

HISTORY OF BRITAIN PART ONE

By Harry
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INTRODUCTION

The History of Britain is a five pack series which in total considers 101 topics from British history. The format for pages is mostly one page one topic, with a short description of a particular event, followed by questions and exercises. It would be easily possible to have covered more than 200 topics and to have devoted several pages to each topic. This would probably have left the packs too big and difficult to use. This selection, therefore, represents 'snapshots' rather than being comprehensive. Teachers are advised to use the sheets as an introduction from which students may develop the topic in one of several different ways. They can be asked to answer one or more of the questions posed, or the teacher may direct the student in a specific way. The topics are suitable for use as classroom material, homework, or as a basis for longer project type assignments.

Teachers are advised at all times to link the topics back to the events which precede and forward to the implications and effect that the event had on related matters. It is also important to link the topics to the underlying trends in the history of the time. Many of the events happened as a result of the complicated accession claims made by the aristocracy, or as a result of religious competition between Protestants and Catholics. There is also the link between the Scottish and English fight for independence and/or supremacy.

One of the difficulties in teaching British history, especially before 1900, is the ability to keep the interest of the student in a topic which seems to have little relevance to their needs and expectations today. It is important, therefore, to try to maintain interest by direct comparisons to events today or to the historical implications that the events had which can be seen today. An example of this could be the Roman road networks which are still visible today, or the Union with Ireland, the effects of which still cause friction today. Another highly recommended tool is the building of short biographies of historical figures. A number of biographies can be built up which can then be displayed or used as a reference resource.

The History of Britain pack has been widely tested and comes highly recommended for use with students between the ages of 11 and 16. The language may be difficult for some students but in an attempt to cater for a wide ability range and in order to explain the topics fully it has been necessary to use quite complicated language at times. Teachers are reminded to assess whether their students are likely to be confused by some words. The development of a classroom glossary may be of use here.

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VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN **VICTORIAN** 20TH CENTURY

Please note: in the date line which appears at the bottom of each page, the Victorian era is omitted except for the period for which it is relevant. This is only because in this series it features only a few times and should be noted by teachers and students as an important era in British history study generally.

ROMANS CONQUER BRITAIN

TOPIC 1

Julius Caesar invaded Britain in 55 or 54 BC, bringing the island into close contact with the Roman world. Caesar's description of Britain at the time of his invasions is the first known comprehensive account. From about 20 BC. There were two principal powers in Britain: the north of the Thames led by Tasciovanus, and south of the river, the kingdom of the Atrebates. Beyond these kingdoms lay the Iceni in what is now Norfolk, the Corieltaui in the Midlands, the Dobuni in the area of Gloucestershire, and the Durotriges in that of Dorset. Behind these again lay further independent tribes; the Dumnonii of Devon, the Brigantes in the north, and the Silures and Ordovices in Wales.

Caesar had established links with certain British tribes. Some British tribes welcomed Roman aid in their resistance to the expansion of others. The decision of the emperor Claudius to conquer the island was the result partly of his personal ambition, partly of British aggression. Under Aulus Plautius an army of four legions was assembled, together with a number of other regiments consisting of cavalry and infantry raised among tribes of the empire. After delay caused by the troops' unwillingness to cross the ocean, which they then regarded as the boundary of the human world, a landing was made at Richborough, Kent, in AD 43. The British were taken by surprise and defeated.

They fell back to defend near Rochester but were defeated again. The Romans halted at the Thames to wait for the emperor, who took personal command of the closing stages of the campaign. In a short time the main military opposition had been crushed: But Britain was by no means united. Some tribes submitted, and subduing the rest remained the task for the year 44.

By the year 47, a frontier had been established from Exeter to the Humber, based on the road known as the Fosse Way. The Romans did not plan the annexation of the whole island but only of the arable southeast. The actions of the tribes of Wales, however, caused them to occupy the lowlands beyond the Fosse Way up to the River Severn.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

List the factors which led up to the invasion of Britain.

Why is this event important in the history of Britain?

What were the immediate effects of this event?

Write a letter to a friend describing what the invasion was like. Imagine you had a part in it.

Find out about and write a short biography of Julius Caesar.

