



A Brief Description

This landmass was attached to mainland Europe for eons, then the last Ice Age melted away (*changing everything*); new bodies of water formed including the English Channel and Irish Sea, Britain and Ireland were now islands and Stone Age settlers came ashore.

The Roman Legions (*40,000 strong*) crossed the dangerous English Channel in 43 AD. They eventually named this wild new province, Britannia. For some 350 years they controlled and influenced it, until their own Empire collapsed upon itself in 410 AD.

Britannia was now unprotected, and for the next 300 years invaders came from all directions. The Anglo-Saxons from Germany proved the dominant group, and a series of small kingdoms developed. One faction were called *Engle*, and from that name came "England."

Viking raids, though very persistent, were continually squashed. Then, in 1066, the Normans sailed in from France. William of Normandy was victorious at the Battle of Hastings, Harold, the last Anglo-Saxon king was now dead, and William was crowned William the Conqueror at Westminster in London.

During the so-called Middle Ages that followed, the Normans built hilltop castles and repeatedly tried to control Scotland and Wales, with little success. They introduced feudalism, where the king shares power with local nobles, who in turn allow common people (*now the Anglo-Saxons*) to farm their land.

For the next few centuries western Europe and England were certainly in turmoil; an out-of-control plague (*Black Death*) killed millions, competing royal families waged war, and the Hundred Years' War, pitting English kings against the French throne was debilitating.

The Tudor Renaissance followed (*a century of peace and stability*) except of course in the many marriages of Henry VIII. To solve his divorce problems he split with the Catholic Church, formed the Church of England, and declared himself its leader. It's good to be king!

Henry VIII's love of ships inspired the beginnings of English sea power, and in 1588, the English navy engaged and destroyed the mighty Spanish fleet. This overwhelming victory catapulted England into naval supremacy for the next three centuries.

Civil war raged in the mid-17th century as monarchy and Parliament supporters struggled for power. It led to the execution (*beheading*) of King Charles I. This created the Commonwealth of England, one disastrously led by Oliver Cromwell. His dictator-like tendencies and 1649 punitive expedition into Ireland brought Parliament to its senses, and they finally restored a Monarchy, albeit one with now limited powers.

With the Acts of Union in 1707, England and Scotland merged and became the Kingdom of Great Britain. In the early 18th century Great Britain quite successfully expanded its influence around the globe; from colonies in upstart America and the Caribbean islands, to significant power bases in Australia, Canada and India.

By the time the *United Kingdom* of Great Britain and Ireland formed in 1800, America had won its War of Independence, but that regional loss of power was offset by Great Britain's version of the Industrial Revolution and the massive growth that would soon follow.

Queen Victoria assumed the throne in 1837. During her productive and popular reign Britain's economy exploded with new growth; universal education was introduced, labor unions formed and Britain was transformed into the world's greatest power, bar none.

In a somewhat shocking turnabout, the human and financial costs of World War I, countrywide labor unrest in the 1920's and the crushing depression of the 1930's put England and Great Britain into a tailspin. Then came Hitler and WWII; Britain's military and its determined citizens (*all sparked by Winston Churchill*) as well as the resources and manpower of the United States and other allies defeated the German war machine.

The enormous price of freedom had repercussions. The British Empire began its

decline, losing influence and colonies around the globe. At home, in an effort to survive financially, the (*majority*) Labor government nationalized the Bank of England, railroads and other critical businesses.

In the 60's Britain rebounded for a time as John, Paul, George and Ringo (*the Beatles*), the Rolling Stones and other pop groups burst onto the stage; a youth cultural emerged, Twiggy modeled miniskirts and London was again fashionable. At the same time, across the Irish Sea, Northern Ireland exploded in violence.

Following the 1970's economic stagnation and Margaret Thatcher's (*love it or hate it*) term as Prime Minister in the 1980's, the fractured nation rallied for change in the form of a new Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

The British public now feel Blair's government has both succeeded and failed, as they remain polarized on the war in Iraq, immigration, their membership in the EU, and a litany of other nationalistic issues.

Shakespeare described England, his native land, by writing, "*this royal throne of kings...this fortress built by nature...this blessed plot.*" Well, he should have added, "*this innovative and optimistic lot,*" as England and its brilliant and resilient people have changed our world for the better more than once, and surely they will do it again. In fact, you can take that to the bank!

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[Symbols](#)

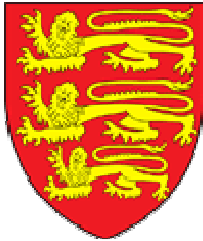


🚩Official Flag

First hoisted in 1191, the historic Flag of St. George became England's official flag in 1278. The flag is dominated by an upright, deep-red cross.

When combined with the flags of Scotland and the patron saint of Ireland (*St. Patrick*), they collectively form the United Kingdom flag.

👉Large version [here!](#)



🚩unofficial Coat of Arms

The "Three Lions" is the unofficial crest of England and was first used by Richard I (*Richard the Lionheart*) in the late 12th century.

Although the "Three Lions" are not used in any official capacity on their own, they are included on the United Kingdom's Royal Coat of Arms.



🚩Floral Emblem

The Tudor rose is the national floral emblem of England. It symbolizes the end of the Wars of the Roses.

👉**National Holiday** April 23, celebrates St. George's Day. All major public holidays in England are listed [here!](#)



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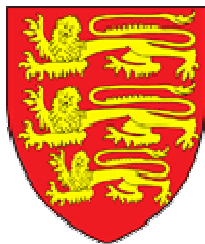


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