



“Holidays in the United Kingdom”

In Great Britain there are public holidays that called “bank holidays”.

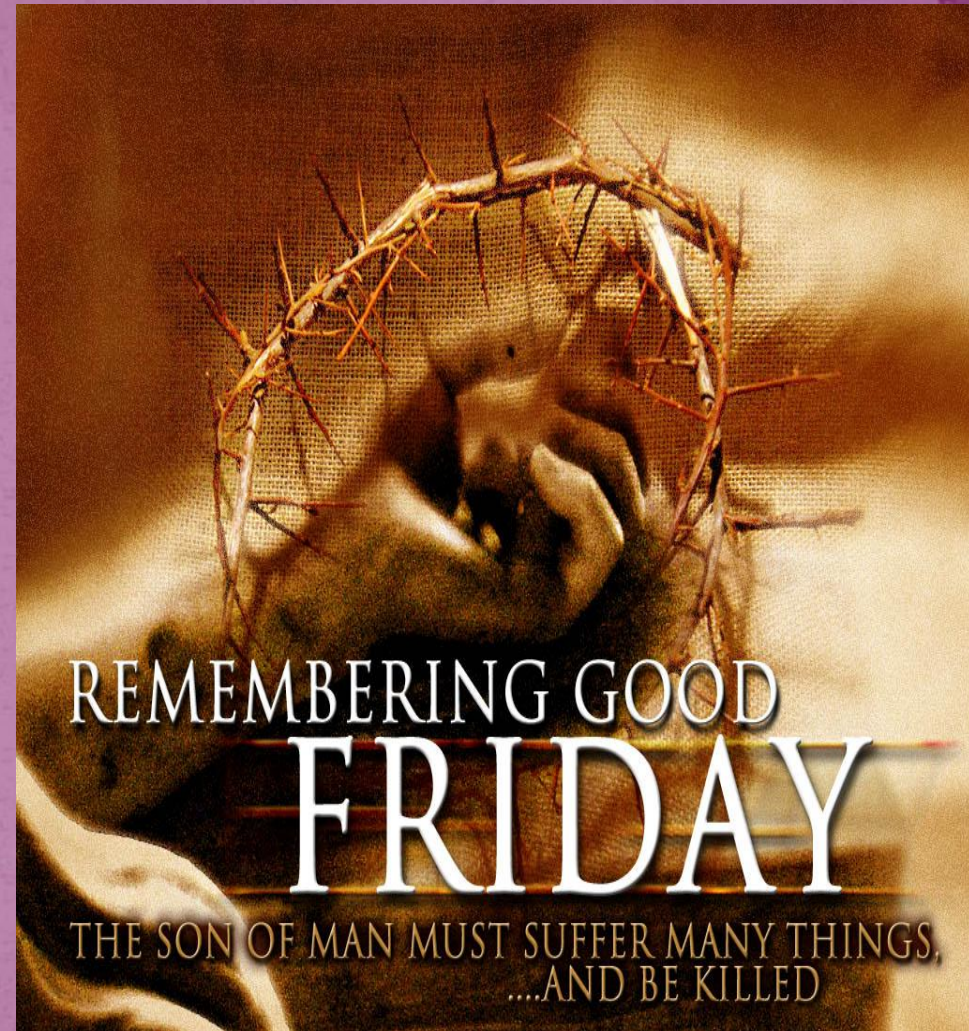
The term “bank holidays” dates back to the 19th century. At that time all the banks were closed on these holidays. Now this term is no longer refered only to banks. Many other firms and offices are closed too.

Among these are eight holidays: New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Day Holidays, Spring Bank Holidays, Late Summer (August) Bank Holiday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

New Year's Eve
(December 31st) is more special for Scottish people, who celebrate it with their families. They sit the Old Year out and the New Year in. At midnight Scottish people hold their hands in a large circle and sing the song "Auld land syne" by Robert Burns. That is how they celebrate the coming of a new year. Now people decorate their houses with bouquets of mistletoe.



