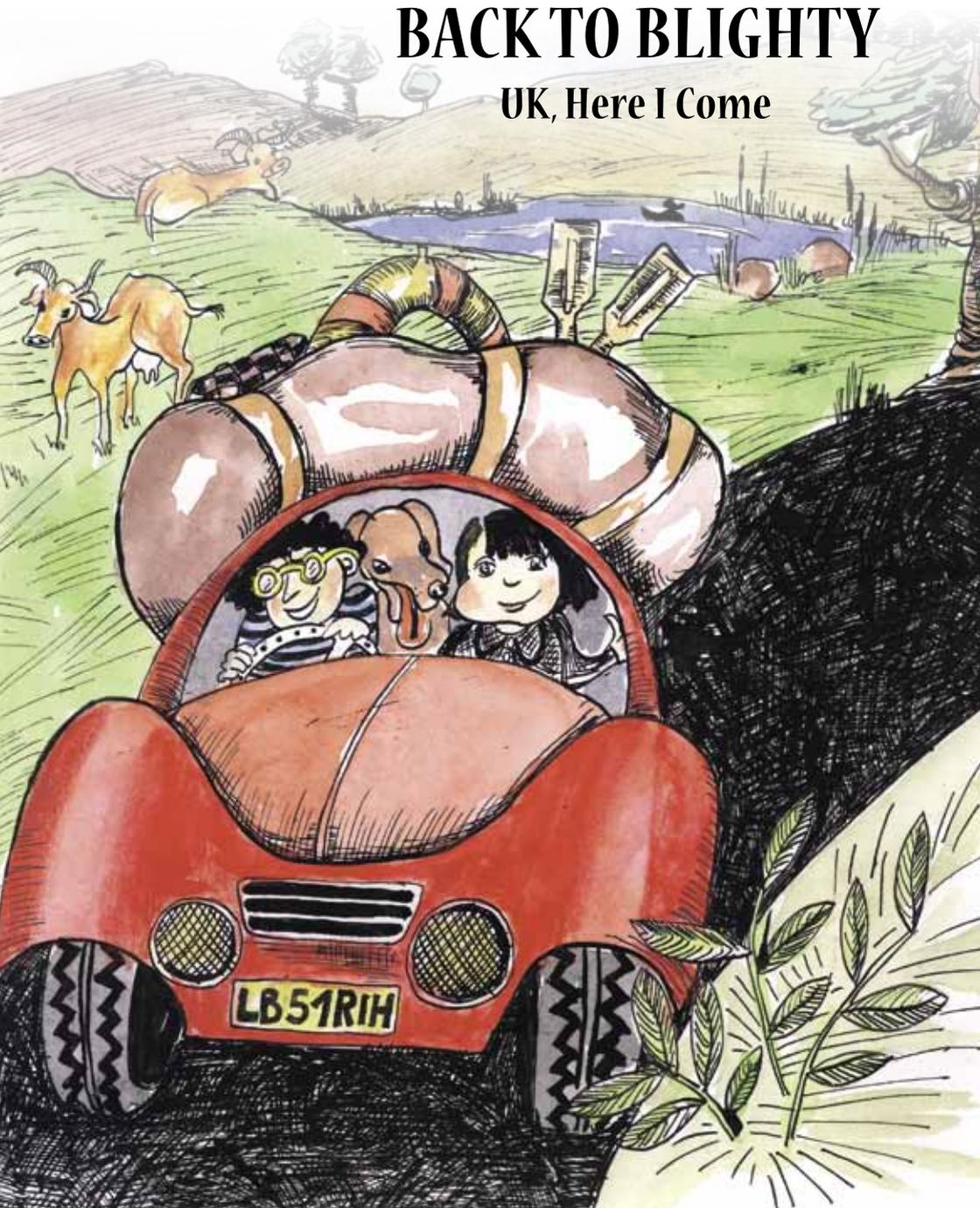


Jo Molloy

BACK TO BLIGHTY

UK, Here I Come



Back to Blighty

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FOREWORD

Blighty is slang for Britain – it was a word used by British soldiers in India and later it became an affectionate term used by expats around the world when they talked about going ‘home’, back to the UK. You don’t live in Blighty but you go ‘back to Blighty’. I’m returning back to the ‘homeland’ after living in the Czech Republic for a few years, but will it be the same place I left?

'MIND THE GAP'

London

It's been some time since I've explored London properly. I've travelled through it, visited friends' houses, commuted¹ to work, and had meetings there. But by 'properly' I mean stopped, looked around, walked the streets and enjoyed being in the city – home to over nine million people who live in its 33 different boroughs² and speak over 300 different languages.

So I thought it's about time I grabbed (took) my Oyster card • and hopped on³ the Tube⁴ to join the 2.5 million passengers that the London underground transports every day to 270 different stations around the city!

To start with, instead of complaining about the unreliable trains, for once I should appreciate the fact that it's an amazing piece of engineering. There's a very good reason why it's always breaking down or not working – it was built in the 1890s! Secondly, there is history everywhere you look – with famous stations like Baker Street (Sherlock Holmes), Oxford Street (one of the world's most famous shopping streets) and Hyde Park Corner (London's well-known park). And finally, it has an incredible network of interconnecting tunnels that stretch (spread) under the whole city where you can be entertained by street musicians along the way.

West London has historically always been the 'poshest'⁵ part of town with very nice, large properties (houses) that sell for millions of pounds. It's the sort of place where celebrities and royals are caught by paparazzi photographers exiting the doors of exclusive restaurants, clubs and bars. Here you'll find the upmarket⁶ department store Harrods, famous for its luxury goods, and the bookshop where Julia Roberts fell in love with Hugh Grant in the film *Notting Hill*. I personally love to wander around Little Venice, an area where two of London's canals meet. It's so pretty with its waterside cafes, pubs and

1 **to commute** – to travel to and from work daily

2 **borough** – an administrative area

3 **to hop on** – to jump onto something that is moving (usually transport)

4 **the Tube** – the common name for the underground in London

5 **posh** – upper-class, luxurious or elegant

6 **upmarket** – describes something that's high quality or expensive



restaurants. For shopping, I recommend going to Portobello Market with its cool clothes, antiques and vintage⁷ jewellery.

East London in contrast was always traditionally the poorest area of the city. The docks⁸ were located here and it is where dirty ships brought goods along the Thames to the warehouses (storage buildings) that dotted the shore. This was the place where the immigrants originally settled and stayed. Heavily bombed⁹ in the second world war, it's not the most attractive of places. However, it makes up for¹⁰ it in other ways. The whole area has seen a big change in recent years – first the artists moved in, and then richer people began changing warehouses into hip (cool) apartments. Once poor areas like Shoreditch and Dalston are now full of trendy bars and cafes. Of course the Olympic stadium in Stratford, built for the games in 2012, has also put East London on the map¹¹.

The city of London, also known as the 'Square Mile' because it is literally a square mile in size, is the oldest part of London. Now it's one of the most powerful financial centres in the world, but I like exploring behind the big banks and large international corporations (big companies) because around every corner there's a historic building or beautiful courtyard. Here and there you can still catch a glimpse of (see) the original city walls. One of my favourite walks is starting at St Paul's Cathedral, and walking across the Millennium Bridge to the Tate Modern art gallery.

The city of Westminster is another 'small city' inside the greater area known as 'London', sometimes called the 'entertainment district'. Here the brash (bright and showy) lights of Leicester Square lure (attract) tourists. It's the place where all the big film premieres are held and where you'll find most of London's largest theatres, showing anything from *Mamma Mia* to the ballet *Swan Lake*. If you want to get away from all the popcorn, ice cream and tourists, just a few streets away is the colourful district of Soho, or try Chinatown for a Chinese meal. Covent Garden is also close by with its boutique shops and market.

7 **vintage** – something from the past from a particular period of time; for example, an old mirror from the Victorian times in the 1800s, or a necklace from the 1980s

8 **the docks** – short for dockyards/port

9 **heavily bombed** – it was bombed a lot

10 **to make up for sth** (phrasal verb) – to compensate (e.g. "He bought me dinner to make up for being so late for the date.")

11 **to put the area on the map** – to make it famous or popular

There has always been a north-south divide in the city. Those who live north of the river Thames think it's superior to (better than) the south, and those living south of the river think the north London types are snobs¹².

North London, home to football teams like Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, is also where London's rich, arty types live. There are chic¹³ pubs and wide-open spaces like Regents Park, and the canals are a short stroll (slow walk) away. And even though I'm not a teenager anymore, I still enjoy exploring Camden Market where you can buy anything from the latest club wear to beautiful handmade jewellery.

South London is home to Greenwich Park, the Royal Observatory and the National Maritime Museum. Much farther west is the Richmond Park, and the botanical gardens of Kew. I never tire of wandering along the South Bank, the strip of land along the Thames; it's the perfect place to view London's iconic skyline (Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, The Shard, Tower Bridge, the London Eye). Head (go) further south to Clapham High Street for some lively bars or Brixton Market, the heart of London's Caribbean community, where you'll find delicious food from around the world.

● CULTURE POINTS

mind the gap – a warning to train passengers using the underground to take care while crossing the gap between the train and the platform



Oyster card – a blue credit-card-sized 'smart card' or electronic ticket. You 'top it up' with money and use it at the electronic travel barriers where you have to 'touch in' and 'touch out' of every station.