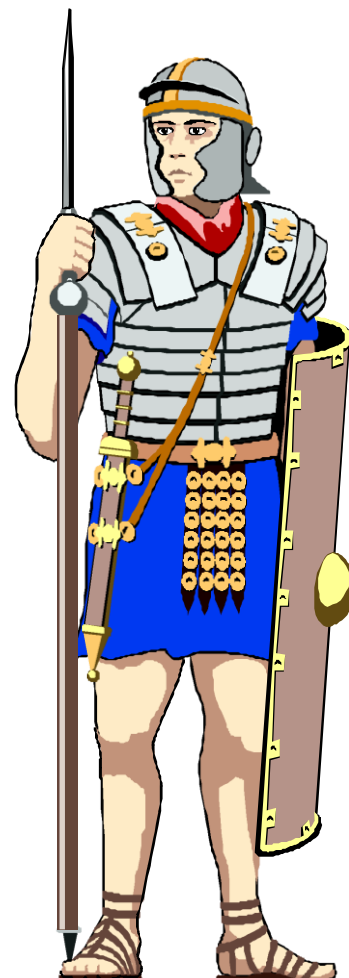
THE ROMAN SOLDIER AND MILITARY MACHINE

TOPIC
2

The Roman legion was originally the largest permanent organization in the armies of Rome. The term legion also denotes the military system by which imperial Rome conquered and ruled the ancient world.

The Roman Republic found the Greek phalanx formation too unwieldy. Accordingly, the Romans invented a new tactical system based on small and supple infantry units called maniples. Each maniple had 120 men in 12 rows and 10 columns. Two weapons gave the legion its famous flexibility and force; the pilum, a 2-metre (7-foot) javelin used for both throwing and thrusting; and the gladius, a 50-centimetre (20-inch) cut-and-thrust sword with a broad, heavy blade. Each legionary also had a metal helmet, breastplate, and convex shield.

As Roman armies of the late Republic and Empire became larger and more professional, the cohort, with an average field strength of 360 men, replaced the maniple as the chief unit within legions.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Find out about Roman armour. Label the picture above with the correct names for armour and dress.

Why was the Roman army so successful in war?

Write a letter to a friend describing what it was like to be a soldier in the Roman Army.

Find out about and write a short biography of a famous Roman soldier.

QUEEN BOUDICCA (BOADICEA)

TOPIC
3



Boudicca is often portrayed as a mythical warrior queen

Boudicca's husband, Prasutagus, was king of the Iceni (in what is now Norfolk) and friendly with the Romans. When He died in 60 with no male heir, he left his wealth to his two daughters and to the emperor Nero, trusting that the Romans would protect his family. Instead, the Romans took his kingdom, humbled his family, and attacked the chief tribesmen.

While the provincial governor Suetonius Paulinus was absent in 60, Boudicca started a rebellion in East Anglia. They burned Camulodunum (Colchester), Verulamium, the mart of Londinium (London), and several military posts; massacred 70,000 Romans and pro-Roman Britons; and cut to pieces the Roman 9th Legion. Paulinus met the Britons and in a desperate battle regained the province. Boudicca took poison or died of shock.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

List the factors which led up to this event in British history.

Why is this event important in the history of Britain?

What were the immediate effects of this event?

Write a letter to a friend describing what the event was like. Imagine you had a part in it.

Find out about and write a short biography of Boudicca.

TOWNS IN ROMAN BRITAIN

TOPIC 4

Before the Romans arrived Britain had large centres of population but not towns in the Roman sense of having not merely streets and public buildings but also the amenities and local autonomy of a city. In Britain these had therefore to be provided if Roman civilization and normal methods of provincial administration were to be introduced. A policy of organisation started in which the legions, played an organizing role. The earlier towns consisted of half-timbered buildings; before AD 100 only public buildings were built of stone. The administrative capitals had regular street grids, a public hall, public baths, and temples; a few had theatres and amphitheatres, too. With few exceptions they were undefended. In the 3rd century, town walls were provided.

These towns grew in size to about 100-130 acres with populations of about 5,000; a few were twice this size. The majority of towns in Roman Britain developed out of traders' settlements near early garrison-forts: those that were not selected as administrative centres remained dependent for their existence on economic factors, serving either as centres of trade or manufacture or else as markets for the agricultural peasantry. They varied in size. In the north, where garrisons were permanently established, quite large trading settlements grew up in their vicinity, and at least some of these would rank as towns.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What were towns like before the Romans invaded Britain?

Why was the Town considered important to the Romans?

What sort of public buildings would there likely to be in a typical Roman town?

Which English towns were established during the Roman occupation?

TRADE IN ROMAN BRITAIN

TOPIC 5

Even before the conquest, Britain exported gold, silver, iron, hides, slaves, and hounds in addition to grain. Iron was worked in many places but only for local needs; silver, obtained from lead, was of more importance. The basis of the economy was agriculture, and the conquest greatly stimulated production because of the requirements of the army. Grain to feed the troops was collected as a tax; so more had to be grown before a profit could be made.

People in Wales and the north had to supply leather, which the Roman army needed for tents, boots, uniforms, and shields. A military tannery is known at Catterick, in north Yorkshire. Small peasant farmers tilled the lighter, more easily worked soils. Villa estates were established on heavier, richer soils, sometimes on land recently won by forest clearance, itself a result of the enormous new demand for building timber from the army and the new towns, and for fuel for domestic heating and for public baths.

