

11. Notable days in Great Britain

14th of February; Valentine's Day

Historically the Feast of St. Valentine, nowadays this is a celebration of romance. Many people in the UK go out for dinner with their sweethearts, and give them a Valentine's card, chocolate or flowers. If you're single, you might receive an anonymous card from a 'secret admirer'!

25th – 28th of March; Easter Weekend

Easter is a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is always on a Sunday in March or April (called Easter Sunday), and the previous Friday (Good Friday) and following Monday (Easter Monday) are bank holidays. People celebrate Easter in different ways, but many give each other chocolate eggs and eat 'hot cross buns' (sweet buns with a cross design), while children decorate eggs or take part in Easter egg hunts.

13th of June; The Queen's Official Birthday (Elizabeth II. is ~90 y.o.)

Although the Queen's real birthday is on the 21st of April, it has been a tradition since 1748 to celebrate the king or queen's birthday in June. A military parade known as Trooping the Colour is held in London, attended by the Royal Family.

23rd – 24th of June; Midsummer Night

Known as the summer solstice, Midsummer represents the middle of summer and the longest day of the year. Midsummer is traditionally celebrated in England on June 24 with Midsummer Night celebrated on June 23. Steeped in tradition and ancient belief, Midsummer Night is a time for celebration and ritual surrounding the power of the sun, fairies and spirits.

Midsummer Night in theatre:

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a Shakespeare stage play. The play concerns fairies, spirits and dreams on the night before Midsummer.

31st of October; Halloween

The modern way of celebrating Halloween is based on the Christian feast of All Hallows' Eve and the Celtic festival of Samhain. Children go trick-or-treating (knocking on neighbours' doors to ask for sweets) or carve pumpkins, while older students go to parties and Halloween events at pubs, clubs or Students' Unions. The important thing is to dress up as gruesomely as you dare!

5th of November; Guys Fawkes Night

Also known as Guy Fawkes Day, Bonfire Night and Firework Night. Historically, this marks the anniversary of Guy Fawkes' plot to blow up the House of Lords and assassinate King James I in 1605 – the failed 'gunpowder plot' is remembered in the children's rhyme 'Remember, remember the 5th of November; gunpowder, treason and plot'. Today, it is commemorated with spectacular displays of fireworks.

11th of November; Remembrance Day

Is a memorial day to honour members of the armed forces. The aim is to remember those who lost their lives in battle, so many peace campaigners also support the event. The Royal British Legion charity sells paper poppy flowers to raise funds for veterans and their families (the poppy is a symbol of Remembrance Day), and it is customary to observe a two-minute silence at 11am.