



Short Story

submitted by

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Topic

Keeping the light on: Our shared future as British-German Friends

A British-German friendship was the reason for a big adventure in my family. The first person in my family who travelled to England was my grandfather Alfred. He was born in 1931 in Hannover and as a child he had a British friend called Andrew. They both lived in the same neighbourhood and they used to play every day together. When the Second World War began, Andrew had to leave Germany with his family and they moved to London. It was very difficult for my grandfather to keep in contact with his best friend. He tried to imagine his best friend's life in England and he read a lot of books about life in Great Britain, the royal family and English history.

Once the Second World War was over, he tried to find his best friend, but he was not successful. In the year 1953, almost 15 years after he had to say goodbye to his friend Andrew, he received a letter from Great Britain. In the envelope he could recognize King George on a stamp. When he opened the letter, he was glad to read that his loyal friend and his family were doing well, and that Andrew had not forgotten him. Quite the opposite, he invited my grandfather to visit him in London. However, at that time there was no money for travelling. Everybody was working very hard in Lower Saxony and tried to save money. But the desire of my grandfather to meet his old friend was so big that he decided to go on an adventure. He would travel to London by bicycle. He had heard that riding a bicycle was very common in England. Nothing could stop him! He packed his luggage in a bag-pack and after a few days the adventure started. He travelled along the Netherlands, Belgium and France and finally, ten days later, he arrived in Calais where he took the ferry to Dover. From Dover he rode through the British countryside to London. When he arrived in London, everything seemed familiar to him because he had read so many books about London, but still things were different than in Germany. He saw people wearing checked patterns and the buildings had a traditional architecture and were still there, not totally

destroyed from the war. The most strangest thing for him was the tea time organized by his guest family every afternoon. He was served scones with jam and biscuits, but the most delicious candy was the English wine gums. He loved them so much, that he used to order them by mail for the rest of his life from the British Shop. English wine gums were so different from the hard caramel candies he tasted in Germany. He was so glad to see his friend again! So many bad things happened during the World War and both of them were glad to meet each other as friends so many years later. Andrew organized many sightseeing tours for my grandfather and the most amazing thing during his stay in London was the Crowning of the young Princess Elizabeth II! In 1953 the coronation of Queen Elizabeth the II took place and it was a life-time chance for my grandfather to attend the celebration near the Westminster Abbey!

My grandfather narrated this unforgettable adventure to my family in Hannover many years later. Whenever the next Crowning in Great Britain happens, my family and I will travel by bicycle to London and try to honour the loyal friendship of my grandfather and Andrew.

