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| **Famous People of Great Britain** |  |
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Great Britain is very rich with outstanding people and always was. There are lots of famous British musicians, sportsmen, scientists, writers, explorers and so on. One of the most important people of the mankind was Charles Darwin, who was a great explorer, scientist and a writer. He has travelled around the world carefully studying the origin of people and some animals and then he produced his famous “On the origin of species” book, where he stated that all human creatures originated from some simpler creatures through evolution and natural selection. Another outstanding Englishman, who has changed the course of literature and theater development, was a great writer William Shakespeare. Thanks to him everybody in the world knows the story of “Romeo and Juliet”. One of the most influential changes in music world was brought by the famous English rock band “Beetles”. Some of the band leaders are already gone, but their music is still as popular as it used to be decades ago. Isaac Newton was another great man in the world of science. This prominent Englishmen is considered to be a founder of physics. Many of the famous English men are buried in Westminster Abbey, in London. Speaking about contemporary celebrities of Great Britain, it’s important to mention some well-known country leaders, such as Queen Elizabeth II, who has been a monarch of the country for almost 60 years by now. Another famous politician is the former leader of Labour Party and the 73rd Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair. Among well-known Britons some sportsmen are worth mentioning, such as David Beckham – a famous footballer, Paula Radcliffe – a famous athlete, Steve Redgrave – a famous rower and many others. Great Britain can be also proud by some of her prominent artists, such as Thomas Gainsborough, William Hogarth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, John Constable and several others.

**English Traditions**

English nation is famous for its old customs and traditions. Some of the traditional British dishes, holidays and sports are known all over the world.

#### The full English breakfast

The tradition of having a substantial breakfast meal has existed since the 18th century. The full English breakfast became very popular after the World War I, in those days it was served at the hotels and restaurants all over the country.

The full breakfast consists of sausages, bacon and eggs, served with toasts, grilled tomatoes, baked beans and fried mushrooms.

#### Afternoon tea

One of the most well-known English traditions is afternoon tea – light refreshments, including tea, traditionally served around 5 p.m. English people often drink tea with milk; they may or may not add sugar.

Tea is usually taken along with finger sandwiches, crumpets, scones, cakes, jam and marmalade. Traditional tea treats also include puddings, buns, muffins and biscuits.

#### Pancake Day

Pancake Day or Shrove Tuesday is held in February or March. It is the day, preceding Ash Wednesday – the first day of the 40 days Lent. It has been celebrated in Britain for centuries.

On Pancake Day children go from house to house asking for a pancake. “Pancake races” are held all over the Britain. Contestants have to race with frying pans tossing and flipping pancakes in the air.

#### Marble Championship

Marble championship is an annual event which takes place on Good Friday. The participating teams, consisting of six members, have to knock out the marbles from the raised concrete ring. The winner gets a silver cup.

#### Guy Fawkes Night

The Guy Fawkes Night is a traditional celebration which is held on 5 November. Its history begins on 5 November 1605 when the Gunpowder Plot was foiled. That night Guy Fawkes, a member of the Plot, was arrested and people lit bonfires around London, celebrating the survival of the king.

Today the Guy Fawkes Night is widely celebrated in Britain. The celebrations involve lighting bonfires, fireworks displays and burning the effigies of Guy Fawkes.

There exist some very unusual traditions in Great Britain.

One of them is Town Crier’s Rivalry. Town criers from all parts of the country gather at Hastings, Sussex, in August for the National Town Crier’s Championship. For the contest they wear their traditional ceremonial uniforms and carry their handbells. A procession headed by the Hastings band marches to an arena where the Mayor, members of town council and civil officials greet them. To enable the judges to determine who possesses the most powerful voice the competitors are rowed to a small island about 75 yards from them. From this little island they one by one make their cries and declaim a 150- word test piece.

Another curious tradition reminds us of our country. Fun and jokes are very common on April Fool’s Day. In Scotland an old name for April Fool is April-cuckoo. For some reason the cuckoo is a symbol for daftness. The return of the cuckoo and the arrival of spring are connected with all this fooling.

Still another interesting tournament is the Veteran Car Run. The veteran cars are set out on the London — Brighton run each November. There is a condition — every car taking part must be at least 60 years old. The London — Brighton ride is not a race. Participants are limited to a maximum average speed of 20 miles per hour. At 8 o’clock comes the “Off”. The main things in this tournament are the cars that represent the history of the country.