more serious programmes and news features. There is a break for advertisements about every l5-20 minutes. The IBA is responsible for looking after the regional independent TV companies who broadcast their own programmes and those they have bought from other regions. The most recent independent channel is Channel 4, and it has more specialized programmes than the main channels. In general, people think the programmes offered on British television are of a very high standard. Some people, however, are becoming worried about the amount of violence on TV, and the effect this may have on young people.

TV and radio are also two of the main teaching channels used by the Open University. This ‘university of the air’ allows many thousands of students to study at home for degrees they never would have obtained in the main educational system. They also have to do without sleep as most of their programmes are broadcast early in the morning or late .at night.

**NEWSPAPERS**

Fleet Street in London is the home of most national and Sunday newspapers. People often say “Fleet Street” to mean “the press”.

British newspapers can be divided into two groups: quality and popular. Quality newspapers are more serious and cover home and foreign news while popular newspapers like shocking, personal stories. These two groups of papers can be distinguished easily because the quality newspapers are twice the size of the popular newspapers. The quality daily papers are the “Times”, the “Guardian”, the “Daily Telegraph” and the “Financial Times”. The “Times”, founded in 1785 is considered to be the most authoritative newspaper voice in the country and is said to be the paper of the Establishment. The “Guardian” appeals to well-educated readers interested in intellectual and social affairs. The “Daily Telegraph” is bought by educated upper-middle and middle-class readers. The “Financial Times”, printed on pink paper, is read by businessmen.

The “popular” press consists of the “Daily Mail”, the “Daily Express”, the “Daily Star” and the “Daily Mirror”. In all newspapers there is a desperate fight to maintain or improve their circulations but it is worst among the “popular’ papers whose main weapons are sex , scandal and sport.

Apart from London-based papers, there are many local newspapers. Most of these are evening papers (there is only one London evening paper) and many appear weekly.

**VIII. CULTURAL LIFE**

**ARTS**

Artistic and cultural activity ranges from the highest professional standards to a wide variety of amateur involvement. London is one of the leading world centres for drama, music, opera and dance. Other cities are also centres of artistic excellence. Some 650 professional arts festivals take place each year. The Edinburgh International Festival is the largest of its kind in the world.

Britain has about 300 theatres intended for professional use, of which about 100 are in London, including the Royal National Theatre. The Roya1 Shakespeare company performs in Stratford-upon Avon, Shakespeare’s birthplace, and in London.

The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and the English National Opera are the main London opera companies. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own opera companies. Dance companies include the Birmingham Royal Ballet, Scottish Ballet and the Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble.

Britain’s leading symphony orchestras include the London Philharmonic, the City of Birmingham Symphony, and the Ulster and the Royal Scottish Orchestras. There are also chamber orchestras such as the English Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. British conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Simon Rattle and Jane Glover reach a wide audience through their recordings as well as by their performances. Well-known composers include Sir Michael Tippett and Sir Harrison Birtwistle. Percussionist Evelyn Glennie and violinist Nigel Kennedy are among solo performers currently enjoying great acclaim.

British pop musicians and groups - some of the most popular being Phil Collins, Lisa Stansfield, Simply Red, Seal and Right Said Fred - have world-wide appeal and have set new trends.

British films, actors and the creative and technical services which support them are acclaimed at international film festivals. The industry also produces films for television. Well-known British performers include Sean Connery, Michael Caine, Greta Scacchi and Kenneth Branagh.

There are about 2,500 museums and art galleries. The major national museums, many of which are in London, have world-famous artistic, archaeological, scientific and historical collections. They include the British Museum, the Natural History museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum, the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery. Many of Britain’s great private houses (some open to the public) are of prime architectural interest and also contain art treasures.

Britain’s network of libraries helps to maintain the wealth of English literature and culture. The British Library, Britain’s national library, is one of the world’s three largest. Many British novelists are internationally recognised. They include the Nobel prize-winner Sir William Golding, Martin Amis, A.S. Byatt and Jeanette Winterson. Well-known poets include Ted Hughes, Tony Harrison and Wendy Cope.

**LONDON THEATRES**

The English people have loved the theatre since the days of Shakespeare. London today is one of the greatest centres of drama in the world, there are over 40 in the West End alone.

Still standing on its original site is the **Theatre Royal - Drury Lane**, which was opened in 1663. It is one of very large theatres which are mainly devoted to big-scale musical productions. They include the **Coliseum** (the biggest in London, and the principal home of operetta), the **Palace and the Palladium** (which specialize in musical comedy or variety shows), the Royal **Opera House - Covent Garden.**

The Royal Opera House is situated in the big fruit, flower and vegetable market Covent Garden. The Covent Garden Theatre is the chief centre of opera and ballet in Britain. Operas are performed in Italian. Covent Garden was the first theatre abroad visited by the famous Bolshoi Theatre Ballet in 1956.

**Sadler’ Wells**, its “younger sister”, is another opera and ballet house. It specializes in Opera in English.

In London a theatre-goer has a wide choice of drama and comedy, both classical and modern.

If you want to see classical drama you may visit the **Old Vic Theatre,** a famous London playhouse in Waterloo Road. It has been staging classical plays since 1914. In 1963 the Old Vic Theatre became the home of the **National Theatre Company** under the direction of Laurence Olivier.

You may also go to the **Open Air Theatre** in Regent’s Park. It is famous for its Shakespeare productions.

 And if you prefer modern drama you may go to the **Haymarket Theatre**, the **Royal Court Theatre** or the **Globe Theatre** (opened in 1908).

London’s two principal concert halls are the **Royal Festival Hall** (opened in 1951) and the **Royal Albert Hall** (opened in 1878), famous for its promenade concerts, capable of seating about 8000 people.

**LIVERPOOL AND THE BEATLES**

On Wednesday 24th October 1962, Love Me Do, entered the British Top Thirty. It was the first single by an unknown group from Liverpool called the Beatles. It was the first of a number of big hits that would make John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr the most successful pop group the world has ever known.

**The early years.**However, the road to success was not always easy. John and Paul had spent many afternoons listening to American stars like Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley before they were able to write the famous Lennon and McCartney songs.

 Although the long evenings spent playing in hot nightclubs in Liverpool and Hamburg in Germany had not earned them much money, they found the experience very useful when playing to huge audiences , later on.

Not only was their style of singing new and exciting but their unusual haircuts - Beatle ‘mops’ ! - and crazy sense of humour immediately became the latest fashion.

**Influences.**One of the most important people at the start of their careers was Brian Epstein, a Liverpudlian record-dealer. He managed to change four ordinary working-class lads into international superstars. George Martin, their record producer, encouraged them to introduce all kinds of unusual instruments on their records and combined popular and classical styles in a new and original way.

**The 1960s.** During the 1960s the Beatles were always in the news headlines; films, world tours and sometimes scandal. John once suggested that the Beatles were better known than Jesus Christ. This caused hundreds of young Americans to burn their Beatle records. In addition some people thought there were hidden messages about drugs in some of the songs.

