

Comparison of British and Australian National Holidays

Bachelor Thesis

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Čestné prohlášení

„Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma Srovnání britských a australských národních svátků zpracovala samostatně. Použitou literaturu a veškeré podkladové materiály uvádím v příloženém seznamu literatury.“

Ve Velkém Borku dne 6. dubna 2010

podpis.....

Abstract

This thesis deals with a comparison of British and Australian national holidays. It is divided into two main parts. The first chapter is concerned with public holidays in the United Kingdom. Each public holiday creates a section of the chapter. The last section is a comparison of British and Czech public holidays. Australian national holidays are the topic of the second chapter which is also concluded with a comparison of Australian and Czech national holidays.

The aim of this thesis is to provide teachers of the English language with information about national holidays in English speaking countries.

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá porovnáním britských a australských státních svátků. Je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. První kapitola se zabývá jednotlivými národními svátky ve Velké Británii. Každý svátek tvoří jednotlivé podkapitoly. Poslední podkapitolou je srovnání britských a českých státních svátků. Australské státní svátky jsou tématem druhé kapitoly, která je rovněž zakončena srovnáním australských státních svátků s českými.

Cílem této práce je informovat učitele anglického jazyka o státních svátcích anglicky mluvících zemí.

Content

Introduction	5
1. United Kingdom	6
1.1. New Year.....	6
1.2. 2 January	8
1.3. St. Patrick's Day.....	8
1.4. Good Friday.....	10
1.5. Easter	11
1.6. May Day	12
1.7. Spring Bank Holiday	13
1.8. Bank Holiday in Lieu of Battle of the Boyne.....	13
1.9. Summer Bank Holiday	15
1.10. St. Andrew's Day	16
1.11. Christmas Day	17
1.12. Boxing Day	21
1.13. Comparison with the Czech Republic	22
2. Australia.....	24
2.1. New Year's Day	24
2.2. Australia Day.....	24
2.3. Good Friday.....	26
2.4. Easter	26
2.5. ANZAC Day	27
2.6. Queen's Birthday.....	29
2.7. Christmas Day	29
2.8. Boxing Day	30
2.9. Comparison with the Czech Republic	30
3. Conclusion.....	32
4. Resources.....	34
4.1. Bibliography	34
4.2. Electronic Resources	34

Introduction

The proposed thesis explores British and Australian public and national holidays. All British and eight Australian national holidays were selected since the people in the Czech Republic generally have very limited knowledge of British public or Australian national holidays. Czech pupils are usually only taught about Christmas and Easter overlooking the other public holidays. The second reason is the author's desire to visit Australia and learn more about the country.

There are two main chapters, the first one deals with British public holidays, the second one focuses on Australian national holidays. The chapters are divided into sections that take into account particular holidays. Final section of each chapter compares the holidays with those in the Czech Republic.

The aim of this thesis is to familiarize the reader with traditions that are held and to introduce as well as compare the holidays, Christmas, Easter and New Year's Day, which are celebrated in both countries. It attempts to answer questions such as: Are they the same because of Australia being the member of Commonwealth of Nations and originally a British colony? Which of the two countries seems to be more patriotic according to the holidays?

1. United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom the holidays are called Bank Holidays. The name is derived from the fact that all banks and offices are closed. With the exception of Christmas and New Year all other bank holidays may have variable dates. There are eight bank holidays in Great Britain. They are: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Early May Day Bank Holiday, Spring Bank Holiday, Summer Bank Holiday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. In addition to these holidays there are more holidays in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland there are further holidays for example, St. Patrick's Day and Bank Holiday in Lieu of Battle of the Boyne. Finally, the Scottish people celebrate 2 January, Summer Bank Holiday and St. Andrew's Day.

1.1. New Year

New Year's Day is held on 1 January according to the Gregorian calendar. It was designated in 1752. In each country the New Year is celebrated in various ways. In Great Britain people celebrate it in different ways. Some people consider it as a normal eve and they go to bed as usual, but most people celebrate it all night. The celebration itself depends on the taste of each person or family. Some of them have a party at home or they go to a party organised by a group of people. The most common features of the parties are bottles of champagne, good mood and singing a song called Auld Lang Syne. "Before midnight everybody sings Auld Lang Syne to bid farewell to the old year" (Morkesová 63). Then comes midnight and people who are in London start to count the last minutes of the old year and then when Big Ben strikes midnight they wish happy new year to each other.

In Scotland the celebrations are livelier than those in England. New Year's Eve is called Hogmanay there. "Hogmanay has its origins in pagan times, an ancient time when the people would hold festivals for the sun and fire in the middle of the winter, to help them through the cold hard times and to encourage the warmth and the longer days to return in the spring"¹. It might seem that Hogmanay is more important than Christmas because the preparations for this eve are long-lasting. "Brass and silver must be glittering and fresh linen must be put on the beds. No

¹ <http://hubpages.com/hub/New-Year-Customs-in-Great-Britain-The-Celtic-Lands>

routine work may be left unfinished; stockings must be darned, tears mended, clocks wound up, musical instruments tuned, and pictures hung straight. In addition, all outstanding bills are paid, overdue letters written and borrowed books returned. At least, that is the idea” (Chimunina 12). It is very important to welcome the New Year with a tidy house otherwise it would bring a bad year with no luck. The food is also connected with the preparations consequently, they eat a lot. They serve for example, plum puddings, apples, lemons, toffee and shortbread and they drink wine or whisky. As a result of their over-enthusiastic celebration the 2 January is a bank holiday, but only in Scotland.

Not only in Scotland but also in England there is a tradition called the First-Footer. It is a person who comes to a household to wish a Happy New Year. He usually says: “May I come in, I wish you all the best, good health and happiness for the new year” (Morkesová 63). The First-Footer cannot be a woman because she would predetermine some disaster in the following year. The First-Footer must be a man who is young, handsome and dark-haired. “This is because a dark-haired man in ancient times would have been regarded as a fellow Scotsman, and therefore to be deemed safe, whereas a fair haired or red headed man could have been a Viking and therefore potentially a dangerous enemy”². The visitor must also bring some small presents for the family to wish them prosperity in those coming twelve months. “Nothing must be taken out of the house before these gifts have been brought in, nor should anyone go outside until he has arrived. He must be admitted through the front door and, since he is a luck-bringer, he must be hospitably entertained with food and plentiful supplies of wine or spirits” (Chimunina, 10). That is the explanation for the party that lasts till dawn or even longer.

