

# BRITAIN'S PREHISTORY

THE EARLIEST TIMES Britain has *not always been an island*. It became an island *after the end of the last ice age*, about 8000 years ago

What is Britain?

Why Britain's history has been closely connected with the sea?

- Because it's an island. It's a strong national; until modern times it was as easy to travel across water as it was across island.
- Britain has been saved from danger by being an island.

# THE EARLIEST PEOPLE

The people living in Britain were  
descendants of the first homo sapiens  
who arrived in Europe 30000 – 40000  
years ago.

They lived by fishing, hunting and  
collecting fruit, nuts, berries, etc.

Around 700 B.C (Iron Age), a group of people began to arrive from central Europe or further east & from southern Russia. They occupied & control all the lowland areas of Britain.





*They were called “ Celts ”*

The word “Celt” comes from the Greek word, Keltoi, which means barbarians and is properly pronounced as "Kelt".

**Interesting fact**

No-one called the people living in Britain during *the Iron Age*, *Celts* until the eighteenth century (18<sup>th</sup> c) . In fact *the Romans* called these people *Britons*, not *Celts*. The name *Celts* is a '*modern*' name and is used to collectively describe all the many barbarian tribes of people living during the Iron Age

When did the Celts live in Europe?

- ♦ They lived during the Iron Age(for 750 years before Jesus was born).
- ♦ The Iron Age ended in AD43 (43 years after Jesus was born) when the Romans invaded Britain.

Why are the Celts called Iron Age Celts?

- ♦ The period of time in Britain immediately before the Roman period is known as the **Iron Age**. The name '**Iron Age**' comes from the discovery of a new metal called iron. The **Celts** found out how to make iron tools and weapons.
- ♦ Before the Iron Age the only metal used in Britain to make tools was **bronze**.

# The Physical Appearance of Celts



Many of them were tall, had fair or red hair & blue eyes.



The genetic code for the physical appearance of Celts have remained greatly **unchanged** throughout time.



Why the Celts are important in British history?

Because: They're the ancestors of many of the people in Scotland, Wales, Ireland & Cornwall today.

## ***the Celtic social & political structure***

- ♦ They traded across tribal borders & that was important for political & social contact between the tribes. They traded both inside & outside Britain by river & sea.
- ♦ For Money they used “ **Iron bars**” until they began to copy the **Roman coins** used in “**Gaul**”.

- ♦The Celtic tribes were ruled by a warrior class, of which the priests or druids, seem to be important who were responsible for all sorts of religious ceremonies.

## Celtic language

They remained illiterate and only Celtic speak.

## Celtic Clothes

- ♦ **The celtic Men** wore shirts and breeches (knee-length trousers) and striped or checked cloaked fastened by a pin. (like Scottish tartan & dress)





- ♦ **The celtic Women** wore floor length dresses made from woven cloth. Wealthy women wore silk and linen dresses.
- ♦ Both men and women wore leather shoes or sandals.



# *Celtic women' Life*

Women may have had more independence than they had again for hundreds of years.

When Roman invaded Britain, two of the largest tribes were ruled by women.

The most powerful celt to stand up to Romans was a woman called “Boadicea”.

# The Romans





# The Romans

Who were the Romans?

Why did the Romans invade Britain?

What's Britain means?

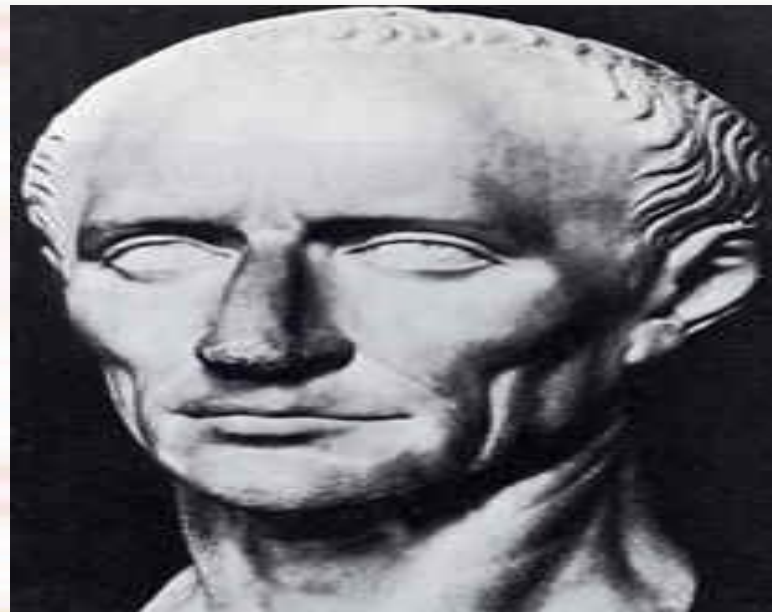
Why Romans are important to Britain's history?

