

British History Review

Geography

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland = England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
(*Britain also governed Ireland until 1922*)

Government Today

Queen – figurehead

Prime Minister – real head of state

Parliament

- House of Lords
 - upper chamber
 - not elected ... majority are appointed by the Queen
 - around 740 members, from 3 groups: (1) life Peers (appt. for life, but appt. doesn't pass on to children), (2) archbishops and bishops, and (3) elected hereditary Peers (as of 1999 reform, this group is disappearing)
- House of Commons
 - lower chamber
 - MPs (Members of Parliament) are elected by the public
 - who can be an MP: any British citizen or citizen of a Commonwealth country or Ireland over 18 years old

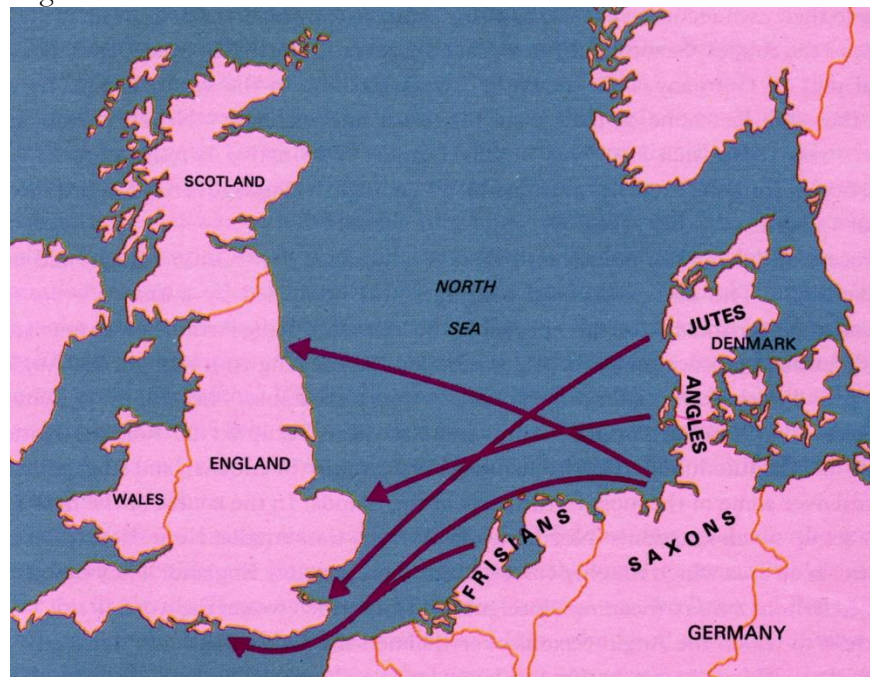
History

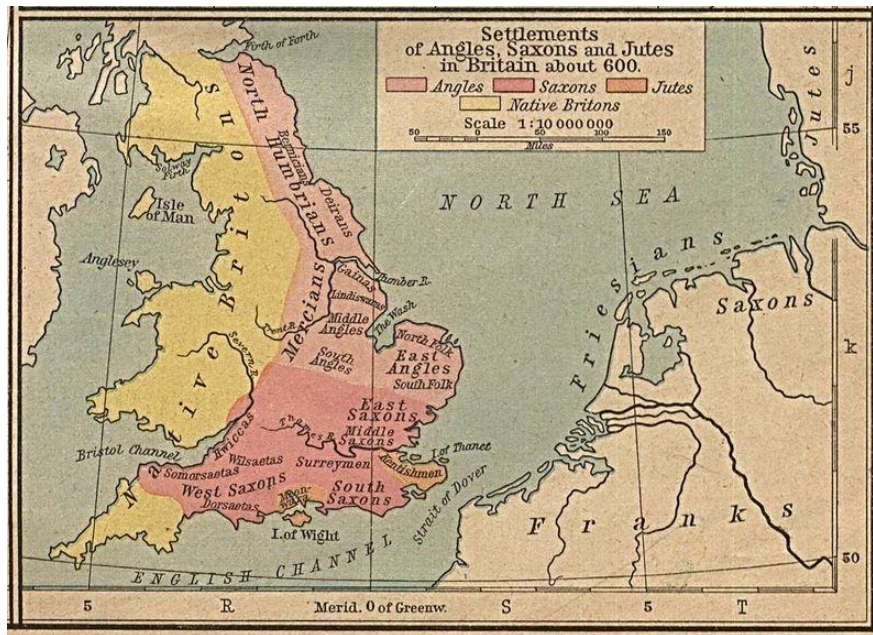
43- 410 A.D. Roman rule

- 55 B.C. – 1st Roman invasion

410-1066 Anglo-Saxon rule & Viking invasions

- 5th-6th c.: invasions by Angles, Saxons, Frisians, Jutes (from Germany & Denmark)
- Anglo-Saxons most successful





Anglo-Saxon rule & Viking invasions continued...

- Late 8th c. – 10th c. – Viking invasions & rule
- By 9th c., there were 4 kingdoms in England: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex
- 10th c. – English kingdoms united
- 9th c. – kingdom of Scotland formed

1066-1154

Norman Britain

- 1066 – Norman invasion (from France) under William the Conqueror [Battle of Hastings]

1154-1485

Middle Ages

- 1215 – **Magna Carta** (King John)
- 1337-1453 – **Hundred Years' War**
 - o England vs. France over duchy of Aquitaine
 - o French victory
 - o British kings: Henry III (r. 1216-1272 ... started war), Richard II (r. 1377-1399), Henry IV (r. 1399-1413)
- Broader European events: Great Famine (1315-1322), Black Death (1348)
- 1381 – **English Peasants' Revolt**
- 1387-1400 – Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*
- 1455-1471 – War of the Roses (civil war b/t houses of York and Lancaster)