New Year is a day when most people decide to make a New Year’s Resolution. The resolution always contains an idea on how to change one’s habits. People often want to give up smoking, lose weight or study more - unfortunately everybody usually only speaks about it, or in several cases people start doing what they promised themselves but after a couple of days they give it up because it is demanding to change their old habits.

² <http://hubpages.com/hub/New-Year-Customs-in-Great-Britain-The-Celtic-Lands>

If you were a pilgrim, you would go from house to house and see many different kinds of New Year's celebrations because of different personalities. On the other hand the custom for example the First-Footer can be seen in all households.

1.2. 2 January

2 January is a bank holiday only in Scotland because people there are used to celebrating the New Year so much that they simply cannot work on 2 January. It is said that the New Year's celebrations in Scotland are the biggest. "Edinburgh's Hogmanay is the biggest New Year party held anywhere in the world alongside four days packed with festive activities of all shapes and forms; you might need the rest of the year to recover! The four day festival with the magical Torchlight Procession and ever popular Street Party, runs from 29th December until 2nd January"³.

1.3. St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated especially in Northern Ireland where it became also a bank holiday. "The person who was to become St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales about AD 385. His given name was Maewyn, and he almost did not get the job of Bishop of Ireland because he lacked the required scholarship. Far from being a saint, until he was 16, he considered himself a pagan. At that age, he was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders that raided his village. During his captivity, he became closer to God. He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in the monastery under St. Germain, Bishop of Auxerre for a period of twelve years. During his training he became aware that his calling was to convert the pagans to Christianity. His wishes were to return to Ireland, to convert the native pagans to Christianity. But his superiors instead appointed St. Palladius. But two years later, Palladius transferred to Scotland. Patrick, having adopted that Christian name earlier, was then appointed as second bishop to Ireland. Patrick was quite successful at winning converts and this upset the Celtic Druids. Patrick was arrested several times, but escaped each time. He travelled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the country. He also set up schools and churches which would aid him in his conversion of Irish

³ <http://www.scotland.org/about/history-tradition-and-roots/features/culture/acquaintance.html>

country to Christianity. His mission in Ireland lasted for thirty years. After that time, Patrick retired to County Down. He died on March 17 in AD 461. That day has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since" (Wilson). "The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland but in the United States. Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City on March 17, 1762. Along with their music, the parade helped the soldiers reconnect with their Irish roots, as well as fellow Irishmen serving in the English army"⁴. There are several symbols connected with St. Patrick's Day for example the green colour, the shamrock, the snake and Irish music. The green colour has almost nothing to do with St. Patrick as it is worn because this feast takes place just a few days before the first spring day which symbolises the green colour that indicates spring. The shamrock means something more. "The shamrock, which was also called the 'seamroy' by the Celts, was a sacred plant in ancient Ireland because it symbolized the rebirth of spring. By the seventeenth century, the shamrock had become a symbol of emerging Irish nationalism. As the English began to seize Irish land and make laws against the use of the Irish language and the practice of Catholicism, many Irish began to wear the shamrock as a symbol of their pride in their heritage and their displeasure with English rule"⁵. One would wonder why should a snake be the symbol of St. Patrick's Day but it is the most competent symbol for this day. "It has long been recounted that, during his mission in Ireland, St. Patrick once stood on a hilltop (which is now called Croagh Patrick), and with only a wooden staff by his side, banished all the snakes from Ireland. In fact, the island nation was never home to any snakes. The 'banishing of the snakes' was really a metaphor for the eradication of pagan ideology from Ireland and the triumph of Christianity. Within 200 years of Patrick's arrival, Ireland was completely Christianized"⁶. The Irish music belongs to the nation and without music there would be no true festival. "Today, traditional Irish bands like The Chieftains, the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem are gaining worldwide popularity. Their music is produced with instruments that have been used for centuries, including the fiddle, the uilleann

⁴ <http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day>

⁵ <http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day-symbols-and-traditions>

⁶ <http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day-symbols-and-traditions>

pipes (a sort of elaborate bagpipe), the tin whistle (a sort of flute that is actually made of nickel-silver, brass or aluminium) and the bodhran (an ancient type of framedrum that was traditionally used in warfare rather than music)”⁷. St. Patrick’s Day is celebrated all over the world because the government of Northern Ireland did their best to make it into a touristic attraction for all nations.

1.4. Good Friday

Good Friday is the Friday before the first Sunday after the first full moon after the March equinox. “Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ”⁸. The day when he was crucified he was arrested and tried by court. After being sentenced a crown of thorn was put on his head. Later Jesus had to carry his cross to Skull Hill where he was nailed to the cross and according to the Bible he died at 3 pm. People want to honour his suffering and those who regularly attend church services are supposed to attend also a special service held on Good Friday. For other people it is just a day off.

As far as the name of this day is considered we can say that it is derived from the word ‘God’ with the wrong spelling. Or it can be even derived from other meanings of the word ‘good’ and the meaning is ‘holy’, but this meaning has been lost.

“Many Catholics do not eat meat on Good Friday. This means that, in some areas, it is common to eat fish on this day. It is traditional for all denominations to eat hot cross buns. These are made of leavened dough, to which sugar, currants and spices have been added. The top of the bun is marked with a cross made of flour and water paste or rice paper. The buns are eaten as they are or split in half, toasted and spread with butter”⁹. People eat these buns because the cross on the top of the delicious food reminds them of the cross that Jesus was crucified on. Good Friday is also a good day for cleaning the house and preparing it for Easter.

⁷ <http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day-symbols-and-traditions>

⁸ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/good-friday>

⁹ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/good-friday>

1.5. Easter

“Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox” (Morkesová 62). “The name Easter is derived from the name of Saxon goddess of spring, Eostre (related to a Mediterranean pagan goddess mentioned in the Bible, Astarte)” (Storry and Childs, 255). Easter Sunday and Easter Monday belong to the Easter celebrations. However in Scotland Easter Monday is not celebrated and for this reason it is not a bank holiday there.

According to that what Christians believe in Easter Sunday is about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But there are not many believers in the United Kingdom so Easter is more about painting and giving eggs. Eggs are the symbol for new life that spring brings. There are many methods on how to decorate boiled eggs. The simplest one is to dip it into dye that is sold in shops. Those who are more skilful can use natural materials. They can, for example wrap onion peel round eggs and boil them with it. After boiling the egg, it will be yellow or brown. There are some egg hunting competitions. “In some parts of the United Kingdom, people roll hard boiled down slopes. In other places, there is a game in which people roll hard boiled eggs against other peoples’ eggs. The winner is the person whose egg remains whole”¹⁰. Children enjoy Easter to the same extent as adults. The Easter Bunny hides eggs in the garden and they have to find them. As these eggs are usually chocolate it is a big opportunity for factories that make chocolate to earn a lot of money during Easter.

