**London - the capital of Great Britain**

When we think of Paris, Rome. Madrid, Lisbon and other European capitals, we think of them as "cities'. When we think of the whole of modern London, the capital city of England and the United Kingdom, that great area covering several hundred square kilometres, we do not think of it as 'a city. not even as a city and its suburbs. Modem London is not one city that has steadily become larger through the centuries; it is a number of cities. towns, and villages that have, during the past centuries, grown together to make one vast urban area.

London is situated upon both banks of the River Thames, it is the largest city in Britain and one of the largest in the world. Its population is about 7 million people.

London dominates the life of Britain. It is the chief port of the country and the most important commercial, manufacturing and cultural centre. There is little heavy industry in London, but there is a wide range of light industry in Greater London.

London consists of three parts: the City of London, the West End and the East End.

The City extends over an area of about 2.6 square kilometres in the heart of London. About half a million people work in the City but only less than 6000 live here. It is the financial centre of the UK with many banks, offices and Stock Exchange. But the City is also a market for goods of almost every kind, from all parts of the world.

The West End can be called the centre of Tendon. Here are the historical palaces as well as the famous parks. Hyde Park with its Speaker's Corner is also here. Among other parks are Kensington Gardens, St.James's Park. In the West End is Buckingham Palace. Which is the Queen's residence, and the Palace of Westminster which is the seat of Parliament.

The best-known streets here are Whitehall with important Government offices. Downing Street, the London residence of Prime Minister and the place where the Cabinet meets. Fleet Street where most newspapers have their offices, Harley Street where the highest paid doctors live, and some others.

Trafalgar Square is named so in commemoration of Nelson's great victory. In the middle stands the famous Nelson Column with the statue of Nelson 170 feet high so as to allow him a view of the sea. The column stands in the geographical centre of the city. It is one of the best open air platforms for public meetings and demonstrations.

One of the "musts" for the sightseer are the Houses of Parliament, facing the Thames, on one side, and Parliament Square and Westminster Abbey, on the other. The House of Commons sits to the side of the Clock Tower (Big Ben), the House of Lords - to the Victoria Tower side.

Westminster Abbey is the crowning and burial place of British monarchs. It has its world famed Poet's Corner with memorials to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, the Bronte's sisters. Tennyson. Longfellow, Wordsworth, Burns, Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, Kipling and other leading writers. Only a few however, are actually buried there.

Here too is that touching symbol of a nation's grief. The Grave of the Unknown Warrior.

The name "West End" came to be associated with wealth, luxury, and goods of high quality. It is the area of the largest department stores, cinemas and hotels. There are about 40 theatres, several concert halls, many museums including the British Museum, and the best art galleries.

It is in the West End where the University of London is centred with Bloomsbury as London's student quarter.

The Port of London is to the east of the City. Here. today are kilometres and kilometres of docks, and the great industrial areas that depend upon shipping. This is the East End of London, unattractive in appearance, but very important to the country's commerce.

In recent times London has grown so large. that the Government has decided that it must spread no farther. It is now surrounded by a "green belt" - a belt of agricultural and wooded land on which new buildings may be put up only with the permission of the planning authorities.