12 **snob** – someone who looks down on others, and believes they are better, more civilized, more cultivated

13 **chic** – fashionable and stylish

It's nice being back and seeing the city with fresh eyes again. I can't keep up with all the latest places to 'hang out', but I'm happy revisiting some old favourite pubs, restaurants and hidden corners of the city.

'LOVE ME, LOVE MY JEANS'

Fashion

I'm a trousers and jeans kind of a girl. There's no getting away from it, I love being comfortable in my clothes. On the rare occasions that I dress up or put heels on¹⁴ I feel sort of awkward¹⁵ and/or self-conscious (aware of myself).

But I still like wearing nice clothes. I don't slouch (move in a lazy way) out of the house in pyjama bottoms¹⁶, baggy T-shirts or tracksuits¹⁷. I like to 'throw' on a few items, layer¹⁸ tops over T-shirts, wear trousers with boots and add a nice pair of earrings. I just don't have the time or the inclination (natural liking) to look super-groomed¹⁹. I care about fashion, it's just that I don't want to wear anything that's like a big fashion statement or expresses an 'I'm here, look at me!' attitude.

I spent some time living in the US, and it's a bit terrifying standing next to all those smartly dressed women. Americans are not hugely adventurous with fashion, but when they put on a simple top with jeans or a dress, it always looks so crisp (fresh), cool and effortless. Luckily, when I was there I lived by the beach so I could get away with²⁰ wearing summer dresses or shorts and flip-flops without worrying.

14 **on the rare occasions that I dress up or put heels on** – I don't very often put on more formal clothes like a dress or high-heeled shoes

15 **awkward** – uncomfortable or difficult

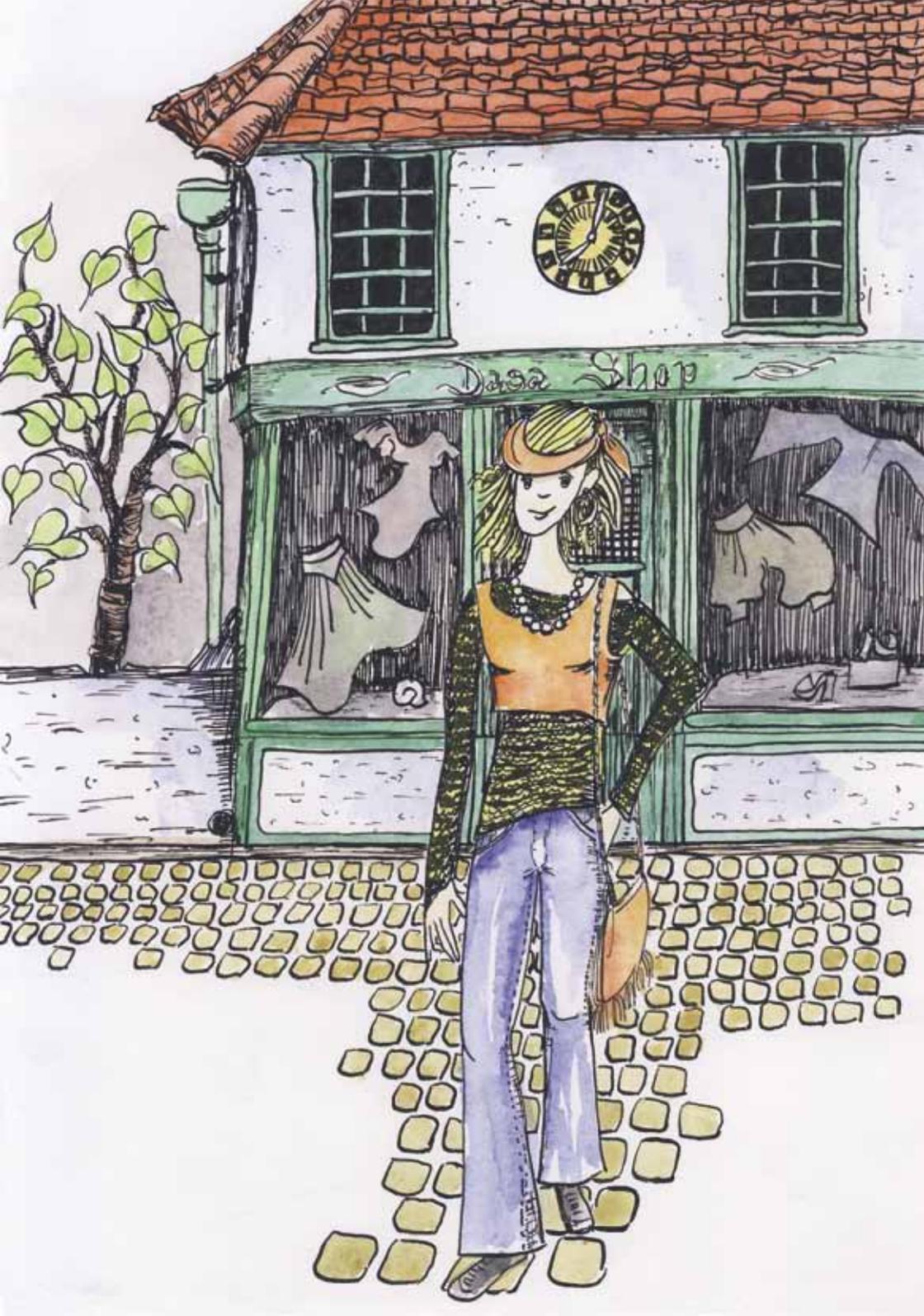
16 **pyjama bottoms** – light trousers that you wear for bed

17 **tracksuit** – also called sweatpants, loose trousers and top that you wear for exercise or for casual wear

18 **to layer** – (here) a verb meaning to put something on top of something else

19 **super-groomed** – perfect, tidy and smart

20 **to get away with** – to do something without anything bad happening



I think British fashion, in contrast to American, is a bit hit or miss²¹. We love our 'high street' fashion²² and experimenting but we're a bit more scruffy (messy or untidy). We pick and mix²³ styles and put them together a bit more haphazardly (in no organized way). We're definitely learning to be more 'groomed' but when we get the chance we still like to go back to our favourite, 'music festival' look – dresses, boots, tights or leggings with shorts, and lots of layers. Something to 'hang out' in and, here's that word again, be comfortable in.

It's been interesting coming back 'home' to the UK. Suddenly I've been spending more money on clothes. Maybe it's because I feel the pressure to wear something that's more 'in'? Fashion changes very quickly here; every season the high street brings out (presents to the public) a new 'look' which has been quickly copied from the catwalk²⁴. Normally it is made by men and women earning low wages working in poor conditions in factories in Bangladesh, India and Cambodia.

People are starting to think about where their clothing is coming from a little bit more, to shop more 'ethically' and to throw less away.

FUN FASHION PHRASES & EXPRESSIONS

orange is the new black – black is a popular colour; orange (it could be any colour that's in fashion) is the 'new' popular colour, worn by everyone. 'Orange' will be the colour to look out for!

fashion police – people considered to be fashion 'experts' or 'opinionated' about clothes, who comment on what other people are wearing

off the peg – ready to wear; not specially made

on trend – very fashionable right now

● LANGUAGE POINTS

Love me, love my jeans – a play on the phrase *Love me, love my dog*, which means if you love someone you accept everything about them, even their faults.

uber – from German; used a lot in language to mean **outstanding example** or **very** but in a strong way

21 **hit or miss** – without plan or direction, sometimes good and sometimes bad

22 **high street fashion** – mass-market retail fashion shops like Primark, New Look, Topshop, H&M

23 **pick and mix** – choose a selection that sometimes doesn't match. 'Pick N Mix' in a shop is where you can choose a variety of different sweets in one bag.

24 **catwalk** – sometimes known as a runway, the narrow platform that models walk up and down on during a fashion show

There is a small but growing trend, especially during the financial crisis, of people mending (repairing or fixing), sewing and making clothes again. One of the uber• trendy things for ‘cool’ people to do is meet in coffee shops and knit. Who would have thought it?

If you look at an average wardrobe in the UK, Brits tend to mix their clothes. They buy a few high street ‘staples’ (main items) and add extra touches with clothes from boutiques, markets, or charity shops to create a more ‘personalised’ look. Even though we like being ‘in fashion’, we don’t want to look the same as each other. And now we are also influenced by fashion bloggers and the style on the street, which means we don’t just take our cue (lead) from the catwalk or fashion designers any more.

I think Czechs like fashion but they just don’t get the chance to experiment – the boutique shops are too expensive, and the second-hand shops are not great.

When I went looking, the second-hand shops were full of ‘cast-offs’, things that no one else wanted, piled up high, smelly, old and tired (worn out).

I also realize that in the Czech Republic there aren’t that many great fashion role models for girls. It’s all make-up, short skirts and showy designer labels in the Czech media. Where are the sexy but cool girls who like to have fun with clothes?

But I think times are changing... just don’t be afraid to experiment. And like me, sometimes ditch²⁵ the jeans!

‘FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD...

THERE’S NOTHING QUITE LIKE IT’

Eating in Britain

In the musical adaptation of the Charles Dickens book *Oliver Twist*, the orphans in the story are given gruel (a kind of cold porridge) for breakfast. They hate it and dream of all the lovely food they could be

25 **to ditch** – to get rid of, to lose

eating instead and sing out, 'Food, glorious food, there's nothing quite like it... Hot sausage and mustard, cold jelly and custard'²⁶.