16th c.

REFORMATION ERA / TUDOR DYNASTY (r. 1485-1603)

- Northern Renaissance (also in Low Countries, France, Germany)
 - o **Thomas More, Utopia (1516)**
 - o “new monarchs”: **Henry VII (r. 1485-1509)** – brought peace/order, restored royal authority, reduced power of nobility and gained support of upper middle class, improved the economy, Court of Star Chamber
- **Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547)**
 - o 6 wives; broke from Catholic Church to wed Anne Boleyn (later had her killed for not producing a male heir) = started English Reformation
 - o **Supremacy Act (1534)**: Henry becomes head of Anglican Church
 - o dissolved English monasteries for their \$\$

- **Pilgrimage of Grace (1536)**: rebellion of Catholics in N. England against Henry's changes; largest rebellion in English history; Henry crushed it
- Edward VI (r. 1547-1553) – short reign by Henry VIII's only and sickly son; *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), adopted by Parli, est. order for Anglican services/prayers
- **Mary Tudor (r. 1553-1558)** – aka “Bloody Mary” for executing 100s of Protestants; Henry VIII's very Catholic daughter by 1st wife Catherine of Aragon (a Spanish Catholic); she married Philip II of Spain and sought to re-Catholicize England
- **Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603)** – Henry VIII's Protestant daughter by Anne Boleyn; a “politique” for bringing religious peace
 - **Elizabethan Settlement** – middle path b/t Catholicism & Puritanism
 - Elizabethan and Jacobean literature – **Shakespeare (1564-1616)**
 - Mary, Queen of Scots (Catholic cousin of Elizabeth) part of Catholic plot backed by Philip II to assassinate Elizabeth → Eliz had her executed (Spanish Armada followed)
 - defeat of **Spanish Armada (1588)**
 - 1600 – British East India Company est. GB presence in India

17th c.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUTIONALISM / **STUART DYNASTY** (r. 1603-1714)

Remember the sandwich!!!!