Easter Monday is celebrated only in some parts of the United Kingdom, in Scotland people do not care about it. For some people it is the last day of four days off. So they come back home from their friends and families. Those who were at home work in the garden and enjoy the last free day. In Biddenden special cakes are baked to commemorate Siamese twins who were born in 1100 and lived until the age of 34. On Easter Monday a game takes place in Hallaton between two villages, Hallaton and Medbourne. “Two teams fight over three small beer barrels, in an attempt to get each barrel across the stream in their village by any means possible. The two teams are the Hallaton team, made up exclusively of villagers, and the Medbourne team, open to anyone. The Hallaton side tries to get the barrels down

¹⁰ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/easter-sunday>

the hill and over the stream behind the Bewick Arms, whilst the Medbourne team tries to get the barrels over the fields for a mile or so towards their village” (Barrow).

1.6. May Day

The May Day is celebrated on the first Monday in May. “It is called May Day in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but in Scotland it is known as the Early May Bank Holiday”¹¹. This celebration is held because people want to say good-bye to winter and welcome summer, the season of new life. There are various traditions in different parts of the United Kingdom. “May Day celebrations have their origins in the Roman festival of Flora, goddess of fruit and flowers, which marked the beginning of summer” (Barrow).

Maypole dancing is a typical activity of this day. Children, especially girls, dance around the maypole and each of them holds a ribbon. The dance is organised in a way that the ribbons wrap round the pole from the top to the bottom. The ribbons are colourful and when the dance is finished they create ornaments on the maypole. The maypole is a tall wooden pole that is raised every year. Many years ago the villages fought against each other so there was a tradition of stealing the maypole. That was the reason why young boys had to guard the maypole.

May Queen is crowned. She is chosen from all unmarried woman in the village. She should represent Flora, the goddess of fruit and flowers. Her crown is made of flowers and she should also sit in flowers as the queen. All girls go out early in the morning and they wash their faces with morning dew. It will make them more beautiful. They collect flowers before sunrise and decorate their houses and the village. This tradition brings them good fortune.

“Morris Dancing is a kind of rhythmic dancing involving flags, sticks and handkerchiefs being waved around. Morris dancers frequently wear bells especially on their feet, so that when they are dancing in step the bells ring out in unison”¹². They are accompanied by various instruments especially by a melodeon, a pipe or an accordion.

¹¹ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/early-may-bank-holiday>

¹² <http://hubpages.com/hub/Bringing-in-the-May---the-history-and-culture-of-the-traditional-English-May-Day>

1.7. Spring Bank Holiday

Spring Bank Holiday falls on the last Monday in May. It is a pleasant day off when people can go for a three-day trip or they can stay at home and enjoy free days. “The spring bank holiday started as the Monday after Pentecost. This is known as Whitsun or Whit Monday in the United Kingdom”¹³. In 2002 it was moved to June 4 because June 3 was also a holiday. It was done so for a very important purpose. People celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. It was 50 years since the queen accessed to the throne of the United Kingdom. In 2012 it will be again moved to June 4 because it will be connected with the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee bank holiday.

Morris Dancing takes place on this day. But a more famous activity is cheese-rolling. “The custom may have been started by the Romans or ancient Britons and be an ancient fertility rite or a way of guaranteeing the rights of the villagers to graze their livestock on the surrounding land”¹⁴. The cheese is chased on Cooper’s Hill in Brockworth, Gloucestershire. The hill does not have any trees and is very steep. The master of ceremonies, who is dressed in a white coat and his hat is decorated with ribbons, starts to count to four. As he says ‘three’ the man called ‘starter’ throws the cheese on the hill and the competitors have to chase it downhill. The first one to reach the bottom of the hill is the winner and gains the cheese, which was protected by strong wooden casing during the rolling. “In some years, there have been a lot of injuries, causing the event to be cancelled a couple of times in recent years. In these years, the cheese was rolled down the hill, but nobody was allowed to chase it”¹⁵.

1.8. Bank Holiday in Lieu of Battle of the Boyne

Bank holiday in lieu of Battle of the Boyne takes place on 12 July. It is also known as Orangemen’s Day. It is celebrated in Northern Ireland and in parts of Canada where people from Northern Ireland live. “The Battle of the Boyne was held on July 1, 1690 on the banks of the Boyne River near the town of Dorpheda on the East

¹³ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/spring-bank-holiday>

¹⁴ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/spring-bank-holiday>

¹⁵ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/spring-bank-holiday>

coast of Ireland. It was a battle between King James VII of Scotland and James II of England and Ireland and his supporters on one side and Prince William of Orange and his followers on the other side. Prince William of Orange won the battle and became King William III. The Battle of the Boyne has been seen as symbolic of the sectarian struggles between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. King James was seen as representing the Catholics and Prince William was seen to represent the Protestants. This gave the Battle of the Boyne an important symbolic role in Irish politics and life. However, modern analysis of documents from the time suggests that Catholics and Protestants fought on both sides. Although the Battle of the Boyne is now commemorated on July 12, it was held on July 1, 1690. The shift in the date is due to the changeover from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar”¹⁶. Nowadays many marches take place and there are struggles between Protestants and Catholics. “These marches have been taking place, by the original route taken by the victors in 1690, every year since then. Unfortunately, since the route of some marches passes through areas which today have mainly catholic populations, since the start of the latest ‘troubles’ they became a cause of protest, frequently turning into violence and even riots. Because compromise is seen by some as the result of weakness rather than strength, both sides became entrenched in their positions: the Protestants insisting on their right to march the traditional route, and the Catholics on their right to a peaceful existence untroubled by displays of triumphalism. In recent years, it has taken repeated police action, backed up by various legal enactments, to finally bring the situation under some sort of control. The marchers generally march to the border of the areas in question, where police set up and man barricades to deny them access. After some problems in the past, these barricades are now high enough to prevent much in the way of missile throwing. Despite the bad press, in fact there are more than 2,000 of these marches every year, and only a few of them have ever been an occasion of violence” (Leach).

¹⁶ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/orangemen-day>

1.9. Summer Bank Holiday

Summer Bank Holiday falls on the last Monday in August but only in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland it is celebrated on the first Monday in August. For the first time it was introduced by the law called the Bank Holidays Act in 1871. “It was originally intended to give bank employees the opportunity to participate and attend cricket matches”¹⁷. One hundred years later it was moved to the last Monday in August but not in Scotland.

