

Introduction & Quick FactsPrime ministers of Great Britain and the United Kingdom References & Edit History Facts & Stats Geography & Travel Countries are part of the United Kingdom? What is the United Kingdom? What is the capital city of the United Kingdom? How is the government of the United Kingdom References & Edit History Facts & Stats Geography & Travel Countries are part of the United Kingdom? What is the Capital city of the United Kingdom? How is the government of the United Kingdom References & Edit History Facts & Stats Geography & Travel Countries are part of the United Kingdom? What is the Capital city of the United Kingdom? structured? What is the role of the British Monarchy in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some famous cultural landmarks in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some famous cultural landmarks in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions are some key traditions and holidays celebrated in the United Kingdom's history shape its current form? What are some key traditions are some key tr United Kingdom influence global politics and culture today? United Kingdom, island country located off the northwestern coast of mainland Europe. The United Kingdom comprises the whole of the island of Great Britain—which contains England, Wales, and Scotland—as well as the northern portion of the island of Ireland. The name Britain is sometimes used to refer to the United Kingdom as a whole. The capital is London, which is among the world's leading commercial, financial, and Cardiff in Wales. The origins of the United Kingdom can be traced to the time of the Anglo-Saxon king Athelstan, who in the early 10th century ce secured the allegiance of neighbouring Celtic kingdoms and became "the first to rule what previously many kings shared between them," in the words of a contemporary chronicle. Through subsequent conquest over the following centuries, kingdoms lying farther afield came under English dominion. Wales, a congeries of Celtic kingdoms lying in Great Britain's southwest, was formally united with England by the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1542. Scotland, ruled from London since 1603, formally was joined with England and Wales in 1707 to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain. (The adjective "British" came into use at this time to refer to all the kingdom's peoples.) Ireland came under English control during the 1600s and was formally united with Great Britain through the Act of Union of 1800. The republic of Ireland gained its independence in 1922, but six of Ulster's nine counties remained part of the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland. Relations between these constituent states and England have been marked by controversy and, at times, open rebellion and even warfare. These tensions relaxed somewhat during the late 20th century, when devolved assemblies were introduced in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Nonetheless, even with the establishment of a power-sharing assembly after referenda in both Northern Ireland and the Irish republic, relations between Northern Ireland) and nationalists (who favour unification with the republic of Ireland) remained tense into the 21st century. Audio File: Anthem of United Kingdom (see article) Head Of Government: Prime Minister: Keir Starmer Capital: London Population: (2025 est.) 69,414,000 Currency Exchange Rate: 1 USD equals 0.800 British pound Head Of State: Sovereign: King Charles III Form Of Government: constitutional monarchy with two legislative houses (House of Lords [7941]; House of Commons [650]) Official Languages: English; both English and Scots Gaelic in Scotland; both English and Welsh in Wales Official Religion: See footnote 2. Official Name: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Total Area (Sq Km): 242,500 Total Area (Sq Km): 242 20 Population Projection 2030: 70,338,000 Density: Persons Per Sq Mi: (2025) 741.4 Density: Person Per Sq Km: (2025) 286.2 Urban-Rural Population: Urban: (2018) 16.6% Life Expectancy At Birth: Male: (2020-2022) 78.6 years Female: (2020-2022) 82.6 years Literacy: Percentage Of Population Age 15 And Over Literate: Male: (2006) 99% Female: (2006) 99% Gni (U.S.\$ '000,000): (2023) 3,260,416 Gni Per Capita (U.S.\$): (2023) 47,700 The United Kingdom has made significant contributions to the world economy, especially in technology and industry. Since World War II, however, the United Kingdom's most prominent exports have been cultural, including literature, theatre, film, television, and popular music that draw on all parts of the country. Perhaps Britain's greatest export has been the English language, now spoken in every corner of the world as one of the leading international mediums of cultural and economic exchange. The United Kingdom retains links with parts of its former empire through the Commonwealth. It also benefits from historical and cultural links with the United States and is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Moreover, the United Kingdom became a member of the European Union in 1973. Many Britons, however, were sometimes reluctant EU members, holding to the sentiments of the great wartime prime minister Winston Churchill, who sonorously remarked, "We see nothing but good and hope in a richer, freer, more contented European commonalty. But we have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are linked, but not