**Break-up.** After a decade of successful music and films, the Beatles finally decided to break up in the early seventies, after public disagreements about money and personalities.

Although many fans hoped there would be a reunion throughout the 1970s, this became impossible with the tragic murder of John Lennon in New York in 1980.

The surviving Beatles are still deeply involved in musical and film projects, but many fans still long for the music of the 60s.

IX. FAMILY LIFE

A ‘typical’ British family used to consist of mother, father and two children, but in recent years there have been many changes in family life. Some of these have been caused by new laws and others are the result of changes in society. For example, since the law made it easier to get a divorce, the number of divorces has increased. In fact one marriage in every three now ends in divorce. This means that there are a lot of one-parent families. Society is now more tolerant than it used to be of unmarried people, unmarried couples and single parents.

Another change has been caused by the fact that people are living longer nowadays and many old people live alone following the death of their partners. As a result of these changes in the pattern of people’s lives, there are many households which consist of only one person or one person and children.

You might think that marriage and the family are not so popular as they once were. However, the majority of divorced people marry again, and they sometimes take responsibility for a second family.

Members of a family - grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins - keep in touch, but they see less of each other than they used to. This is because people often move away from their home town to work, and so the family becomes scattered. Christmas is the traditional season for reunions. Although the family group is smaller nowadays than it used to be, relatives often travel many miles in order to spend the holiday together.

In general, each generation is keen to become independent of parents in establishing its own family unit, and this fact can lead to social as well as geographical differences within the larger family group.

Who looks after the older generation? There are about 10 million old-age pensioners in Britain, of whom about 750,000 cannot live entirely independently. The government gives financial help in the form of a pension but in the future it will be more and more difficult for the national economy to support the increasing number of elderly. At the present time, more than half of all old people are looked after at home. Many others live in Old Peoples’ Homes, which may be private or state-owned.

The individual and the family. Relationships within the family are different now. Parents treat their children more as equals than they used to, and children have more freedom to make their own decisions. The Father is more involved with bringing up children, often because the mother goes out to work. Increased leisure facilities and more money mean that there are greater opportunities for the individual to take part in activities outside the home. Although the family holiday is still an important part of family life (usually taken in August, and often abroad) many children have holidays away from their parents, often with a school party or other organized group.

Talking Points. People say that children today grow up more quickly. The law sometimes makes this possible. Look at the information below how is the law different in your country?

 YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LAW

Age 13 may be employed part-time.

Age 14 allowed in bar but not to drink alcohol.

Age 15 legally a ‘young person’ and not a ‘child’.

Age 16 school leaving, can leave home, drive moped, marry with parents’ consent

 (not needed in Scotland), buy beer with a meal.

Age 17 can drive a car or motorbike.

Age 18 age of majority - can vote, get married without parents’ consent, own

 property, get tattooed, drink in pubs…

X. FESTIVALS

On New Year’s Eve, people traditionally take a shower in the fountains in Trafalgar Square! The Christmas tree is an annual gift from Norway.

I’m in love! On l4th February, St Valentine’s Day, many people send a card to the one they love or someone whom they have fallen in love with. People usually do not sign these cards and a lot of time is spent trying to guess who has sent them!

 Pancake Day. Ash Wednesday is the day in February when the Christian period of Lent begins. This refers to the time when Christ went into the desert and fasted for forty days. Although not many people actually give up eating during this period, on Pancake Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, they eat lots of pancakes. These are made from flour, milk and eggs, and fried in a hot pan.

Some towns also hold pancake races on that day. People run through the streets holding a frying pan and throwing the pancake in the air. Of course if they drop the pancake they lose the race!

Easter eggs. At Easter time, the British celebrate the idea of new birth by giving each other chocolate Easter eggs which are opened and eaten on Easter Sunday. On Good Friday bakers sell hot cross buns, which are toasted and eaten with butter. Easter Monday is a holiday and many people travel to the seaside for the day or go and watch one of the many sporting events, such as football or horse-racing.

Christmas. If you try to catch a train on 24th December you may have difficulty in finding a seat. This is the day when many people are travelling home to be with their families on Christmas Day, 25th December. For most British families, this is the most important festival of the year, it combines the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ with the traditional festivities of winter.

On the Sunday before Christmas many churches hold a carol service where special hymns are sung. Sometimes carol-singers can be heard on the streets as they collect money for charity . Most families decorate their houses with brightly-coloured paper or holly, and they usually have a Christmas tree in the corner of the front room, glittering with coloured lights and decorations.

There are a lot of traditions connected with Christmas but perhaps the most important one is the giving of presents. Family members wrap up their gifts and leave them at the bottom of the Christmas tree to be found on Christmas morning. Children leave a long sock or stocking at the end of their bed on Christmas Eve, 24th December, hoping that Father Christmas will come down the chimney during the night and bring them small presents, fruit and nuts. They are usually not disappointed! At some time on Christmas day the family will sit down to a big turkey dinner followed by Christmas pudding. They will probably pull a cracker with another member of the Family. It will make a loud crack and a coloured hat, small toy and joke will fall out!

Later in the afternoon they may watch the Queen on television as she delivers her traditional Christmas message to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. If they have room for even more food they may enjoy a piece of Christmas cake or eat a hot mince pie. 26th December is also a public holiday, Boxing Day, and this is the time to visit friends and relatives or watch football.

May is here. As summer comes, Britain likes to celebrate the end of the winter. Much of this celebration is connected with dancing, which is performed to encourage life and growth and to drive away harmful spirits. Children may be seen dancing round the Maypole on village greens, weaving their brightly coloured scarves into a beautiful pattern. Morris men dance all day long on lst May, waving their white handkerchiefs to drive away the evil spirits and welcome in the new ones.

Ghosts and witches. Halloween means ‘holy evening’, and takes place on 31st October. Although it is a much more important festival in the United States than in Britain, it is celebrated by many people in the UK. It is particularly connected with witches and ghosts. At parties people dress up in strange costumes and pretend they are witches. They cut horrible faces in potatoes and other vegetables and put a candle inside, which shines through the eyes. People may play difficult games such as trying to eat an apple from a bucket of water without using their hands.

In recent years children dressed in white sheets knock on doors at Halloween and ask if you would like a ‘trick’ or ‘treat’. If you give them something nice, a ‘treat’ they go away. However, if you don‘t they play a ‘trick’ on you, such as making a loud noise or spilling flour on your front doorstep!

 Guy Fawkes Night. In I605 King James 1 was on the throne. As a Protestant, he was very unpopular with Roman Catholics. Some of them planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5th November of that year, when the King was going to open Parliament. Under the House of Lords they had stored thirty-six barrels of gun powder, which were to be exploded by a man called Guy Fawkes. However one of the plotters spoke about these plans and Fawkes was discovered, arrested and later hanged. Since that day the British traditionally celebrate 5th November by burning a dummy, made of straw and old clothes, on a bonfire, whilst at the same time letting off fireworks.