- Absolutism attempted – these 2 proclaimed divine right, tried to rule w/o Parli, angered the Puritans (religious radicals; a group fled to America on the Mayflower in 1620)
 - **James I (r. 1603-1625)**
 - **Charles I (r. 1625-1649)**
 - **Long Parliament (1640-1660)** – Charles finally forced to call Parli to try to get \$ to put down a Scottish revolt (Scots angry over efforts to impose Anglican elements on their Presbyterian church); est. legislation limiting monarch's power (ex. **Triennial Act** – required king to call Parli every 3 years)
 - **English civil war (1642-1649)** – king vs. Parli, aka Cavaliers vs. Roundheads, over who has sovereignty → Parli wins! and Charles I is executed; began w/ Irish rebellion (1641) as Charles tried to get Parli to help him raise an army to squash the Irish and Parli refused, so he formed his own and Parli formed one in response
- The Commonwealth (1649-1660) – no king! rule by **Oliver Cromwell's “Protectorate”**
 - republic in theory, Puritan military dictatorship in practice
 - **Navigation Acts (1651-1663)** – GB goods on GB ships (or on ships of country producing the goods); GB colonies must ship goods on GB (or US) ships + buy goods from GB (ex. of mercantilism)
 - **Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652-1674)** – GB wins (bye bye 17th c. Dutch golden age)
- Back to absolute monarchs, who also started to move GB towards Catholicism:
 - **Charles II (r. 1660-1685)** – the Restoration (of king, Parli, Anglican Church)
 - **Test Act of 1673** – denied all non-Anglicans the right to vote, preach, assemble, hold public office, teach at universities
 - started moving back towards Catholicism (secret agreement w/ Louis XIV to get \$\$ from France in return for making England more Catholic)
 - **James II (r. 1685-1688)** – Catholic, thus feared and overthrown in 1688
- ***Glorious Revolution (1688-1689)*** → **William and Mary** and **Bill of Rights** (constitutionalism achieved!)
- 1707 – England and Scotland are united as “Great Britain”

2 important texts of this era:

- **Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)** – absolute monarchy
- **John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1689)** – constitutional monarchy

AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION (1650-1850)

- began in Low Countries and England
- crop rotation + enclosure revolutionize agricultural productivity – helped set stage for IR

18th c.

DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH EMPIRE – GB BECOMES COMMERCIAL LEADER

- **HANOVERIAN DYNASTY** (r. 1714-1901): rule by the 4 Georges, 1714-1830 (remember the German chocolate cake??), William IV, Victoria (r. 1837-1901)
- GB won a bunch of wars, giving it land in America and India, control of the Atlantic slave trade (18th c. was its height), and global commercial dominance:
 - o **Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652-1674)** – GB vs. Dutch over commercial leadership
 - o **War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713)** – GB w/ Grand Alliance vs. France and Spain, preventing union of Spanish and French crowns (Grand Alliance wins) → **Peace of Utrecht** gives GB France's American colonies and the *asiento* (control of the African slave trade to the Americas) from Spain
 - o **War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748)** – Prussia seized Silesia from Austria ... war came to include Anglo-French conflicts in India and N. America (GB wins again, but no land changes)
 - o **Seven Years' War (1756-1763)** – follow up to Austrian Succession, as Austria wanted Silesia back ... again came to include Anglo-French conflicts in India and N. America → **Treaty of Paris** gives GB land in India and NA from France and Spain
 - o 1793-1815 – war vs. France (in context of French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars) ... 1815 – **Battle of Trafalgar** – GB victory vs. France → GB masters the seas (and overcomes Napoleon's attempts to block GB goods from the Continent)

GB did lose the Revolutionary War/ American War of Independence (1775-1783) under King George III.

1780s – INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION BEGINS (GB 1st)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CABINET SYSTEM (continuing evolution of British government)

- under the Hanoverians (the Georges)
- cabinet = leading ministers who have seats in Parli and help monarchs run the country ... during century power moved towards the cabinet, led by the prime minister, and House of Commons (away from monarch) ... idea developed that cabinet is responsible to the House of Commons (vs. the king)
- Robert Walpole (cabinet leader, 1721-1742) = 1st prime minister

PROTESTANT REVIVAL (across Protestant countries): in GB John Wesley founds Methodism

Long 19th c.
(to 1914)

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CONTINUES

- 1780s-1815: IR primarily just in GB (hits continent ca. 1815)
- labor movement to improve conditions begins ca. 1820
 - o **Combination Acts (1799)** – outlawed unions and strikes → repealed in 1824
 - o unions began to form in 1820s – ex. Robert Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trades Union (failed attempt at a nat'l union), Amalgamated Society of Engineers (a craft union, which is what won out over the nat'l union idea)
 - o **Factory Act of 1833** – limited factory workday for children
 - o **Mines Act of 1842** – prohibited underground work for females and for boys <10

