The Celebration Report
Leading Britain out of a Psychological Recession
“We tend to associate the word ‘celebration’ with a big event that needs planning and money, however this research demonstrates how important it is that we are able to celebrate even the smallest of occasions in our lives. Being able to take pleasure and enjoy the smaller, simpler things in life is a great way to feel happier.”

Dr Linda Papadopoulos
Introduction

In producing this report we aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how we approach celebration – when we celebrate, how often we celebrate, how and why we celebrate, what prevents us from enjoying our celebrations more and, importantly, how celebration makes us feel. The report is based on research, conducted by YouGov, of over 4000 British adults. It explores the attitudes and approach to celebration and is especially poignant during this time of economic uncertainty. The research also explores regional, age-related and sexual differences to our celebrations.

The research questions were planned and supervised by psychologist Dr Linda Papadopoulos BA(Hons), MSc., PhD., CPsychol., CSci., AFBPsS, who has authored this report on the basis of the findings.

Dr. Linda Papadopoulos is one of the most well-known and respected psychologists working in the UK today. Her 14 year career as a research scientist and practising psychologist has led to her work being published in some of the most well-regarded academic journals and given rise to a high profile media career. She was included in the Top 20 therapists in London by the Evening Standard newspaper and was awarded the Madame Figaro Women of the Year Award in 2008 in the field of academia.

“The findings of this report underline the importance celebration plays in our lives and the benefits of finding small ways to celebrate more often. Our research highlights a real desire to move back to smaller, community-based celebrations, and this is something we are making happen every day at Bingocams.co.uk.”

Vikki Taylor, Marketing Manager UK, Bingocams

The research and resulting ‘Celebration Report’ was sponsored by Bingocams.co.uk, the only online bingo website where players can interact with each other via webcam and celebrate Live Win Moments.
The report

It is a sign of our times that so many of the respondents to this survey reported that they are feeling a bit down.

- Nearly half (42%) reported that they felt a bit depressed when thinking about the current economic situation
- Financial constraints are preventing over half (55%) from celebrating more
- However, nearly three-quarters (71%) would like more celebration in their lives

The report uncovered important signs that although people recognise that being more uninhibited in celebration would allow them to enjoy it even more, the majority resist the urge to really let go when they celebrate. A fear of embarrassment is what most holds us back, which Dr Linda believes is part of the British psyche.

In exploring the role of celebration among the British population, the research took the broadest approach. Rather than strictly defining ‘celebration’, respondents were able to consider a vast array of celebrations – from larger events such as weddings and anniversaries through to small, every-day ‘wins’, such as the triumph of a favourite sports team to winning at a pub quiz.

What we found suggests that whether large or small, the majority would like more celebration in their lives, with seven in 10 agreeing that finding something to smile about has become more important to them. However, aside from financial constraints, many feel a lack of opportunity for celebration and a notable number sadly feel that they don’t have reason to celebrate.

Not only does the report show that the act of celebrating can greatly improve our mental health, it also has a positive effect on our physical health.

This report further explores the benefits of celebration, the factors that prevent us from celebrating more and the wider issues surrounding celebrating during these tougher times.

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Dr. Linda Papadopoulos says: “Being able to take pleasure and enjoy the smaller, simpler things in life is a great way to feel happier.”

Dr Linda states: “Physical changes when a positive unexpected event happens to us include a rise in endorphins, increased heart rate and an overall feeling of well-being. It is no surprise therefore that people actually FEEL the effects of celebrating.”
Does Britain celebrate enough?

Our research discovered that 71% of Britons would like to celebrate more in their lives and crucially, over half (57%) believe that those who celebrate more lead happier lives.

Dr. Linda notes: “This is important as being able to experience happiness and having the mindfulness to live moments of happiness fully has been shown to have a positive effect not only on emotional health but on physical health as well. In addition, being able to celebrate and share positive experiences with those around us has a great effect on bonding and building community spirit, which has also been shown to correlate with good mental health.”

Over half (52%) of the respondents also feel that we should celebrate more together as a nation. Interestingly, this is more strongly expressed by younger people, than older (57% age 18-24, compared with 45% age 55+).

