

THE POND HOPPER



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TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL TO THE U.K. & IRELAND FOR INDEPENDENT AND GROUP TRAVELERS

SUMMER / AUTUMN 2011

The British Isles: Not All Stuffed Shirts & Pageantry

The average American calls to mind a certain image when hearing the word "Britain." London taxicabs, butlers serving the elite in oak-paneled mansions, afternoon tea (pinkies extended) with scones and clotted cream. Generally, in our "Yankee" minds, the idea tends to be one of dignity, class, and grace. May we be permitted to add another dimension to this upper-crust image?

Allow us to serve up a bit of silliness. Think *Monty Python*, *Benny Hill*, and yes, even *The Full Monty*. Enjoy a chuckle over these real place names, found throughout the British Isles. (If you thought *your* town or street name was embarrassing, imagine having to explain these ones.)

In England

- Bachelors Bump, Essex
- Beef Lane, Oxfordshire
- Beer, Devon

- Broadbottom, Cheshire
- Cockpit Hill, Derbyshire
- Coldwind, Cornwall
- Crackpot, North Yorkshire
- Crapstone, Devon
- Devil's Lapful, Northumberland
- Fanny Barks, Durham
- Feltwell, Norfolk
- Giggleswick, Staincliffe, Nth. Yorkshire
- Happy Bottom, Dorset
- Juggs Close, East Sussex
- Knockerdown, Derbyshire
- North Piddle, Worcestershire
- Ogle Close, Merseyside
- Over Peover, Cheshire
- Pant, Shropshire
- Piddle River, Dorset
- Ramsbottom, Lancashire
- Scratchy Bottom, Dorset
- Shittington., Bedfordshire
- Six Mile Bottom, Cambridge
- Splatt, Cornwall
- The Blind Fiddler, Cornwall
- Thong, Kent
- Ugley, Essex
- Weedon Lois, Northampton
- Wet Rain, Yorkshire
- Wideopen, Newcastle
- Winkle Street, Southampton

In Scotland & Wales

- Backside, Aberdeenshire
- Ballownie, Angus
- Bladda, Paisley
- Boghead, Ayrshire
- Brokenwind, Aberdeenshire
- East Breast, Inverclyde
- Fannyfield, Ross and Cromarty
- Fattiehead, Banffshire
- Long Lover Lane, Halifax
- Tarty, Aberdeenshire
- The Bastard (a mountain in



- Scotland)
 - Pant-y-Felin Road, Swansea
 - St. Mellons, Cardiff
 - Stop-and-Call, Pembrokeshire
 - Tarts Hill, Flintshire, Wales

We promise... these names have not been fabricated!

Next, let's talk about what the Brits do that gives them that wonderfully dry sense of humor. In fact, this "wackiness" is something in which you can partake! Throughout the year, events take place in the British Isles that are truly unique. Here are just a few:

Every September, the *basadóiri* (matchmakers) descend upon the small village of Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare, Ireland for the annual **Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival**. People from all over the world flock to this bedlam in hopes of finding a kindred spirit. While it's not something to take too seriously, it is, indeed, a good bit of "*craic*". This month-long festival offers fun, lots of flirting, drink, and dance. Visit the festival's website at: www.MatchMakerIreland.com

(continued on page 2)

Airfare Tips for International Travelers

It seems as though one of the hurdles which often prevents international travel is airfare. It is a sad but true fact that flying isn't like it used to be. It's less comfortable, more expensive, and takes longer (think airport security lines.) But there are a few ways that the "pain" of travel can be eased a little... at least on your pocketbook.

First, think "*middle*." Flying in the middle of the week, the middle of the day, or even the middle of the weekend can often lower your airfare, as there is less demand for these flights. (This could also, possibly, mean an empty seat next to you... room to stretch out a bit.)

Secondly, if you have the time and patience, consider flights with stops in them. Nonstop flights are almost always more expensive. If you aren't elderly, or traveling with children, this can be a price-reducing option.

Lastly, be flexible. The more flexible you are on dates and airports from which you might leave (as opposed to the airport nearest you), the more likely you are to find a better fare.

