



# Leisure and Entertainment in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

As working hours began to decrease, leisure time (free time) became more and more important. Leisure time was 'free time' that people could use for having fun. More people began to have extra money by the 1930s so 'leisure industries' began to make suggestions for ways to spend money.

Billy Butlin, Oswald Stoll and Oscar Deutsch were three of the businessmen wanting to provide entertainment.

**Billy Butlin** set up holiday camps for British families with great success. His first holiday camp was built at Ingoldmells, near Skegness, in 1936. There, families were provided with somewhere to stay, three meals a day and entertainment all in the same place.

**Oswald Stoll** was famous for creating theatre entertainment and film studios. He invented the Royal Variety Performance, still held today, and Stoll Pictures, a leading film studio.

**Oscar Deutsch** founded the Odeon cinema group. These cinemas brought British films and Hollywood movies to ordinary people in 258 places across the country.

People had spare money because of changes in employment laws. People also had more leisure time because in 1939 a law was passed that every working person in the country was entitled to one week's paid holiday per year. Many people had not taken holidays before because they could not afford to. This created a revolution for businesses that provided entertainment and holidays. Also, in 1900 the average working week in Britain had been 54 hours. By the 1980s this had become 39 hours. More and more people were able to spend less time working because their pay was able to stretch further and more easily.

Popular leisure pursuits of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century included trips to the cinema, fairgrounds, sporting and music events as well as dance clubs. People would also listen to the radio, watch television, play with toys, games and use developing technologies. More people were able to travel further, safely and cheaply in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This also meant that eating out at exotic restaurants developed as a popular entertainment.



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1. Who were the three business men mentioned in this text? \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why are the men's names in bold? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was so special about the 1930s? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Oswald Stoll do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What happened in 1939? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How had people's lives changed by the 1980s? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why do you think pictures were included in this text? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. In what kind of book would you expect to find an information sheet like this? \_\_\_\_\_  
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