

The Queen in North America

The Queen has begun her first trip to the US for 16 years and is due to visit Virginia to meet survivors of the worst college shooting in US history. The 81-year-old monarch and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived at Virginia's Richmond Airport, on a British Airways plane, for the six-day East Coast tour.

The official state visit will end with two days in Washington DC with President George Bush.

The Queen's last visit in 1991 was when President Bush's father was in power. She was dressed in a lilac wool coat and dress with coral trimming for her arrival on Thursday. There was some delay in the royal party disembarking their aircraft as officials and workers struggled to get the steps to reach the plane door and line up the red carpet.



A crowd of an estimated 5,000 people in Richmond's Capitol Square were told through a PA system: "The Queen has landed". All state workers in Virginia have been given the day off for the royal visit at a cost of almost £6m (\$11.9m). But officials said the visit's benefits in terms of tourism and publicity would outweigh this cost.

The Queen's programme is aimed at forging bonds between Britain and the US and focusing on their shared future. The Queen will pay tribute to the victims of last month's Virginia Tech shooting, in which a gunman killed 32 people, and is expected to meet survivors and bereaved families. Cadets from the college will line the steps up to the state capitol, where the Queen will deliver her keynote speech to the Virginia assembly. The Queen will visit Jamestown on Friday to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the US's first permanent English settlement. There have already been calls for her to apologise for the introduction of slavery and slaughter of American Indians.

She will also fulfil a lifelong dream by attending the Kentucky Derby at the Churchill Downs racetrack at the weekend. The finale will be two days in Washington DC, where she will be entertained by President Bush, visit a Nasa space centre and meet some GI brides who left Britain for a new life across the Atlantic during the World War II.

The Queen and Prince Philip last visited Canada in 2002.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Timeline: Canada A chronology of key events:

1967 - Expo 67 in Montreal provides impetus to Canadian national identity. French President Charles de Gaulle visits and declares 'Vive le Quebec libre' (Long live free Quebec).

Trudeau era

1968 - Pierre Trudeau of the Liberal party wins elections. Parti Quebecois (PQ) is formed to push for complete independence for Quebec.

1970 - Members of a radical Quebec separatist group, the Front de Liberation du Quebec, kidnap a British trade official and murder a Quebec minister.

1976 - PQ wins elections in Quebec.

1980 - A referendum on the separation of Quebec is defeated.

Coming clean on offshore bank accounts

Hundreds of thousands of people with offshore bank accounts could soon be in for a very nasty shock. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has given them a short space of time to 'come clean' about any interest they may have earned on their money abroad, but on which they have, so far, failed to pay tax to the Revenue.

It follows on from the successful ruling obtained by HMRC last year against Barclays Bank, which means it can demand full details of UK resident customers with offshore bank accounts.

So, what sort of people is HMRC after and what practical steps can be taken?

The most common situation is likely to arise where those who previously worked abroad - and have subsequently returned to the UK - have maintained their offshore bank accounts. They may have been unaware that the interest arising on those accounts must be declared in their UK tax returns.

Also, many thousands of people now own foreign holiday homes, many of which are let out. For practical reasons these individuals may operate offshore bank accounts to collect rents and pay expenses. Where these accounts have attracted interest, this too must be declared in a UK tax return. In other cases the problem could be more extensive, particularly where the source of the original money in the offshore bank account should itself have been taxed in the UK, and not just the interest generated by that sum.

Examples would be where people have been trading abroad and effectively generating profits from a business which has not been declared in their UK tax returns.

One of the largest markets is Ebay where people can sell on a global basis. Where individuals are simply disposing of the odd unwanted item or gift, there will be no tax liability. However, a number of people are now trading on Ebay by holding a stock of items which they sell at a profit. Where the proceeds of sales are banked in an offshore bank account, the Revenue will wish to tax both the interest earned on the account and the profits stemming from the trade.

What to do?

In terms of the practical way forward, anyone who is affected and who wishes to take advantage disclosure opportunities should write to their tax inspector. They should give formal notification of an intention to disclose and that letter should be with their tax inspector by not later than 22 June this year. Thereafter they should collate the information which is necessary to make the full disclosure - obtain bank statements and so on - as quickly as possible. They should then calculate the tax, interest and penalties due, using the Inland Revenue website, or get professional advice if the situation is more complicated.

HMRC has said that in the absence of full information they will accept a 'best estimate' of tax due, although clearly some sort of evidence of how that best estimate has been calculated should be available.

