

**Проектная работа учащейся 9 класс А. Харитоновой на тему
The British in Close-up**

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Introduction

I have heard a lot about peculiarities of English people. In a nation of many millions of people, there are different kinds: good and bad, honest and dishonest, happy and unhappy. However, there are some general things. What are they? What is their social profile?

I am interested in the problems concerned the English people and their way of living. So I've decided to choose this theme for my paper to have the opportunity to find some new and interesting facts about them.

And I am interested in peculiarities of British family. Are there families just the same as in our country? Are there any problems?

A social Profile

The population of Britain is 57 million. The British population is already one of the oldest in Europe, and it is slowly getting older. In 1990 the median age in Britain was 36 but it will rise to 41 by 2020. one result will be that by 2020 there will be twice as many people aged 85 or over as in 1990.

Britain is also changing ethnically. There used to be an assumption that the British were nearly all Anglo-Saxon, in spite of the substantial Europe during the first half of the century. Since black people from the Caribbean were recruited to fill job vacancies during the 1950s over two million Afro-Caribbean and Asian people have come to live and work in Britain, becoming 5.7 per cent of Britain's population by 1990.

Social Class

Britain has a deeply individualistic society. Nevertheless, it is also described as having a class-ridden one. Is it really true? The answer is not simple. Undoubtedly Britain is a class-conscious society but this does not mean that society is more divided than, for example, in France. Many people feel that class divisions exist less in reality than in the imagination. In part the sense of division probably comes from that love of hierarchy and sense of difference. Not only the Royal family, but also the surviving titled families and old land-owning families are treated with greater deference than might be expected in a democracy. There can be no doubt that they enjoy special status.

Such a picture suggests a static situation, but in fact there is major movement between classes. Many people move from one category to another or increase their level of responsibility during their working lives. More importantly, the working class is rapidly declining. In 1911 three out of four employed or self-employed people were manual workers. By 1950 that proportion had fallen to two out of three, but since then it has fallen to only one in three. Since the 1950s there has been a massive growth of the middle class.

The middle class embraces a range of people from senior professionals, for example judges, senior medical specialists and senior civil servants, through to clerical workers – in other words, almost all people who earn their living in a non-manual way. Over half of today's middle class started life in the working class.

Beyond the middle class lies a small but powerful upper class, which survives from one generation to another. Although the upper class seems to be merely an extension of the middle class, it is actually, networks and power. For example, the top 1 per cent of wealth holders probably own about one quarter of the nation's wealth. The reason that the top 1 per cent has remained so wealthy, is inheritance. Without inheritance the top 1 per cent would not be able to sustain their position from one generation to another. The core of the class is probably only between 25,000 and 50,000 strong, but they control key areas of capital in the national economy.

English character

The best known quality of the English, for example, is reserve. They do not talk very much to strangers, do not show much emotions, they never tell you anything about themselves. English people rarely shake hands – except when being introduced to someone. They rarely embrace their sons – except when they are very little.

Closely related to English reserve is English modesty. They say that like any other society, the British like to create an agreeable picture of themselves. The majority like to think the important national values are things like tolerance, decency, moderation, consensus and compromise. They are uncomfortable with terms which polarize such as: ideology, liberation, bourgeois, capitalist, collectivist. They like modesty and understatement. The Englishman prefer practical common sense to pure logic.

Privacy

Every Englishman wants privacy. Most people don't like blocks of flats, because they provide the least amount of privacy. Everyone in Britain dreams of living in a detached house, which means a separate building. As the proverb says "An Englishman's Home is His Castle".

Law and custom in Britain support a clear separation between what is public and what is private. To emphasize this division, people prefer to live in a house, set back from the road. This way they can have a garden in front of the house, which separates them from the world. This area may not be very big, but it allows people to have a low fence or a hedge round it. Such a fence announces that here a private property begins.

Flats don't give people enough privacy. Not having a separate entrance to the outside world doesn't suit British tastes. People like to choose the colour of their own front door or window frames. Besides they can have a small garden of their own in front of the house, even if the outside territory is very small- English people usually have flower beds with paths in between, or just patches of grass to express their individuality.

Family

British say : "There is no such thing as society. Only individual men and women, and families" The nuclear family is usually pictured as a married couple, with two children, ideally a girl and a boy, and perhaps their grandmothers, or 'granny'¹, in the background. As a picture of the way most British live, this becomes increasingly unrealistic each year.

Only 42 percent of the population live in nuclear family households, and even within this group a considerable proportion of parents are in their second marriage with children from a previous marriage. In fact, it is expected that the year 2000 only half the children born in Britain will grow up in a conventional family.

Social attitudes and behaviour are undoubtedly changing. The number of people living alone has risen significantly, from one in ten in 1951 to one in four thirty years later. By the end of the century it is expected to rise to *one* in three.

This does not mean that there are fewer marriages in Britain. Marriages are as popular as ever, with 400,000 weddings yearly. But in 1961 85 per cent of all marriages were for the first time, while today 37 per cent are second- time marriages for at least one partner, This figure implies a high yearly divorce rate, and this has risen to be the highest in Europe.

In fact, more than *one* in three first marriages ends in divorce, *one* quarter of first five years. Research shows that the rate is highest among those on a low income and those who marry very young, say under the age of 24.

There has also been an increase in the number of couples choosing to live together but not marry later in life. Other women prefer a measure of

independence by living alone, which they fear they will lose by marriage. The preference of pursuit of career rather than marriage was characteristic of the 1980s.

One inevitable consequence of the climbing divorce rate has been the rise of single parent families. These families often experience isolation and poverty. The great majority of single parents are women. Children, of course, are the main victims. One in three children under the age of five has divorced parents. Forty per cent of children experience the divorce of their parents before the age of eighteen.

There has also been an increase in babies born out -side marriage. They are now described officially as 'non -marital.

Most of the non-marital births are to single mothers, with the rate being highest in areas of high unemployment and the greatest poverty, suggesting to some analysts that the birth of a child gives a woman in such circumstances someone to love, a purpose in life and also state assistance.

Is Britain really in moral decline? It would be safer to say that moral values are changing, with less attention on traditional definitions of immorality, and greater emphasis on personal morality being rooted in kindness and respect for others.

Conclusion.

While working at the paper I've come to the conclusion that the Englishmen have some specific features and characters that traditionally formed in the process of historic development. They have some peculiarities in national self -expression as any other national has in the world.

They differ in traditions and customs. And I can say now the British are sound-thinking and rational people. But still our life problems are alike. There are happy and unhappy families, rich families and poor families. Single mothers suffer the same difficulties with their children and money problems as single mothers in our country.

So, I think we must unite our efforts in solving these problems and help each other through mass media with pieces of advise and consultations how to cope with them.