

Holidays and Celebrations in the UK □ □

There are eight public, or bank holidays in Great Britain, that is, days when banks and offices are closed. They are: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Mayday, Spring Bank Holiday and Late Summer Bank Holiday. The observance of these days is no longer limited to banks. All the public holidays, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day observed on the 25 and 26 of December respectively, do not fall on the same day each year. Most of these holidays are of religious origin, though for the greater part of the population they have long lost their religious significance and are simply days on which people relax and make merry. Certain customs and traditions are associated with most bank holidays. The reason is that many of them are part of holiday seasons, like Easter and Christmas seasons. Besides public holidays, there are celebrations, festivals, and simply days, on which certain traditions are observed, but unless they fall on a Sunday, there are ordinary working days.

February, 14 is St. Valentine's Day. It is a day for choosing sweethearts and exchanging love tokens. Generations of young people have considered St. Valentine to be the friend and patron of lovers and have sent gifts and hand-made valentines to their sweethearts. A valentine was a colourful card with a short verse composed by the sender. Now thousands of ready-made valentines are sent through the post every year.

Pancake Day is a popular name for Shrove Tuesday — the last day of enjoyment before the fasting of Lent. On this day Christians confessed their sins to a priest. Many people still traditionally eat pancakes. One of the main events of this day is the pancake race at Olney. The competitors in the race are local housewives who make their pancakes and run from the village square to the church.

The fourth Sunday in Lent is Mothering Sunday — a day of small family reunions. On this day absent sons and daughters return to the homes and make gifts to their mothers.

April, 1 is April Fool's Day — the day when practical jokes are played* Any person may be made in April Fool between midnight and noon. Children are, of course, very keen supporters of the tradition. You can step in a basin of water, or receive a letter with a deceiving message. If you are young and innocent, you can be sent to fetch some non-existing thing, like pigeon's milk.

Another popular British tradition is Halloween, celebrated on October, 31, the eve of All Saints' Day. Halloween's customs dated back to a time, when people believed in devils, witches and ghosts. They thought that they could do all kinds of damage to property. Some people tried to ward off the witches by painting magic signs or nailing a horseshoe. Today the day is marked by costume-balls or fancy-dress parties. On the night of Halloween children or grown-ups visit houses and ask the residents if they want 'trick' or 'treat'. If the people in the house give children a 'treat' (money or sweets), then the children will not play trick on them. Another Halloween custom is to scrape out a pumpkin, cutting eyes, nose and mouth in its side and lighting a candle inside. This is made to scare the friends.

Translate the following sentences into English.

1. Во время официальных праздников все банки, почтовые отделения и большая часть офисов и магазинов закрыты, однако соблюдение этих праздников больше не ограничивается банками.

2. Многие из них имеют религиозное происхождение, но давно потеряли свое религиозное значение, и сейчас это просто дни, в которые люди отдыхают и веселятся.

3. В день Св. Валентина, друга и покровителя всех влюбленных, люди обмениваются символами любви.

4. Раньше люди посылали свои возлюбленным самодельные валентинки, которые содержали стихи, написанные отправителем, сейчас посылают готовые валентинки.

5. Во вторник на масленой неделе обычно христиане исповедовались в своих грехах священнику и ели блины, сейчас одно из основных событий дня — бег с блинами в Олни.

6. Апрельский день смеха — это день, когда вас разыгрывают, и эта традиция с энтузиазмом поддерживается детьми.

7. Традиции Хэллоуина, кануна Дня всех святых, восходят ко времени, когда люди верили в чертей, привидения и ведьм и пытались отпугнуть их, рисуя магические значки или прибывая подкову.

8. Сейчас этот день отмечается костюмированными балами и маскарадами, люди также выскребают тыквы, чтобы пугать друзей.

1. During the official or bank holidays all banks, post offices and most offices and shops are closed, but the observance of these holidays is no longer limited to banks.

2. Many of them have religious origin, but they have lost their religious significance and now they are simply days on which people relax and make merry.

3. On St. Valentine's Day, the day of the friend and the patron of lovers, people exchange love tokens.

4. People used to send to their sweethearts hand-made valentines which contained verse composed by the sender, now they send ready-made valentines.

5. On Shrove Tuesday Christians used to confess their sins to a priest and eat pancakes, now one of the main events of the day is the pancake race at Olney.

6. April Fool's Day is a day when practical jokes are played, and children are very keen supporters of the tradition.

7. The customs of Hallowe'en, the eve of All Saints' Day, date back to a time when people believed in devils, ghosts and witches and tried to ward them off by painting magic signs or nailing a horseshoe.

8. Today the day is marked by costume balls and fancy dress parties, people also scrape out pumpkins to scare their friends.