Trade in imported luxury goods ranging from wine to tableware and bronze trinkets vastly increased as traders came after the army to exploit new markets. The Mendip lead field was being worked under military control as early as the year 49, and not much later also the Derbyshire lead field. Large profits were made by continental businessmen in the first two centuries by the import on a big scale of high-class pottery from Gaul and the Rhineland and on a lesser scale of glass vessels, luxury metalware, and Spanish oil and wine. A large market existed among the military, and the Britons themselves provided a second market for luxury goods as they became better off.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What was trade in Britain like before the Romans arrived?

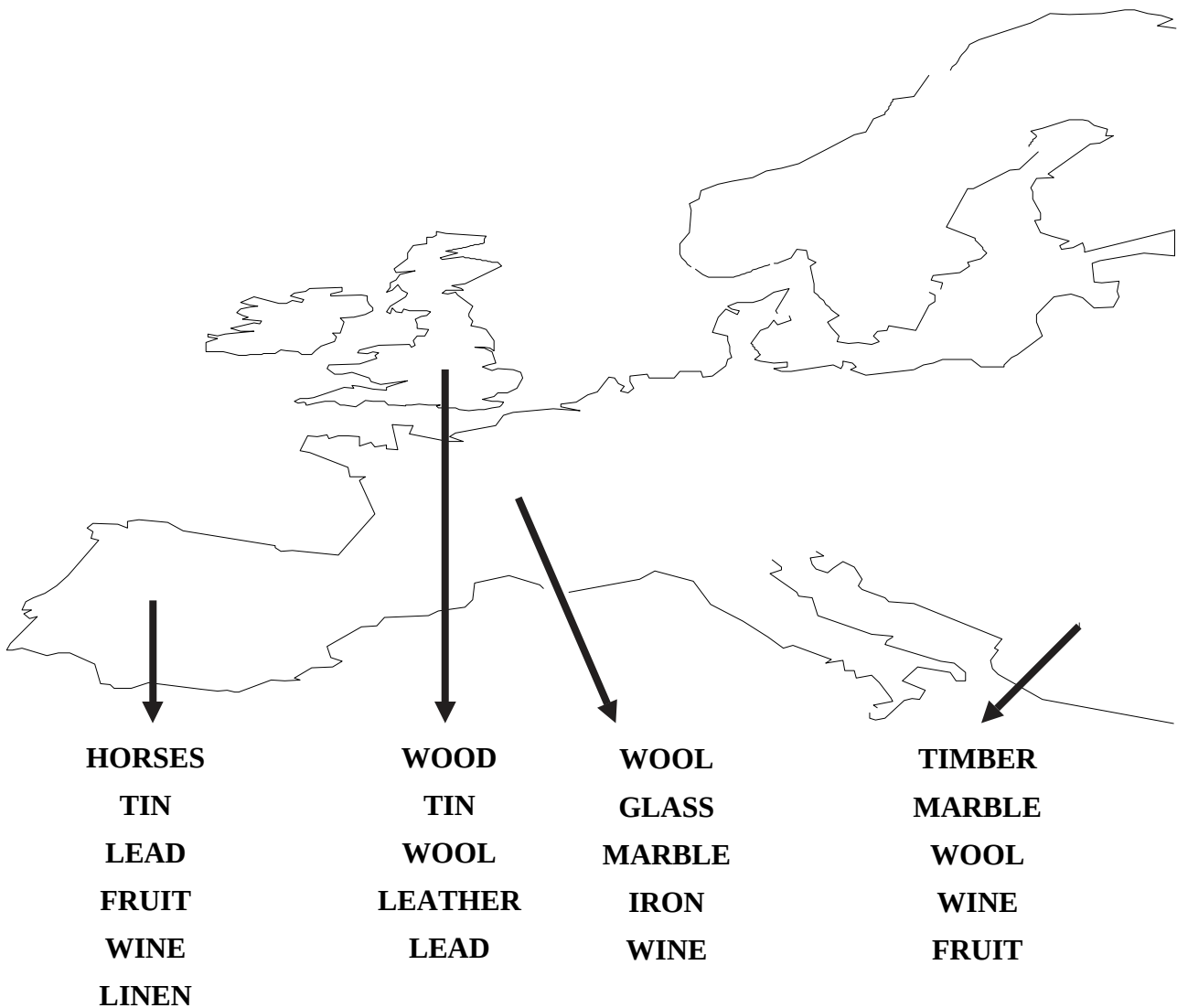
How did the Romans change the way in which people traded?

Did the Romans offer new opportunities to British traders, or did they just exploit the British so that they could produce the goods needed by the Roman Empire?

Why is trade between countries important?