This dummy is called a ‘guy’ (like Guy Fawkes) and children can often be seen on the pavements before 5th November saying, ‘Penny for the guy.’ If they collect enough money they can buy some fireworks.

XI. LONDON AND ITS SIGHTS

LONDON

 1. London, the Capital of Great Britain. London is not only the capital of the country, it is also a huge port, one of the world’s greatest commercial centres, a science city, and the seat of the British government. London was founded at the time of the Roman Empire and now its population is about 7 million. It is situated upon both banks of the Thames, spanned by seventeen bridges.

The most important parts of London are the City of London, the East End, the West End and Westminster.

The City, or the Square Mile (another name for the City of London), is the oldest part of London. It got its name from the fact that its area covers about one square mile.

In the City the streets and pavements are very narrow and on weekdays the traffic is very heavy, because the City is the commercial centre of London, and London’s most important firms and banks have offices there. About half a million people work in the Square Mile. But over weekends the City is almost dead.

Now very few people live there. They are caretakers of office blocks, some lawyers, the choirboys and the clergy of St Paul’s Cathedral, the residents of a new cultural centre called the Barbican.

As the name suggests, the West End is the western part of London It is located between the City and Hyde Park.

The City and the West End are the heart of the capital. Here the visitor will find all the most interesting buildings, theatres, movie houses, museums, picture galleries, shops, offices and gardens.

Westminster with Government buildings is the next part of London. There one can see the Westminster Palace, the Westminster Abbey, and the Clock Tower with the great bell - Big Ben.

The East End is the eastern part of London. The East End is the poorest part of the city, mostly inhabited by factory workers. There are no big parks or gardens there.

London has many great and wonderful sights, which attract the attention of thousands of people from every part of the world. There are many beautiful buildings in London and among them are the Houses of Parliament, the Bank of England, the British Museum which has the richest library in the world. There are many squares and beautiful parks in the city, the “lungs” of London. Hyde Park is the city’s largest park. In spring and summer Londoners walk, sit, play on the grass. Just inside Hyde Park you will find the Speakers’ Corner, a place famous for its open-air meetings.

In London all kinds of vehicles ride up and down the streets: double-decker buses, lorries, vans, taxis, private cars, motor-cycles and bicycles. London’s red double-decker bus is well-known all over the world. In today’s crowded streets it is, in terms of road space, the most economical road user. Its equipment, its engine, gear-ratios, brakes and all its mechanical devices are designed to suit the rhythms of London’s traffic.

 London has been a capital city for nearly a thousand years and many of its ancient buildings still stand. The most famous of these are the Tower of London (where the Crown Jewels are kept), Westminster Abbey and St Paul’s Cathedral, but most visitors also want to see the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace (the Queen’s London home) and the many magnificent museums.

Once, London was a small Roman town on the north bank of the Thames, but slowly it grew into one of the world’s major cities with more than seven million people. Fewer people live in the centre now, but the suburbs are still growing.

Places now in the heart of London, like Westminster, once stood in the middle of green fields. Many small villages, like Hampstead, Chelsea and Mayfair, became part of London, but they still keep some of their old atmosphere. Different areas of London seem like different cities. The West End is a rich man’s world of shops, offices and theatres. The East End is the old working people’s district, where there are many small flats and houses, some old, some new.

London is always changing. New buildings go up and old ones come down. Poorer areas become fashionable and people with more money move into them.

 A hundred years ago, the river was crowded with ships, leaving for Java and Japan, New Zealand and New York, but now the port is nearly empty. People travel by air, and London’s main airport, Heathrow, is one of the busiest in the world.

Like all big cities, London has streets and concrete buildings, but it also has many big parks, full of trees, flowers and grass. Sit on the grass (you’re allowed to!) in the middle of Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens, and you will think that you are in the country, miles away.

Many people live outside the centre of London in the suburbs, and they travel to work by train, bus or underground. Every day, nearly half a million office workers travel into the “City”, the business centre of London, a small area full of banks and offices. Some people come from far out of London, even from the coast, and spend up to four hours travelling every day.

Working hours are from 9 am to 5 p.m. From 8 until 10 every morning, and 4.30 to 6.30 every evening, the trains are crowded with people, and after the morning “rush hour” the shoppers come.

By day the whole of London is busy. At night the City is quiet and empty, but the West End stays alive, because this is where Londoners come to enjoy themselves. There are two opera houses here, several concert Halls and many theatres, as well as cinemas, and in nearby Soho the pubs, restaurants and night clubs are busy half the night.

Many people think that London is all grey; but in fact red is London’s favourite colour: The buses are red, the letter boxes are red, and the mail vans are all bright, bright red. London is at its best when people are celebrating. Then the flags, the soldiers’ uniforms, the cheering crowds and the carriages and horses all sparkle in the sunshine - if it’s not raining, of course!

2. The Symbol of the City, London’s Business Centre. From the History of London. London is a very old city. When Roman troops conquered southeast England in the summer of AD 43, the Emperor Claudius and his processional elephants crossed the Thames at the site of London, building their wooden bridge (as archaeologists established in 1981) close to the present London Bridge, opened in 1973. They called their port Londinium, and it became the capital of Britain. The Romans enclosed it in a wall (the Roman wall), first definite boundary, which was built about the year 200, and its fragments may still be seen .

 London stands on the River Thames which has played a big role in the history of the city. Because of the river it developed into a major port and trading centre and it was by way of the river that various invaders sailed to the site on which present-day London stands - the Romans, the Angles, the Saxons and the Normans.

 When the Normans began invading England in 1066, they built a castle by the river - the Tower of London to keep the Londoners under control.

The Square Mile of the City today encloses 677 acres, of which 325 lie within the circle of the wall.

While the Great Fire of 1666, and the bombs of World War 11 brought tremendous destruction, the City has returned the beauty of its past. It added such great developments as the Barbican Centre.

 Quite recently a new cultural centre, the Barbican, appeared in London. The heart of the Barbican, a historic name meaning an outer fortification, is the Centre for Arts and Conferences. It is the City’s “Gift to the Nation”, opened on March 3, 1982 .

 The Barbican Hall and Barbican Theatre provide a home for the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

 3. London. The Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. The Palace of Westminster, usually known as the Houses of Parliament, dates only from the 19th century, but it stands on the site of the palace founded by Edward the Confessor.

 The Palace of Westminster was used both as a royal residence and as a parliament house until 1512. On October 16, 1834, the old Palace of Westminster was almost destroyed by fire. After the fire, it was decided to erect a new Palace of Westminster on the old historic site .

The modern palace was begun in 1840. The foundation stone of the new building, designed by Sir Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin, was laid in 1840, and Queen Victoria opened First Parliament there in 1849.