There are some notable national variations, with Scots being the least likely of all Brits to feel that we should celebrate more as a nation – only 37% agree that we should do so. Scots are least likely to associate royal occasions with the true spirit of celebration. They are also least likely to agree that those who celebrate more lead happier lives and least likely to agree that they would like to celebrate more in life.

This is interesting given that most regions freely acknowledge Scotland, along with London, as being intrinsic to the true spirit of British celebration, as the hosts of Hogmanay and royal occasions, respectively.

“What we choose to celebrate and in fact how we celebrate is related to our cultural values and norms - so whether it's a religious, political or personal occasion no doubt where we live will dictate what and how we celebrate,” comments Dr. Linda Papadopoulos.
General desire to celebrate, regional variations – all adults

“I want to celebrate more in life”

“We should celebrate more as a nation”

How often should we celebrate? – all adults
What’s holding us back?

Despite the large majority expressing a desire to celebrate more in life, the research findings indicate various factors are preventing people from doing so. Unsurprisingly, during the current economic climate, financial constraints loom large and are the most common reason given (55%); moreover, a similar percentage of people (52%) have cut back on the amount they spend on celebrating and 41% are celebrating less now than they did three years ago.

There were, however, a notable percentage of respondents also citing lack of opportunity (28%) and lack of free time (25%) as the reasons they aren’t celebrating more often.

Sadly, 30% of 18 to 24 year olds said they don’t have much to celebrate. This is in comparison with only 16% of those aged 55+ who gave this as a reason.

As Dr. Linda observes: “We live in a culture that is saturated with news and media and unsurprisingly often derive our beliefs and expectations from the messages we get from them. In recent years following the financial crisis there has been a real trend in the media of ruminating on the doom and gloom of the financial crisis and what this means for the younger generation. In addition with the recent London riots and university fee hikes it’s not surprising that 18-24 year olds don’t feel they have much to celebrate.”

What stops you from celebrating more?  

“I don’t have much to celebrate”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
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<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of free time</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have much to</td>
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<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
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<td>celebrate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of family and</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends to celebrate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I celebrate</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enough already</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What and how do we celebrate?

Both wedding anniversaries and Mother’s Day are the most common reasons for celebration according to our research, with 47% saying that they tend to celebrate these occasions. Work leaving drinks and Father’s Day come in at a joint third at 35%. However, the most common celebration amongst those aged 18-24 is work leaving drinks (44%), whilst the most common celebration for those aged 25-34 is hen or stag parties. Regionally, Londoners celebrate work leaving drinks the most (43%), compared with 35% nationwide but are the least likely to celebrate wedding anniversaries (36%).

Occasions that we celebrate most

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wedding anniversary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Day</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Day</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work leaving drinks</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement parties</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hen/Stag parties</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite sporting team winning</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby showers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, although the research clearly indicates that we wish to celebrate more often, few of us are taking up the every-day opportunities to celebrate small, spontaneous events, such as friends’ birthdays or winning a game. Just 16% of us celebrate such events once a month or more frequently; over half (58%) celebrate these type of smaller events less often than once every two to three months, with 11% never celebrating small, spontaneous events.

These statistics are most interesting given that 70% of respondents agreed that finding things to smile about is more important to them than before, with those aged 55+ agreeing the most (73%).

This is probably due to the fact that we tend to associate the word ‘celebration’ with a big event that needs planning and money. However, this research demonstrates how important it is that we are able to celebrate even the smallest of occasions in our lives. By re-framing the meaning of ‘celebration’ to allow us to acknowledge and take pleasure in something positive, no matter how small, then we would see an increase in the amount of occasions that we celebrate,” suggests Dr. Linda Papadopoulos.

*It should be noted that Christmas was not included as an option in this research. As a key time for celebration within the UK, it was decided that inclusion of this occasion would affect results.
The findings regarding the way in which we celebrate are particularly interesting, bearing in mind that the majority (57%) agree that people who are uninhibited in celebration have the most fun.