HOW THE EMPIRE SUPPLIED ROME

TOPIC
6



Rome was the first city to have a population of more than a million people. This required that there be a very effective and efficient supply system. Over six million sacks of grain were required each year. The map above shows where many of the supplies came from. Where do you think that the Romans got other goods and supplies from? What about wild animals for their gladiator games?



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Romans recognized the importance of roads in maintaining an empire; at the empire's peak it had 53,000 miles (85,000 km) of road, extending from Britain in the north to North Africa in the south and from the Atlantic coast in the west to the Persian Gulf in the east. The Romans were the first to build roads scientifically. The Roman roads were known for their straightness, solid foundations, cambered surfaces facilitating drainage, and use of concrete made from volcanic ash and lime. They adapted their technique to locally available materials; the Roman engineers followed basically the same principles in building abroad as they had in Italy.

In the Roman Empire, for the first time in history, a system of fully integrated roads (and of cities integrated by roads) came into existence. But its military and administrative purposes were clear; when the question was the shipment of wheat or other bulky staples, the method used was almost certainly a fairly primitive sailing ship. The justification for the extensive land transportation system of the Roman Empire was the efficiency and speed it brought to administration.

The chariot was capable of speeds that could assure quick communication if a firm and reasonably sloping surface could be had. The Romans accomplished such construction by devising a drained sub-base to be paved with fairly tight-fitting flat rocks. Few of these roads were wide enough to allow wagons to pass each other. In fact, the pavements were quite narrow for the passage of a single wagon; only chariots fitted comfortably.

Their design remained the most sophisticated until the advent of modern road-building technology in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. As Rome declined its roads fell into disrepair, and, other than some interest in municipal street paving in the 15th and 16th centuries no real road building happened.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What role did road communications play in the Roman Empire?

How did roads develop in Britain after the Roman period?

Find out about Roman roads which exist today.

HADRIAN AND HIS WALL

TOPIC 8

Hadrian's wall was a Roman defensive barrier that guarded the northwestern frontier of the province of Britain from barbarian invaders. The wall extended from coast to coast across the width of Britain; it ran for 73 miles (118 km) from Wallsend (Segedunum) on the River Tyne in the east to Bowness on the Solway Firth in the west. The original plan was to construct a stone wall 10 Roman feet wide (a Roman foot is slightly larger than a standard foot) and at least 12 feet high for the eastern sector and a turf embankment 20 Roman feet wide at the base for the western sector; both had a ditch in front. At every 1/3 Roman mile there was a tower, and at every mile a milecastle containing a gate through the wall. Before this scheme was completed, forts were built on the wall line at roughly 7-mile intervals and an earthwork, known as the vallum, dug behind the wall and the forts.

Hadrian came to Britain in 122 and, "was the first to build a wall, 80 miles long, to separate the Romans from the barbarians." Building continued through most of Hadrian's reign. The wall was abandoned in favour of the Antonine Wall under Hadrian's successor Antoninus Pius (138-61) but continued in use until the end of Roman Britain in about 410.

Its purpose was to control movement across the frontier and to counter threats. There was no intention of fighting from the wall top; the units based on the wall were trained and equipped to encounter the enemy in the open. Many sections of the wall, including its structures, are still visible today.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why did Hadrian build the wall?

What was the relationship between the Roman south and the northern tribes?

Write a short biography of Hadrian.

How much of Hadrian's wall exists today? What does it tell us about the building skills of the Romans?

THE DECLINE OF ROMAN INFLUENCE

TOPIC
9

For a short time, Britain became a separate empire through the rebellion (286/287) of Carausius. This man had been in command against the Saxon pirates in the Channel and by his naval power was able to maintain his independence. His main achievement was to complete the new system of Saxon Shore forts around the southeastern coasts. At first he wanted to be coemperor, but this was refused. Constantius I divided Britain into four provinces, and in the same period the civil power was separated from the military.

The 4th century was a period of great prosperity in towns and countryside alike. Britain had escaped the "barbarian" invasions of the 3rd century and may have seemed a safe place for wealthy continentals. Its weakness lay in the fact that its defence was controlled by distant rather than local rulers. When Constantine III, who was declared emperor by the army in Britain in 407, took troops to Gaul, the forces remaining in Britain were insufficient to provide protection against increasing Pictish and Saxon raids.

Power fell gradually into the hands of tyrants. Chief of these was Vortigern (c. 425), who made no attempt to become Roman emperor but was content with power in Britain. Independence was producing separate interests. By this date Christianity had made headway in the island. Yet there was also a powerful Roman Catholic party anxious to reforge the links with Rome.

This marks the end of Roman Britain, for the central government never re-established control, but for a generation there was little other outward change.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What was Britain like at the time of the 4th Century?

What benefits had the Romans brought to Britain?

Why did Roman influence decrease at this time?

