

### Quirky spring customs in the United Kingdom



There are plenty of weird and wonderful events going on in the UK this springtime. Anyone for cheese-rolling or bottle-kicking? Or perhaps something less active like a scarecrow festival?

Cheese-rolling takes place in two locations in England: You can watch people throw themselves down a steep, grassy bank at Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire, where contestants chase a weighty Double Gloucester cheese down the death-defying slopes. But be careful! Injuries are common; in 1997 there were 33 people who needed hospital treatment. The race along the road in Stilton,

Cambridgeshire, is less dangerous than its counterpart at Cooper's Hill. The Stilton cheese-rolling starts at the Bell Inn in the middle of the village and each team of four (often in fancy dress) has to roll the cheese by hand to the finishing line. And the prize? – A Stilton cheese, of course!

Click here for more information about the Gloucestershire event on 25<sup>th</sup> May:

<http://www.cheese-rolling.co.uk/index1.htm>.

And click here for information about the Stilton cheese-rolling event on 4th May:

<http://www.stilton.org/cheese-rolling/>.

Bottle-kicking (or to give its full title, Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle-Kicking) can be seen in Hallaton in Leicestershire and can be traced back over 200 years. A large hare pie is paraded through the village, preceded by a man holding a large metal hare. At the rear of the procession three men are carrying three small barrels (referred to as bottles) and these are used as balls. The procession is followed later in the day by an unruly 'rugby' game between Hallaton and its neighbouring village, Melbourne. Rules are pretty non-existent (with the exception of no eye-gouging, no strangling and no use of weapons) and the aim of the game is to get the 'bottle' over the touchline in the opponent's village.

If you want to see a wild game of 'rugby', then be in Hallaton on Easter Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> of April.

For more information click here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bottle-kicking>.

But perhaps you would prefer something a little less boisterous? Then you can visit one of the scarecrow festivals held in springtime: in Wray in Lancashire and Urchfont in Wiltshire. Both festivals encourage visitors to wander through the pretty villages, admiring the scarecrows. In Wray, visitors can vote for their favourite scarecrow, while in Urchfont, visitors can do a cryptic quiz identifying the scarecrows. There is usually a theme, for example Films & Shows, Trivial Pursuits, Pairs, and TV Advertisements. The theme for 2013 is Singers.

Click here to find out more about the Wray Scarecrow Festival taking place between 25th April and 4th May:

<http://www.wrayvillage.co.uk/scarecrows/scarecrows.htm>.

And click here for more information about the Urchfont Scarecrow Festival which takes place at the beginning of May:

[http://www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk/News\\_and\\_Events/Scarecrow\\_Festival.aspx](http://www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk/News_and_Events/Scarecrow_Festival.aspx).

And if you would like to use the scarecrow festival as a topic in your lesson from A2.1 upwards, we have

- provided you with an introductory activity (see Activity 1 on the next page)
- suggested two extension activities (see Activity 2 and Activity 3).

You'll find all this in the following **Teacher's notes** and on the **Worksheets**.

## Teacher's notes

### Activity 1 (Introductory activity, level A2.1 and upwards, 10+ mins)

Make one copy of **Scarecrow Festival** (see Worksheet (1)) for each student. Write 'scarecrow' on the board (or draw a picture). Explain that 'scare' in German is *verscheuchen* and 'crow' is *Krähe*. Ask what students know about scarecrows, e.g.: *Do you find them in a field? Do you find them in a town?*

Explain that in the UK there are several scarecrow festivals and students are going to learn about one in Urchfont, Wiltshire in the south of England.

Distribute the gap-fill exercise and ask students to complete the text, using the words below the text. When everyone has finished, check answers together.

**Key:** (1) field (2) hat (3) birds (4) gardens (5) trousers (6) visitors (7) streets (8) quiz (9) prize (10) May

If you would like to extend this activity, then look back at the three themes mentioned in the text: films and shows, pairs, singers and do Activity 2 or 3.

### Activity 2 (level A2.1 and upwards, 10+ mins)

Ask students which films and shows might have been used for the scarecrow festival. (Examples: The King and I, Titanic, Oklahoma, Beauty and the Beast, Star Wars) Which pairs? (Examples: Adam and Eve, Romeo and Juliet, black and white, cats and dogs) Which singers? (Examples: Lady Gaga, Elvis Presley, a church choirboy, a carol singer)

Ask students how the scarecrows would represent the film / show or musical / pair / singer. What kind of clothes would the scarecrows wear? What would they look like?

### Activity 3 (level A2.1 and upwards, 20+ mins)

Make one copy of **Word pairs** (see Worksheet (2)) for each pair of students. Cut out the single boxes. Keep one copy uncut for the key.

Remind students of the pairs in Activity 2 above: black and white, cats and dogs. Explain that the order of the pairs is usually fixed. We seldom say 'white and black', for example.

Distribute the cut-up pairs and ask students to match them.

Help if necessary and check the answers together.

Ask students how the pairs could be used in a scarecrow festival, e.g.:

*A family of scarecrows are eating a big plate of fish and chips.*

Ask students to work with a partner and make sentences about themselves using the word pairs, e.g.:

*I often / never use a cup and saucer to drink tea.*

## Worksheet (1)

### Scarecrow Festival

*Complete the text using the words below.*

You often see scarecrows standing in the middle of a (1) \_\_\_\_\_. They wear old clothes and have a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ on their heads. They scare away (3) \_\_\_\_\_, including crows. But at the Scarecrow Festival in the village of Urchfont in Wiltshire, the scarecrows stand in people's (4) \_\_\_\_\_, near their houses. The scarecrows wear very special clothes, not just old shirts and (5) \_\_\_\_\_. Every year the festival organisers decide on a special theme, for example: films and shows; and pairs. In 2013 the theme is singers. Hundreds of (6) \_\_\_\_\_ walk along the pretty (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of Urchfont and admire the scarecrows. There is a (8) \_\_\_\_\_ which you can complete and of course there is a (9) \_\_\_\_\_ for the best-dressed scarecrow. The three-day festival takes place every year at the start of (10) \_\_\_\_\_.

birds field hat gardens May prize quiz streets trousers visitors

## Worksheet (2)

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fish and	chips	bacon and	eggs
cat and	mouse	cowboys and	Indians
bread and	butter	peace and	quiet
gin and	tonic	safe and	sound
bride and	groom	snakes and	ladders
thunder and	lightening	cup and	saucer
knife and	fork	right and	wrong
salt and	pepper	ladies and	gentlemen
sweet and	sour	name and	address
husband and	wife	read and	write