# British traditional holidays

Great Britain is famous for its old traditions. Some of them existed in ancient times and survived through centuries. Some of them appeared when Christianity came to British isles. Speaking about religious holidays one can’t but mention Easter, Pancake Day and Mother’s Day. The dates of these holidays aren’t strict, they depend on the date of Easter, that varies every year.

   Pancake day is the popular name for the Shrove Tuesday, the day before the first day of Lent. In the middle ages people on that day made merry and ate pancakes. The ingredients of pancakes are all forbidden by Church during Lent, that is why they have to be used the day before. The most common form of celebrating  this day in the old times was the all town ball game or tug-of-war, in which  everyone was tearing here and there, trying to get the ball or rope into their part of the city. Today the only custom, that is observed throughout Britain is pancake eating.

   For the English people the best-known name for the fourth in Lent Sunday is  Mothering Sunday or Mother’s Day. For 3 centuries this day has been a day of small family gatherings when absent sons and daughters return to their homes. Gifts are made to mothers by children of all ages. Flowers and cakes are still traditional gifts. Violets and primroses are most popular flowers. Sometimes the whole family goes to church and then there is a special dinner at which roast lamb, rice-pudding and home-made wines and served.

   Easter is one of the most important holidays in Christianity. In England it’s a time for giving and receiving presents, mostly Easter eggs. We can say that the egg is the most popular emblem of Easter, but spring-time flowers are also used to stress the nature’s awakening. Nowadays there are a lot of chocolate Easter eggs, having some small gifts inside. But a real hard-boiled egg, decorated and painted in bright colours , still appears on breakfast tables on Ester Day, or it’s hidden in the house or garden for children to finny. In egg that is boiled really hard will last for years. Egg-rolling is a traditional Easter pastime. You roll the eggs down a clope   until they are cracked and broken, after they are eaten up.