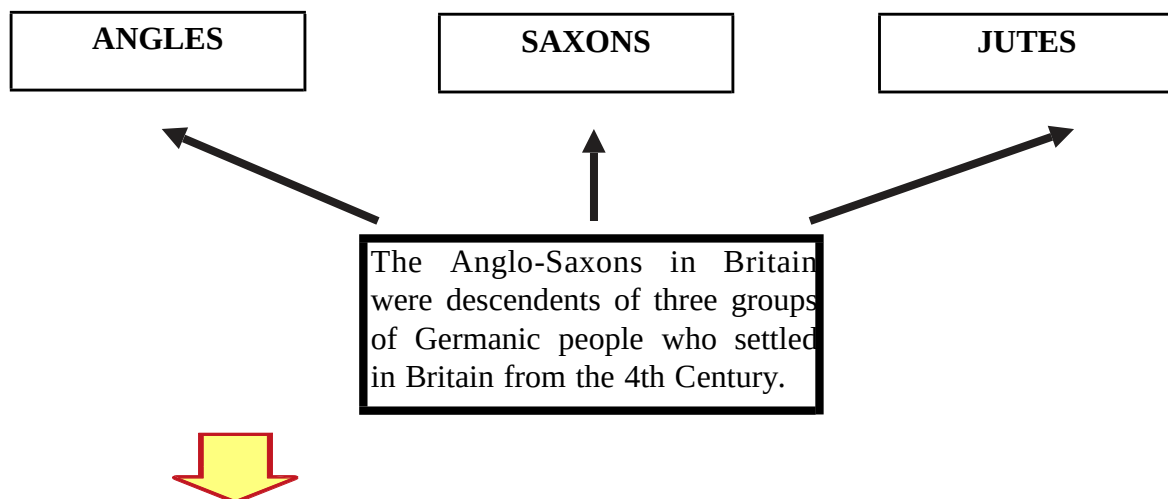
What sort of government replaced the Romans in Britain?

ANGLO SAXONS SETTLE IN BRITAIN

TOPIC
10

The Anglo-Saxons were any member of the Germanic peoples that inhabited and ruled England from the 5th century AD to the time of the Norman Conquest (1066). According to the Venerable Bede, the Anglo-Saxons were the descendants of three different Germanic peoples; the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who originally migrated from northern Germany to England in the 5th century at the invitation of the British chieftain Vortigern to defend the country against Pictish and Irish invaders. Their settlements in what is now England laid the foundation for the later kingdoms of Essex, Sussex, and Wessex (Saxons), East Anglia, Middle Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria (Angles), and Kent (Jutes). The various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms spoke dialects of Old English. Ethnically, the "Anglo-Saxons" actually represented a mixture of Germanic peoples with England's Celtic inhabitants and subsequent Viking and Danish invaders.

The term "Anglo-Saxon" seems to have been first used by continental writers in the late 8th century to distinguish the Saxons of Britain from those of the European continent. After the Norman Conquest, the term simply came to mean "the English."



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Find out about the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. Where did they come from, and why did they settle in Britain?

What was life like between the time that the Romans left Britain and the invasions made by the Vikings? Write a letter to a friend imagining you lived in that time.

He was a legendary British king and the sovereign of a knightly fellowship of the Round Table. It is not certain how or where (in Wales or in those parts of northern Britain inhabited by Celts) these legends originated or whether the figure Arthur was based on a historical person.

The 9th-century *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius records 12 battles fought by Arthur against the Saxons, culminating in a victory at Mons Badonicus. The Arthurian section of this work is from a poetic text and could be a work of fiction. The *Annales Cambriae* also mention Arthur's victory at Mons Badonicus (516) and record the Battle of Camlann (537), "in which Arthur and Medraut fell."

Another speculative view is that Arthur was a professional soldier, serving the British kings and commanding a cavalry force trained on Roman lines, which he switched from place to place to meet the Saxon threat.

Welsh literature quickly made Arthur into a king of wonders and marvels. The 12th-century prose romance *Kulhwch and Olwen* associated him with other heroes, this idea of a heroic band, with Arthur at its head, led to the idea of Arthur's court.



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Do you think that King Arthur really existed, or was he just a character in a poem?

What do the stories about the battles that King Arthur fought tell us about the type of society which existed at that time?

Find out more about King Arthur and write a short biography of him.

Viking raids on the coasts of Britain began at the end of the 8th century. Lindisfarne and Iona were pillaged in the 790s. By the mid-9th century, Norse settlement of the western and northern isles and of Caithness and Sutherland had begun, probably because of overpopulation on the west coast of Norway. During the 10th century, Orkney and Shetland were ruled by Norse earls nominally subject to Norway. In 1098 Magnus II Barefoot, king of Norway, successfully asserted his authority in the northern and western isles and made an agreement with the king of Scots on their respective spheres of influence. A mid-12th-century earl of Orkney, Ragnvald, built the great cathedral at Kirkwall in honour of his martyred uncle St. Magnus.