Exceptions

It is not in every case that interest from offshore accounts needs to be declared to the UK authorities. For example, those UK residents who have a non-UK domicile of origin (ie were born and brought up in a foreign country) do not need to declare any interest arising on an offshore bank account - providing they have not imported the interest into the UK and have made the appropriate notification to HMRC.

Another is those people on full-time contracts of employment abroad, who are temporarily non-resident in the UK. They may have opened offshore bank accounts for normal practical reasons, but they do not require to declare interest or income in the UK whilst they continue to be non-resident.



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The Warrington Male Voice Choir tour Montreal

The Warrington Male Voice Choir (60 members) are touring Montreal and will be holding a benefit concert at St John's United Church in Pointe Claire, address 98 Aurora on May 30th at 7.30pm. Tickets are \$12 if purchased beforehand or \$15 on the door. For further information please call Fiona at 514 693 1186. They are an internationally renowned male voice choir and have a wide repertoire of songs, great for the whole family!

The following was sent to the Britclub Gazette on 23rd April:

You might be interested in our special concert in Christ Church Cathedral on 26 May with Terry Waite CBE, 'Peace One Day': A Concert for International Peace, which will promote the UN International Day of Peace (held annually on 21 September). It is being advertised by Montreal Tourisme. Also, he may be interested in our plans to appear in both Belfast and Dublin at Easter next year, to celebrate ten years on from the Good Friday Agreement.

For information, the choir's website is www.warringtonchoir.org.uk. I can send details of our other performance dates and venues if you would like to publicise them. We shall also link with Montreal Welsh Male Choir and Shawbridge Acapella Choir for a concert in St-Sauveur.

Kind regards,

Barrie Johnson

Chairman, Warrington Male Voice Choir

Montreal Police

The day after they brought the house down at the Grammys with a rousing performance of their hit Roxanne, the reunited Police announced they're hitting the road for their first time in more than two decades. Sting, guitarist Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland will play Toronto on July 22 and **Montreal on July 25** in a tour that kicks off in Vancouver on May 28. It's expected at least one more Canadian date - possibly in Edmonton - will be announced in the weeks to come.

The new wave trio was biggest in the 1980s, when it climbed the charts with songs Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic, Don't Stand So Close To Me and Every Breath You Take. Personal clashes among the band members, notably between Sting and Copeland, tore the band apart in 1984 but they reunited on recently with the show-opening performance.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are the Police and we're back!" Sting shouted at the start of the telecast.

The 2007 tour marks the first real reunion for the group. They performed three songs together in 2003 when they were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame but otherwise hadn't done any public shows in more than 20 years.

Canadian Tour Date Details for The Police:

Vancouver
GM Place
May 28th, 2007

Toronto
Air Canada Centre
July 22nd, 2007

Montreal
Bell Centre
July 25th, 2007

Other News & Events

British girl (3) missing in Algarve

A three-year-old British girl has gone missing in a Portuguese beach resort in the Algarve.

A Portuguese police spokeswoman said they are investigating the case. Jill Renwick, a family friend, told BBC she was sure that three-year-old Madeleine McCann had been abducted. "She's obviously been taken - she couldn't have gone out on her own and the shutters were forced open," she said.

The girl's parents had put her to bed and were eating dinner 50 metres away with friends. "They went back to check on her - the window had been opened and she'd been taken," Jill Renwick said.

In London, the Foreign Office said the incident was being treated as a missing person case.

The Ocean Club resort in the western Algarve where the family was staying with several other couples said in a statement that police, staff and locals were searching the area. <http://www.ireland.com>

Clashes mar Man Utd-Roma match

British and US officials have denied a report that the US was seeking ways of imposing entry restrictions for visiting Britons of Pakistani origin, following a spate of UK bomb plots involving citizens with links to Pakistan.

The report in The New York Times, quoted unnamed British officials as saying that the US had put several options on the table, including a cancellation of the existing visa waiver programme, which allows British tourists to visit without a visa, or a requirement that British Pakistanis would have to apply for visas.

British soldier killed in Afghanistan

A British soldier manning a checkpoint has been killed in southern Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Defence confirmed that the soldier from 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards had been shot dead in Afghanistan

The soldier was killed by small arms fire while manning a checkpoint near the town of Garmsir in Helmand Province. In the early hours of Thursday morning, the soldier was at the Eastern Checkpoint which came under attack from a force of between eight and ten Taliban fighters.