Food in the UK has changed quite a bit from Dickens' days. But even in Victorian times, rich Britons were starting to use more herbs and spices in their food instead of plain (basic) root vegetables like turnips, carrots or potatoes. And if they were lucky, they would occasionally have a bit of meat. As the British Empire expanded, ships began bringing all sorts of exotic foods back to the UK, so if you had money or were in the upper classes you could try teas from India or spices from China.

Because of the second world war, experimenting with food took a nosedive²⁷. There was severe (strict) rationing²⁸ and no one was travelling abroad bringing back different types of food. Plain, overcooked²⁹, flavourless, boring and bland were words synonymous with British cuisine. The pie became popular during this time because it was a way of making a meal stretch further³⁰, so bits of less expensive meat were hidden away with vegetables in a pastry crust³¹. You could get savoury (not sweet) pies or sweet ones – filled with apple, for example. We still like a pie in the UK. It's a great comfort food in the winter, and if you're feeling peckish³² when you're out, it's a popular takeaway snack.

At this time nobody was cooking with such exotic ingredients as olive oil or garlic. The French turned up their noses at our 'British gastronomy' and Mediterranean cuisine³³ was seen as something very fancy. However, slowly and surely British cuisine started to be influenced by the immigrants who had settled in the UK and more ingredients became available from overseas.

As a child I was used to having typical English fare (dishes) like bangers and mash, shepherd's pie, fish and chips, and on a Sunday

26 **jelly and custard** – a typical children's dessert; cold fruit gelatine pudding with hot sweet sauce made of egg and milk

27 **nosedive** – steep downward fall; an aeroplane might take a nosedive

28 **(food) rationing** – it began in 1940 and each person could only buy a fixed amount of food each week (cheese, meat, butter, etc.). Everyone got the same amount and was given a coupon which was entered (written) into their ration book.

29 **to overcook** – to cook too much

30 **to stretch further** – to make something go further or last longer

31 **pastry crust** – a dough made from flour, eggs and butter which is cooked. The crust is the cooked top layer.

32 **peckish** – hungry, like a bird that 'pecks' bits of food

33 **Mediterranean cuisine** – food from Italy, France, Greece and Spain, using olive oil, garlic, fresh vegetables, more fish and less meat; salads are very popular too



SOME BRITISH DISHES NOT TO MISS

The Sunday roast

It was traditional to put a large piece of meat – like beef, lamb, pork or chicken – in the oven to cook while you went to church. When you came back the meat would be nicely roasted and was served with roasted potatoes, vegetables and gravy (hot brown sauce made from the meat juices).



Fish and chips

fish covered in batter (a mixture of flour and milk) and deep fried. This was a popular dish for the workers in industrial cities in the late 1800s as fish trawling (catching) became more common. A takeaway meal that is hugely popular even today.

The sandwich

I can't imagine lunchtime without the sandwich. Originally it was invented by the Earl of Sandwich in the 1700s. He was the first person to put cold meats or cheeses in between two pieces of bread so that he didn't have to stop gambling to eat lunch. Nowadays you can find any combination of fillings from plain old cheese to goat's cheese, chicken mayonnaise salad or sun-dried tomato.



Curry

The Brits have actually created their own 'Anglo-Indian' dishes that you can't find in India, only in the UK – meals like chicken tikka masala (roasted bits of chicken in a creamy spicy sauce), kedgeree (rice with fish and spices) and mulligatawny soup (a type of sweet and spicy soup). In fact, chicken tikka masala is considered one of Britain's most popular meals; you can even buy chicken tikka masala flavoured crisps, or get it in a sandwich!



The great British breakfast

You would look like a house (very fat) if you had this every day, so it's reserved for weekends or special occasions. Usually a fried egg served with bacon, sausage, fried tomatoes, mushrooms, beans and toast. If you're going for the 'full traditional', you might also get a serving of bubble and squeak (fried leftovers from a Sunday roast dinner, mainly cabbage and potatoes).

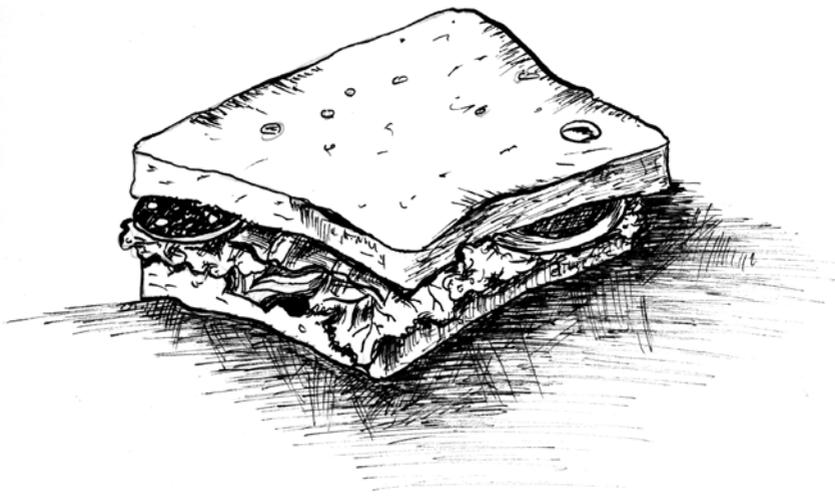
Bangers and mash

a traditional British meal made from potatoes which are mashed up (cooked and crushed into a soft mush) and sausages (bangers), served with peas or other vegetables. The word 'banger' was used because if the sausages are cooked too quickly they explode or 'bang'.



Shepherd's pie

minced (cut into very small pieces) lamb with vegetables cooked in a dish with a mashed potato topping. Cottage pie is the same meal but cooked with beef; shepherd's pie is named after a shepherd, the person who looks after sheep.



the traditional roast dinner. But I also remember my mum being a little more experimental than others. I used to get embarrassed when I had friends over for tea because she was the only mum cooking with garlic and chillies, and making curries.

Now it's common for people to try different foods, and experiment with cooking. The Brits love rice and pasta, curries and noodles. And because eating out³⁴ is affordable in the UK, you can sample (try) any type of cuisine from anywhere in the world, from Turkish, Chinese, Spanish and Thai to Mexican and Hungarian. There are even two Czech restaurants in London that I know of!

The stigma³⁵ of bland British food is slowly disappearing and 'modern British cuisine' is having a huge resurgence (revival). Restaurants are sourcing (finding) local ingredients, buying British meats, and using traditional methods to recreate hearty (filling and

● LANGUAGE POINT

food, dish and meal – food is a generic term which describes anything that you can eat. Dish refers to something prepared to be eaten, like a recipe, so it could be 'spaghetti bolognaise' (be careful because dish is sometimes used to describe a bowl that holds food, e.g. 'pass me the dish please'). Meal is the overall word used for times of eating, like breakfast, lunch and dinner. A meal can consist of many dishes, for example a meat dish and a vegetable dish.

34 **to eat out** – to eat away from home; to go to a restaurant

35 **stigma** – something that is marked or labelled as negative

good) English dishes, and celebrity chefs like Jamie Oliver are making it all the more popular. So it's gone full circle and, like those orphans in *Oliver Twist*, we're back to dreaming about hot sausages and mustard and cold jelly and custard.

'ARMCHAIR TRAVEL'

Virtual travel around the UK

I can't lie to you. I'm not writing this as I'm travelling around the UK on a train whizzing (moving quickly) through beautiful countryside on the way to historic towns and lively cities. I'm sitting at my computer being a 'virtual tourist'. With so many travel websites available, and of course Google Maps which let you look at photos and now even videos, I can see everything I need to know about the UK without leaving the comfort of my chair.

At its best the UK is quirky (strange), eccentric, interesting and friendly; at its worst it's dirty, expensive and overcrowded, with unpredictable weather. It's a country full of contrasts, and England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which make up the United Kingdom, are all unique countries in their own right, with their own regional accents, cultures, traditions and customs.

But it's a relatively small country, with a lot packed in³⁶. For a start, there are a huge number of people trying to squeeze in, 61 million of them. Then there's a huge range of different landscapes, from the hills to the sea, from sprawling (spreading out) cities to pretty villages. And everywhere you look there's an interesting bit of history. Here's just a small taste of what you might find.

On the south-east coast is the county of **Kent**, also known as the 'Garden of England', and one of its main tourist attractions is the city of **Canterbury**. It has a young feel because it's a university town, and has a pretty historic centre, but tourists come to see Canterbury Cathedral. It dates back to the 11th century, and is where archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a famous book called *The Canterbury Tales*, which follows a group

36 **a lot packed in** – filled with a lot of things, e.g. 'we managed to pack a lot in the car', or 'we managed to pack in a lot of activities today'

of pilgrims making their way to Becket's shrine (holy place). But don't just stop here; rent a bike and cycle along the disused (no longer used) railway line, known as the 'crab and winkle³⁷ way' to the coast and the fishing town of **Whitstable**. It's famous for its oysters, which are caught daily, and its pretty shops and fishing huts. Along the coast are lovely sandy beaches, like Broadstairs, Joss beach or Margate.

On the other side of the country in the west is the enchanting (lovely) city of **Bath** in **Somerset**. Walking through the city feels like walking through a historical museum. Wherever you look there are buildings that were built either by the Romans or the Georgians • . But no visit to Bath is complete without a stop at the Roman baths, which the town is famous for. The Celts and Romans both came here for the natural hot springs. There is a museum where you can learn all about the baths, but also an actual spa where you can have a soak (lay) in the waters. Close by is the vibrant (lively) city of Bristol and the University of Oxford isn't too far away either.