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why did the Vikings invade Britain?

Write a letter to a friend describing what it was like to be a Viking landing on the coast of Britain for the first time.

What clues have the Vikings left behind which can be seen or read about today?

BATTLE OF MALDEN (VIKINGS TAKE THE SOUTH)

TOPIC
13

There is an old English heroic poem describing a historical battle between East Saxons and Viking raiders in 991. It is incomplete, its beginning and ending both lost. The poem is remarkable for its vivid, dramatic combat scenes and for its expression of the Germanic ideas of loyalty to a leader. The poem, as it survives, opens with the war parties aligned on either side of a stream (the present River Blackwater near Maldon, Essex). The Vikings offer the suggestion that the English might buy peace with golden rings. The English commander Earl Byrhtnoth replies that they will pay their tribute in spears and darts. When the Vikings cannot advance because of their poor position, Byrhtnoth recklessly allows them safe conduct across the stream, and the battle follows. In spite of Byrhtnoth's supreme feats of courage, he is finally killed. In panic some of the English warriors desert. The names of the deserters are recorded in the poem along with the names and family trees of the loyal retainers who stand fast to avenge Byrhtnoth's death. The 325-line poem ends with the rallying speech of the old warrior Byrhtwold (here in modern English):

Mind must be firmer, heart the more fierce,
Courage the greater, as our strength
diminishes



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

How easy do you think it was for the Vikings to take the south of England?

Imagine you were in the battle. Write an account of how you felt, facing the Viking armies.

ALFRED THE GREAT

TOPIC
14

ALFRED THE GREAT (b. 849, d. 899), was king of Wessex (871-899), a Saxon kingdom in southwestern England. He prevented England from falling to the Danes and promoted learning and literacy. Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle began during his reign, in about 890.

Alfred the Great, made a truce with the Vikings, which became the basis of a treaty in 886. This recognized that much of England was in Danish hands. Although he struggled against fresh armies of Vikings from 892 to 899, Alfred was victorious over them, and the spirit of Wessex was so little broken that his son Edward the Elder was able to start the reconquest of Danish England. Before his death in 924 the small Danish states on old Mercian and East Anglian territory had fallen to him. The more remote Northumbria resisted longer, mainly under Viking leaders from Ireland, but the Scandinavian power there was finally wiped out by Edred in 954. Viking raids on England began again in 980, and the country ultimately became part of the empire of Canute. Nevertheless, the native rule was restored in 1042, and the Viking threat ended. The Scandinavian conquests in England left deep marks on the areas affected, in social structure, dialect, place-names, and personal names.



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

How important was it for the Saxons to resist the Vikings in this period of British history?

How different might British history have been if there had been no effective opposition to the Vikings?

Find out about and write a short biography of Alfred The Great.

Also spelled DANELAGH, or DANELAGA, this was the northern, central, and eastern region of Anglo-Saxon England colonized by invading Danish armies in the late 9th century. It was recognized that all of eastern England between the Rivers Tees and Thames formed a region in which a form of customary law prevailed in the local courts, differing from West Saxon law to the south and Mercian law to the west. The region got its name from the Old English Dena lagu ("Danes' law") under the assumption that its unique legal practices were of Danish origin, an assumption proved later by modern scholarship.

The Danes did not settle the whole of this wide area intensively, but their powerful military aristocracy dominated for a sufficient period to leave its imprint on local custom. The area of the Danelaw is marked by the survival of Danish personal names and place-names. Its law was distinguished by differences in procedures, severe fines for breach of peace, and the existence of an aristocratic jury to start the prosecution of criminal suspects. In the areas of intensive Danish settlement, there were an unusually high number of 'sokemen', a class of personally free peasants attached to a lord rather than to the land.

Using different colours mark the areas of the map controlled by the following types of rule:

DANELAW
MERCIAN LAW
WEST SAXON LAW

Which modern day counties would have been under control of the Danes?

Who controlled other areas of Britain at that time in history?



ETHELRED (THE UNREADY)

TOPIC
16

Also spelled AETHELRED, (b. 968 d. April 23, 1016, London), he was king of the English from 978 to 1013 and from 1014 to 1016. He was an ineffectual ruler who failed to prevent the Danes from overrunning England. The epithet "unready" is derived from unraed, meaning "evil counsel."

There was doubt about whether he had deserved to come to the throne because he had played a part in the death of his half brother and because of this there was no unified defence when the Danish invasions resumed in 980. Nearly all of the country was ravaged, and Ethelred's efforts to buy peace only made the invaders more greedy. When they did begin to settle down in towns, Ethelred provoked further invasions by launching a massacre of Danish settlers (Nov. 13, 1002). By the end of 1013 the Danish king Sweyn I had been accepted as king in England, and Ethelred had fled to Normandy.