 The new Palace of Westminster extends over 8 acres of ground, contains II quadrangles, and includes 1,000 rooms and 100 staircases. There are two towers in the Palace of Westminster: the Victoria Tower and the Clock Tower.

The Victoria Tower holds the records of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The British flag (called the Union Jack), flying from Victoria Tower shows that Parliament is in session. The light in the Clock Tower also indicates that Parliament is in session.

The clock came into service in 1859 and was nicknamed “Big Ben”. It chimes the hours to the tune of Handel’s music. Big Ben is the biggest clock bell in Britain. It weighs 13,5 tons.

The Clock Tower is 818 feet high. You have to go up 374 steps to reach the top. So the clock looks small from the pavement below the tower. The four clock dials are 22,5 feet in diameter, the hour hands are nine feet long, and the minute hands are 14 feet. The bell weighs 13,5 tons and the hammer which strikes it weighs 8 tons.

 The clock bell was called Big Ben after Sir Benjamin Hall, who was given the job of having the bell hoisted up.

 Sir Benjamin was a very tall and stout man, whose nickname was “Big Ben”. One day he said in Parliament, “Shall we call the bell St Stephen’s? St Stephen is the name of the tower”. But someone joked, “Why not call it Big Ben?” Now the bell is known all over the world by that name.

4. London. Westminster Abbey. Westminster Abbey is the historic building to which every visitor goes sooner or later. It was founded in 1050 as a monastery. Later it was rebuilt by Henry III. In the l8th century the West Towers were added. The present building dates from about 1480.

As the scene of coronation of English kings, Westminster Abbey continues a tradition established by William the Conqueror who was crowned on Christmas Day, 1066. When Queen Elizabeth II was crowned on June 2, 1953, the ritual was essentially the same although the architectural setting had changed.

Westminster Abbey is in the centre of London. Many great Englishmen are buried in the Abbey: Newton, Darvin, Watt and others. Here we can see a lot of monuments to and tombs of great men. There is a corner usually called ”Poets’ Corner”, where the famous British poets lie. Near the West Door of the Abbey the Unknown Warrior lies in a simple grave.

5. London. St Paul’s Cathedral. St Paul’s Cathedral is the City’s greatest monument and Sir Christopher Wren’s masterpiece. Sir Christopher Wren was the most famous of all English architects. St Paul’s Cathedral was built in 1675-1708 and was the fifth church put on the same site. The earliest cathedral was erected in 604. The second, built in stone 675-685, was burned by the Danes in 962 and the third was destroyed by fire in 1087. The Normans rebuilt it in 1180. After its destruction in the Great Fire of London in 1666, it was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren. During World War II it was hit by enemy bombs, one of which destroyed the High Altar. Although destroyed in World War II, it exists and is now seen and used by people.

6.London. Buckingham Palace. Buckingham Palace is the official London residence of the Queen. It was built in the l8th century and rebuilt later by the architect John Nash. Nash began his work in 1825, but the palace was not completed until 1837. The first Queen to live there was the young Queen Victoria.

Above the State Entrance is the central balcony where the Royal Family appear on occasions of national importance.

The Royal Standard flying over Buckingham Palace is the sign that the Queen is in the residence. The absence of the Royal Standard over the east front of Buckingham Palace means that the Queen is absent from London. Royal Horse Guards ceremony always arouses the interest of visitors. They specially come to the Palace gates to watch it.

7. London. Trafalgar Square. Trafalgar Square is in the centre of the West End of London. It was named so in commemoration of the victorious naval battle of Trafalgar in 1805, in which Admiral Lord Nelson was fatally wounded. The Nelson Column was erected in the 1840s. On the top of the imposing column, a replica of one of the Corinthian columns in the Temple of Mars in Rome, is a 17 feet-tall statue of Lord Nelson. The total height of the monument is l84 feet. On the pedestal are bronze reliefs cast from a captured French cannon representing Nelson’s most famous victories. The four bronze lions are the work of the English architect of Landseer.

On the north side of Trafalgar Square are the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery. The National Gallery was built in 1824. It contains one of the finest collections of pictures in the world. There are more than 850 masterpieces of all the European schools of painting. In the northeast corner is the well-known church of St Martin-in-the-Fields. The church was built in 1222 and rebuilt in 1726. Trafalgar Square is one of the busiest places in London.

During the rush hours, when people go to and from their work, it is hardly possible to cross the streets. At that time the quickest transport is the Underground railway. All other traffic is slowed down by crowds of people and all kinds of vehicles.

 Trafalgar Square is site of demonstrations and mass rallies for peace, disarmament and for working people’s rights.

8. London. The Tate Gallery. There is another picture gallery in London - the Tate Gallery. It was founded in 1897. It is named after its founder Henry Tate, a sugar manufacturer. The Gallery has rich collections of pictures by l6th century English artists as well as paintings by foreign painters of the 19-20th centuries - by impressionists and postimpressionists. It also has a large sculpture collection.

9. London. Albert Hall, One of the Biggest Concert Halls In London. Albert Hall is a circular brick building under a glass-and-metal roof. The Hall was built in 1867-1871. It is a big concert hall, seating 8 000. Albert Hall is used for concerts, athletic events, for public gatherings and other functions.

10. The Tower of London. In 1066 the Normans built a castle on the edge of London in the southeastern corner of the old Roman city walls. The Normans joined up the walls with a ditch and fence to make a yard, in which they probably built a wooden tower. About ten years later William the Conqueror ordered the building of the great stone tower, later called the White Tower.

The Tower of London long continued to be both a fortress and a palace. It was also a prison. At first prisoners were often foreign princes and nobles who had been captured in war. But later on, in Tudor times, the Tower became the place where famous and infamous people were sent, and perhaps tortured and executed.

 After the Stuart period few prisoners were brought to the Tower. Instead more and more visitors came to see the ancient armour and weapons and the Crown Jewels.

Now the Tower is simply Britain’s most famous and most visited historic building. According to tradition the Tower is guarded by the Yeoman Warders or “Beefeaters”. They still wear their old bright and colourful Tudor uniforms.

11. Tower Bridge. Not far from the Tower of London is Tower Bridge, built across the Thames in 1894. It was designed so that it could be used equally by road traffic and by ships going up the River Thames. When a ship approached, everybody was cleared off the bridge , which then split in two, and raised itself in the air so that river traffic could pass through. After a few minutes, the bridge was lowered again, and pedestrians, carriages, and cars could continue their journey.

 In this busiest time, the road was raised and lowered 50 times a day. Parliament decided that pedestrians should be able to cross the river at any time, so when the lower half of the bridge was used by ships, people could (if they wished) cross by two walkways, 45 metres above the Thames. It is those walkways which have finally been reopened to the public.

12. London. Piccadilly Circus. London’s West End is the richest part of the city, and its heart is Piccadilly Circus. This is London’s theatreland, and at night it is bright with electric signs. Under the Circus lies one of the busiest stations of London’s underground railway network.