One last tip - while online booking engines may have great deals, their customer service can be lacking, especially if your flight is delayed or cancelled. Be sure you always have travel insurance to guarantee that any unanticipated airfare costs can be refunded.

Happy flying!



- Beggars Bush, Sussex
- Bishops Itchington, Staffordshire
- Bitchfield, Lincolnshire
- Booty Lane, No. Yorkshire

The British Isles...

(continued from page 1)

When one thinks of “gravy”, does the idea of wrestling come to mind? It does for those who participate in **The World Gravy Wrestling Championships**, now celebrating its 5th year! The event is made up of 16 men and 8 women who are willing to “wrestle” in, what else, but Lancashire Gravy, for at least 2 minutes. Fancy dress (i.e., costumes) are encouraged. Despite the savory mess, the important thing to remember is that this event is all about raising money for charity while having a bit of fun. The event is sponsored by East Lancashire Hospice and all proceeds on the day are donated to them. You can visit the website at:

www.worldgravywrestling.com

Don't fancy washing gravy out of your hair? For those who prefer athletic competition with a lower sodium content, there's always the **Olney Pancake Race**. Sorry lads, this one's for the ladies, only. As bizarre as it is amusing, this race, held on Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras), boasts hundreds of Olney women dressed in “traditional housewife” costumes running down the street, holding pancake filled frying pans. Participants must toss their pancakes from the beginning to the end of this race. The tradition is reputed to have begun in the 15th century when a local housewife heard the ringing of the bell summoning the congregation to church while she was making her Shrove Tuesday pancakes – in a rush, she raced to church carrying her frying pan (pancake included). Today the ringing of the church bell still signals the start of the race. The course is 415 yards long and all proceeds, of course, go to charity - a great way to have fun and support a good cause! For more information about the Olney Pancake Races, visit:

www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/site/events/olney-pancake-race-p692671

Tossing pancakes and wrestling not your cup of tea? Prefer a more cerebral experience? How about considering **The Biggest Liar in the World Contest**? This truth-stretching event is held every November at the Bridge Inn, Santon Bridge in Cumbria, in memory of Will

Ritson (1808–1890), a pub landlord from Wasdale, who was well known for his “tall tales”. Competitors from around the world have five minutes to tell the biggest and most convincing lie they can. Competition rules bar the use of props or scripts. For blatantly obvious reasons, Politicians and Lawyers are banned from entering the competition, as “they are judged to be too skilled at telling porkies”. (See Page 3 - Auntie Mabel's column for a further explanation about porkies.) Visit the liar's website at:

www.santonbridgeinn.com/liar

Say cheese! Say cheese rolling! You read that correctly... Double Gloucester Cheese Rolling to be precise. Every May, those with a passion for cheese (and rolling down hills at breakneck speeds) attend the annual **Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling and Wake** in Gloucestershire. Daredevils literally hurl themselves down the steep, grassy slopes of Coopers Hill in pursuit of Double Gloucester cheeses. There are downhill races throughout the afternoon including separate races for men and for women. The race starts with

All this work...



... for this! A delicious Double Gloucester!

the master of ceremonies rolling a 7 to 8 lb. Double Gloucester “cheese wheel” down the hill. Dozens of competitors run, roll and somersault down the hill after it. It is impossible not to fall over due to the rough uneven slope with a 1:2 gradient. The winners take home the cheeses as well as cuts and bruises. The unique event dates back to medieval times. Beware: we advise this event to you strictly as a spectator. Should you choose to participate, know that this will most likely cause injury and an irreversible lowering of IQs. Ambulances and rescue units await “runners” at the bottom of the hill. But, despite its history of causing everything from sprained ankles to concussions, it is still one of the most popular events in the U.K. today. For more information on this cheesy event, visit:

www.cheese-rolling.co.uk

Lots more events abound such as the World Pooh Sticks Championships, Husky Racing, Bottle Kicking and Hare Pie Scramble, Nettle Eating, Eel Day, Shin Kicking, Toe Wrestling, Egg Throwing, Pea Shooting, Snail Racing, Black Pudding Throwing, a Pumpkin Parade, and of course, a Christmas Pudding Tossing Race. (Finally we know the purpose of a Christmas Pudding!)