This holiday is a good opportunity for going to the countryside or simply taking a vacation, many sports events are held. The most significant event of those days is Notting Hill Carnival. “The Notting Hill Carnival is the largest street festival in Europe and originated in 1964 as a way for Afro-Caribbean communities to celebrate their own cultures and traditions”¹⁸. “At the roots of the Notting Hill Carnival are the Caribbean carnivals of the early 19th century – a particularly strong tradition in Trinidad – which were all about celebrating the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. The very first carnival was an attempt to showcase the steel band musicians who played in the Earls Court of London every Weekend. When the bands paraded through the streets of Notting Hill, they drew black residents out on to the streets, reminding them of the Caribbean homes they had left behind. In the days of abolition, there was a strong element of parody in the songs and dances Trinidadians performed. Having been forbidden to hold festivals of their own during the period of slavery, they now took full advantage of the relative new freedoms the ending of slavery brought them. Dressing up in costumes that mimicked the European fashions of their former masters, even whitening their faces with flour or wearing white masks, they established a tradition that continues in the costume-making of today’s Notting Hill Carnival”¹⁹. The Notting Hill Carnival is the second largest carnival in the world and it attracts people from all over the world. There are many stalls selling Caribbean food which people can taste. As it should be able to remind them of the Caribbean carnivals the masks are colourful, huge and they should attract each person that joins the parade. The day before

¹⁷ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/summer-bank-holiday#obs>

¹⁸ <http://www.thenottinghillcarnival.com/history.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.thenottinghillcarnival.com/history.html>

Summer Bank Holiday, on Sunday, is Kid's Day. That day children wear costumes and the best masks are awarded.

1.10. St. Andrew's Day

St. Andrew's Day is a bank holiday only in Scotland held on 30 November. It is a relatively new bank holiday because it was introduced during the Bank Holiday Act in January 2007. This day is not only an honour to St. Andrew, a patron of Scotland, but also to Scotland. St. Andrew was the first of the Apostles and he was brother of St. Peter, they were both fishermen. There are many stories that explain why St. Andrew became the patron of Scotland but the oldest one is about the king and his prayer dating back to 832 AD. "In a story that resembles the famous tale of Emperor Constantine and the Chi Rho, it is said that an army of Scots was facing an English army when the Scottish king prayed to St. Andrew for help. Seeing a cloud in the shape of the saltire (X-shaped) cross against a clear blue sky, the king vowed that if the Scots were victorious, St. Andrew would be made the patron saint of Scotland. The Scots won the battle, the king fulfilled his promise, and the intervention of St. Andrew has been represented on the Scottish flag ever since"²⁰. On 30 November some places are open to the public that are normally closed, people drink whiskey, schools hold essay competitions and the Scottish nation is the centre of the celebration. You can see the Scottish flag everywhere whose origin was explained in the story about St. Andrew becoming the patron of Scotland but there is also another version of the flag's origin. "St. Andrew is believed to have died on a diagonally transverse cross, which the Romans sometimes used for executions. The cross St. Andrew was crucified on has been adopted as the national flag of Scotland, later incorporated into the Union Flag. The blue stands for the sky" (Barrow). The second symbol of Scotland is thistle. "A legend tells of how a group of Scots were sleeping in a field when a group of Vikings crept up to attack. Fortunately one of the Vikings stood on a thistle, whose prickles penetrated through to his foot and made him yell with pain. His cries woke the sleeping Scots who were able to fight off their attackers. It is said that from this day the thistle has been adopted as Scotland's national emblem" (Barrow).

²⁰ http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/holidays/st_andrews_day.htm

1.11. Christmas Day

Christmas Day is celebrated on 25 December. Christmas is a religious feast because it honours the birth of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, non-worshippers celebrate it because there are also pagan origins. For everybody it is the best occasion to meet their families, gather in one's house, give presents to their beloved and enjoy a nice time together.

“Christmas Day is often seen as the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem over two thousand years ago. However, many aspects of the celebration have their origins in the Pagan traditions of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. These include bringing pieces of evergreen trees into homes, lighting fires, holding parties and eating special foods. When missionaries converted the inhabitants of these countries to Christianity, many of these customs were included in the Christian celebrations”²¹.

There are many symbols of Christmas. They include evergreens, mistletoe, holly tree, pine tree, Christmas cards, Robin redbreast, Father Christmas, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, presents, food, carols, Queen's Christmas Message.

The mistletoe symbolises peace. “Mistletoe, considered sacred by the British Druids, was believed to have many miraculous powers. Among the Romans, it was symbol of peace, and, it was said that when enemies met under it, they discarded their arms and declared a truce. From this comes our custom of kissing under the mistletoe. England was the first country to use it during the Christmas season”²².

The tradition of the Christmas tree is not that old. It was introduced by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. “The Christmas tree became popular in England in 1841 when Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, brought a Christmas tree over from Germany and put it in Windsor Castle. The Royal couple was illustrated in a newspaper standing around the Christmas tree with their children, and the tradition of decorating a tree became fashionable” (Barrow). “Since 1947, the country of Norway has presented Britain annually with a large Christmas tree which stands in Trafalgar Square in commemoration of Anglo-Norwegian cooperation during the

²¹ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/christmas-day>

²² <http://www.californiamall.com/holidaytraditions/traditions-england.htm>

Second World War”²³. Also the reason, why the Christmas tree is decorated, has its origin. “Long time ago people used to decorate trees outside each winter. When the trees had lost their leaves, it was felt that the spirits living in the trees had abandoned them. This made people very worried because they believed that without tree-spirits the trees would not grow leaves ever again. To encourage the tree-spirits to return they dressed the trees with strips of coloured cloth. They hoped by making the trees look beautiful, the spirits would return to live in the trees ready for spring. To everyone’s delight this worked and every year, in spring, the trees burst into leaf again. When the new custom of bringing small fir trees indoors started in Germany, it was natural enough to add similar decorations to them, even though fir trees had not lost their leaves” (Barrow). Originally people decorated the Christmas tree with candles which should remind of the stars in the sky and the birth of Jesus. It is obvious that it was quite dangerous because there were many things that might burn inside each house. By the progress of technique people started to use electric lights. Nowadays the Christmas tree is decorated with electric lights, tinsel, small ornaments and chocolate coins or shapes. It is a family tradition to decorate the Christmas tree, everybody helps with it and enjoys a nice time with their family. But the Christmas decoration must be taken away by 6 January otherwise it would bring bad luck. If people do not want to encounter bad luck they must not have the decoration in their house all year.

