

So one of my family traditions every year was to go to this thing called a regatta, which sounds very, very, very posh in terms of British culture and stuff. But it was just because my grandma had a place. My grandma lived on the south coast and there's a beautiful. I don't know if it's a city or a town. It's kind of between the two. It's quite a lot of space, but it's not hugely populated because it's not quite a tourist attraction, called Dartmouth.

And Dartmouth. One of the things it's most famous for is having a naval base there, naval training base. So a regatta is a maritime, a water-based festival, I suppose that lasts for about a week. And we used to go there, August Bank holiday every single year and still do. Actually, it's been a long time. It's been I mean, I'm in my twenties and we've been going there all of my life and probably even before then.

So it's really nice. Obviously, it's quite water-based. So there are a lot of boats, they have a lot of competitions. So rowing competitions, they do races, mini-marathons and stuff like that. But I've never been involved in, so I actually don't know the details of any of them. I just remember watching some rowers sometimes.

But the big thing that my family was really into about the regatta is obviously because there was a naval base, there was a relationship with the armed forces. So my family always really loved watching the R.A.F., the Royal Air Force Airshows.

So one of them that we loved every single year and unfortunately happens less and less now due to weather implications, due to bad weather and how busy it gets. It's actually not safe to have big air shows when there's so many people in the area and now that the regatta is more popular.

But things like the red arrows and they used to do, I think they were about 15, 20-minute shows of flying through the air and drawing things with the smoke coming out of the back of them and red, white and blue. So they do hearts. They do arrows through hearts, they do smiley faces. They do all these little twists and turns and everything. And sometimes you can meet the pilots.

There's also a fair there. So a fairground of kind of like a carnival. So you'd have games that you could play and you could have like merry go round the horses having mind blowing weather or cold. But one of the ones that we always used to love was they had an RAF I suppose as a game rather than a ride.

But you'd go into kind of this little capsule and it would be covered in these computer screens on the inside. So it would look like you were flying up and down and it would move and it was, it was so much fun. But yeah, they do all these flyovers and it was a lot of fun.

They also had a guard ship, I think, every year, actually. But we didn't we didn't visit it every year, but a guard ship, a warship, like not quite aggressive, but as aggressive as that, but like a warship that the public could go onto and get tours around and see the different weapons that were used and see how the crew would live and the different things that were available.

So that was a lot of fun as well. And speaking to people who worked for the armed forces, which was wonderful and it was also one of the only times of the year that our whole family would get together because we live all across the UK and it was really nice just coming together because we all because it's a bank holiday weekend, no one works, we all get a holiday.

So we could all go there. They had a tent that was like a shopping fest or a lot of independent local businesses would go there. So you'd have local. Local nuts was the one that was always there. Local candied nuts, lots of artisanal jewelry, lots of handbags that obviously my mum and grandma really, really loved. And they would always pick up the fresh leather and smell and say, Oh, you can tell that it's such good quality, which was always it was just these images that make me quite nostalgic.

But the one thing that was really, really big and popular for the whole family was this event called Spot the Oddity. And it wasn't until I was much older that I realized Oddity is actually a word and not something that was made up for this game because it's not a word that's used very often it's quite old fashioned now.

But the idea is that you would go around all these local shops in the area and spot something in their window that doesn't fit with everything else. So for example, you would have say a salon, a hair salon, and they would have a piece of art from the artist that works next door and they would have a theme. So they also did a decoration competition between the shops in the town centre. And it was always really, really nice. It was always a lot of fun. And it reached a point where it got so popular that they had to ban parents from taking part because they would take part under their children's names. So there was a lot of local drama about that. And as I said it got really, really popular in later years, in the last maybe five years.

Oh, probably more than that, actually. I've lost time during COVID. So we would take a day out to go to these National Trust properties, so these heritage properties in the local area. And one of them that was so beautiful was called Coleton Fishacre, which was a 1920s house and gardens that was really, really fancy. And some famous operetta writers used to be friends with the original owners, so you could see some of their original manuscripts in the rooms that they would meet in.

But the gardens were absolutely enormous. I mean, I've got no idea the amount of space that was covered by them, but it was so beautiful. And my grandma was a really enthusiastic gardener. So we'd go, we'd have scones in that café and then just walk around for hours. I mean, you could spend a full day there and not see everything in the gardens, but yeah, that was the end of my summer celebrations every year.