When it comes to times of celebration, the majority of Brits (44%) say that they always do it in moderation; just over a quarter (26%) are exuberant, outgoing and ‘let it all out’ celebrants, whilst a fifth (20%) are shy and retiring or introverted in their celebrations.

There is also an indication that a fear of embarrassment in “overdoing” celebrating is a factor. Over a third (36%) admit to feeling slightly embarrassed or extremely ashamed the day after taking a celebration ‘too far’. Just over a quarter (28%) feel philosophical – “it happens to the best of us”, although nearly a quarter feel uplifted or proud (22%) of letting go.

Which type of celebrant are you? – all adults

Dr. Linda feels this may be a national habit: “Inhibition around celebrating may come from the British stiff upper lip that sees congratulating ourselves as crass. The fact is that it’s vital to take the time to celebrate our achievements and accomplishments as this can have a positive effect on self-esteem and even our happiness levels. The important thing is to celebrate ‘your way’ and not feel that you have to live up to expectations regarding how you ‘ought to’ behave while celebrating.”
The findings also uncover interesting insights with regards to regionalism. Despite such stereotypes that portray those from the North being unfettered in their partying and those from London being “standoffish”, our findings actually indicate that Londoners are more likely to be extroverted during their celebrations (33%) than those from the North (24%).

There are also interesting variations between the sexes. When asked about their reaction when something great happens to them, men are almost twice as likely as women to hold it back and keep it to themselves (31% of men, compared to 16% of women). What's more, only just over half (54%) of men say that they even break out into a smile, compared with over three quarters (77%) of women. Women are also almost twice as likely to grab someone and give them a hug to celebrate good news – 24% of women versus just 11% of men.

Dr. Linda comments: “These are impressive stats that truly demonstrate the emotional difference between the sexes. Although we have always associated women and girls with being more comfortable with emotional displays, these stats show just how emotionally detached men and boys truly are.”
Which British region do you most associate with the true spirit of celebration? – all adults

- The region that most Britons choose as being most associated with the true spirit of celebration is Scotland (24%), followed by London (16%).
- East Midlands and East Anglia are considered to be the regions least associated with the true spirit of celebration (both 1%).

Events most associated with the true spirit of celebration – all adults

- Hogmanay is associated with the true spirit of celebration by the most respondents (39%), followed by Royal occasions and, perhaps surprisingly, St. Patrick’s Day (both 27%).
- Regionally, Hogmanay sees a much larger response rate amongst Scots themselves (66%), while 30% of Scots named Edinburgh Festival.
Two-thirds (66%) of all Britons would take most enjoyment from watching a family member celebrate.

Enjoying “Family members” celebrating saw an upward trend in response with age – 48% of 18-24 year olds, compared to 77% 55+ year olds.

“A friend” celebrating saw a downward trend in response with age – 35% 18-24 year olds, compared to 12% 55+ year olds.

There is one a regional variation, with Londoners most likely to respond “a friend” (27%) and least likely to name “family members” (59%).

Just under half (46%) of all adults would take least enjoyment from watching a celebrity celebrate.

Almost a third (32%) said a stranger.
How does celebrating make us feel?

Whilst the insights provided reinforce that women are far more likely than men to express themselves with demonstrative emotion when something great happens, further differences between the sexes arise when questioned about experiences that give them a feeling akin to enjoying a celebration.

Enjoying a belly-laugh was the sensation that most compared to the feeling of enjoying a spontaneous act of celebration, although this breaks down to 47% of females and 30% of males. Very interestingly, the most selected option for males was sex, chosen by one in three (33%), in comparison to under one in five women (19%).

*Dr. Linda Papadopoulos isn’t surprised by this: “This is probably due to the association of sex with feelings of disinhibition, emotional connection and physical exhilaration, all things that are also associated with celebration.”*

Sex was also the response more prevalent amongst the younger age group, chosen by 35% of those aged 18-24 years but only 18% of those aged 55+.