absorbed." referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain in the EU, 52 percent of British voters chose to leave. After much negotiation, several deadline extensions, prolonged domestic political discord, and the majority of Parliament. Thus, on January 31, 2020, the United Kingdom comprises four geographic and historical parts—England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The United Kingdom contains most of the area and population of the British Isles—the geographic term for the group of islands that includes Great Britain, Ireland, and many smaller islands, while Northern Ireland and the republic of Ireland constitute the second largest island, Ireland, England, England, Ireland, Ireland occupying most of southern Great Britain, includes the Isles of Scilly off the southern coast. Wales lies west of England and includes the islands off the northern coast. Wales lies west of England and includes the island off the southern coast. Anglesey to the northwest. Which Country Is Larger By Population? Quiz Apart from the land border with the Irish republic, the United Kingdom and France is the English Channel. The North Sea lies to the east. To the south of England and to the southeast of Northern Ireland, the Irish Sea separates Great Britain from Ireland, the northwestern coast of Northern Ireland, and western Scotland face the Atlantic Ocean. At its widest the United Kingdom is 300 miles (500 km) across. From the northwestern coast of England, it is about 600 miles (1,000 km). No part is more than 75 miles (120 km) from the sea. The capital, London, is situated on the tidal River Thames in southeastern England. The archipelago formed by Great Britain and the numerous smaller islands is as irregular in shape as it is diverse in geology and landscape. This diversity stems largely from the nature and disposition of the underlying rocks, which are westward extensions of European structures, with the shallow waters of the Strait of Dover and the North Sea concealing former land links. Northern Ireland contains a westward extension of the rock structures of Scotland. These common rock structures are breached by the narrow North Channel. On a global scale, this natural endowment covers a small area—approximating that of the U.S. state of Oregon or the African country of Guinea—and its internal diversity, accompanied by rapid changes of often beautiful scenery, may convey to visitors from larger countries a striking sense of compactness and consolidation. The peoples who, over the centuries, have hewed an existence from this Atlantic extremity of Eurasia have put their own imprint on the environment, and the ancient and distinctive palimpsest of their field patterns and settlements the natural diversity. Great Britain is traditionally divided into a highland and a lowland zone. A line running from the mouth of the River Exe, in the southwest, to that of the Tees, in the northeast, is a crude expression of this division. The course of the 700-foot (213-metre) contour, or of the boundary separating the older rocks of the north and west from the younger southeastern strata, provides a more accurate indication of the extent of the highlands. Britain has been shaped by turmoil between its nations, and tension between state and church. But centuries of conflict would forge the power at the heart of the largest empire the world has ever seen. Discover more in the sections below. A History of Britain presents a comprehensive narrative of the British Isles from ancient times to the mid-20th century. Written and presented by historian Simon Schama, this BBC series spans 15 episodes, each focusing on a specific period of British history. The journey begins in the Stone Age village of Skara Brae in Orkney, around 3100 BC, and progresses through the arrival of Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, and Christian missionaries, all of whom left their mark on the nascent nations of Britain. Schama's storytelling brings to life pivotal moments and figures that shaped the country's destiny. The Norman Conquest of 1066 serves as a turning point, dramatically altering the power struggles scheming, and conflicts that defined medieval Britain. As the narrative unfolds, it covers the emergence of distinct national identities within the British Isles, the devastating impact of the Black Death, and the religious upheavals of the Reformation. The Tudor period receives particular attention, with Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots, taking center stage in a tale of religious and political intrigue. The turbulent 17th century is portrayed through the lens of civil wars, regicide, and the brief period of republican rule under Oliver Cromwell. These events set the stage for the constitutional changes that would shape modern Britain. The series then turns to the industrial revolution, examining how technological advancements and urbanization transformed the country's landscape and social structure. A History of Britain also addresses the expansion and its often harsh realities. The final episode brings the story into the 20th century, focusing on how Britain's imperial past influenced its modern identity and the challenges faced by leaders in forging a new national future. Throughout the series, Schama weaves together political, social, and cultural threads to create a rich tapestry of British history. He draws connections between different eras and illustrates how past events are a rich tapestry of British history. continue to resonate in contemporary Britain. By covering nearly 5,000 years of history, the documentary provides context for understanding the formation of British national identity and the country's place in the world. 