The 'Angel of the North' marks the gateway (entry) to **Newcastle-Upon-Tyne**. It's a 20-metre-high steel sculpture of an angel. The outstretched (opened out) metal wings make it look like an aeroplane. The statue not only represents the north of England, but also the birthplace of industry and technology. Based on the river Tyne, Newcastle was a major city during the industrial revolution, with its natural coal and iron; it was also home of the steam railway. If you come from the city you're known as a 'Geordie' and you have a unique local accent and dialect. You might hear someone say "Me mam said wye ah pet" which means "My mum said of course my



37 **crab and winkle** – this was the name of the railway line because it ran close to the sea; a crab is a type of sea creature with claws and a winkle is a type of edible sea snail



love”. The city has a good music scene and lots of students. It’s also close to Whitley Bay and Tynemouth beaches, and only an hour away from the Scottish border and Hadrian’s Wall • .

Across the border in **Scotland** is the wonderful city of **Edinburgh**. Scotland’s capital is famous for its castle, which stands proudly in the middle of the city, and for its impressive Georgian architecture. During the summer months it’s bursting with (full of) tourists, who come to see the Edinburgh International Festival (a performing arts festival) and ‘The Fringe’ (an alternative arts festival). In January the city comes alive again to celebrate ‘Hogmanay’ • on New Year’s Eve. Celebrations take place over four days with events and concerts that end in a huge street party with fireworks. The city has a lively music, arts and cultural scene, but it’s also close to some incredible countryside. Take a trip to the Highlands, a mountainous region of castles, glens (valleys) and lochs (lakes).

For some more beautiful countryside, but this time in Wales, go to an area called the **Brecon Beacons**. It’s an area with red sandstone peaks, great for walkers who want to explore the woods, waterfalls, hills and castles. Try the Welsh specialities: Welsh Cakes (traditionally baked

WHAT IS WHAT?

Great Britain – is made up of England, Scotland and Wales

The United Kingdom – is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is a separate country.

The British Isles – includes everything; it’s the two islands of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) plus Ireland, and all the small surrounding islands, including the Isle of Man.

● CULTURE POINTS

Georgian – a period of time in English history from 1714 to 1837, ruled by four Georges: Kings George I, George II, George III and George IV

Hadrian’s Wall – a defensive wall between England and Scotland built by the Romans



Hogmanay – the Scottish name for the last day of the year, and a celebration of New Year’s Eve, which starts after midnight and can continue for days. The traditional song ‘Auld Lang Syne’ is sung and then people visit friends and family.

on an iron griddle³⁸), or Bara Brith, a sweet and moist (slightly wet) fruitcake made using cold tea. You're also close to the capital of Wales, the bustling (busy) and interesting city of **Cardiff**. If you're a book or literature lover, there is one place to go and that's the famous Hay Festival. It takes place over a week at the end of May on the English-Welsh border at **Hay-on-Wye**. Known as the 'book town', Hay-on-Wye is heaven for book fans and crammed (filled) with second-hand bookshops and little tea shops.

If you want something a bit more energetic, it's time to head to (go to) the coast of **Cornwall**, in the south-west of the country. You don't automatically associate (connect) the UK with surfing but it's surprising just how many surfing beaches there are, especially around this area. **Newquay** is the king of them, a wide horseshoe shaped bay with waves all year around. All you need is a very warm wetsuit³⁹ and a board of course! For something much more sedate (calm) try the pretty ports of **Padstow** or **St Ives**.

It's impossible to cover the whole country. But this is a personal selection of some of the places I've actually been to over the years and enjoyed. So I didn't really cheat, because even though virtual travel is interesting, it can never replace the real thing.

'DEATH OF THE HIGH STREET'

Shopping

One thing I missed when I lived in the Czech Republic was shopping. I enjoyed browsing (looking through) the Czech Christmas markets, and picking up (buying) lovely unusual hand made products, but in general I found shopping in the Czech Republic expensive and frustrating.

It's amazing just how much cheaper it is in the UK for things like clothes, shoes, even food – it's only eating out and Czech beer that remain cheap as chips⁴⁰. Coming back to the UK, I have to be

38 **griddle** – heavy flat pan made of iron

39 **wetsuit** – a rubber suit worn for diving or surfing

40 **cheap as chips** (idiom) – very cheap

careful that my credit card doesn't burn a hole in my pocket⁴¹. It's like Aladdin's cave⁴² for shopaholics⁴³ here – there's always something to spend money on.

But I have also started to notice how much shopping has changed over the few years I've been away, and it's a trend that seems to be getting worse and worse.

The traditional high street⁴⁴ is dying. It was once a place where you could stroll along (walk in a leisurely way) and get anything you needed, from socks to satellite televisions. But large out-of-town shopping centres and supermarkets now tempt (attract) shoppers out of their cars and into their warm and sterile⁴⁵ environment. Let's face it, they are convenient and everything is under one roof. The new centre in London, Westfield Stratford City, is one of the largest in Europe, and with 300 shops and 70 restaurants it's like a mini city!

The smaller independent shops on the high street can't compete. They just don't have the same pulling power⁴⁶, and so everywhere you look there are 'for rent' signs and boarded up⁴⁷ windows. I read somewhere that the high street now has five categories of businesses: 'bargains'⁴⁸ (there are at least seven in every town), 'baristas'⁴⁹ (the UK has over 15,000 coffee shops – at least three on every high street), 'betting shops' (for gambling), 'burgers' (cheap take-away food places) and 'boarded up' (closed shops).

It's such a huge problem that the British government ordered an independent review to find ways to 'save the high street'. It wants to bring back the spirit of the high street, not just as a place to shop, but a place to socialise⁵⁰, a place for well-being⁵¹ and entertainment. But

41 **money burns a hole in someone's pocket** – an expression that describes someone who can't keep money for long, spends it quickly

42 **Aladdin's cave** – a place full of precious items or treasure, like in the story of Aladdin

43 **shopaholic** – someone who loves shopping

44 **high street** – the main street of a town, traditionally the place to find shops, banks and businesses

45 **sterile** – having no atmosphere, bland or boring

46 **pulling power** – the ability to attract people

47 **boarded up** – with planks of wood over the windows

48 **bargain** – when something is sold for a low price; here it refers to charity or cheap shops

49 **barista** – the name for the person trained to use the coffee machine and serve coffee

50 **place to socialise** – where people can meet

51 **well-being** – the feeling of being happy, content and healthy



I fear it is fighting a losing battle⁵². Because the way we like to shop is different now.

We live in a busy society and we're always looking for ways to make our lives simpler and easier. It's not just shopping centres, but internet shopping: from eBay to Amazon, we prefer to add to basket, click and it's yours, delivered to the doorstep. I'm as guilty as anyone – it almost feels like you're not really spending money, until you get your credit card bill, of course.

I live in a town that's been clever with its town planning. There is a small shopping centre right off the high street so the smaller shops still get a lot of foot traffic⁵³, and it's still a busy and lively place to shop.

Now, that reminds me. I must get off the computer, stop online shopping and go to the local bookshop instead!

52 **it is fighting a losing battle** – you are fighting against something knowing you can't win
53 **foot traffic** – pedestrian traffic, people coming and going on foot

'I'M A CELEBRITY, GET ME OUT OF HERE!'

Our love of celebrity gossip

If you live in the UK, chances are you've heard of the popular reality TV show *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* The idea is pretty simple: 12 celebrities are left to survive without any creature comforts⁵⁴ for a few weeks in the Australian jungle. In order to get food, they have to take part in a series of 'bush-tucker'⁵⁵ trials', or challenges, which involve eating fried insects or diving into a container full of snakes. Each week the public vote which celebrity they want to get rid of (to go), until the last one left is crowned the king or queen of the jungle.

The series has been running since 2002, and with a whopping (huge) 13 million people watching the first episode of the new series this year, it just shows you how much Brits love following celebrities (or 'celebs'). Our shelves are heaving with (full of) magazines with the latest gossip: which soap star is dating who, which footballer did what. We have an insatiable (never ending) appetite for goggling⁵⁶ at the lives of the rich and famous.

Even children these days no longer want to work hard and be teachers, bankers, lawyers and doctors – they too want to be celebrities. According to a teacher's survey, the top career choice for youngsters today is being a famous footballer, followed by pop star, and then actor. Some children weren't even that specific and just wanted to be 'famous for being famous'. And then, of course, sadly, you have young girls who want to dress in sexy, provocative⁵⁷ clothing like their idols, thinking that is the way to find fame and fortune.

But hold on (wait). Before we hang our heads in shame, despair⁵⁸ at our shallow⁵⁹ lives, start feeling depressed at the 'state of our nation' and use phrases like 'broken Britain', let's take a look back at a time not so long ago...