ROMAN **SAXON-VIKING** NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Ethelred has often been criticised for being useless in the face of the Viking attacks. What sort of King would have been best suited to this period of history? Would it have made any difference who had been in control against a powerful and organised army like the Vikings?

Why did people dislike Ethelred?

KING CANUTE

TOPIC
17

His byname was CANUTE THE GREAT. He was a Danish king of England (1016-35), of Denmark (as Canute II; 1019-35), and of Norway(1028-35).

Neither the place nor date of Canute's birth is known. As a youth he accompanied his father, Sweyn I Forkbeard, king of Denmark, on his invasion of England in 1013. Canute was left in charge of the fleet at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and it was probably then that he met Aelfgifu, daughter of a chief officer of Northumbria who had been murdered with King Aethelred II's help in 1006; she bore him two sons, Sweyn and Harold. Sweyn I Forkbeard was accepted as king of England by the end of 1013 but died in February 1014.

On his return from a battle the English council (witan) elected Canute king at Southampton, but those councillors who were in London, elected Edmund. Canute won a victory at Ashingdon, Essex, on October 18, and the kingdom was then divided; but Edmund died on November 30, and Canute succeeded to the whole.

Canute's first actions were ruthless: he gave Englishmen's estates to his Danish followers as rewards and he had some prominent Englishmen killed or outlawed. But Canute did not rule like a foreign conqueror for long: by 1018 Englishmen were holding earldoms in Wessex and Mercia. The Danish element in his entourage steadily decreased. From 1021, and, during the rest of the reign, of his three most influential advisers only one was a Dane.



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

List the factors which led up to Canute becoming King.

Why is this event important in the history of Britain?

What were the immediate effects of this event?

Find out about and write a short biography of Canute.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

TOPIC
18

He was King of England from 1042 to 1066. Although a weak king overshadowed by powerful nobles, his reputation for religious devotion preserved much of the dignity of the crown. His close ties to Normandy prepared the way for the conquest of England by Normans under William, Duke of Normandy (later King William I the Conqueror), in 1066.

Edward was the son of King Ethelred II the Unready.

Edward succeeded to the throne in 1042 and quickly seized the property of his mother, who had plotted against his accession. Nevertheless, for the first 11 years of his reign the real master of England was Godwine, Earl of Wessex to whose sister Edward was married. But they started disagreeing. In 1051 Edward outlawed the Godwine family. During this period Edward was quickly losing popularity by giving foreigners, particularly Normans high positions in his government. In 1053 Godwine and his sons were able to gather large forces against the king. They forced Edward to restore their lands, and they exiled many of his foreign favourites. When Godwine died in 1053, his son Harold became the dominant power in the kingdom. It was Harold who overcame Wales in 1063 and negotiated with the rebellious Northumbrians in 1065. Edward on his deathbed named Harold as his successor even though he had already promised the crown to William. William killed Harold at the Battle of Hastings, Sussex, in October 1066, and two months later he became king.



ROMAN SAXON-VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why is the rule of Edward important in the history of Britain?

What were the effects of his close ties with Normandy?

Why was he called 'The Confessor'?

Find out about and write a short biography of Edward.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

TOPIC
19

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, duke of Normandy (as William I) from 1035 and king of England from 1066, was one of the greatest soldiers and rulers of the Middle Ages. He was the mightiest feudal lord in France and then changed the course of England's history by his conquest.

Norman interest in Anglo-Saxon England started from an alliance made in 1002, when King Ethelred II of England married the sister of Count Richard II, William's grandfather. Two of her sons, had reigned in England, Hardecnut (1040-42) and Edward the Confessor (1042-66). William had met Edward during that prince's exile on the Continent. William expected some sort of reward from Edward.

Edward seems to have made some sort of promise to William in 1051 about the succession to the English throne. In 1064 or 1065 Edward sent his brother-in-law, Harold, earl of Wessex, Godwine's son and successor, on a visit to Normandy. William took him on a campaign into Brittany, and in connection with this Harold swore an oath in which, according to Norman writers, he renewed Edward's promise of the throne to William.

When Edward died childless on Jan. 5, 1066, Harold was accepted as king by the English, and William decided on war. William assembled a fleet, recruited an army, and gathered his forces.

(SEE BATTLE OF HASTINGS SHEET.)

The Norman church flourished under his rule. He wanted a church free of corruption but subordinate to him. William left England early in 1067 but had to return because of English unrest. The English rebellions that began in 1067 were finally silenced in 1071. They gave William a distaste for England. Since his position on the Continent was deteriorating, he wanted to solve English problems quickly. To secure England's frontiers, he invaded Scotland in 1072 and Wales in 1081 and created special defensive "marcher" counties along the Scottish and Welsh borders. In the last 15 years of his life he was more often in Normandy than in England, and there were about five years in which he did not visit the kingdom at all. He retained most of the greatest Anglo-Norman barons with him in Normandy and left the government of England to bishops.