1837-1901 Victorian Era Queen Victoria's reign marks a period of industrial, cultural, political, scientific, and military change within the United Kingdom. The union of Great Britain and Ireland into the United Kingdom occurred in 1801 during the reign of King George III Part of a series on the History of the United Kingdom Timeline Georgian period Victorian period Victorian period Second World War Postwar period (political) Post-war period (social) Modern history (social) Modern history (social) Topics Economic history LGBT history Military history Taxation United Kingdom portalvte The history of the United Kingdom and its evolution into a constitutional and ceremonial monarchy is a major theme in the historical development of the British monarchy traces its origins to the petty kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Scotland, which consolidated into the kingdoms of England and Scotland by the 10th century. The Norman and Plantagenet dynasties expanded their authority throughout the British Isles, creating the Lordship of Ireland in 1177 and conquering Wales in 1283. In 1215, King John agreed to limit his own powers over his subjects according to the terms of Magna Carta. To gain the consent of the political community, English kings began summoning Parliaments to approve taxation and to enact statutes. Gradually, Parliament's authority expanded at the expense of royal power. The Crown of Ireland Act 1542 granted English monarchs the title King of Ireland. From 1603, the English and Scottish kingdoms were ruled by a single sovereign in the Union of the Crowns. During the Interregnum (1649-1660), the monarchy was abolished and replaced with various forms of republican government. Following the installation of William III and Mary II as co-monarchy was established with power shifting to Parliament. The Bill of Rights 1689, and its Scottish counterpart the Claim of Right Act 1689, further curtailed the power of the monarchy and excluded Roman Catholics from succession to the throne. In 1707, the kingdom of Great Britain, and in 1801, the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The British monarch was the nominal head of the vast British Empire, which covered a quarter of the world's land area at its greatest extent in 1921. The Balfour Declaration of 1926 recognised the evolution of the Dominions of the Empire into separate, self-governing countries and territories became independent, effectively bringing the Empire to an end. George VI and his successors, Elizabeth II and Charles III, adopted the title Head of the free association of its independent member states. The United Kingdom and fourteen other independent sovereign states that share the same person as their monarch are called Commonwealth realms. Although the monarch is shared, each country is sovereign and independent of the others, and the monarch yeach realm. Main article: History of the English monarchy Further information: Government in Anglo-Saxon England By 865, Viking invaders had conquered all of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms except Wessex, which survived under the rule of Alfred the Great (r. 871-899).[2][3] Alfred's son Edward the Elder (r. 899-924) and grandson Æthelstan (r. 924-939) gradually expanded and consolidated their control over the rest of England.[4] Æthelstan first adopted the title "king of the English" and is considered the founder of the English monarchy.[5] While the king authority, he relied on the support of the English church and nobility to govern.[6] The king's council or witan advised the king and also played a role in electing new monarchs. Succession was not strictly based on primogeniture, leading to complex successions and power struggles.[7][8] Royal revenue came from various sources including the royal demesne, judicial fines, and geld (land tax).[9] By the time of Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–1066), Anglo-Saxon government had become sophisticated.[10] The treasury had developed into a permanent institution, and Edward appointed the first chancellor.[11] Nevertheless, he faced challenges from the powerful Godwinson family, leading to political turmoil.[12] After Edward's death, there were competing claims to the English throne. Harold Godwinson was crowned king, but he faced challenges from Duke William of Normandy and King Harald Hardrada of Norway. Following a series of battles, including the famous Battle of Hastings, William emerged victorious, leading to his coronation as King of England on Christmas Day in 1066.[13] Further information: House of Normandy and Government in Norman and Angevin England and Normandy in 1087 After the Norman Conquest, the English monarchy became closely intertwined with French politics and the kings of England were nominal vassals to the kings of France.[14] The king claimed ownership of all land,[15] and the estates of the old Anglo-Normans maintained the basic system of English government. The witan's role of consultaiton and advice was filled by the curia regis ('king's court') and magnum concilium ('great council').[17][18] The Normans introduced new practices such as royal forests and forest law, which limited the rights of landholders within those areas.