



ESSENTIALLY BRITISH?: Exploring citizenship and 'Britishness' using film

Island People (1940): Transcript

Britain, the United Kingdom. An island 700 miles long, 200 miles wide, separated from Europe by the English Channel, bounded by the North Sea and the Atlantic. An island of 48 million people.

The people of the land, who harvest the wheat of East Anglia - who rear the sheep of the West Country, the Midlands, Wales and Scotland; who work the fruit orchards of the South and West and the dairy farms of the central plain - the Britain of farmhouses, villages and market towns.

Industrial Britain - the world's workshop. It's people living in towns and cities; Glasgow, Manchester, London and a score of others. They mine the coalfields of Durham and Northumberland, Rhondda and Midlothian. They work with steel and iron in the foundries and machine shops. They build ships on the Clyde and the Tyne at Barrow, Liverpool and Belfast. They build locomotives and Doncaster and Swindon. They weave wool on the looms of Yorkshire. Spin cotton on the frames of Lancashire. A thousand industries. A thousand products. A thousand manufacturers for export overseas.

London - the nation's capital - centre of commercial Britain, where black-coat workers manage the business and international trade of the country. They keep the accounts of industry. They insure the world's shipping. They fix the world's gold price. They buy raw materials from overseas and sell finished products.

These are the main sections of working Britain - agriculture, industry and commerce. This is Britain, the great producing and trading country. And these are the people who are making it.

Jack Moore - a farmer. At 26 years of age he runs the 260 acre farm on which he was born. For six generations Moat Farm has been worked by his family and today as he drives the tractor up 20 acre field he has behind him the experience of generations of farmers together with the modern, scientific training he had at his agricultural college.

Jane Martin, doctor and psychologist, is head of a children's clinic in Manchester. Children meet her as an equal. In two minutes, she makes a rather nervous man completely at home. He's even ready to help her examine him. After 12 years intensive training and six years of practise, she is an established child specialist.

James Anderson, Captain of the SS Glenaisler. She is on the South American run carrying mixed cargoes outwards and carrying meat back to Liverpool. Captain Anderson is at sea for nine months in the year. He is solely responsible for his crew, cargo and 10,000 tonne ship. A job that requires South American run carrying mixed cargoes outwards and carrying meat back to Liverpool. Captain Anderson is at sea for nine months in the year. He is solely responsible for his



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crew, cargo and 10,000 tonne ship. A job that requires experience and a cool head. His greatest pleasure is his garden on the hills above the Mersey.

Elizabeth Davies, private secretary, works in a brokers office in London. She is a confident short-hand typist and knows the stock-market almost as well as her employer. In a day, thousands of pounds of stock are dealt with by her office. It is responsible work that requires intelligence and alertness. She likes to be independent and has many interests outside her office life.

Sam Hawker, silversmith, has worked for this Birmingham company for 40 years. From apprentice to journeyman to master craftsman. He works to a basic design but it is his creative ability that gives the work its beauty. His work is the work of an individual and can be recognised as such. He is an easy-going man with the quiet confidence of a master of his trade.

For five and a half days a week they work and at noon on Saturday the weekend holiday starts. Saturday afternoon - the time for sport. Summer and winter the British people follow their particular game. IN summer it may be cricket, bowls, tennis or swimming. In winter, skating, a friendly game of curling or rabbit shooting in a Kentish wood with ferrets and a dog. Or most typical of all, football. 20,000 people - steel workers, miners and textile operators, have come 300 miles with their team and on the football field mingle with the people of the south. 80,000 of them from every walk of life are united by a game. It is a time when people meet, when pleasures are shared and community life is at its best.

And there are those that stay at home. Here people are free to do the things they want to do. Free for all those small, personal pleasures of home life. In the evening the farmhouse kitchen and the town sitting room become the centres of family life. Mother, Father and the children are home for high tea. Throughout the week they have been separated, but today they are together and can enjoy the unity of family life.

A daughter brings home a friend to spend a weekend with her family and they gossip cheerfully as they fit a dress. Mother finishes her last job of the evening and enjoys it as much as her children do.

It is within these surroundings that children and their parents learn to appreciate the values of human associations. It is here that they learn the give and take of living with others. Consideration, tolerance and generosity.

In the outside world we see these ways of living on a larger scale. At this great ballroom where thousands dance, at this village hall where some play in the band. All in their own way contribute to the general enjoyment.



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At the local inns Britain meets. These are the traditional community centres. They are even called public houses where people go to talk and play games. Where men and women, friends and neighbours come together. Where the qualities of human relationships are at their best.

It is in the small everyday things that people do that we see their character. In the skill of a craftsman as he shapes a silver bowl. In the quiet efficiency of a secretary as she goes about her work. In the reliability of a captain as he plots the course. In the good humour of a doctor as she examines her patient. In scenes like these, we see not only the character of individuals but the character of a whole people - the British people.