“The first Christmas card was created and sent in 1843. A man named John Calcott Horsley printed the first Christmas card for Sir Henry Cole, the friend who had given him the idea. Sir Henry Cole, a wealthy British businessman, wanted a card he could proudly send to friends and professional acquaintances to wish them a ‘Merry Christmas’. The card depicted a typical English family enjoying the holiday, and people performing acts of charity. An important part of Victorian Christmas spirit. A thousand copies of the card were printed and sold for one shilling. This is reportedly the first Christmas card to be produced and sold to the public” (Barrow). Nowadays Christmas cards depict a few topics for example traditional nativity story, winter scenes or Father Christmas.

²³ <http://www.californiamall.com/holidaytraditions/traditions-england.htm>

Father Christmas is an old man with white hair, a beard and a moustache. He is the British version of the American Santa Claus. He wears red and white clothes, but originally he used to wear green clothes. The red colour became popular after a Coca Cola campaign in the 1930s with Santa Claus dressed in red. He lives in the North Pole where he makes toys for children with elves. The history of Father Christmas in the United Kingdom is quite long and gradually developing. "Father Christmas was originally part of an old English midwinter festival, normally dressed in green, a sign of the returning spring. He was known as 'Sir Christmas', 'Old Father Christmas' or 'Old Winter'. In this earliest form, Father Christmas was not the bringer of gifts for small children, nor did he come down the chimney. He simply wandered around from home to home, knocking on doors and feasting with families before moving on to the next house. Images of Father Christmas (Santa Claus) dressed in red started appearing on Christmas cards in the late Victorian times" (Barrow). There is a tradition that somebody dresses up as Father Christmas and visits shops where he meets children and gives them presents and asks them what they want for Christmas. Children are also photographed with him. In cases where children cannot visit Father Christmas personally they can write him a letter. They can send it by post or e-mail but the most frequent way of sending the letter is to put it at the back of the fireplace and the draught brings it to Father Christmas. On Christmas Eve Father Christmas puts all the toys into his sledge pulled by reindeers. The leader of the reindeers is called Rudolph whose typical feature is his red nose. Then Father Christmas goes down the chimney and leaves the presents in the stockings hanged at children's beds or at a fireplace. This custom is based on a true story. "St. Nicholas, or Sinter Klaas in Dutch, was a very shy man and wanted to give money to poor people without them knowing about it. It is said that one day, he climbed the roof of a house and dropped a purse of money down the chimney. It landed in the stocking which a girl had put to dry by the fire! This may explain the belief that Father Christmas comes down the chimney and places gifts in children's stockings" (Barrow).

In the United Kingdom the main Christmas menu is served at midday or early in the afternoon on Christmas day. "A traditional English and British Christmas dinner includes roast turkey or goose, brussels sprouts, roast potatoes, cranberry sauce, rich nutty stuffing, tiny sausages wrapped in bacon (pigs in a blanket) and

lashings of hot gravy” (Barrow). After that they eat traditional Christmas pudding which consists of brown pudding, raisins, nuts and cherries and is steamed. When taking it to the table they pour brandy on it and set a light. Usually a silver coin is hidden inside the Christmas pudding. It should bring good luck to the member of the family who finds it inside. “The traditional time for making a Christmas pudding is on ‘Stir Up Sunday’ at the beginning of advent. A proper Christmas pudding is always stirred from East to West in honour of the three Wise Men and traditionally made with 13 ingredients to represent Christ and His Disciples. Every member of the family must give the pudding a stir and make a secret wish” (Barrow). The turkey wishing tradition takes place on Christmas day. Two people hold a turkey bone shaped as the letter Y, both of them pull it and the one who is left with the larger part of the bone makes a wish. A Christmas cracker will be placed next to each plate on the Christmas table. “A Christmas Cracker is a brightly coloured paper tube, twisted at both ends. A person pulls on each end of the cracker and when the cracker breaks, a small chemical strip goes ‘Pop’ and the contents fall out” (Barrow). It can contain a paper crown, a small gift or a joke. The small gift can be whatever comes to your mind but the size depends on the size of the cracker. “Christmas crackers were invented by Thomas Smith in 1846. During a visit to Paris he came across the bob-bon, a sugar almond wrapped in tissue paper (with a twist either side of the centrally placed sweet). Thomas decided to try selling similarly wrapped sweets in the lead up to Christmas in England. His bon-bons sold well at Christmas but not at other times of the year. In the early 1850s Thomas came up with the idea of including a motto with the sweet. As many of his bon-bons were bought by men to give to women, many of the mottos were simple love poems. In about 1860, Thomas added the banger, two strips of chemically impregnated paper that made a loud noise on being pulled apart. At first these novelties were called ‘cosaques’, but they soon became known as ‘crackers’. Unfortunately for Thomas, his ‘cracker’ idea was copied by other manufactures and so he decided to replace the sweet with a surprise gift. When Thomas died his two sons took over the business. The paper hat was added to the cracker the early 1900s and by the end of the 1930s the love poems had been replaced by jokes or limericks” (Barrow).

During Christmas period Christmas carols are sung. Carols are songs about Jesus and Christmas. In the Middle Ages carols were written to make performances more interesting. “The word carol comes from the ancient Greek ‘choros’, which means ‘dancing in a circle,’ and from the Old French word ‘carole’, meaning ‘a song to accompany dancing’. Over the years, the word ‘carol’ changed its meaning, referring only to certain kinds of songs, the word carol became known as a Christmas song ” (Barrow). People start to sing carols on 21 December and they sing them till Christmas Day. Carols are not necessarily sung at home but at public places. People go from house to house and ask for money for charity. This originated in the Middle Ages when beggars went from home to home and asked for food and drink. The most famous Christmas carols are for example Silent Night, O Come all ye Faithful, Once in Royal David’s City, See Amid the Winters Snow, O Little Town of Bethlehem and Away in a Manger.

People are used to watching or just listening to the Queen’s Christmas Message during the Christmas afternoon. She describes the current world situation and participation of the United Kingdom within a global context.