54 **creature comforts** – things around you that make life comfortable

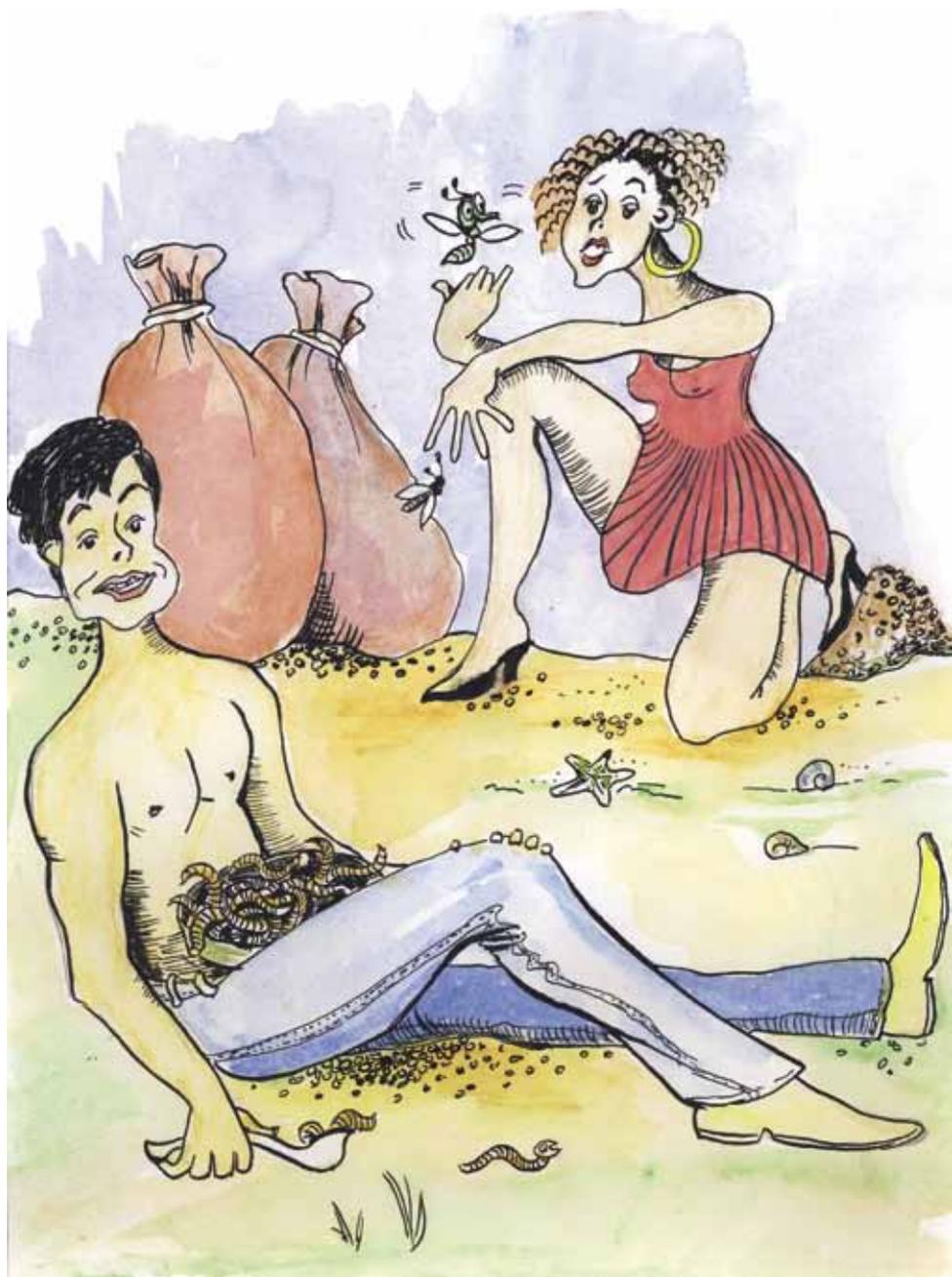
55 **bush tucker** – food that you get from the 'bush' or wild lands in Australia

56 **to goggle** – to look with wide open eyes in amazement

57 **provocative** – causing a strong reaction or sexual desire

58 **to despair** – to give up hope

59 **shallow** – not deep, having no serious thoughts



The Georgians in the 18th century were the first generation to find themselves with 'leisure time', and a growing middle class who had money to spend. According to an exhibition at the British Library, Georgians, just like us, liked spending time in teahouses, eating chocolate or hanging out in coffee shops. They also enjoyed shopping and wearing the latest fashion, went to horse races, cricket matches and dances. But more than anything they loved their booze (alcohol), particularly gin.

In London alone, there were over 7,000 'gin dens', or places to drink gin. It was hugely popular with the poor because it was so cheap. The drink was soon nicknamed 'mother's ruin' because mothers abandoned their children for drinking clubs and parties. An artist called William Hogarth drew a picture called 'Gin Lane' which shows a mother dropping her baby down a set of stairs while there are drunk men and women all around her.

It was also a period of time when there were suddenly magazines, leaflets and posters everywhere. Before, you needed a special licence, but the printing rules had changed, which meant that anyone could print anything. It's similar to the internet today; we are also experiencing an explosion

● CULTURE POINTS

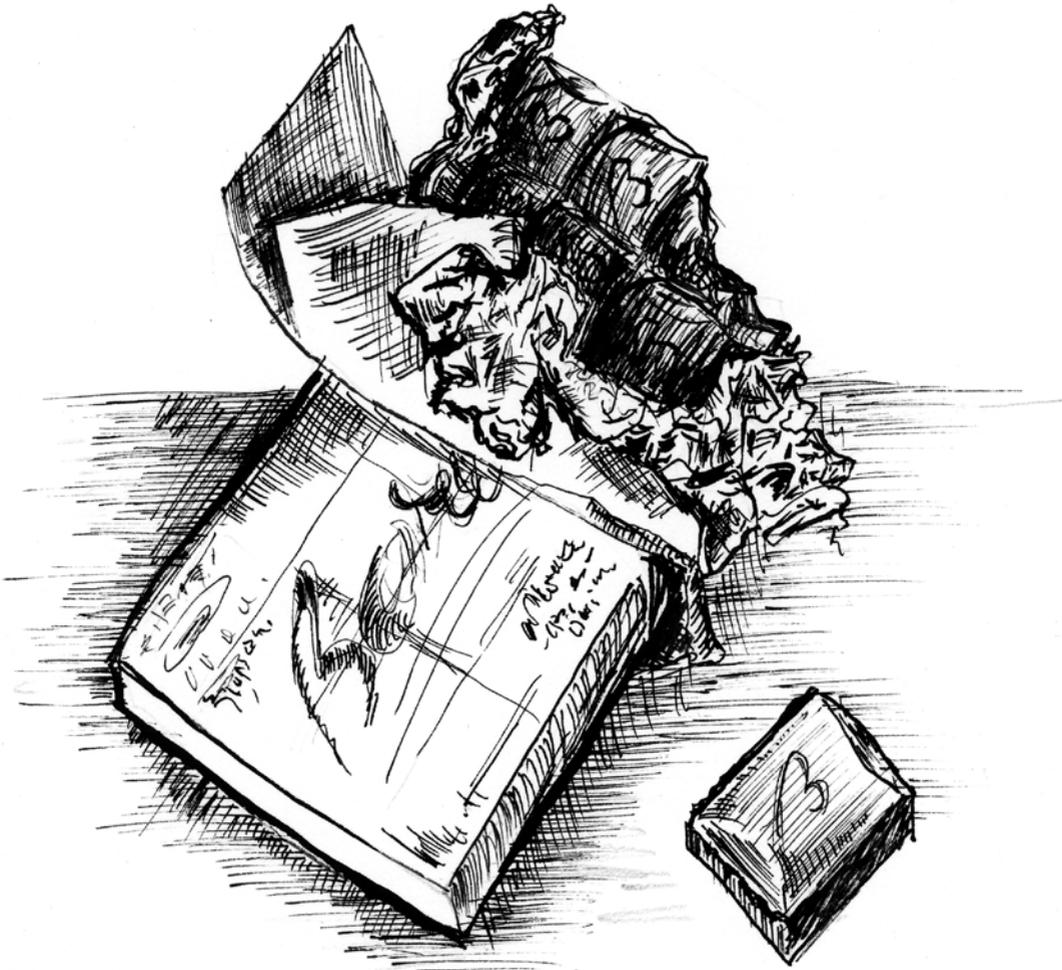
Admiral Horatio Nelson – a war hero who was famous for leading Britain against the French and beating Napoleon at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805). There is a statue of him called Nelson's Column in London at Trafalgar Square.



Duke of Wellington – Arthur Wellesley or the Duke of Wellington was another war hero who fought in Spain against the French. He became a politician.

Sarah Siddons – an actress in the late 1700s who was famous for over 20 years and very well known in theatres and the entertainment industry





of information everywhere. But it also meant that the type of content changed too, because what sells best? Sex, gossip and celebrities.

The most popular stories involved the heroes of the time, Horatio Nelson • or the Duke of Wellington • – especially when Horatio had a lover, Lady Hamilton. Georgians also loved reading about Kitty Fisher, the leading courtesan⁶⁰ of the time and mistress to the richest man in London. They avidly (keenly) read stories about criminals like Jack Sheppard, who escaped prison twice, and loved gossip about celebrity performers like Sarah Siddons • and Joseph Grimaldi.

60 **courtesan** – a prostitute who mixes in rich circles

Grimaldi was like the Justin Bieber of today. He was a successful child actor, star and clown who was in every sell-out show. If his face appeared on the cover of a magazine, everyone would buy it, and even more so when his career went sour (wrong) and he sank into depression and alcoholism.

So maybe we just can't help following in the footsteps of our forefathers' forefathers⁶¹. I think we should just blame *them!*

'OUT OF THE ORDINARY'

Strange celebrations around the UK

Christmas and Easter are the traditional major holidays celebrated in the UK, and it was interesting to see how these were different in the Czech Republic. But there are some smaller, more unusual, uniquely British celebrations that I was reminded of when I moved back home.