[19] The Normans built defensive castles across the country. William II (r. 1066-1087) ordered the construction of the White Tower, the central keep of the Tower of London, which became an imposing symbol of the monarch's power.[20] The Conqueror was succeeded by his sons, William II (r. 1087-1100) and Henry I (r. 1100-1135). The latter formalized the royal household, established the office of chief justiciar,[21] and made royal justice more accessible.[22] His marriage to Matilda as his heir, sparking controversy and forcing the nobility to swear oaths of allegiance to her.[23] Despite the oaths sworn to her, Matilda was unpopular both for being a woman and because of her marriage ties to Anjou, Normandy's traditional enemy.[24] Following Henry's death in 1135, his nephew, Stephen of Blois (r. 1135-1154), laid claim to the throne and took power with the support of most of the barons. Matilda challenged his reign; as a result, England descended into a period of civil war known as the Anarchy (1138-1153). While Stephen maintained a precarious hold on power, he was ultimately forced to compromise for the sake of peace. Both sides agreed to the Treaty of Wallingford by which Stephen adopted Matilda's son, Henry FitzEmpress, as his son and heir.[25] Further information: Angevin kings of England and Capetian-Plantagenet rivalry The Angevin kings of England and Capetia William the Lion of Scotland to acknowledge him as a feudal overlord, and confirmed his feudal overlordship over most of Ireland.[27] Additionally, Henry's clash with Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, in the Becket controversy foreshadowed the ongoing struggle between secular and ecclesiastical powers.[28][29] Henry was succeeded by his son, Richard I (r. 1189-1199), also known as the Lionheart. He joined the Third Crusade and spent most of his reign outside of England. His absence from the country led to power struggles and opposition against his appointed regent, William de Longchamp.[30] While returning from the Crusade and spent most of his reign outside of England. His absence from the country led to power struggles and opposition against his appointed regent, William de Longchamp.[30] While returning from the Crusade and spent most of his reign outside of England. Emperor and had to pay a substantial ransom for his release.[31] His brother John defected to France and plotted to take Richard's lands on the Continent.[32] After his return to England, Richard waged war against Philip II of France. Despite reclaiming most of his territory, Richard died from wounds sustained in battle in 1199, naming John as his successor before his death.[33] Eleanor and Arthur children of John's late elder brother Geoffrey II, Duke of Brittany were passed over; later John had Arthur murdered, and Eleanor was imprisoned until her death in 1241, with her claim only posthumously recognized. John (r. 1199-1216) faced significant challenges, including the loss of Normandy, financial struggles, and conflicts with the barons and the English church. His attempts to fund military campaigns through taxation and other means led to resentment and distrust among the barons. [34][35] In 1215, the barons forced John to agree to Magna Carta, which aimed to define and limit royal power. [36] John's attempts to annul Magna Carta led to the First Barons' War, which was ongoing at his sudden death in 1216.[37] Further information: House of Plantagenet and Government in late medieval England Since the Conquest, monarchs have been crowned at Westminster Abbey. (1216-1272), the concept that kings were bound by the law gained traction.[38] This era saw the development of the English Parliament, which claimed the power to grant taxes. In exchange for funding military campaigns in France, Parliament, which claimed the power to grant taxes. which led to power struggles and resentment, ultimately resulting in widespread consensus that Henry was unfit to rule. In 1258, the King was forced to comply with the Provisions of Oxford, transferring royal power to a council of barons.[39] Henry's attempts to overturn the provisions led to the Second Barons' War, which ended with the King's victory and the restoration of royal authority.[40] Henry's reign was also marked by extravagant spending on royal palaces and Westminster Abbey.[41] Edward I (r. 1272-1307) initiated a number of reforms through parliamentary statute, summoned the Model Parliament in 1295, and effectively convinced Parliament to finance military campaigns in Wales and Scotland [42][43][44] Edward permanently conquered Wales and enforced English domination with the Statute of Wales.[45] His intervention in the Scottish Independence. Edward died in 1307 while on his way to invade Scotland [46] During the reign of Edward II (1307-1327), conflicts arose between the King and the nobility, largely due to the influence of royal favourites.[47] These tensions led to a series of events including the exile and eventual execution of the king's favorite, Piers Gaveston, and later the rise of Hugh Despenser the Younger, who further destabilized the kingdom.[49] In the midst of this turmoil, Edward's wife, Isabella, formed an alliance with Roger Mortimer, leading to Edward's capture and subsequent abdication in 1327, marking the first formal deposition of an English monarch.