1.12. Boxing Day

Boxing Day is the day after Christmas Day that is 26 December. There are several theories about the origin of Boxing Day. Either the box should have protected the ship. “During the Age of Exploration, when great sailing ships were setting off to discover new land, A Christmas Box was used as a good luck device. It was a small container placed on each ship while it was still in port. It was put there by a priest, and those crewmen who wanted to ensure a safe return would drop money into the box. It was then sealed up and kept on board for the entire voyage. If the ship came home safely, the box was handed over to the priest in the exchange for the saying of a Mass of thanks for the success of the voyage. The Priest would keep the box sealed until Christmas when he would open it to share the contents with the poor” (Barrow). Alternatively, there were designated boxes in churches and during Christmas Day people put money or gifts into them and on Boxing Day the boxes were opened and their contents was given to the poorest. However, the servants had to work during Christmas Day so that they were not able to spend the wonderful time with their families. Boxing Day was a day off for them and the

employers gave them some boxes with presents and food for their families. Nowadays people still give presents to people who serve them somehow. For example dustmen and milkmen receive small presents on Boxing Day. Nonetheless, Boxing Day is not connected only with small presents but also with outdoor activities such as sport, hunting and horse racing. “Traditionally Boxing Day is a day for fox hunting. Horse riders dressed in red and white riding gear, accompanied by a number of dogs called foxhounds, chase the fox through the countryside in the hope of tiring it out. Eventually the hunters hope the fox will be so tired that the dogs will be able to catch it and kill it. Many animal welfare campaigners object to fox hunting saying it is cruel to kill a fox in this way, while many participants view it as a crucial part of rural history in England, vital for conservation, and a method of pest control. In November 2004, MPs voted to ban hunting with dogs in England and Wales. As from 18 February 2005 hunting with dogs became a criminal offence (although it is still legal to exercise hounds, chase a scent and flush out foxes to be shot)” (Barrow). Not everybody can practise sports on Boxing Day so they watch it on TV. For some people this day is the best occasion for going to shops and buy things that are available in New Year’s sales.

1.13. Comparison with the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic only three holidays are the same as in the United Kingdom which are New Year, Easter and Christmas.

New Year falls on 1 January in Europe. Both the British and the Czechs welcome this day as a holiday because they can recover from the previous night during which almost everybody celebrates till the early morning. In Prague in contradistinction to London the New Year’s firework presentation is showcased on 1 January in the evening since the different timings allow small children to celebrate the display at a suitable time. Further New Year’s traditions can be found in the United Kingdom for example the First-Footer who is the first person to visit a house after midnight with the purpose of bringing good luck. Both the British and the Czechs make various New Year’s Resolutions but find difficulty in implementing them.

Unlike in the United Kingdom the Czech government has not legalized Good Friday as a national holiday. As a result the inhabitants of the Czech Republic are

obliged to go to work on Good Friday however, Easter Monday is a national holiday in the Czech Republic as well as in Britain. In the United Kingdom people decorate eggs in the same way as in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, there are differences in traditions for example, in Britain after hiding the eggs in the garden, the children search for them.

Children are told that the Easter Bunny has hidden the eggs for them. In the Czech Republic children and men go from house to house saying Easter poems and then hitting women with a whip which is knitted from willow wicker. It is said that hitting women with a whip would make them younger because the willow wicker has vernal new life and strength therefore if the women are not hit they would dry. After hitting the girls with a whip the children may receive an Easter egg and a bar of chocolate whilst men receive an alcoholic drink.

In the Czech Republic Christmas starts on 24 December and ends on 26 December. In the United Kingdom Christmas Day falls on 25 December and Boxing Day on 26 December. Eager children are advantaged in the Czech Republic because they get Christmas presents one day earlier. The presents are not brought by Father Christmas but by Jesus. As a result of the influence from the United States of America, business and internet, Santa Claus is becoming a symbol of Christmas in the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom.

In the Czech Republic e-mails and short messages are replacing Christmas cards as millions of short messages are sent on Christmas Eve. The most significant divergence can be seen in the Christmas cuisine. In the United Kingdom people eat roast turkey and Christmas pudding which are served on 25 December at lunchtime. In the Czech Republic we cook carp, potato salad and sweets which are eaten on 24 December in the evening. The president of the Czech Republic does not make a speech on Christmas Eve.

2. Australia

There are many national holidays in Australia depending on the particular state or territory. As Australia is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations the feasts that are held in both countries, Australia and the United Kingdom have the same origin and they are similarly celebrated. They bear exotic features in Australia. For this bachelor's thesis were chosen those that are celebrated in all the country. Eight national holidays of Australia, New Year's Day, Australia Day, Good Friday, Easter, ANZAC Day, Queen's Birthday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, will be described.

2.1. New Year's Day

As almost all over the world New Year's Day falls on 1 January. It is so because in Australia the year is measured according to the Gregorian calendar that was brought to Australia by European settlers. Australia is a country that is very close to the International Date Line - it means that Australians celebrate New Year almost as the first people in the world. In Sydney there are a lot of fireworks and also in small cities the local authorities organise fireworks for their inhabitants. In comparison to the United Kingdom, children in Australia have summer holidays because it is on the southern hemisphere. "For many people, New Year's Day is a time to recover from New Year's Eve parties the evening before. Others use the day to travel home to end the summer vacation or to spend time with family members. People who enjoy horse racing may watch or bet on the Perth Cup. The race is run over 3200 meters (just over two miles) at the Ascot Racecourse in Perth, Western Australia. The prize money for the race totals 400,000 Australian dollars"²⁴.

2.2. Australia Day

Australia Day is celebrated on 26 January. British captain Arthur Phillip landed at Botany Bay on 18 January 1788 but he did not find any water so he decided to leave his ship in search of water. On 26 January 1788 he arrived at Sydney Cove and there he founded a settlement and raised the Union Jack by which he signalled foundation of a colony. His ship brought prisoners to Australia. When we say

²⁴ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/new-year-day>

prisoners, it does not mean that they were murderers. They were for example, people who were not suitable in the view of the British government. Nowadays, 26 January is celebrated as Australia Day. Nevertheless, there are some problems with this because the Aboriginal Australians feel that it is the celebration of the founding of the British colony and occupation of their country. It does not mean that they do not celebrate it, they do since they are proud of being Australians. However, they want to find a more suitable date. 26 January as Australia Day was established in 1994 and since 2004 “the presentation of Australia Day awards - the focus of Australia Day - became fixed in Canberra”²⁵.

During Australia Day a few people are granted the following awards - Australian of the year, senior Australian of the year, young Australian of the year and Australia’s local hero. “The Awards operates at two levels - state/territory and national. State and territory selection committees select four finalists for each award category, with one of these finalists becoming the state/territory award recipient. State/territory award recipients then become the national finalists for the awards. The prestigious year round program culminates in the announcement of the national award recipients in Canberra on Australia Day Eve”²⁶. Achievements of these people should inspire other Australians to work on themselves and create a more beautiful and stronger Australia. Any Australian has the chance of being awarded; in order to be considered they must have a good idea and be able to realize it. In 2010 Ronni Kahn became Australia’s local hero who increased awareness of the issue of wasted food. She decided to found an organisation that delivers these leftovers to charities. Nowadays she helps many people and has become successful.

