

# London Life

## Ice Skating



**BBC WORLD SERVICE**  
LEARNING ENGLISH



[bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com)  
© British Broadcasting Corporation 2005

**Anna:** Hello, I'm Anna Jones, and this is London Life. In the programme today we are going to find out what special event takes place during the Christmas period at Somerset House. Somerset House is a well-known and beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century building in the heart of central London where visitors can attend a variety of cultural events throughout the year. Some of these events take place in its large central courtyard – in the summer months there are beautiful fountains which people can play in and cool off on a hot summer's day. But what happens in the courtyard in the cold months of winter? For a couple of months over the Christmas period the central courtyard changes into something very magical. I visited Somerset House at the beginning of December and spoke to two Londoners who were there. What do you think they had just been doing?

“It's good , it's very good – it's a shame it's not a bit bigger because it does get quite crowded when there's a full hour's session booked. But no, it's good fun.”

“Yeah it was brilliant, lots of people – the worry is when other people fall over and knock you over but it's a good afternoon out – really good fun.”

**Anna:** Well whatever they were doing, they both seem to have enjoyed themselves! They use these expressions to say how much they enjoyed themselves: “It's good fun” “It was brilliant” and “A good afternoon out”. Can you guess what it is they've just been doing? Have another listen.

### Vox Pops

“It's good , it's very good – it's a shame it's not a bit bigger because it does get quite crowded when there's a full hour's session booked. But no, it's good fun.”

“Yeah it was brilliant, lots of people – the worry is when other people fall over and knock you over, but it's a good afternoon out – really good fun.”

**Anna:** Well there were some clues for you there. The man says he would like it to be larger as there are a lot of people there and it can get very busy during a one hour session. He says: “It’s a shame it’s not a bit bigger because it does get quite crowded when there’s a full hour’s session booked.” The woman says that it can be quite worrying when other people fall down and can knock you down at the same time. She says “The worry is when other people fall over and knock you over.” Enough clues? Well, they’ve both been ice skating on the ice rink at Somerset House. The central courtyard turns into a magical winter world of ice and skating. Here’s Jenny Waldman the Events Consultant at Somerset House to describe it in more detail. How long has the ice rink been at Somerset House?

We’ve had an ice rink here for the last 6 years – the first one was in the year 2000 and it’s really an annual treat for Londoners and for visitors to London.

**Anna:** Jenny says the ice rink has been at Somerset House for the last 6 years and the first one was in the year 2000. She describes it as “an annual treat for Londoners.” If something is described as a treat then it is an event to look forward to. For example if it’s a child’s birthday then their parents may give their son or daughter a “birthday treat.” Perhaps they’ll take them to the cinema to see a favourite film or take them out for a meal in a favourite restaurant. So for Londoners, for people who live in London, Somerset House ice rink is a treat around Christmas every year – people look forward to its reappearance each year. [Here’s Jenny again with a description of the ice rink at night.]

### **Insert**

At night it’s particularly beautiful with gorgeous lighting and wonderful flames around, “flambeaux” around the ice rink. We have beautiful music during the day and rather funkier music at night. We have a lovely café and the ice wall has become quite a spectator sport. And

in addition, we have a very large and beautiful Christmas tree which is up until the 6<sup>th</sup> January, our Twelfth Night.

**Anna:** Jenny uses two adjectives to describe how attractive and lovely the ice rink looks at night. She says it is “beautiful” with “gorgeous lighting,” It has wonderful flames around the edge and the lights at night make it look extremely attractive or “gorgeous.” There is also music for people to skate to during the day and at night, the music becomes “funkier” – funky music usually has a strong bass rhythm which is repeated. Next to the ice rink there are three other attractions. Can you remember what they are?

The three attractions are a café, a large Christmas Tree which stays up until 6<sup>th</sup> January and an ice wall. The ice wall is a climbing wall which is 8 metres high. Jenny describes it as a “spectator sport.” – a spectator sport is very enjoyable to watch and generally interests people more as spectators than as participants.

Now here’s a recap of some of the language we’ve heard today:

What’s the word that means a special occasion?

treat

Which adjective means very attractive?

gorgeous

How do you describe music which repeats a strong bass rhythm?

funky

What kind of sport attracts more spectators than participants?

a spectator sport. That’s all for now. Goodbye.