COLONIAL EMPIRE – “THE SUN NEVER SETS ON THE BRITISH EMPIRE”

- **Queen Victoria (r. 1837-1901)** governed a huge empire and GB thrived under her long leadership, which is called the “Victorian Era”
- some major colonies / colonial ventures:
 - o opening up of China to trade w/ the Opium Wars (mid-century)

- along w/ France, had largest footprint in Africa – governed colonies running N/S “from Cairo to Cape Town”
 - Egypt (GB colony 1882-1956)
 - South Africa (GB colony until 1910 and then settler state ... fought Boer War to fully wrest it from the Dutch)
- India (GB colony 1858-1947)

PEACEFUL EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRACY (further evolution of GB government)

Peaceful evolution towards liberal democracy rather than revolution (contrast w/ revolution elsewhere in Europe).

1800-1850

- 2 political parties: **Tories** (conservative aristocrats) vs. **Whigs** (also historically aristocratic, but came to represent the new, liberal industrial middle class)
- 1815-1819: Conservative reaction to FR, led by Tories:
 - 1815 – **Corn Laws** revised: prohibition on importation of foreign grain unless home prices rose hugely (protected interests of aristocrats who owned the land)
 - 1817 – suspension of rights to peaceable assembly and habeas corpus
 - 1819 – **Battle of Peterloo** – protest at St. Peter’s Fields in Manchester in response to Corn Laws revision → squashed savagely
 - 1819 – **Six Acts** – prohibited civilians training w/ weapons, gave right for gov’t to search homes and seize weapons, restricted mass meetings, put controls on the press, sped up getting people to trial, increased taxes on printed publications
- 1820s-1840s: Liberal political and economic reforms, driven by new industrial middle class, but both Tories and Whigs ended up backing them:
 - 1820s – liberal reforms under Tories: better urban admin, greater econ. liberalism, civil equality for Catholics, Corn Laws revised further (grain imports taxed instead of banned)
 - **Reform Bill of 1832** – Whig reform; extended suffrage to 12% of adult male pop. (up from 8%) + gave representation in Commons to new industrial areas
 - 1838 – **Chartists** demand universal male suffrage (failed) = ex. of radicalism, not lib.
 - 1839 – **Anti-Corn Law League** – demanded repeal of Corn Laws ... fun note: *The Economist* was founded in 1843 to oppose the Corn Laws
 - 1846 – Corn Laws repealed under Tory PM
 - **Ten Hours Act of 1847** – Tory reform; reduced factory workday for women/youth to 10 hrs

1850-1914

- further extension of male suffrage:
 - **Second Reform Bill of 1867** – suffrage extended to all middle-class males and best-paid workers
 - **Third Reform Bill of 1884** – extended suffrage to almost every adult male
 - 1918 – *universal male suffrage finally achieved*
- women’s suffrage movement:
 - failed in 1860s to persuade Parli to grant the vote → turned to petitions, formation of reform societies, and more militant tactics like hunger strikes
 - a key leader: **Emmeline Pankhurst**, founder of Women’s Social and Political Union
 - WWI – women work in jobs vacated by soldiers → showed their importance
 - 1918 – suffrage granted to women over 30
 - 1928 – voting age lowered to 21 (same as for men)
- evolution of political parties: **Conservatives** vs. **Liberals**
- 1906-1914 – Liberal Party passed extensive social welfare measures (**People’s Budget**) and increased taxes on the rich – responded to the needs of the majority (era of the responsive

national state) ... happened only after tussle w/ Conservative Party and when Liberal Party came to power in 1906

IRELAND – INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT (into 20th c.)