When I lived in Prague, I really missed Bonfire Night •. I missed wrapping up warm⁶² in scarves and hats, putting on wellies⁶³ and braving the cold⁶⁴ on the 5th of November to watch exploding fireworks and wave a burning sparkler⁶⁵ in the night sky.

If you're in the UK, you can't fail to notice the firework displays going off all over the country – and if you don't like loud bangs (noise), glittering lights or large bonfires, the only way to escape it is to hide in a cave for 24 hours. Or you could always head for St Peter's School in York; apparently it's the only place in the country that doesn't celebrate because Guy Fawkes went to school there.

Lewes, a small town near the south coast, has been called 'the bonfire capital of the world' because six local bonfire societies join up to celebrate the event. Colourful parades wind their way through⁶⁶ the town and people dress up in costumes holding torches

61 **forefathers** – our relatives who lived a long time ago

62 **to wrap up warm** – to cover yourself in something to keep warm

63 **wellies or wellington boots** – the name for rubber boots made popular by the Duke of Wellington, who always wore them when he was hunting

64 **to brave the cold** – to face the cold with courage, or put up with the cold weather

65 **sparkler** – a small hand-held firework that burns giving out sparks (tiny bits of fire)

66 **to wind your way through** – to make your way in a bending or curving way through sth



(burning sticks); there are fireworks and explosions going off and smoke everywhere. The societies also remember the 17 Protestant martyrs⁶⁷ who were killed at the stake almost 100 years before the Gunpowder Plot, in 1509.

I hadn't realized that Brits like burning so much. There's another event that happens in Brighton on December 21, called 'burning of the clocks', so named because it happens on the shortest day of the year. But unlike Bonfire Night or the Lewes burns, it's a modern-day tradition that started only twenty years ago. It was created as a way for people to come together and celebrate the festive season no matter what their religion, and be an alternative to a commercial Christmas celebration. Locals make paper and willow lanterns⁶⁸ that they carry through the city and burn on a huge fire on the beach as a symbol of the end of the year.

Christmas and Easter are celebrated in the traditional way of course, but we don't mark the beginning of spring like Czechs do with '*masopust*'. I was a bit surprised at first to see a gutted⁶⁹ pig on my street hanging from a pole (long piece of metal),

● CULTURAL POINTS

Bonfire Night or **fireworks night** – a uniquely British tradition where we remember Guy Fawkes, a man who tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament with his 'Gunpowder Plot' in 1605. King James was so happy that he wasn't blown up that he threw a celebration; his men burnt an effigy (sculpture or model of a person) of Guy Fawkes and lit fireworks to represent the explosions. We still celebrate it 400 years later.

Morris dancing – a type of English folk dance where dancers wear folk costumes and have bells tied to their feet. They might dance with sticks, swords or small cloths.



Stonehenge – a mysterious collection of large blocks of stone near Salisbury in the UK. The stones are arranged into a circle believed to be 5,000 years old. People believe that the stones mark the important stages of the year and the passing of the seasons; the site is thought to be a religious or spiritual landmark.

67 **martyr** – a person killed for their religious beliefs

68 **willow lantern** – a willow cane (stick) and paper lamp that has a candle inside

69 **gutted** – the animal has had its insides, like the stomach and intestines, removed



but I loved the mad costumes and crazy parade which represent the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

We don't have 'one' spring event across the country, but some smaller towns and villages do celebrate 'May Day'. This usually involves girls decorated with flowers dancing around a maypole (a very tall decorated piece of wood) and men with bells on their legs in folk costumes doing Morris dancing • !

There are places like Hastings, again on the south coast, that celebrate this day with 'The Jack in the Green festival'. It's a coming-of-spring celebration with lots of flowers and garlands (wreaths of flowers worn on the body or head), and Morris dancing. 'Jack' is a symbolic representation of spring and is usually a man covered head to toe in green foliage (leaves). In fact he looks a little bit like a large Christmas tree, but instead of decorations there are flowers. He is joined by the 'Bogies'. They are covered in green rags (old clothes) and face paint, and their job is to lead him through the town while playing music and dancing. They are accompanied by hundreds of Morris dancers all shaking their bells, dancing and beating their drums until the chaotic procession ends at Hastings Castle where Jack is 'slain' (killed) to mark spring and release the spirit of summer.

The summer solstice is the first day of summer and is around June 21. It's celebrated in a few places around the country but the biggest event of all takes place at the ancient stone circle of Stonehenge • . Imagine a big new-age party which attracts thousands of people who all want

to worship⁷⁰ the sunrise and the start of summer. You'll find a mix of druids⁷¹ and pagans⁷² who take the celebration very seriously, hippies, travellers and partygoers, along with families and tourists.

Although I've never been to the summer solstice at Stonehenge, I was lucky enough to film a smaller event in a village in Cornwall. I was making a documentary in the area and we were interviewing a wonderful but eccentric druid called Ed Prynne who had erected his own 'Stonehenge' in his garden. He was a former quarryman (worked with stones) who had 19 hunks (large pieces) of rock weighing between 2 and 10 tons installed in his garden. People came in great numbers to his 'healing stone' or to get their marriage vows renewed (say their marriage promises again) at the 'wedding stone'. At that summer solstice I saw groups of druids in their long robes waiting for the magical first glimpses of summer.

As autumn arrives, it's time for most children in schools or communities to celebrate the 'Harvest Festival'. It's a Christian-based tradition that teaches them to be grateful for the fruit and vegetables grown on the land. Normally children visit a local church and sing songs and collect food donations which are then given to the poor or old.

Then it's back to Bonfire Night. And the cycle of celebrations begins again.

70 **to worship** – to show strong respect and admiration

71 **druids** – druidism is a type of paganism connected to the Celts. During the Celtic times the druids were the priests, doctors, lawmakers or important people of the tribes.

72 **pagans** – paganism is a term used to describe nature-based religions (so not Christian, Muslim or Jewish); it's a group of spiritual people who celebrate the cycles of nature through festivals or rituals



'NEW JOBS FOR OLD'

The changing world of work

There was a study recently by the social media website LinkedIn⁷³ that found one out of three parents didn't understand their child's job. Top of the list of jobs that they didn't understand was 'user interface designer'⁷⁴ followed by 'social media manager'⁷⁵ and 'data scientist'⁷⁶.

I'm struggling (having trouble) to describe some of them too, and I'm not that old yet! A lot has changed since I first started

73 **LinkedIn** – a social networking site used by professionals to network (connect with others) or find work

74 **user interface designer** – someone who designs how webpages work; they create programs to use data and information so that webpages open and function

75 **social media manager** – someone in charge of marketing through social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to promote a company or product

76 **data scientist** – described as part computer scientist and part business analyst, someone who can look at data and spot trends

looking for a job. When I look at adverts in the UK now, I realize my 'old' media skills are on the wane (on the way out). I need to start upskilling (getting some new skills) in social media, like using hashtags⁷⁷ and Twitter, or learning how to use digital media more, whether it's using my smartphone for filming or using apps (computer programs) for editing.

One person I recently contacted asked me, "Do you want to tweet me or contact me through Facebook, or the old-fashioned way of email?" I thought to myself, "The old way of email?" Surely the old way was sending a letter; email is still 'new', isn't it? That's how quickly it's all changing and it's reflected so much in the job market here in the UK.

Fewer and fewer people have job titles like dentist, doctor, or engineer – traditional jobs, the kind of jobs that do exactly what they say on the tin⁷⁸. And because more and more people have gone to college or university, there are fewer people doing traditional 'trade' jobs like carpentry⁷⁹, painting and decorating⁸⁰. I noticed when I lived in the Czech Republic that those trade jobs are still quite valued there.

Here's a true story: A few years ago there were so few plumbers⁸¹ that those who had a plumbing qualification were in such huge demand that they found they could command (ask for) six-figure salaries⁸²! So professionals⁸³ who couldn't get work during the financial crisis were ditching their degrees to go to plumbing school to quickly cash in⁸⁴ and make money.

The world of work has changed so much, though. Unlike our parents we don't have jobs for life any more (we don't have the same job for the whole of our life), we move around and work for different companies, and some of us are freelance – working on short contracts for lots of different companies. There are more 'high tech' jobs and job titles that didn't exist even a decade ago. Both Google and LinkedIn

77 **hashtag** (#) – used on Twitter before a word to make that word or sentence easier to search for; for example #Bridge magazine

78 **does exactly what it says on the tin** – it was originally an advertising slogan but has become an idiom meaning it doesn't need any explanation, says exactly what it is for

79 **carpentry** – working with wood, building kitchens, or repairing cupboards, etc.

80 **painting and decorating** – the job of painting houses or buildings

81 **plumber** – a person who fixes pipes, water systems or heating in houses or buildings

82 **six-figure salary** – used to describe a salary that's 100,000 or more (six numbers) per year

83 **professional** – a person who has the type of job that needs a high level of education

84 **to cash in** – to take advantage of something



have run (organised) special ‘Take Your Parents To Work Days’ to encourage employees to bring their old folks (parents) into the office to show them what it is exactly that they do as a job to help them understand.

One thing is for sure: there is definitely more pressure these days for students leaving college to be skilled not only in their specialist subject, but have lots of ‘work experience’ and be good at using computers as well.

British students are also using social media like Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn to help them get jobs. Most job applications are done online now, and I have a friend who had to do a ‘video’ interview where she had to film her answers and then upload them without ever meeting a human!

So it’s time to brush up on⁸⁵ my own computer skills, because if I’m not careful, I’ll soon be out of a job...

