



Customs and traditions

"An Englishman, even if he is alone, forms an orderly queue of one!"

George Mikes

One English politician commented that Englishness could be summed up by warm beer and cricket. He was, of course, demonstrating another typical British characteristic: a sense of humour and being able to laugh at oneself.

National characteristics

The British are famous for fair play, sportsmanship, the cult of the amateur, preferring middle ways to extremism or fanaticism, not fervently patriotic, prone to running themselves down. Taking part is more important than winning, so children must be trained to be good losers. Being too clever or aware of your own abilities does not endear you to the British who respect modesty and understatement. The English Lord with his wealth and owning huge properties may often be the worst dressed man in the room, because it is vulgar to show off

your wealth. The Italian might drive a red Ferrari with 800 horsepower, but the Englishman prefers a dark green Bentley where the manufacturer never publicly announced how powerful the engine was, just saying that it was enough.

The British not only have a soft spot for eccentrics, they are positively celebrated. Only in the UK could a political party called the Monster Raving Loony Party be allowed to take a serious part in national elections. Then there is the English humour. The British know how to laugh at themselves and everyone up to the Prime Minister or the Queen must expect to be the object of humour.

Tradition is never far from the British. Tourists come from all over the world to see the Changing of the Guard in London, the Trooping of the Colour, or The Lord Mayor's Show even though they have little relevance to life in England today. Old medieval universities with archaic customs are still held by