There's an old saying, “There's none so queer as folk.” True, indeed! Whatever oddity strikes your fancy, you won't want to miss attending at least one of these crazy, fun-filled events! We can take you there. Call Across the Pond Vacations today. We'll create a custom-designed tour to England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland that has you smiling, laughing and enjoying a good time!

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Auntie Mabel's Corner

Hello again, my darling poppets! Auntie Mabel here! Today, I'm going to introduce you to a sort of silly *language*, called "Cockney Rhyming Slang."

Believed to have originated in the mid-19th century, Cockney Rhyming Slang was, and still is, used primarily in the East End of London (as well as other parts of the U.K.). It remains a matter of speculation whether rhyming slang was a linguistic accident, a game, or if it was created as a sort of "secret language" among criminals (the most common theory being that it was used by convicts to communicate with one another). Regardless of its origins, it is definitely a good bit of fun!

The idea of Cockney Rhyming Slang is this: You have a set of phrases with no particular meaning, whatsoever. These phrases rhyme with the word one is trying to (secretly) communicate. Once you learn them, in conversation they are only relayed by the first word of this phrase. Example: Cockney Rhyming Slang = "Going home to see the *trouble*." (The unspoken part becomes, "Going home to see the *trouble and strife*." Trouble and strife = wife.)

What the sentence means is: "Going home to see the *wife*." Here are just a few of my favourites!

- Adam and Eve – believe
- Baked bean – Queen
- Barney Rubble – trouble
- Bees and honey – money
- Duke of Kent – rent
- Elephant's trunk – drunk
- Fireman's hose – nose
- Kick and Prance – dance
- Lady Godiva – fiver
- Pat and Mick – sick
- Peckham Rye – tie
- Porky Pie – lie (see page 2 of this newsletter)
- Rosy Lee – tea (drink)
- Round the houses – trousers
- Rub-a-Dub – pub
- Septic tank – Yank
- Sky Rocket – pocket
- Tea leaf – thief
- Tomfoolery – jewelry
- Trouble and strife – wife
- Vera Lynn – gin

Well, I think I'll join the Baked down the rub for a Rosy... probably a Vera. We surely won't get like an elephant's, which could cause some Barney, but we may just kick a bit. I've only got a Lady on me, not much bees, so I won't be too late back.

Can you translate this? Bye for now, my darling poppets!

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Offer valid through December 31, 2011. Booking must be made (and non-refundable deposit received from client) by December 31, 2011. Referral fee of \$100 paid to referrer if party traveling consists of at least 2 people. Coupon must be presented to Across the Pond Vacations to receive \$100.00. \$100.00 is maximum payable amount to referrer, regardless of maximum party size or incidents of referral. Only one referral fee paid per household, per lifetime.

THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS

Not since 1948 has London had the prestigious honor of hosting the Olympics. And, 2012 promises to be an exciting and busy year for the city! Londoners are working hard in preparation for the upcoming Summer events, which will be held from July 27th through August 12th, 2012 with 302 events taking place in 26 sports. In addition to the Olympic games, the city has the privilege of hosting the Paralympic Games as well, which will take place from August 29th until September 9th 2012, in which 503 events will be held in 21 sports. Events will take place in numerous venues both in and out of the city of London.

Tickets for residents of the United States can only be purchased through CoSport (visit <https://www.cosport.com/> for more information). However, Across the Pond Vacations (<http://www.atpvacations.com/>) would be happy to arrange your travel,



whether you'd like to visit London, only, for the Olympics, or take advantage of being in the U.K. and experience all that Britain has to offer. Across the Pond Vacations will custom-design your tour! (And, if you fancy, how about a trip across the Irish Sea to the Emerald Isle? Or a couple of nights in Paris via the "Chunnel"? We can help you with both!)

For those interested in traveling to the U.K. in 2012 but want to avoid the crowds, we recommend visiting outside of the dates specified above. There

will be greater availability and crowds will be more manageable.