In the centre of the Circus stands the bronze statue of Eros on a high pedestal above the fountain. It was erected by architect Alfred Gilbert in l892.

North of the Circus, the streets shade off into Soho and to Oxford Street and the Telecom Tower.

South of the Circus, in Haymarket, there is the colonnaded Theatre Royal, founded in l720.

West of the Circus, is the Royal Academy of Arts and opposite it the clock with “Mr Forthum and Mr Mason”, two figures which on the striking of the hour come out from their front doors and bow to each other. The West End also covers Mayfair and Marble Arch, the shopping centres of Oxford Street and Bond Street.

13. London. No.10,Downing Street. The Residence of the Country’s Prime Minister. The most famous house in London is undoubtedly No.10, Downing Street. It is a little street on the west side of Whitehall. It is the official residence of the Prime Minister. The house, like its neighbour No. l1, the residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has a modest exterior.

14. London. Whitehall with Government Offices. The broad highway of Whitehall, leading from Trafalgar Square to Westminster, is lined with many large government buildings. The street’s name is a memory of what used to be the Palace of Whitehall which stood here until the 18th century. It was the principal centre of court life in Tudor and Stuart times. Kings and their families lived there. In the centre of the roadway stands the monument to the fallen in the two world wars. Wreaths of red poppies are a tribute to the unknown soldiers.

Very often the British government is called Whitehall because many government offices are situated in this street.

15. London. Fleet Street. Fleet Street is one of the central streets of the British capital with the editorial offices of many English newspapers and magazines.

l6. London. The Telecom Tower. The Telecom Tower is situated in London’s West End. The centre of West End is Piccadilly Circus. The tower stands 620 feet high and was designed to create a microwave telecommunication system, linking the whole country through the main industrial cities.

In addition to its primary function as a telecommunication centre, the tower provides a new and exciting addition to the sights of London. Two lifts convey visitors at 1,000 feet a minute to three observation platforms, the uppermost of which is almost 500 feet high. Above them is a restaurant which revolves slowly around the central part of the tower and offers the finest views of London.

17. London. Royal Greenwich Observatory. Royal Greenwich Observatory is the oldest scientific institution in Great Britain. It was set up in the l7th century. The old town and port of Greenwich is now part of southeast London.

Greenwich is famous as the place crossed by the zero meridian. Under an international agreement this meridian is marked 0 on all maps of the world. The 0 meridian passes through the building of the Observatory. Greenwich Observatory is the zero point for measuring longitude east and west.

The old Observatory measures the exact time. The true time at Greenwich is called Greenwich Mean Time.

In 1948 the Observatory has changed its location and is situated in Sussex where it continues to carry on its scientific exploration.

The former building of Greenwich Observatory is now a Museum of Astronomy and Navigation. It is called Flamsteed House in honour of its first astronomer John Flamsteed.

18. London. The British Museum. The British Museum was founded in 1753. It has many departments covering a vast variety of subjects. One of its most interesting sections is the National Library. It has more than six million books. The library receives nearly two thousand books and papers daily. The National Library has a copy of every book printed in the English language.

The Library of the British Museum has a very big collection of books and manuscripts both old and new. There are also some of the first English books printed by Caxton. Caxton was a printer. He lived in the l5th century. He made the first printing-press in England.

XII. THE CITIES

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

1. Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare’s Birthplace. Stratford-upon-Avon is a town 94 miles northwest of London, on the Avon. In l553 the town received a charter from Edward VI. Another Charter was granted in 16l1. The population of the town is about 20 thousand. Its chief points of interest are associated with the name and life of Shakespeare In Henley Street stands an unpretentious one-storeyed wooden house, where he was born, and which now belongs to the British government. The house where he died was torn down in 1759.

 The town has a fine guild-hall, and a public library rich in Shakespeareana (1905) an art gallery with many Shakespeareana paintings, a market house, a corn exchange, a new school for technical education, public schools, the fine Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and the Shakespeare fountain.

 Stratford-upon-Avon, a small English town, is the birthplace of the greatest English poet and playwright William Shakespeare. Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564. William received his early education at the local grammar school. In 1587 Shakespeare went to London to seek his fortune in a company of actors. First he worked as an actor and then as a reviser and writer of plays. Shakespeare’s first narrative poem, “Venus and Adonis”, was published in I593 and met with a warm reception.

In 1599 he became one of the proprietors at the Globe Theatre which was built on Bankside.

By the standards of his day the poet became wealthy and in 1597 he bought New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. But he continued to live and work in London until 1610.

He paid occasional visits to London till 1614 and continued to have dealings with actors and playwrights for the rest of his life.

Shakespeare died at the age of fifty-two on April, 23, 1616, at New Place. He was buried in the church at Stratford on the banks of the Avon.

Shakespeare’s plays are “The Comedy of Errors”, “The Taming of the Shrew” “Romeo and Juliet’, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, “Much Ado About Nothing”, “Hamlet”, “Othello”, “King Lear”, “Macbeth”, “Antony and Cleopatra”, “The Winter’s Tale” and others.

Although Stratford-upon-Avon remains a small market town, it has now become a gathering-place of all nations. People show their love for the great writer and every year on April, 23 they come to Stratford and take part in celebrating Shakespeare’s birthday.

2. Stratford-upon-Avon. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre was opened in Stratfard-upon-Avon in 1932. Only Shakespeare’s plays are performed here. The town attracts people from a1l over the world by its Royal Shakespeare Theatre and as the birthplace of the great writer.

CARDIFF

 Cardiff, the Capital of Wales. City Hall and the National Museum of Wales. Cardiff is the capital of Wales and its chief port. It has many industries such as coal-mining, steel. As a port it is used to ship coal to other parts of the country and the world.

Cardiff is also a tourist centre. There are some places of interest there: the Castle, Civic Centre, City Hall, National Museum of Wales, New Theatre, Welsh Folk Museum, Institute of Science and Technology and some University departments.

The magnificent Civic Centre was built early this century. City Hall is the first part of the Civic Centre. It houses a unique series of statues of Welsh national heroes in its Marble Hall. Other buildings include Law Courts, Welsh Office, Institute of Science and Technology and some University departments.

In its airy galleries the National Museum of Wales displays the panorama of Wales’ geology, botany, zoology, archaeology, industry and art. The collections are very well planned and easy to understand. There is also a small restaurant there.

The Castle’s main gate faces the central shopping area and is on the main east-to-west road through the city. The Romans were the first to appreciate Cardiff’s strategic advantages but all that remains of the traditional fort they built here is parts of the old stone walls. The Normans used the existing structure to build first a wooden palisade, then a stone keep. They added more fortifications and later on, town walls. Today, although students occupy part of the buildings the public are admitted to the grounds, the keep and some of the state rooms.

Cardiff has a theatre with a varied programme (New Theatre). The Welsh National Opera Company play regular seasons here.

The people of Wales have their own language, Welsh. But most of them speak English, too.

The Welsh people love singing. That’s why Wales is sometimes called “the land of song”.