ROMAN SAXON VIKING **NORMAN** MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What sort of King was William The Conqueror?

Which other areas did William rule?

Find out about and write a short biography of William The Conqueror.

BATTLE OF HASTINGS

TOPIC
20

This battle established the Normans as rulers of England. This battle, (Oct. 14, 1066), ended in the defeat of Harold II of England by William, duke of Normandy. Harold's predecessor, the childless Edward the Confessor, had at first probably nominated William, a cousin, as his heir but on his deathbed (Jan. 5, 1066) granted the kingdom to Harold, earl of Wessex and the most powerful man in the kingdom; Harold was crowned king the next day.

On September 27 William crossed to England unopposed, with an army of 4,000 to 7,000 cavalry and infantry. Harold, learning of his landing arrived on October 13 at Hastings with about 7,000 men, many of whom were poorly armed, untrained peasants. At dawn on October 14 William moved toward Harold's army. The Normans opened the attack but suffered heavily from English slings and spears. William sent in his cavalry, which was badly beaten by the English infantry. Eventually the English were worn down; two of Harold's brothers were killed, and in the late afternoon he himself was killed. The leaderless English fought on until dusk, then broke; after a last rally they scattered, leaving William the winner of one of the most daring gambles in history. After the battle his army moved towards London, where William I was crowned king on December 25.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING **NORMAN** MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why was the Battle of Hastings such an important event in British history?

Imagine you were involved in the Battle yourself. Write a short article explaining what happened.

Write a short biography of Harold II.

BAYEUX TAPESTRY

TOPIC
21

The Bayeux Tapestry is a medieval embroidery depicting the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, remarkable as a work of art and important as a source for history.

The tapestry is a length of linen 231 feet (70 m) long and 19.5 inches (49.5 cm) wide, on which are embroidered more than 70 scenes from the Norman Conquest. The story begins with a prelude to Harold's visit to Bosham on his way to Normandy (1064) and ends with the flight of Harold's English forces from Hastings (October 1066); originally, the story might have been taken further, but the end of the strip no longer exists. Along the top and the bottom there are decorative borders with figures of animals, scenes from the fables of Aesop and Phaedrus, and occasionally scenes related to the main pictorial narrative. It has been restored more than once, and in some details the restorations are of doubtful quality and historically incorrect.

The Tapestry may have been commissioned by William's half brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux; Odo is prominent in the later scenes, and three of the very few named figures on the tapestry have names of obscure men known to have been associated with him. This would date the work not later than about 1092. The tapestry has comparisons with other English works of the 11th century, and, though its origin in England is not proved, there is a circumstantial case for such an origin.

The tapestry is of greater interest as a work of art. It is also important evidence for the history of the Norman Conquest, especially for Harold's relation to William before 1066; its story of events seems straightforward and convincing. The decorative borders have value for the study of medieval fables. The tapestry's contribution to knowledge of everyday life about 1100 is of little importance, except for military equipment and tactics.

Why is the Bayeux Tapestry an important work?

What does it tell us of the period of history in which it was made?



This is a summary of William I the Conqueror's survey of England. By contemporaries the whole operation was known as "the description of England," but the popular name Domesday ("doomsday", when men face the record from which there is no appeal) was in general use by the mid-12th century. The survey, in the scope of its detail and the speed of its execution, was perhaps the most remarkable administrative accomplishment of the Middle Ages.

The Domesday Book covers all of England except the northern areas. Though invariably called Domesday Book, in the singular, it consists of two books quite different from each other. Volume 1 contains the final summarized record of all the counties surveyed except Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk. For these three counties the full, unabbreviated return sent in to Winchester by the commissioners is preserved in volume 2.

The procedure for the survey was geographic, material being collected by shires, hundreds, and villages. But before being sent to the royal court at Winchester the material for each county was reorganised under the names of the king and his tenants in chief. This recognised the new Norman idea of a feudal society based on the barony, a complex of estates that were treated as a unit. Volume 1 gives, under each county heading, a roll of the holders of land, from the king to the humblest tenant in chief. Their fiefs are described and consist of long lists of manors, with the names of their holders in 1066 and 1086, their dimensions and plowing capacity, the number of agricultural workers of various sorts, their mills, fishponds, and other amenities, and finally their values in pounds. For most English villages and towns (but not, unfortunately, London and Winchester, for which no Domesday records survive), Domesday is the starting point of their history. For historians of Anglo-Norman England, the survey is of great importance.

ROMAN SAXON VIKING  NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why is the Domesday Book an important work?

What can we find out about the way people lived and worked?

How are surveys carried out today? Was the Domesday survey conducted reliably?