Friday before Easter is called “**Good Friday**”. People usually make special buns which are marked with a cross on top. On this day the Church marks Jesus Christ’s death. **Easter Monday** is the 1st Monday after Easter Day.



May Day Bank Holiday is celebrated on the 1st Monday after May Day (May 1st). People celebrate the coming of spring. They also select the most beautiful girl on this day, who becomes May Queen. Sometimes May poles are constructed with long coloured ribbons and children dance around these poles holding the ends of these ribbons.



Spring Bank Holiday is marked on the last Monday in May.

August Bank Holiday is the last Monday in August. British people usually go on picnics on spring and summer holidays.



The most popular bank holiday is **Christmas Day**. It is celebrated on December 25th.

Christmas symbolize the birth of Jesus Christ. On this day many people go to Churches, get Christmas presents and make a traditional Christmas dinner (roast turkey and pudding).



*Christmas
Eve*

*YOUR
Logo*



On this day children wait for a special person who will come down the chimney during the night and bring them presents. It is Father Christmas. However, Santa Claus is used synonymously with Father Christmas.

Children usually hang long socks or stocks (stockings) on their bed and hope that Father Christmas will put his presents in them. Christmas trees are set in the living-rooms and are decorated with toys by children.



Boxing Day is celebrated on the December 26th . It comes straight away after Christmas Day. This is an old tradition, when in old times rich people used to give their servants money or “ Christmas Boxes”. Now it is the day when people simply have rest or visit their friends.

Besides bank holidays, there are also different festivals reflecting interesting traditions and customs. Among them are: St.Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day), April Fool's Day, Mother's Day (Mothering Sunday), Father's Day, Halloween and Guy Fawkes Night.