Questions about how we feel physically when we celebrate confirm that the majority (46%) of us feel exhilarated after letting out a spontaneous shout of joy. However, men are almost twice as likely as women to feel relieved – 13% of men versus 7% of women. Men are also more likely to feel relaxed after letting out a shout – 11% of men compared with just 7% of women.

In contrast to what happens when something great happens to them personally, just 27% of all respondents say they feel exhilarated when their favourite sports team wins; whilst 18% feel relieved, with this rising to 23% amongst men.

When questioned about what people feel when encountering a group of strangers celebrating, most say they feel amused (38%) or happy (25%), however nearly a quarter (24%) feel indifferent. Londoners are most likely to say they want to join with the celebrations (15%), compared with the national average of 12%.

Somewhat surprisingly, a fifth (20%) of those aged 18-24 say that they are irritated by the noise! This compares with 13% of all and just 11% of those aged 55+. 
What of the future?

The research reveals interesting insights on how the current economic situation is affecting our outlook on celebrations. Not only have more than half (52%) cut down on the amount of money that they spend on celebrations; community has now become more of a focus for the majority of us. Sixty-four per cent (64%) would like to see a return to simpler, community-based celebrations. What’s more, during these tougher economic times, spending time with friends and family has become even more important to almost eight in ten (78%) of all those polled.

Equally, family gatherings are also the celebrations which make most of us (41%) feel happiest, with nights out with friends coming second (29%). Notably, 44% of those aged 18-24 also agree with this sentiment.

This is surprising given that 65% of Britons are worried about the way youth today celebrates, although this sentiment is higher amongst the older age groups.

It appears that while over two thirds (77%) of younger British adults (aged 18-24) would like to celebrate more, they are also more likely to feel that they haven’t much to celebrate (30%, compared with 16% of those aged 55+). The majority (56%) of the younger age group are additionally finding it harder to find fun affordable things to do in their spare time, compared with 48% of all adults and 41% of those aged 55+.

Dr. Linda Papadopoulos comments: “As we noted earlier in the report, with the financial crisis and ensuing cuts to university fees and reduction of employment opportunities – both of which are felt most acutely by the younger generation, it’s not surprising that 18-24 year olds don’t feel they have much to celebrate. On the other hand, older people may have a better sense of perspective when it comes to appreciating and celebrating the smaller things in life. They are also more likely to have the resources to do so, making the concept of celebration much more appealing.”
Conclusion

The findings of The Celebration Report demonstrate that overall, there is a serious side to celebration. Across age, sex and region, it is clear that as a nation we would like – and indeed need, to celebrate more in life.

The core findings outlined in this report can be summarised as:

• The current economic climate is creating a psychological recession in Britain today
• 71% of British adults agree that they would like to celebrate more in their life, with over half of people citing financial constraints as the reason they don’t celebrate more
• We need to redefine the meaning of celebration and learn to celebrate the smaller things in life, with seven in 10 agreeing that finding things to smile about is now more important than ever
• In doing so, we need to lose our inhibitions in the way in which we celebrate as Brits agree that those who let go during celebrations will get the most out of it
• Not only does the act of celebrating affect our psychological health – we all agree that celebrating makes us happier, it also has a positive effect on our physical health due to increased endorphins and heart rate
• Finally, we need to listen to the concerns of the younger generation who feel we should celebrate more together as a nation – especially as we agree that celebrations shared with a community are those that make us happiest

In closing, the report shows that although we are currently seeing a psychological recession in Britain, learning to take a step back and celebrate the smaller things in life with those around us will dramatically increase our quality of life and lead to a happier nation.

“Whether it’s a huge sporting event or passing our driving test, the ability to celebrate can have a positive effect on the way we see ourselves and those around us, fostering better emotional and physical health as well as social support. We need to allow ourselves to celebrate spontaneously - it doesn’t have to be big or expensive it just needs to make the point that when good things happen to us it’s vital that we sit up and take notice of them,” concludes Dr. Linda Papadopoulos.
Bingocams.co.uk is the only bingo website where players can interact with each other via webcam. Celebrations are at the heart of Bingocams.co.uk with thousands of Live Win Moments taking place every day as players celebrate their winnings.