

## A selection of Unusual and unique UK traditions and customs

A famous event in England is the **Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling and Wake**.

It illustrates British 'eccentricity'!

This annual event, held on the Spring Bank Holiday at Cooper's Hill, near Gloucester in England. Traditionally, people who lived in the local village of Brockworth took part, but now people come from all over the world to participate. In recent years, winners have come from the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and even Nepal.<sup>1</sup>

The event takes its name from the steep hill on which it occurs. Until recent years, it was managed in a quasi-official manner by nominated locals, but since 2010, the event has taken place spontaneously without any management.

A whole Gloucester cheese is set rolling down the slope of the hill and participants begin to chase it. The winner is the person who manages to catch the cheese before it reaches the bottom of the slope.

Many people are injured every year during the event!



### Morris Dancing

**A Morris dance** is a form of traditional English folk dancing, accompanied by music. It is based on rhythmic stepping and the execution of choreographed steps by a group of dancers, wearing bells attached to their trousers. Sometimes sticks, swords and handkerchiefs are also wielded by the dancers. In some dances for just one or two people, the steps are around and over a pair of clay tobacco pipes laid one across the other on the ground.

The earliest mention of Morris dancing dates from 1448, and records the payment of seven shillings to a group of Morris dancers by the Goldsmiths' Company in London. Further mentions of Morris dancing come from the 15th century, together with other dancing activities as well as mumming plays.

Today there are around 150 Morris sides (or teams) in the United States, while English expatriates have formed groups in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Hong Kong. There are even isolated groups in other countries, for example those in Utrecht and Helmond, the Netherlands; in Helsinki, Stockholm and Cyprus.

**To be continued...**