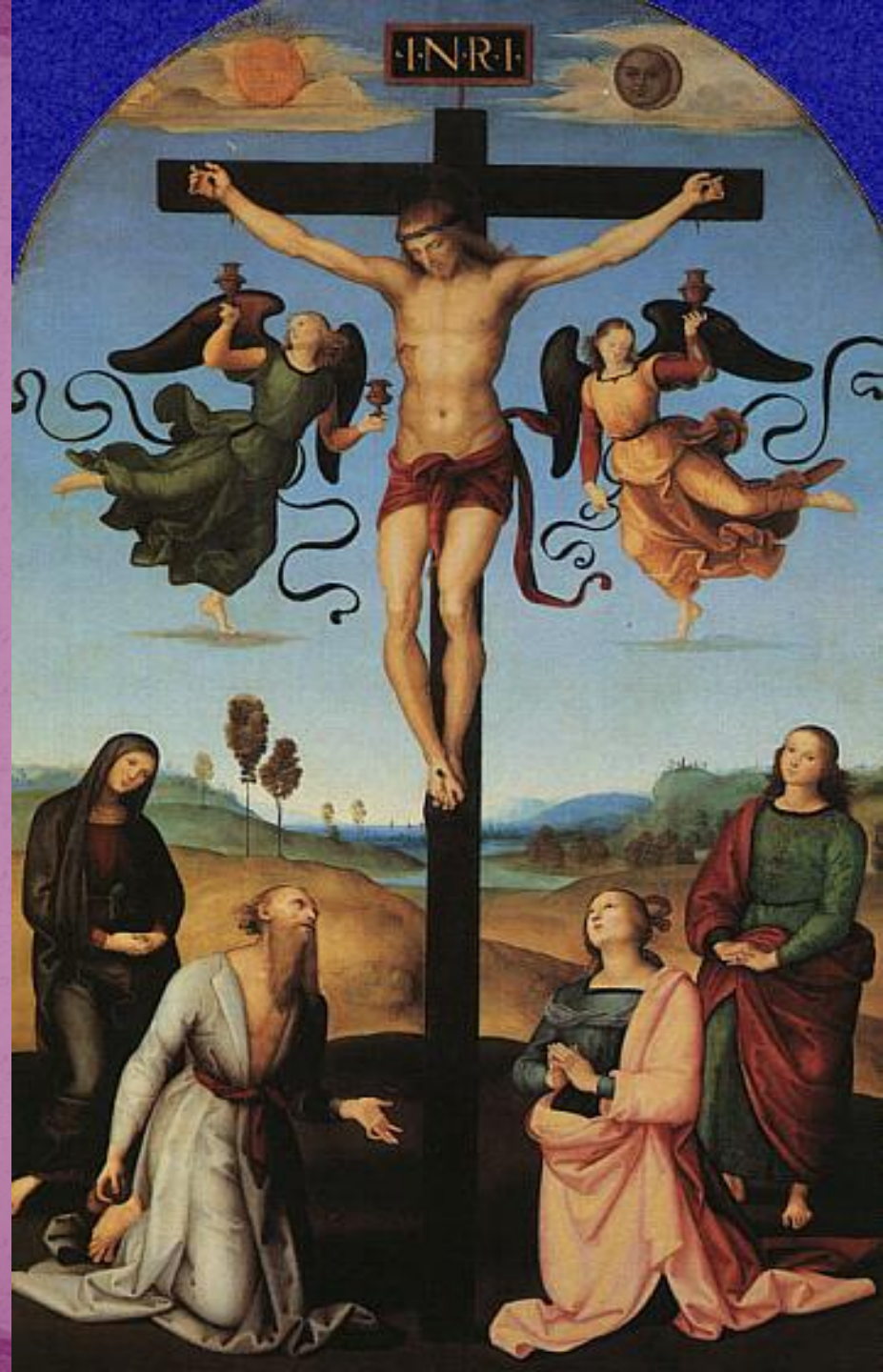






St.Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14th . On this day people send Valentine cards and get presents and “valentines” from their sweethearts. A valentine is a colourful card with tender love words composed by the sender. It is a kind of a love-token. Valentine cards are usually not signed. Those who get them must guess who the sender is.

Shrove Tuesday is the last day when you can eat and do everything before the fasting of Lent. It also has a popular name “Pancake day” because many people traditionally eat pancakes on this day. Christians usually go to the church and confess sins to a priest on Shrove Tuesday.



Mothers Day or Mother's Day is celebrated on the 4th Sunday in Lent in March. On this day mothers get presents from their sons and daughters. And all children despite their age return to their homes.



On April Fool's Day people play jokes and tricks on each other.





In June there is **Father's Day**. On this day fathers get gift cards and a lot of attention from their children.





HALLOWEEN

Halloween is a holiday that is on October 31st . The most memorable symbol connected to this holiday is a lantern made of a pumpkin. A pumpkin is cut like a face and a candle is put inside of it. So it looks like a face with burning eyes.

Usually people dress in colourful costumes of witches and ghosts and go to fancy parties.



Children go from one house to another and say: “Trick or treat”. If people do not refuse to give them something they sing. If they do refuse children play tricks. Halloween is on the eve of **All Saint’s Day**. The word “halloween” means “holy evening”. The tradition of Halloween goes back with its roots to a time when people believed in evil spirits.



Guy Fawkes Night is celebrated in the UK on November 5th. This tradition comes from old times when King James I was on the throne. He was a Protestant that is why Roman Catholics did not like him because of the religious differences. In 1605 Roman Catholics made a plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The man called by Guy Fawkes was one of those people.



GUY FAWKES

Nevertheless, they didn't have a chance to blow up the Parliament because the King discovered their plan, his soldiers found Guy Fawkes and executed him. This happened on November 5th . Since then British people mark this day by burning a **dummy** made of straw and old clothes on a bonfire. They call this dummy simply “a guy” .



Alongside public holidays there are not least important holidays celebrated in the UK. They are the patron saint days: St. David's Day on March 1st (in Wales), St. George Day on April 23rd (in England), St. Andrew's Day on November 30th (in Scotland) and St/Patrick's Day on March 17th (in Northern Ireland). The only national holiday from this list is St. Patrick's Day for Irish.

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