

## EASY ENGLISH // THIS MONTH

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LANGUAGE LEVEL: A2-PRE-INTERMEDIATE

# A WILD WEEKEND

## AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY

Aunque fue pionero en la idea de vacaciones pagadas, Inglaterra es el país de Europa con menos días de fiesta. Puentes solo hay ocho y se hacen siempre en lunes.

**A**s August comes to an end, summer is considered almost over in England and Wales! However, there is one more occasion for celebration: August 31st is Summer Bank Holiday. What do people do on a Bank Holiday? Firstly, everyone looks up at the sky and prays for sunshine<sup>1</sup>. Then thousands jump

into their cars and drive to the coast for the day; others go walking in the country, while some prefer to stay at home and relax.

### MODS AND ROCKERS

Britain's Bank holidays began in the 19th century when ordinary people first took trains to nearby seaside resorts<sup>2</sup>. In the 1960s, notorious gangs of Mods and Rockers spent the day fighting on the beaches of Scarborough, Brighton and Margate. In the film *Quadrophenia*, Sting appears as a mod with short hair, Italian suit and a scooter. The rockers wore black leather<sup>3</sup> and rode motorbikes.

### THE VICTORIANS

A Bank Holiday is a public holiday, but unlike other countries which celebrate specific dates, Britain's bank holidays are always on a Monday. So, while Europe celebrates May 1st, England celebrates the first Monday in May. The Summer Bank Holiday is the last Monday in August. Bank holidays were created by Sir John Lubbock in 1871, and introduced the concept of paid holidays to Britain.



Mods on mopeds with many mirrors. In the '60s, gangs would fight Rockers in English coastal towns. Below left: the older tradition of Morris dancing.

### GOOD FRIDAY

The name 'bank holiday' comes from the fact that banks must close on these days. Banks also close on Good Friday<sup>4</sup> (before Easter) and Christmas Day, but these are traditional common law holidays<sup>5</sup>, not Bank holidays. Lubbock introduced these holidays for two reasons: firstly, so that bills<sup>6</sup> due<sup>7</sup> on a bank holiday are automatically paid on the following day; and secondly, to standardize holidays for working people.

There are eight bank holidays in England, the lowest number of public holidays in Europe. Even Scotland has nine!

### GLOSSARY

- 1 TO PRAY FOR SUNSHINE: rezar para que haga sol
- 2 SEASIDE RESORT: lugar de veraneo en la costa
- 3 LEATHER: cuero
- 4 GOOD FRIDAY: Viernes Santo
- 5 COMMON LAW: derecho consuetudinario [lo de usos y costumbres]
- 6 BILL: factura
- 7 (TO BE) DUE: vencer
- 8 PLUM: ciruela
- 9 HUNTING LODGE: cabaña de cazadores
- 10 TO STEP BACK: retroceder
- 11 SCREAM: grito
- 12 LAUGHTER: risas
- 13 HEADLESS: sin cabeza
- 14 GHOST: fantasma