What's the most obvious characteristic of Roman Britain?

The **Romans** were the people from a city called **Rome** in what is now **Italy**. **Rome** was the greatest city of its time. At one time it had nearly one million people living there. The Romans were very clever and very good at organizing things.

# ***Why did the Romans invade Britain?***

The **Romans** arrived in Britain in 55 BC. The Roman Army had been fighting in **Gaul** (France) and the **Britons** had been helping the **Gauls** in an effort to defeat the **Romans**. The leader of the Roman Army in Gaul, **Julius Caesar**, decided that he had to teach the Britons a lesson for helping the Gauls – hence his invasion.





The name “ **Britain**” comes from the word “**Pretani**”, the **Greco-Roman** word for the inhabitants of Britain. It was mispronounced by Romans & called it “ **Britannia**”.

## **Romans are important to Britain's history**

Because they brought the skills of reading as well writing to Britain. Which was an important for spreading ideas and establishing power.

Britain was more **literate** under the Romans that it was. A number of town dwellers spoke **Latin, Greek** and the richer landowners almost used **Latin**. But Latin completely disappeared both in its spoken & written forms when the **Anglo-Saxons** invaded **Britain** during the fifth century.

The most an important characteristic of Roman Britain was its “**Towns**” which were the basis of **Roman administration & civilisation**. Many of these towns were *Celtic settlements, military camps, markets or centers*.

**Interesting fact**

Camp means “Castra” in Latin which remained part of many town names like:  
Winchester – Lancaster & Chester

# **Christianity**

Who brought Christianity to the Britain?

How the Church increase the power of the English state?

**Celtic Church** which brought **Christianity** to the ordinary people of Britain. How?

**Celtic bishops** went out from their ministers of Wales, Ireland & Scotland, walking from village to another teaching the new religion.

England became Christian very quickly.



# How the Church increased the power of the English State?

1- They increased the power of the kings. Bishops gave the kings their support, which made it harder for royal power to be questioned.

2- when kings were crowned, it was done as a Christian ceremony led by a bishop which suggested that kings were not chosen only by people but also by God. They had “ God's approval”

3- They also established monasteries or minster like Westminster which were places for learning and education. Its trained men who could read and write. Why?

To growth and spread royal and Church authority.



# The Vikings

What is the Viking means?

Where are they from & what is their religion?

Why Vikings invaded Britain?

Why the Middle Ages and Feudalism was a very important part of society ?

What is Feudalism system?

What is the Domesday book?

What is the House of lords and the House of commons?

The growth of towns as centers of wealth?

- ♦ Vikings means “ Pirates”. They came from Norway and Denmark.
- ♦ The Vikings invaded, conquered and settled in Britain at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. They were tempted by Britain's wealth. They became Christians very quickly.

Why the Middle Ages and Feudalism was a very important part of society during Vikings' period?

It was during 1066, when William I the Conqueror was crowned King of England. William was careful on the way he gave the new captured lands to his nobles. He gave parts of the new lands as reward to his captains while he kept enough land for himself. Why?

To make sure he was stronger than his nobles.  
He & kings after him treated England as their  
own personal property.

## What is Feudalism system?

- ♦ The word “feudalism” comes from the french word “fue” which used by Normans to refer to land held in return for duty or service to lord.
- ♦ Its main purpose was economic
- ♦ The central idea was that all lands was owned by the king but it was held by others, called “vassals”, in return for services and goods. Its main principles are  
“Every man had a lord, and every lord had land.”



## What is the Doomesday Book?

It's a book which gives an extraordinary amount of information about England's life during the feudalism system. William needed it to plan his economy; find out how much was produced & how much he could ask for tax.

## Feudalism declined

1- During 13<sup>th</sup> c. A council of nobles was elected a **parliament** or **parlement**. Which is a french word means “**discussion or meeting**”. They made or it made statues, wrote laws & made political decisions. This became the “ **House of Lords**”

2- Edward I was the first to create a “**representative institution**” which provide the money he need. It contained a mixture of “**gentry**” (knights & other wealthy freemen) and merchants from the towns. This became the “ **House of Commons**”.

## The Growth of towns as centers of wealth

Because England was to a very large degree an agricultural society even in towns & cities. Many involved in trade or industry for that England has sense of self-sufficiency. However, throughout the Middle Ages there was a good deal of trade between different regions inside England as well international trade. For example: English “Grain” was highly valued in Norway. In return England imported Scandinavian fish and tall timber.