- Ireland populated by poor Irish Catholic peasants, governed by GB and exploited by English Protestant landlords = Irish want freedom!
- 1845-1851 – **Great Famine** (Irish potato famine) fueled Irish revolutionary movement (GB maintained laissez-faire policies, so relief effort was pathetic)
- 1886 and 1893 – PM William Gladstone introduced bills to give Ireland self-government → rejected
- ca. 1901-1910 – Irish nationalists in Parli supported Liberals in battle for People’s Budget and got home-rule bill in return ... but Ireland was divided: Irish Catholic majority (S counties) wanted home rule (ie Ireland today) vs. Irish Protestant minority (Ulsterites / N counties) opposed it (ie Northern Ireland today)
- 1914 – Liberals proposed compromise home rule bill that did not apply to N counties → rejected
- Sept. 1914 – original home-rule bill passed but then suspended for duration of WWI
- 1922 – independence achieved after a war fought for it (1919-1921)

Short 20th c.
(from 1914)

WWI (1914-1918) + PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE (1919)

- PM **David Lloyd George (1916-1922)** – Liberal Party
- made conflicting promises regarding the ME:
 - o encouraged Arab revolt against Ottomans and made vague promises of an independent Arab kingdom
 - o 1916 – Sykes-Picot Agreement – w/ France, divided up ME b/t them ... set blueprint for ME mandates (GB got Iraq, Transjordan, Palestine)
 - o 1917 – Balfour Declaration – promised Jews a homeland in Palestine

INTERWAR PERIOD (1919-1939)

- PM **Neville Chamberlain (1937-1940)** – Conservative Party
 - o led policy of **appeasement** of Hitler
- Rise of the **Labour Party** – replaced the Liberal Party as the main opposition to the Conservatives (though all 3 parties remained). Ramsay MacDonald (1924, 1929-1935) = 1st Labour PM
 - o Labour = working class interests; more socialist ... its rise was especially a reflection of revisionist socialism of the late 19th c. (think Bernstein) and economic problems of the 20th c.
 - o Liberal = middle class interests; liberal (pro-capitalism, individual rights, limited gov’t)
 - o Conservative = historically more aristocratic; conservative
- Great Depression (1929) → didn’t do much to help the unemployed (kept spending under control and budget balanced, contrast to spending approach taken in US and Scandinavia), but econ recovered after 1932; in 1930s focused on developing the domestic market rather than export industries

WWII (1939-1945)

- PM **Winston Churchill (1940-1945, 1951-1955)** – Conservative Party
- **Battle of Britain** (1940-41) – GB held out against long period of German bombing attacks thanks to Royal Air Force (RAF), strong morale, and Churchill’s will (“We shall never surrender”)

1945 ONWARDS

- Churchill and Cold War origins: (1) one of the “Big Three” in the conferences leading up to the Cold War (Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam); (2) coined the term “iron curtain” in a 1946 speech
- Labour Party took power after WWII (PM Clement Atlee, 1945-1951) and est. **social welfare state** = nationalization of industries, free medical care, generous pensions, unemployment benefits (Conservatives then ran GB in the 1950s-early 60s but they kept the welfare state)
- 1949 – British Commonwealth est. – org. of 53 former British colonies
- **Queen Elizabeth II (r. 1952-present)** – House of Windsor
- 1973 – GB joins the Common Market (and goes on to be in the EU, but GB is sort of different – part of Europe, but doesn’t want to be part of Europe ... it’s an island thing)
- late 1960s-1990s – **IRA (Irish Republican Army)** leads violent separatist movement to wrest N. Ireland from GB (unsuccessful) ... U2 sings about “Bloody Sunday” in 1972
- PM **Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990)**, aka “iron lady” – Conservative Party; part of wider neoliberal movement of the 1980s = very strong free market ideology, decreased role of gov’t, fiscal responsibility/austerity (decrease social spending, decrease taxes) – ideology was a reaction against the profligate spending of the welfare state
 - o cut spending on healthcare, education, public housing
 - o decreased taxes
 - o privatized gov’t industries
 - o very anti-union
 - o lots of working class strikes/protests against her policies (unemployment increased w/ shutdown of heavy industries, income gap widened)
 - o **Falklands War (1982)** – war w/ Argentina over control of Falklands Islands; GB won

Resource:

Interactive Timeline on the BBC website:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/timelines/british/index_embed.shtml