 One of the Welsh traditions is festivals. And on holidays and during festivals the Welsh wear traditional clothes.

At a festival songs are sung by choirs and soloists, usually poems are recited. The festival ends with the crowning of the best poet or singer. The best poet who was before an unknown Welshman is crowned. Usually he is led on to the stage. A wreath of golden oak-leaves is put on his head. And everyone shouts a Welsh word, meaning “peace”.

BIRMINGHAM.

Birmingham. One of the Main Centres of Britain’s Industry. Birmingham is the second largest city in Britain and the biggest industrial centre. It is located in the West Midlands and has a population of about 3 million. The most developed industries are the automotive industry, aircraft-building industries, metal-working, chemical industry and non-ferrous metallurgy. “British Leyland”, the biggest car producers in the UK, employ thousands of people in the Birmingham area.

 Birmingham is called “the city of 1,500 trades” because of the great variety of its industries. All the spoons and forks they use at table, the glasses out of which they drink, the pins and needles in English homes are mostly products of the Birmingham industry.

Birmingham grew quickly after the Industrial Revolution in the l8th century because it was in the centre of Britain with good communications and large local supplies of coa1 and water. In the 20th century it expanded even more and now it’s a major European city with excellent facilities. For example, there is a huge shopping centre called the Bull Ring. Birmingham is also an important conference centre and is only a short distance from Shakespeare’s birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon. The city’s name is often abbreviated to Brum and its inhabitants (who have a very distinctive accent) are called Brummies.

Another important part of Birmingham’s identity is its large immigrant population. Birmingham is a multinational city.

There are some places of interest in Birmingham - the Civic Centre, the Hall of Memory, Bull Ring Centre, New Street, etc.

 Birmingham has a high student population since there are two universities in the area.

SHEFFIELD

 Sheffield. In the Central Part of the City. Sheffield is the fourth largest city in Great Britain. It is one of the country’s metallurgical centres. It is situated in the extreme south of the country, at the foot of the Pennine Chain.

 The town was founded in the l2th century, and its population is about 350,000.

The city is known as the place where “Sheffield plates” are made. Sheffield plate is a term applied to articles, produced from copper and coated with silver.

Situated on a hill-and-valley system of great beauty, Sheffield is a pleasant and beautiful city. There are open spaces and tree-lined streets less than a mile from the city centre, and the purple moors of the Pennine Chain, and the deep wooden dales of Derbyshire sweep up to the very edge of the residential area.

 There are some places of interest in Sheffield. The town hall was opened in 1897; it is a good example of Victorian Gothic and it houses the municipal offices. Twentieth-century buildings include the City Hall for concerts and meetings, the City Museum with excellent collections of cutlery, and the Central Library and Graves Art Gallery. The Library is well known for information material on ferrous metallurgy and for collections of local archives.

The inhabitants of the city declared a nuclear free Sheffield.

MANCHESTER

Manchester. The Centre of the City. Manchester is Britain’s first city of the Industrial Revolution. It is now the leading centre of the cotton and the chemical industries in Britain. It is situated not far from London and a 3-hour ride will bring you to the capital.

In the 19th century cotton goods made Manchester a great city. Now Manchester is one of Britain’s most important producers of man-made fibres, computers and electronic equipment.

The first thing the visitor will notice is the grand scale of everything. Enormous warehouses and factories, railway stations and markets, offices and banks, municipal buildings and museums; all seem to be very grand, very well built and magnificently solid.

The second impression is that Manchester buildings all seem to be Gothic, though there are many classical buildings there, too.

The third impression is that there are many charming arcades in Manchester. Arcades are roofed in cast iron and grass and are extremely graceful. Cool in summer and protected from the worst colds of winter, they have shops on the ground floor, while galleries on the upper levels would often lead to offices.

There are some places of interest in Manchester such as the Town Hall, the Central Library, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester University.

The Town Hall was built in 1867. It is the greatest of all monuments in Gothic style. The Town Hal1 administers the life of the city.

The Central Library of Manchester is situated near the Town Hall and is one of the largest municipal libraries in Europe. It is a very beautiful round building with books in different languages.

One of the most beautiful squares in Manchester is Piccadilly Plaza. Side by side with old houses are new high-rise buildings.

XIII. HABITS AND WAYS OF THE BRITISH

AND THE AMERICANS

Birthdays. For British and American people, birthdays are very special days, especially for children. Parents and family members send cards and give presents. Often, children have birthday parties. They invite their friends, who bring presents to the party. There are games, and prizes, and a birthday “tea” with sandwiches, biscuits, ice cream and a birthday cake. There are small candles on the cake. If the child is four years old, he has four candles. If he is five, he has five candles and so on. When the little guests leave, they each get a small present and a balloon.

Birthdays are special days for older people too. Family members and friends give presents and send birthday cards. When people meet someone on their birthday, sometimes even at work, they say “Happy birthday!” or “Many happy returns of the day!” (This means ”I hope you will live to have many more birthdays.”)

 The most important birthday is the eighteenth. When you are eighteen, you are grown up. You can vote, you can get married, and you can even go to prison! People often have a big party on their eighteenth birthday and receive a lot of presents. Until a few years ago, the most important birthday was the twenty first, and some people still wait for their big party until they are twenty one.

 Fortieth and seventieth birthdays are also rather special, and in Britain, if you live to be a hundred, the Queen sends you her congratulations.

Weddings. In Britain and the USA, invitations go out about six weeks before the wedding day. The guests write as soon as possible to say if they can or cannot come.

Choosing a present for the couple can be difficult. People don’t take their presents to the wedding. They send them to the girl’s house before the wedding day. To help them find a present, couples often make a list of what they would like and leave it at a store. Their friends call the store and order something from the list.

Most weddings take place before lunch or in the early afternoon. Many people like to get married in church. The bride often wears a long white dress. Guests wear their best clothes, and most of the women wear hats. In the church the bride’s family sits on the left and the groom’s family sits on the right.

In Britain you have to get married in a church, or a registry office (never both). But in the States you get married where you like, in your home, in a hotel, or in a park or garden.

 After the wedding, there is a short reception. The guests go to the bride’s home, or to a hotel, pub or restaurant and have something to eat and champagne to drink. The bride and groom cut the wedding cake, and the groom’s friend (his “best man”) makes a speech. The guests usually leave after the bride and groom. Sometimes the couple give a party or disco in the evening.

Married people wear their wedding rings on the third finger of the left hand. Most married women wear wedding rings, but married men often do not.

Pubs. Pubs are an important part of life in Britain. People go to the pub to relax, meet friends, and sometimes to do business.

 But pubs are not open to everyone, and they are not open all the time. People under the age of 14 cannot go into pubs. And they are only open from about 11 am (“opening time”) until 2.30 p.m., and 5.30 p.m. until 10.30 or 11 p.m. (“closing time”). When it’s closing time, the barman calls “Time!” or “Time, gentlemen, please!”