‘A BREATH OF FRESH AIR’

The Lake District

We decided to spend the New Year in the Lake District⁸⁶, to get a dose⁸⁷ of nature, some fresh air and take a break from the rat race⁸⁸. So we packed up the kids and dog and headed up the M6 motorway. Just over four hours later we were rewarded with sweeping (long and wide) views of the English countryside.

Since all the cottages and farm stays⁸⁹ were either full or too expensive, I’d booked something on the internet called a ‘camping barn’. I hadn’t a clue what it was, only that it was in a pretty rural

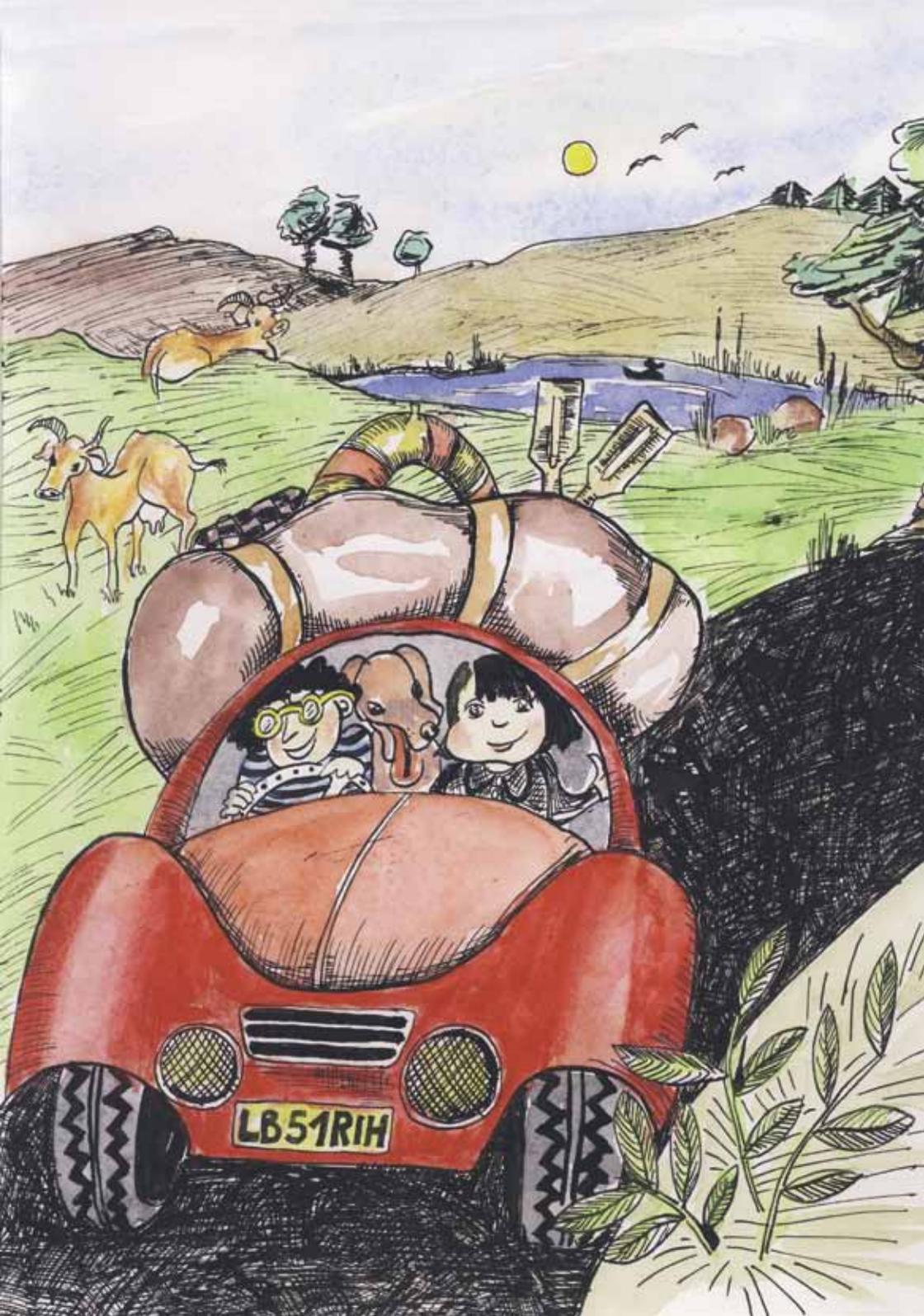
85 **to brush up on** – to improve your knowledge of something you’ve already learnt, but partly forgotten

86 **The Lake District or Lakes** – a mountainous region in north-west England; a popular tourist destination famous for its lakes, forests, hills but also its association with 19th-century romantic poets

87 **dose** – a prescribed quantity of medicine taken at a certain time; in this case a ‘dose of nature’ means feeling good by being in the countryside

88 **to take a break from the rat race** – to stop and have a rest from daily life: working, making money, spending money, working again, etc.

89 **farm stay** – accommodation found on a farm



setting (area of countryside) and didn't involve putting up a tent or sleeping outside.

I soon found out it was very nice converted barn⁹⁰, with a shower, a wood-burning heater, basic kitchen, beds and sofas. In the summer months you could camp outside and use it as a base for cooking, or as a shelter in case it poured down (rained heavily), which it frequently does in these parts.

Did this fall into the 'glamping' (glamorous camping) category, I wondered? It's a trend that's popular in the UK where middle-class people in their 30s don't want to get dirty and 'rough it'⁹¹ but they still want to be 'outdoors'. So they sleep on luxury beds in designer tents with fireplaces and hot running water. Picture the model Kate Moss at Glastonbury music festival – she's not camping with the riff raff⁹², she's staying in a posh teepee tent with her own personal toilet and silk sheets. That's glamping.

But we didn't do much 'glamping' when we arrived. The first night there was no electricity due to local flooding.

FAMOUS PEOPLE AND THE LAKES

William Wordsworth – a famous English romantic poet in the 1800s who wrote 'The Daffodils'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge – one of the Lake Poets, who was a friend of Wordsworth; his most famous poem is 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' written in 1789

Beatrix Potter – a famous 19th-century children's author who lived and wrote in the Lake District; she wrote *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and 23 other animal tales

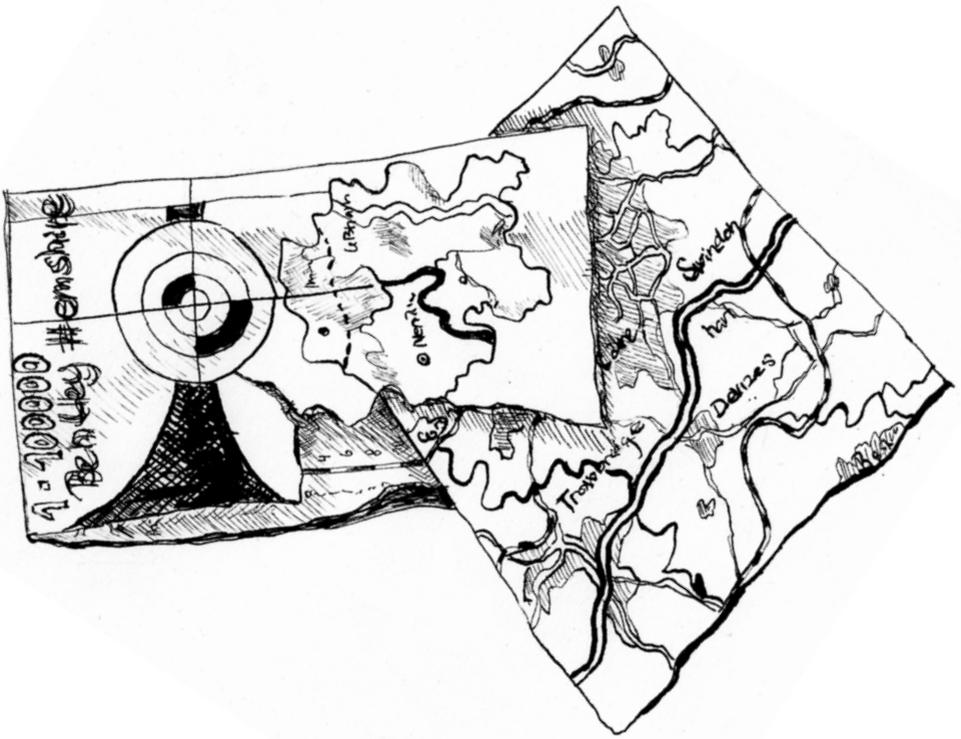
Arthur Ransome – a children's author in the 1930s who wrote adventure stories set in and around the Lake District. His most famous book is *Swallows and Amazons*.



90 **converted barn** – an old barn (a building in which animals or hay – dry grass – are kept) that's been made livable with heating and running water

91 **rough it** – live without pleasures and amenities (things making life more pleasant) like water and heating

92 **riff raff** – undesirable people, the lowest of the low in society



So by 4.30pm it was dark, and we had to cook dinner on our gas camping stove and somehow try to get the wet wood to light so we could have some heat. It was all very romantic for about 20 minutes, but then I was ready to check into an expensive hotel. After we got the fire going and defrosted • a bit, in the end it was very nice, but we still went to bed at 8pm – it’s amazing how having no electric light makes one tired.