A visitor can feel how important the day is for local people. “It’s the day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in our great nation. It’s the day for us to re-commit to making Australia an even better place for the future. Australia Day is a day driven by communities, and the hundreds of celebrations held in each town, suburb or city are the foundation of its ongoing success. And Australia Day is big. Over 780 local community celebrations take place on 26 January right across the nation. Research undertaken by the National

²⁵ <http://www.australiaday.org.au/experience/page77.asp>

²⁶ <http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/pages/page2.asp>

Australia Day Council in 2007 showed that about 27 per cent of Australians attend an organised, community event on Australia Day, while a further 26 per cent get together with family and friends with the explicit intention of celebrating Australia Day”²⁷

2.3. Good Friday

Good Friday is the Friday before Easter Monday. In Australia it is the beginning of a four-day holiday. Like in the United Kingdom it is a day when Christians commemorate Jesus Christ’s crucifixion. “On Good Friday or Great Friday, flags at homes and government buildings are set at half mast to mark the mournful day”²⁸. “Traditionally, people eat hot cross buns on Good Friday. These are small, bread-like buns flavoured with spices and raisins or currants. Some modern recipes add cocoa to the dough and replace the dried fruit with chocolate chips. All hot cross buns are marked on the top with a cross. The cross is sometimes cut into the top of the bun and sometimes made with different, paler dough. Some people eat hot cross buns just as they are and others split them in half, toast them, spread them with butter, jam or cream and eat them warm. A lot of sporting events are held on or start on Good Friday. The Three Peaks Race in Tasmania starts in the afternoon of Good Friday. This event is three-tiered, consisting of a section to be sailed and a section to be walked or run. During the sailing sections, all members of a given team sail a set course down Tasmania’s west coast. During each of the running or walking sections, two members of each team leave their boat and run or walk up and then down one of three mountains. Other well-known sporting events that start on Good Friday are the Brisbane to Gladstone yacht race, the Stawell Easter Gift, a long distance running race and the Easter Racing Carnival in Sydney”²⁹.

2.4. Easter

Easter in Australia falls on the first Sunday after the full moon after 21 March. In the United Kingdom Easter is the feast of spring and in Australia it is the feast of autumn. Easter involves Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. Easter

²⁷ <http://www.australiaday.org.au/toolkit/page156.asp>

²⁸ <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/easter/>

²⁹ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/good-friday>

commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and many Christian churches organise services in honour of that miracle. Wonderfully decorated eggs are a symbol of Easter. Many people buy them and then they organise egg hunt competitions for their children. Children in Australia do not receive the Easter Bunny but Easter Bilby, there are evident reasons for this. Bunnies are considered as pests in Australia. They have eaten crops on farms consequently the native animal bilby was chosen to represent the Easter animal. “The bilby is a small rodent with a long nose and has rabbit-like long ears”³⁰. “The Sydney Royal Easter Show is Australia’s largest annual event. It showcases the rich Australian heritage, ranging from bushman culture to the urban city life. It takes place annually, at Sydney Olympic Park for over a two week period, which includes the Easter long weekend. The show is a reflection of rural Australia with rural and farming communities exhibit their livestock and produce”³¹. Weddings and christenings are typical events on Easter Saturday. On Easter Monday many music festivals are held. They are organised in many cities and in different styles for example they include the National Folk Festival, the Byron Bay East Coast Blues and Roots Blues fest and the Australian Gospel Festival. “A number of large sporting events end on Easter Monday. These include: the Stawell Easter Gift athletics competition; the Three Peaks Race, which consists of sections sailing around Tasmania and sections running up and down three mountains on the island; the Easter Racing Carnival in Sydney; and the Brisbane to Gladstone yacht race. Other events, including horse race meetings in Melbourne and major football fixtures, are held on Easter Monday”³².

2.5. ANZAC Day

ANZAC is the abbreviation of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. ANZAC Day, 25 April, commemorates the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Only one year later 25 April was called ANZAC Day. “The Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25 April, meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. What had

³⁰ <http://festivals.iloveindia.com/easter/traditions/easter-in-australia.html>

³¹ <http://festivals.iloveindia.com/easter/traditions/easter-in-australia.html>

³² <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/easter-monday>

been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated, after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. Over 8,000 Australian soldiers had been killed. News of the landing on Gallipoli had made a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who had died in the war”³³. As the time was passing Australians enlarged the definition of this day and they started to commemorate all soldiers who had been killed in any war. The original landing happened at dawn, so nowadays commemorative services are held at dawn. Then ex-servicemen march through cities. At dawn veterans gather and they are ordered to ‘stand to’, which is the term for making a formation during dusk so that when the first sunbeam appears they as soldiers would be able to attack their enemy, then the two minutes’ silence follows and then a bugler plays the Last Post. “In more recent times families and young people have been encouraged to take part in dawn services, and services in Australian capital cities have seen some of the largest turnouts ever. Reflecting this change, those services have become more elaborate, incorporating hymns, readings, pipers, and rifle volleys. Other services, though, have retained the simple format of the dawn stand-to, familiar to so many soldiers”³⁴. At 10:15 am a ceremony takes place that is visited by the prime minister and the governor general. This ceremony has its typical features that are known to each Australian. The features are an introduction, hymn, prayer, an address, laying of wreaths, a recitation, the Last Post, a period of silence, either the Rouse or the Reveille, and the national anthem. When all formal events end people are used to play ‘two-up’. It is a gambling game by which the gamblers use two coins. It is one of the gambling games that are forbidden in Australia but on ANZAC Day the government excuses it. People serve gunfire breakfast which stands for coffee with rum in it.

³³ http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac_tradition.asp

³⁴ http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac_tradition.asp

2.6. Queen's Birthday

Australia is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations which means that the official head of the state is Queen Elizabeth II. who is represented by the governor general in Australia. She was born on 21 April 1926 2:40 am. Nevertheless, her birthday is celebrated on the second Monday of June in all Australia except for Western Australia where it is celebrated in late September or early October in Western Australia. The Australian Post issues a stamp in honour to Australia's Queen's birthday every year. For many people this holiday creates a three-day weekend. "Some well-known sporting events are held on the second Monday of June. These include an Australian Football League game played at the Melbourne cricket club between the Collingwood Magpies and the Melbourne Demons. It is also traditionally seen as the opening weekend of the snow season in Australia, although it is often not possible to really ski for another few weeks"³⁵.