 You can buy most kinds of drink from a pub: beer, lager, all kinds of wine, spirits, liqueurs, fruit juice and soft drinks. Beer is the most popular drink, and there are many different kinds. You ask for beer by the “pint” (a little more than half a litre) or the “half pint”. When people buy beer they ask for “bitter“ (strong beer), “mild” (less strong) or lager. Some people just say the name of the maker: “A half of Double Diamond, please”. Or “Two halves of Export, please”.

 Most pubs do not sell hot drinks, like coffee or tea, but many sell hot and cold food. Pub food (called “pub grub”) is often good, is cheaper than most restaurant food, and you don’t have to leave a tip. But you do have to go to the bar to get your food and drink. There are no waiters in pubs.

Hobbies. “Hobbies” are a great British and American tradition. A hobby is a special interest or activity that you do in your time off.

 Some people have animals as hobbies. They keep rabbits, or go fishing. They train dogs to do tricks, or keep pigeons to race and carry messages. Some are crazy about plants. They try to grow cacti or rare tropical flowers in their kitchens and sitting rooms.

Others are mad about their car or their motorbike. They spend their Saturdays and Sundays washing them, painting them, or buying new bits and pieces to make them go even faster.

Children and teenagers are great collectors. They collect stamps, or postcards, or matchboxes, or pictures of a favourite footballer or pop star.

 Many people make things as a hobby. Some teach themselves at home, but a lot of people go to evening classes at their local college. Just look under letter B in a list of London or New York evening classes and you’ll find: Ballet, Batik, Bengali, Body building, Bread-making and Byzantium.

 But not everyone goes to evening classes to learn about his special interest.

Clothes. These days, most people in Britain and the USA do not wear very formal clothes. But sometimes it is important to wear the right thing.

Many British people don’t think about clothes very much. They just like to be comfortable. When they go out to enjoy themselves, they can wear almost anything. At theatres, cinemas and concerts you can put on what you like - from elegant suits and dresses to jeans and sweaters. Anything goes, as long as you look clean and tidy.

But in Britain, as well as the USA, men in offices usually wear suits and ties, and women wear dresses or skirts (not trousers). Doctors, lawyers and businessmen wear quite formal clothes. And in some hotels and restaurants men have to wear ties and women wear smart dresses. Jeans and open shirts are sometimes not allowed.

In many ways, Americans are more relaxed than British people, but they are more careful with their clothes. At home, or on holiday, most Americans wear informal or sporty clothes. But when they go out in the evening, they like to look elegant. In good hotels and restaurants, men have to wear jackets and ties, women wear pretty clothes and smart hairstyles.

 It is difficult to say exactly what people wear in Britain and the States, because everyone is different. If you are not sure what to wear, watch what other people do, and then do the same. Or ask the advice of a friend or your host. You’ll feel more relaxed if you don’t look too different from everyone else.

Sorry ! I’m late ! In Britain and the USA most people are careful about time.

If they want to see a friend, or meet a business colleague, they telephone first to make an appointment. A lot of people don’t like surprises. They want to know when a visitor is going to arrive.

Have you arranged to meet someone at 3 o’ clock? It’s polite to arrive a few minutes early. Of course, everyone is late occasionally. Cars break down, trains are delayed and meetings go on too long. If you’re late just say sorry and explain what happened. Sometimes it’s impossible to keep an appointment. But if you don’t arrive, the other person will be upset. Call them to explain.

Some people usually spend time chatting and drinking tea or coffee before they start a business meeting - but not in Britain or the USA. There, they like to talk about business first and chat later - if there’ s time.

Office hours in Britain and the USA are from 9 am until 5 p.m. but some offices open at 8.30 or 9.30 and do not close until 5.30 or 6. People usually take about one hour for lunch (between 12 and 2). Shops open at 9 or 9.30, and stay open until 5.30 or 6. Most shops are open all day on Saturday, and are closed all day on Sunday.

Out and about in town . “Tipping”(giving money to people for small services) is always a difficult business. You don’t want to give too much or too little, or tip the wrong person.

In Britain and America, people usually tip waiters in restaurants, porters, taxi drivers and hairdressers. They do not tip people in offices, cinemas, garages or airports. American taxi drivers get a tip of 15% or 20%. Give British taxi drivers 10%. Hairdressers get about $1 in the States, or 50p in Britain. Give a porter 50c for each bag in the States, or 50p in Britain.

 Waiters always expect a tip. Give 10 % of the price of your meal. But if you see “Service Included” on your bill, the tip is part of the bill. Don’t give anything more.

Did you invite your friend to the restaurant? Then you pay the bill. Did your friend invite you? Your friend pays. If there are men and women in the party, the men usually pay.

These days, men and women are equal in many ways. If you work in Britain or America, your boss could be a man or a woman. There are women in important positions in politics, law, medicine and in the business world. But it is still polite for a man to open doors for women, and to ask them to go first. And it is polite for men to stand up when they are introduced to women. On informal occasions, of course, everyone is more relaxed.

Names. American and British people have two names: a “first” name, and a “surname” or “family” name. Here are some examples:

 First name Surname

 Marilyn

 Paul

 Margaret

 Elvis

 Monroe

 McCartney

 Thatcher

 Presley

Family members and friends always use first names, but Americans are more informal than British people, and they use first names with nearly everybody. But it’s usually a good idea to use surnames until people ask you to use their first names.

 When people want to be formal, or when they do not know each other very well, they use surnames with “Mr” (pronounced “mister”), “Mrs” (pronounced “missis”) for married women, and “Miss” for unmarried women. Some women don’t like to say if they are married or not. When they write their name they use “Ms”, not “Mrs” or “Miss”.

 Miss Monroe Mr McCartney

 Mrs Thatcher Ms Warwick

People never use ”Mr”, “Mrs”, “Miss” or “Ms” with first names alone.

 Some people have middle names:

 Jacqueline Lee Onassis

 Winston Spencer Churchill

 British people do not use their middle names, but Americans often give the initial:

 John F. Kennedy

 Richard M. Nixon

 When a woman marries, she usually does not use her old surname any more, but takes her husband’s surname. The children have their father’s surname too. So, John Smith marries Susan Brown. She becomes Susan Smith and their children are Elizabeth Smith and Tom Smith.

Some American men have the same first name as their father. The son puts Jr. (Junior) after his name, and the father puts Sr. (Senior) after his name:

 Sammy Davis Jr

 Martin Luther King Sr.

“Sir” is a British title for men who have done a lot for their country. “Sir” is used with the first name, not with the surname alone:

Sir Winston, or Sir Winston Churchill (not Sir Churchill).