Whether or not you choose to visit London during the Summer Games, the best thing about the Olympics is the spirit! Because whether you're from the U.S., the U.K., Nigeria or Norway, the Olympic spirit brings us all together as citizens of one world. ☺

Hungry for the Best Britain's Top Ten Tea Rooms

Let's face it - nobody on earth "does tea" like the British! Is there anything more relaxing and elegant than sitting down to a proper Afternoon Cream Tea? After all, this is a population which consumes 165 million cups of it, *daily!* It is the national drink. And whether you are a Duke or a doorman, a barrister or a barmaid, tea is timeless. (Tea's antioxidants make it good for you, too!)

A recent poll was conducted by Visit Britain which asked the people of the U.K. where their favorite places were to take tea. Here's what they had to say. (Listed in no particular order.)

The Wolseley, London

Sitting sedately on grand thoroughfare Piccadilly, The Wolseley was designed as an art deco car showroom in the early 1920s. These days it serves one of the best teas in London in a gorgeous space. Order tea with scones, homemade jam and a selection of pastries in these imposing but surprisingly relaxed surroundings.

Bettys, Harrogate

Opened in 1919 by Swiss confectioner Frederick Belmont, the sense of history at Bettys is matched only by the quality of the tea tasting experience. Select a brew from 50 teas and a bewildering array of cakes, tarts, pastries and sandwiches.

The Attic, Bristol

The Attic is chic, simple and sophisticated. The emphasis at this minimalist tea house is firmly on the quality of the tea, the non-fussy décor, designer china and refreshing, expertly

prepared tea.

The Tea Cosy, Brighton

Swathed in Royal paraphernalia, The Tea Cosy in Brighton brings you a choice of regal teas with names like the "Queen Mother 100th Birthday Memorial Cream Tea". House rules include the prohibition of dunking biscuits and resting elbows on the table. Kitsch, camp and with its tongue firmly in its cheek, The Tea Cosy gives you a fabulous taste of what makes Brighton fun.

Llangoed Hall, Mid Wales

This 17th-century hall deep within the Welsh countryside makes a great setting for afternoon tea. Try the Welsh Tea with traditional Welshcakes or go all out for the Full Afternoon Tea with homemade scones, sandwiches, biscuits, fruitcake and pastries. Llangoed Hall is a classy and historic setting for tea. Champagne is served if you fancy something a little stronger.

Time for Tea, London

Time for Tea is a 1940s-themed tea shop in the East End of London with an immaculately revamped 40s interior with bone china cups, vintage furniture and gently jazzy, retro tunes.

Tchai-Ovna, Glasgow

Tucked down an alley in the leafy West End, Tchai-Ovna is a relaxed hangout with eclectic furnishings and dark, comfy corners. This 'magic teashop' serves 80 teas and flavorful vegetarian food. Order a pot of Darjeeling First Flush, settle back and play board games, read a book or dream away the

day in a low-key, Bohemian atmosphere.

The Balmoral, Edinburgh

Take tea at the supremely elegant Balmoral. Waiters in immaculate black, a harp plucking gently in the background, stands festooned with cakes brought to your table – it's tea as it should be. Tea in the Bollinger Bar (the Palm Court) is traditional and very elegant, the perfect way to end a day exploring Edinburgh's historic streets.

Leaf Tea Bar, Liverpool

This 'punk' tea bar pairs tea with late-night DJ sets, Wi-Fi and wine in a cool, modern space in arty Elevator Building. It sells 24 loose-leaf teas and there are also tea tastings, live music and exhibitions. Head to the Leaf Tea Bar, stay all day, and see it morph from relaxed daytime tea house to cool late-night club.

The Rose, Oxford

A sanctuary from Oxford's busy streets, The Rose prides itself on providing the very best. Who could resist a tea called 'Phoenix Pearl Dragon'? The Classic Afternoon Tea arrives with organic smoked salmon and cucumber and cream cheese sandwiches followed by homemade scones and cake. Yum!

Whether you prefer sumptuous and sophisticated, or humble and homey, always make time for a "cuppa!"



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