2.7. Christmas Day

As well as in the United Kingdom Christmas Day is celebrated on 25 December. However, in Australia it is the season of summer and school children enjoy summer holidays. Unlike in the United Kingdom, Australians generally do not spend Christmas at home but elsewhere in a caravan or a tent with their family. Santa Claus is the same in both countries and serves the same purpose, he brings presents for children but in Australia his sledge is pulled by kangaroos. The temperature is quite high there, around 35°C. It is quite understandable that Australians spend almost all day at the beach where they can sunbathe and swim. The traditional Christmas food is adapted to the weather too. People eat cold meat, salads, seafood and tropical fruits as mangoes, pawpaw and watermelons. Christmas barbecues are also common. For people from the Northern hemisphere decorating of the Christmas tree in summer might seem funny but Australians do it. The Christmas trees look like those in the United Kingdom. Tinsel and lights are hung on the Christmas tree and also the regions share the Christmas atmosphere. The Australian motifs cannot be omitted. "These are glass baubles or wooden ornaments decorated with images of Australian wildlife, such as bilbies, koalas, king parrots, Waratah

³⁵ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/queens-birthday>

flowers, or Australian landmarks”³⁶. Other Christmas plants have to be mentioned, they are typically Australian for example Christmas bush and Christmas orchid. Christmas carols have been adapted to the Australian culture so they do not sing Jingle Bells instead they sing Aussie Jingle Bells, Australian Twelve Days of Christmas and Six White Boomers amongst others.

2.8. Boxing Day

Boxing Day is the day after Christmas Day. They do not celebrate Boxing Day in South Australia because the Proclamation Day is celebrated there instead. Boxing Day has the same origin as in the United Kingdom, small boxes were given to the servants for their families. It is a time of sport events, post-Christmas sales and returning home from relatives in Australia. The two most significant sports events are the Boxing Day Test Match and the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. The Boxing Day Test Match is a cricket game held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It is a cricket competition between the Australian National Cricket Team and the other country’s cricket team starting on Boxing Day and lasting for the following five days. The Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race is the second very important event of Boxing Day. “This is also known as the Bluewater Classic and covers a distance of 630 nautical miles between Sydney Harbour and Hobart on the island of Tasmania. Traditionally, it took about six days for the yachts to reach Hobart, but now the fastest yacht usually reaches the finish in less than two days”³⁷.

2.9. Comparison with the Czech Republic

The Australian’s national holidays are predominantly focused on the nation and the pride of being Australian. The Australia Day, ANZAC Day and Queen’s Birthday are holidays that somehow commemorate Australia and its inhabitants. In the Czech Republic the holidays are aimed at history. However, the Czech people are happy to have one day free but generally they do not know why. The holidays connected with the history are on 5 July called The Day of Slavonic Apostles Cyril and Methodius, the next one on 6 July called The Day of Jan Hus and the last holiday on 28 September called The Czech National Day.

³⁶ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/christmas-day>

³⁷ <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/boxing-day>

The holiday of Slavonic Apostles Cyril and Methodius commemorates their arrival to the Great Moravian Empire. They were invited by prince Rostislav in 862 to spread religion and the Slavonic language. They accepted this invitation and reached Great Moravia in 863. They were successful with their sermons and translations of Liturgical Books into the Slavonic language. They also made up a new writing called 'hlaholice'.

The Day of Jan Hus reminds us of the occasion when Jan Hus was burned. That happened on 6 July 1415. He was burned in Constance because he was not suitable in the view of Church. They sentenced him as misbeliever because he did not like for example the fortune of the Church. He was very skilful, people lead him and the Church was afraid of his strength.

The Czech National Day glorifies St Wenceslas who is considered to be a patron of Bohemia. He was such a great man who took care of his country and he did his best to bring Christianity to the Czech country. He helped and loved his mother, helped poor people, orphans and ill people. He also provided a shelter for pilgrims. He was brave and a very good horse rider. He attended sermons in churches that he had founded. Unfortunately he had a younger brother named Boleslav who did not agree with him so he managed to kill him at church in Stará Boleslav on 28 September 935.

Unlike in Australia in the Czech Republic the national holidays connected with history are just a day off from work but no special celebrations are held.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion one can say that people in Australia seem to be more patriotic than people in the United Kingdom because their holidays are referred to as 'national holidays' and also the majority of holidays are nation oriented. As far as Easter is concerned, in Australia you cannot find any Easter bunnies because rabbits were brought from England and are therefore considered to be pests. Instead, Easter bilbies were chosen to represent an Easter symbol because they are similar to bunnies and they live in Australia. The second reason for Australians being more nationalistic is that their holidays commemorate Australia and its inhabitants.

Comparing New Year's Day, both countries organise firework displays but the difference in celebrations is caused by the weather. Due to the cold weather in the United Kingdom people tend to stay inside whereas the Australians lie on the sunny beaches and sunbathe. The New Year's weather conditions are synonymous to that of Christmas time. In Australia the temperature is too high to eat hot food so Australians eat cold meat and a lot of fruits. Christmas decorations are almost the same except in Australia the decorations are enriched with exotic features which are typical of southern countries.

Easter takes place on the same date in both countries, however, in Australia it is a feast of autumn and harvest in contrast to the United Kingdom where it is a feast of starting spring and new life. The contrast is also in the Easter symbols, Australian bilby and British bunny. In Australia, rabbits are considered to be pests that eat all crops - as a mark of protest the Australians came up with bilbies instead of bunnies. On the other hand, Australians do not bake any special cakes and do not hold any games between villages, they just organise sports events and music festivals.

The most important similarity can be seen in keeping the traditions in both countries and protecting it as national heritage for the new generation. The teachers in the Czech Republic do the same with Czech national holidays. They provide pupils with information about the reasons of having such a variety of national holidays.

On the other hand, teachers of the English language have to deal not only with the Czech holidays but especially with the British, American, Canadian and Australian national holidays. They are quite successful as far as Easter and

Christmas are concerned but they forget about the other holidays. It would be useful to give homework and display information about the particular holiday on a school notice board a week in advance. Each pupil would read the information and do the homework. Finally, the week which the holiday falls on would be oriented towards the homework and other activities that the teacher would prepare. The pupils usually like interactive learning consequently the activities should be interesting and appealing. These homework activities and teaching about holidays in English speaking countries will be the topic of my further thesis and research at master studies.

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