The Lake District, or the Lakes as it’s more commonly called, is in the north-east of England and was created by glacial erosion⁹⁵ that left behind a mountainous landscape. Now it is one of the most popular national parks in the UK. It’s a beautiful area of the country, and the national park is in the middle of applying for World Heritage

● LANGUAGE POINT

The prefix *de-* can be used to suggest removing something or something moving away. For example:

defrost – to remove frost or ice

declaw – to remove claws from an animal (like a cat)

demystify – to take away the mystery, make clearer

93 **glacial erosion** – a geological process where glaciers slowly move and cut out the landscape, typically leaving U-shaped valleys

status⁹⁴ with UNESCO. However, what struck me (came to mind) walking around on some of the hiking trails was how much the locals are as much a part of the heritage site as the rocks around them. There were sheep grazing (eating grass) everywhere, stone walls⁹⁵ crossed the landscape, farmhouses dotted the hillsides and pretty villages were scattered⁹⁶ all over the place. On one hand, I was able to satisfy my coffee addiction in cute cafes, and on the other we hiked up trails without a person, road or sheep in sight to enjoy the 360-degree views of the tarns and fells⁹⁷ below.

The Lakes are also the home of the ‘romantic poets’ of the 19th century, so we passed ‘Wordsworth’s museum’, and the house where Coleridge stayed. All the kids around here grew up with *Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter and an adventure book called *Swallows and Amazons* by Arthur Ransome. But we weren’t here for a literature tour, we were here



gas camping stove – a small portable stove that you can carry around with you to heat water or food

RIDDLE

How many lakes are there in the Lake District?

Only one! Bassenthwaite Lake. The rest (over 80 of them) are known as ‘meres*’, ‘tarns’ or just ‘waters’.

* **mere** – a small pond of standing (not moving) water

94 **World Heritage status** – a natural or man-made site or area that is considered important to preserve, protected by the international organization UNESCO

95 **stone wall** – a typical wall or barrier in the English countryside made of stones laid on top of one another

96 **scattered** – covering an area in all directions like small drops

97 **without... in sight to enjoy the 360-degree views of the tarns and fells** – we didn’t see... and enjoyed a full circle view of the lakes and hills (tarn – a mountain lake formed by glaciers; fell – a local name for a hill)

to go walking – even if it meant getting wet. We were lucky we did have a few dry days, but after the rain (and it's known to rain a lot in the Lakes) we nicknamed it the 'wet district'.

As the misty rain fell, we decided wisely not to try to 'conquer' the highest peak, Scafell Pike, which is almost 1,000 metres high. It's not only famous for being the tallest peak in England, but also for the amount of hikers that get lost there! The paths criss-cross on the way down so it's easy to lose your way, especially when it's misty. My cousin was one of the lost hikers; she was on her first 'romantic' weekend away with her boyfriend and agreed to the walking challenge. When the fog rolled in (arrived), they couldn't find the pathway down, and after nine hours of walking, crying, arguing, swearing and tearing up maps they finally made it to the bottom. I didn't fancy (want) that adventure.

We definitely satisfied our 'nature' craving (hunger) and we'll definitely do it again – just maybe next time in the summer!

'BACK TO BLIGHTY'

In conclusion

I've been back in Blighty for a few months now, and it was a shock that it wasn't much of a shock being back here. We just seamlessly slotted into (easily fitted in) life back in the UK after living in the Czech Republic for a couple of years.

I think it's mainly because the kids started English school with no problems, and even though the school day is longer (they finish at 3.30pm) and the way of teaching is very different (lots of essays and less memorizing facts), they somehow got on with it. And I still have to pay the bills, walk the dog and do the shopping – it doesn't matter which country I'm in; that daily stuff just has to be done!

But it's only recently that I've noticed that I'm a bit more relaxed, my shoulders have returned back into their normal position instead of being hunched (raised up) to my ears. That's because I don't feel 'on alert'⁹⁸ all the time – I don't have to concentrate until my brain aches,

98 **on alert** – ready for danger or looking around and being aware

or fear that I've mispronounced a word in Czech and everyone's laughing at me.

When you live abroad and have to communicate in a foreign language, you have to be 'switched on' all the time and it can be quite exhausting. Right now I'm enjoying being 'switched off'⁹⁹. I don't have to worry any more that I've said something completely wrong or inappropriate to the lady at the tax office who doesn't speak English, or get frustrated when I don't know the word 'enamel paint'¹⁰⁰, in OBI. Or my worst fear, sitting in the classroom at parents' evening¹⁰¹ in my kids' Czech school pretending I knew what the teacher was saying. Utterly terrifying.

However, I often think about beautiful Prague, or how easy it is to jump in a car or on a bus and be out in the lovely Czech countryside where I can stop off at a pub to have a beer and a *smažený sýr*. I miss things like *housky* and Czech bread, and delicious cakes at the *cukrárna*. And snow. I definitely miss the snow. But I don't miss the aggressive and awful Czech drivers on the roads, nor some of the rude and grumpy (moody) people in the shops.

Coming back, I can't help but notice the amount of people everywhere; the UK is a crowded country. It was lovely going to the Lake District and seeing open spaces without roads or even people. But in contrast, I also love London because it's buzzing with energy and people, there are so many exciting places to go and lots of interesting museums. Some things have changed a lot, like the local high street and shopping habits; there are lots of new types of job opportunities that didn't exist before. There are always the latest trends to catch up on, the current TV shows to watch and new celebrities to gawp¹⁰² at.

But some things just tick along¹⁰³ and stay the same. British people just can't help saying 'sorry' all the time, it continues to rain, you can still buy a lukewarm (slightly warm) pint in the local pub, drink tea with friends and eat decent salt-and-vinegar crisps.

99 **to be switched on/off** – to be awake and alert / to be relaxed and not having to watch what's happening around you

100 **enamel paint** – a glossy shiny sticky type of paint, used to paint doors, for example

101 **parents' evening** – when parents go to talk to the teachers about how their children are doing

102 **to gawp** – to stare or look at someone directly (sometimes in a rude way)

103 **to tick along** – like a clock, to continue or carry on with no problem



What is different though is the way I see things now. I have a little bit more of an ‘outsider’s point of view¹⁰⁴’ after having lived abroad. I can see things with new perspective and realise that there’s also another way of doing things that isn’t always the British way. I can even say there’s a little bit of Czech in me – whether it’s being a bit more outdoorsy (we Brits have a tendency to be couch potatoes¹⁰⁵), cooking *česnečka* soup or making *chlebičky* when guests come round, or wearing my slippers... but never in the office!

104 **outsider’s point of view** – to see things from the outside looking in

105 **couch potato** – a person who spends a lot of time sitting at home, watching TV, etc.

VOCABULARY TASKS

EATING IN BRITAIN

TASK 1

Match the words about British cuisine with their Czech translations.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1 porridge | A bez chuti |
| 2 mustard | B bylinky |
| 3 herbs | C česnek |
| 4 turnip | D hořčice |
| 5 flavourless | E kari (kousky masa v pikantní omáčce) |
| 6 bland | F ovesná kaše |
| 7 garlic | G mdlý |
| 8 curry | H slanina |
| 9 cabbage | I tuřín, vodnice (kořenová zelenina) |
| 10 bacon | J zelí |

TASK 2

Do you know the difference between the meaning of *chips* in British and American English?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 chips (<i>BrE</i>) | A chipsy, brambůrky |
| 2 chips (<i>AmE</i>) | B hranolky |

VIRTUAL TRAVEL AROUND THE UK

TASK 3

Write the opposites for the adjectives describing the UK.

- 1 eccentric _____
- 2 interesting _____
- 3 friendly _____
- 4 dirty _____
- 5 expensive _____
- 6 overcrowded _____

THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

TASK 4

Match the words connected to work and jobs with their Czech translations.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1 carpenter | A instalatér |
| 2 plumber | B na volné noze |
| 3 painter | C zaměstnanec |
| 4 freelance | D malíř (pokojů) |
| 5 contract | E plat |
| 6 salary | F smlouva |
| 7 employee | G tesař |

TASK 5

Write the full (non-shortened) forms of the following words:

- advert _____
- apps _____

STRANGE CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE UK

TASK 6

Choose the correct Czech translation for the underlined words and phrases.

If you're in the UK, **1** you can't fail to notice the firework displays going off all over the country.

- 1** A nemůžete si všimnout B nemůžete si nevšimnout

But **2** unlike Bonfire Night or the Lewes burns, it's a modern-day tradition that started only twenty years ago.

- 2** A na rozdíl od B stejně jako

It was created as a **3** way for people to come together and celebrate the festive season **4** no matter what their religion.

- 3** A cesta B způsob

- 4** A bez ohledu na B kvůli

'Jack' is a symbolic **5** representation of spring and is usually a man covered **6** head to toe in green foliage (leaves).

- 5** A zpodobnění B reprezentace

- 6** A na hlavě a nohách B od hlavy k patě

SOLUTIONS

TASK 1: 1F, 2D, 3B, 4I, 5A, 6G, 7C, 8E, 9J, 10H

TASK 2: 1B, 2A

TASK 3: 1 normal; 2 boring; 3 hostile, unfriendly; 4 clean; 5 cheap; 6 empty

TASK 4: 1G, 2A, 3D, 4B, 5F, 6E, 7C

TASK 5: 1 advertisement, 2 applications

TASK 6: 1B, 2A, 3B, 4A, 5A, 6B



Jo Molloy is a British journalist and writer. After living in the Czech Republic for two years, where she got used to wearing slippers in the office, eating *párek v rohlíku* and ordering *svařák*, she has returned back to the UK, where she has to learn to drink warm beer again, eat cheese-and-pickle sandwiches and remember to queue politely instead of pushing in.