The Grenadiers returned fire with small arms and during the ensuing gun battle, the soldier, who was manning a General Purpose Machine Gun, sustained a gunshot wound. As the fire intensified, with the Taliban using Rocket Propelled Grenades as well as small arms, ISAF forces called in support from British artillery. The soldier was pulled out of the firing line by members of the Quick Reaction Force from Patrol Base Delhi and was then flown to the medical facilities at Camp Bastion, the main British base in the area. Despite efforts of medical teams he later died of his wounds. Next of kin have been informed. <http://www.4ni.co.uk>

British protests over baby gender testing kit

Right-to-life campaigners warned of a surge in abortions following the release this week of a new DNA testing kit which determines the sex of a baby six weeks into pregnancy, a report said on Friday.

The Early Gender Test, which went on sale on the Internet to non-US customers this week,

checks blood from the mother for Y-chromosomes, the presence of which indicates a boy.

<http://www.iol.co.za>

We're just not proud of being British any more

Fewer than half of us say we feel proud to be British, an official survey revealed yesterday.

At the same time the numbers of those seeing themselves as English first and foremost have shot up.

The figures confirm the drift away from support for Britain and the growth in nationalism in England as well as in Scotland.

Twenty-five years ago 55 per cent said they felt "very proud to be British but that figure has dropped to 45 per cent.

Researchers said older people had a strong attachment to Britain but that the young were more prone to listen to the appeals of nationalists.

Britishness is becoming a label only used on holiday, they said. The report was produced by the National Centre for Social Research, which has been carrying out regular polling since the early 80s as part of its British Social Attitudes project.

www.thisislondon.co.uk

Relegated Leeds in administration

Dennis Wise (left) and Leeds must look forward to life in League One

Leeds United have been relegated to League One after being deducted 10 points for going into administration.

The 10-point deduction - in accordance with Football League rules - means Leeds will finish the season at the bottom of the Championship.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Learning to Speak French

Learn Over 2000 French words in a few second:

Did you know that over 60% of English words are French words. Scary? Think of all words ending in 'ion'. Station. Plantation. Vision. They're all identical in French and English. As are all words ending in **ent, ant, el, al, ible, able**. Although the pronunciation is a little different, as promised, you have just learnt well over 2000 French words just by reading this article!

The Power of Imagery

Following on from last weeks discussion the power of imagery cannot be underestimated when learning vocabulary. The trick is to let the word and the meaning form an image in your mind. The more outrageous the image the better you will remember it!

Let's take any obscure French word as an example:

Recevoir

When I hear this word it instantly reminds me of a Reservoir I know in the UK There is a visitor's centre and a park. So I imagine an athlete receiving a gold medal in front of the building.

So I remember it means **To Receive**

Another Example:

Craindre

Instantly a crane comes to mind. I image someone standing on a crane waiting to do a bungee jump. They would be shaking with fear!

So I remember it mean **To Fear, Be Afraid Of**

I'm sure you get the idea. Obviously not all words are that easy to turn into an image but with a little thought and ingenuity you can make words stick in your memory fast. The more outrageous, colourful and noisy your images are the better. Use anything to make the "memory hook" a strong one.

Don't worry about Masculine and feminine

When learning French words by imagery have one place in your mind that is a typically male, and one that is typically female. For instance a sports arena for male and a shopping mall for female. Then when you have the image place it in the appropriate place. When you need to remember the image will come to mind and the location will give you masculine or feminine. Note: The French get round this problem by just saying 'l' or 'n' really quickly.

A quick article this month but you've learnt lots. More next Month!

And Finally!

Just a bit of a laugh.....

Pregnancy, Estrogen and Women

Pregnancy Q & A & more!

Q: Should I have a baby after 35?

A: No, 35 children is enough.

Q: I'm two months pregnant now. When will my baby move?

A: With any luck, right after he finishes college.

Q: What is the most reliable method to determine a baby's sex?

A: Childbirth.

Q: My wife is five months pregnant and so moody that sometimes she's borderline irrational.

A: So what's your question?

Q: My childbirth instructor says it's not pain I'll feel during labour, but pressure. Is she right?

A: Yes, in the same way that a tornado might be called an air current.

Q: When is the best time to get an epidural?

A: Right after you find out you're pregnant.

Q: Is there any reason I have to be in the delivery room while my wife is in labour?

A: Not unless the word "alimony" means anything to you.

Q: Is there anything I should avoid while recovering from childbirth?

A: Yes, pregnancy.

Q: Do I have to have a baby shower?

A: Not if you change the baby's diaper very quickly.

Q: Our baby was born last week. When will my wife begin to feel and act normal again?

A: When the kids are in college.

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