

BRITAIN

FOR LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

Culture Focus

Royal wedding? Time for a street party!

Since the engagement of Prince William and Kate Middleton was announced, the world's press has been anxiously awaiting information about every detail of their wedding day. However, to many British people, the most important aspect of the royal wedding is that the British government has announced a national bank holiday on the same day. And to some people, regardless of their feelings towards the royal family, this is the perfect excuse for a street party.

A street party is a party that takes place in a street. Over the past 100 years, street parties have developed as a **uniquely** British tradition. They are usually held in celebration of national or royal events – the **coronation** of King George VI, the end of the First and Second World Wars, the Queen's Silver **Jubilee**, the Millennium, the wedding of Charles and Diana, and now the wedding of William and Kate.

A street party is held when the residents of a street decide to organise an event for all their neighbours. The street is closed to traffic, decorated with **bunting** and balloons, and everyone is invited to socialise in a very informal atmosphere. There is often music and there are usually chairs and tables set up in the middle of the road. Everyone contributes by bringing some food or drink to the party, and sometimes games are organised for children. Street parties are actively encouraged by the government, as they **foster** a sense of community and build relationships within neighbourhoods.

Street parties seem to have had a bit of a revival since the year 2000, and this is sure to continue well into 2012, with the London Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee providing more than adequate reasons for people to celebrate.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Does your country have street parties? Have you ever been to one? Would you like to go to one?
- 2 How do you think street parties affect the relationship of the British public with the royal family? Why do you think the British government is supportive of street parties?

SUGGESTIONS

Imagine you are planning a street party. What would you have to arrange? How would you encourage your neighbours to help you organise the party?

VOCABULARY

Find definitions of the following words:

- uniquely
- coronation
- Jubilee
- bunting
- foster