Many English names have short forms. They sound more friendly and informal than the whole name. But some people don’t like the short form of their name. Listen what other friends say before you use a short form. Here are some examples:

 Women’s names

 Real name Short name

 Diana

 Elizabeth

 Margaret

 Jacqueline

 Katherine

 Sarah

 Jane

 Susan

 Di

 Liz

 Maggie

 Jackie

 Kathy (or Kate)

 Sally

 Janie

 Sue

Have you heard of Princess Di, Liz Taylor, Maggie Thatcher and Jackie Onassis?

 Men’ s names

 Real name Short name

 James

 Charles

 Robert

 Edward

 Richard

 Thomas

 Michael

 Andrew

 Jim (or Jimmy)

 Charlie

 Bob (or Bobby)

 Ed (or Teddy)

 Dick

 Tom

 Mike (or Micky)

 Andy

Have you heard of Jimmy Carter, Charlie Chaplin, Bobby Ewing and Teddy Kennedy?

Come to a party. Most parties are quite relaxed these days, especially young people’s parties. You don’t have to wear a long dress or a black tie when you want to have a good time. In fact, you can usually wear what you like - anything from jeans to suits and dresses. British and American people are often very informal.

 Informal invitations all look very different. People will expect an answer even to an informal invitation. Just call to say if you can or cannot come. Some people of course (especially older ones) still enjoy formal parties..

“RSVP” is short for the French words “Repondez s’i1 vous plait”. It means that you must write a letter or telephone to say if you can or cannot come. People often send out invitations weeks before a party. It’s polite to answer as soon as possible.

What do you do if someone asks you to “tea”? Or to “drinks”? Some people do things differently, of course. For some British people, “tea” means a cup of tea and a biscuit at 4.30 or 5 p.m. For others, “tea” means a meal at 6.30 or 7 p.m. “Formal dress” usually means a suit and tie for men, and a smart dress for women. “Black tie” means that the men wear dinner jackets and the women wear evening dresses. “Black tie” is only for very special occasions.

Come to dinner! Some British and American people like to invite friends and colleagues for a meal at home. But don’t be upset if your English friends don’t invite you home. It doesn’t mean they don’t like you!

Dinner parties usually start between 7 and 8 p.m. and end at about 11. Ask your host what time you should arrive. It’s polite to bring flowers, chocolates or a bottle of wine to your hostess.

Usually the evening starts with drinks and snacks. (Ask for a soft drink if you don’t like alcohol.) Do you want to be extra polite? Say how much you like the room, or the pictures, or your hostess’s dress. But remember - it’s not polite to ask how much things cost.

Dinner will usually start at about 8 or 9 o’clock. In many families the husband sits at one end of the table and the wife sits at the other end. They eat with their guests.

You’ll probably start the meal with soup; or something small as a “starter”, then you’ll have meat or fish with vegetables, and then a dessert (sometimes called a “sweet” or a “pudding”), followed by coffee. It’s polite to finish everything on your plate and to take more if you want it. Some people eat bread with their meal, but not everyone does.

Most people ask “Do you mind if I smoke?” before they take out their cigarettes after the meal.

Did you enjoy the evening? Call your hostess the next day, or write her a short “thank you” letter. Perhaps it seems funny to you, but British and American people say “thank you, thank you, thank you” all the time!

Sport in Britain. The British are a sporting nation. Like everyone else they love football - in fact, they invented it. Most British towns and cities have a football team. Every year, each team plays in the Football Association competition. The two best teams play in the Cup Final at Wembley Stadium in London. Some fans pay up to 200 pounds for a ticket for the Cup Final. It is one of the biggest sporting events of the year.

Cricket is a typically British game. The only other countries that play are Pakistan, India, the West Indies, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Cricket is a summer game, lovely to watch from under old trees on a village “green”. It looks slow, but it can be exciting if you understand what’s going on. There are eleven men in each team. One man, (“the bowler”) throws the ball, and a “batsman” hits it with his bat. Cricket is a very long game. The big international matches go on for five days. But in the real English way, the players always stop for tea.

Tennis is another popular game in Britain. Every summer, in June, the biggest international tennis tournament takes place at Wimbledon, a suburb of London. There are strawberries and cream for sale, and everyone hopes the rain will stay away.

Many British people who live near the sea, a lake, or a river enjoy sailing. If you are really enthusiastic, and rich enough to buy your own boat, you can take part in one of the annual sailing races or “regattas” at Cowes, near Portsmouth, for example, or at Henley on the river Thames.

LONDON THEATRES

The English people have loved the theatre since the days of Shakespeare. London today is one of the greatest centres of drama in the world, there are over 40 in the West End alone.

Still standing on its original site is the Theatre Royal - Drury Lane, which was opened in 1663. It is one of very large theatres which are mainly devoted to big-scale musical productions. They include the Coliseum (the biggest in London, and the principal home of operetta), the Palace and the Palladium (which specialize in musical comedy or variety shows), the Royal Opera House - Caveat Garden.

The Royal Opera House is situated in the big fruit, flower and vegetable market Covent Garden. The Covent Garden Theatre is the chief centre of opera and ballet in Britain. Operas are performed in Italian. Covent Garden was the first theatre abroad visited by the famous Bolshoi Theatre Ballet in 1956.

Sadler' Wells, its "younger sister", is another opera and ballet house. It specializes in Opera in English.

In London a theatre-goer has a wide choice of drama and comedy, both classical and modern.

If you want to see classical drama you may visit the Old Vie Theatre, a famous London playhouse in Waterloo Road. It has been staging classical plays since 1914. In 1963 the Old Vie Theatre became the home of the National Theatre Company under the direction of Laurence Olivier.

You may also go to the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park. It is famous for its Shakespeare productions.

And if you prefer modern drama you may go to the Haymarket Theatre, the Royal Court Theatre or the Globe Theatre (opened in 1908).

London's two principal concert halls are the Royal Festival Hall (opened in 1951) and the Royal Albert Hall (opened in 1878), famous for its promenade concerts, capable of seating about 8000 people.

1. East Anglia - ВосточнаяАнглия [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Mersey - р. Мерси [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Tyne -р. Тайн. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Clyde - р. Клайд [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bristol Avon - р. БристольскийЭвон [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. It`s raining cats and dogs. -Дождьльеткакизведра [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Poppy - мак (считается символом мира в Великобритании) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Redrose - алая роза (эмблема династии Ланкастеров, эмблема Англии) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Daffodil - желтый нарцисс (вторая эмблема Уэльса) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Leek - лук-порей (национальная эмблема Уэльса) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Shamrock - трилистник (эмблема Ирландии) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Clover - клевер [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Beesh - бук [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Moor - вересковая пустошь, заросли вереска [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Heather - вереск (вечнозеленый кустарник с напоминающими колокольчик

 цветками; распространен в Шотландии) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. smog=smoke+ fog [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. high-tech = high technology (advanced technology) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. “Firstreading” - “первое чтение” (законопроекта) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. To print - печатать [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Scarcely - редко [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Bringing forward - выдвижение [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. In favour of - впользу [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Call for a division - призватькголосованию [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. To delay -отсрочить [↑](#footnote-ref-24)