[50][51] Edward III added the French fleur-de-lis to the Royal Arms of England to symbolise his claim to the French throne Edward III (r. 1327-1377) succeeded his father at age 14, but his mother Isabella and Mortimer actually ruled the country. In 1330, the 17-year-old Edward staged a coup and took control of the government.[52] In 1340, Edward claimed the French throne on the grounds that he was escendant of his grandfather, Philip IV of France. This was the start of the Hundred Years' War. Edward had important military successes, including the loss of Aguitaine. The Good Parliament of 1376 highlighted corruption the government, leading to the first impeachment of ministers and the removal of Alice Perrers, the royal mistress. [55] Despite these challenges, Edward's reign strengthened Parliament's role in government. [56] Richard II (r. 1377-1399) became king at the age of 10; however, actual power was held by his uncles and courtiers. Richard's decisive leadership during the Peasants' Revolt showed he was ready to assume power, [57] but his tyrannical rule bred discontent. In 1399, Henry Bolingbroke, the King's cousin, led a rebellion that forced Richard to abdicate. On 30 September, a convention parliament declared Richard deposed and Bolingbroke claimed the vacant throne for himself, [58] While Edward II abdicated in favor of his son, Parliament deliberately broke the line of succession when it deposed Richard. Historian Tracy Borman writes that this "created a dangerous precedent and made the crown fundamentally unstable." [59] Further information: House of Lancaster France in 1435 during the Hundred Years War Bolingbroke now Henry IV (r. 1399-1413), faced numerous challenges, including rebellions and plots to restore Richard to the throne. His reign was marked by the Welsh Revolt, the Battle of Shrewsbury, financial difficulties, and the Armagnac-Burgundian Civil War in France. [60][61] King Henry V (r. 1413-1422) sought to unify England by making conciliatory gestures towards his father's enemies and honoring the deceased Richard II.[61] His reign was largely free from domestic strife, allowing him to focus on the last phase of the Hundred Years' War with France.[62] Henry's legendary victory at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 boosted national pride, and he continued to achieve military success, conquering Normandy in 1419 and being recognized as heir and regent of France in 1420 as part of the Treaty of Troyes. Despite his popularity and successful reign, difficulty securing further funds for wars in France and his frequent absences from England created challenges. [63] Henry V died in 1422 during a campaign in France, leaving behind his nine-month-old son, Henry VI (1st r. 1422-1461; 2nd r. 1470-1471), to rule the dual monarchy of England and France.[64] Henry VI proved to be a weak and incompetent ruler. By 1453, he had lost all his French territories except Calais.[65] Following the French conquest of Gascony, the King suffered a mental breakdown. Parliament appointed Richard, duke of York, as lord protector. York and Queen Margaret of Anjou engaged in a power struggle that started the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487). [66] York claimed the throne as a descendant of Edward III's son Lionel, duke of Clarence. York's son, Edward IV, defeated the Lancastrians and was crowned in 1461. Henry and Margaret fled to Scotland with their son, Edward of Westminster.[67][68] Further information: House of York Edward IV was constantly at odds with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, winning back the throne at Barnet and killing the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV was constantly at odds with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, winning back the throne at Barnet and killing the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with the Lancastrian heir eturn to power for Henry VI. Edward IV prevailed, with Edward of Westminster, at Tewkesbury. Afterward he captured Margaret of Anjou, eventually sending her into exile, but not before killing Henry VI while he was held prisoner in the Tower. The Wars of the Roses, nevertheless, continued intermittently during his reign and those of his son Edward V and brother Richard III. Edward V disappeared, presumably murdered by Richard. Ultimately, the conflict culminated in success for the Lancastrian branch led by Henry Tudor, in 1485, when Richard III was killed in the Battle of Bosworth Field.[69] Further information: House of Tudor and Elizabethan government King Henry VII then neutralised the remaining Yorkist forces, partly by marrying Elizabeth of York, a Yorkist heir. Through skill and ability, Henry re-established absolute supremacy in the realm, and the conflicts with the nobility that had plaqued previous monarchs came to an end.[70][71] The reign of the second Tudor king, Henry VIII, was one of great political change. Religious upheaval and disputes with the Pope, and the fact that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon produced only one surviving child, a daughter, led the monarch to break from the Roman Catholic Church and to establish the Church of England (the Anglican Church) and divorce his wife to marry Anne Boleyn.[72] In 1155, Pope Adrian IV issued the papal bull Laudabiliter, granting Henry II authority over Ireland. Since then, all English kings claimed dominion over Ireland, using the title Lord of Ireland. Few kings ever visited the island, however. They preferred to rule through lieutenants for Ireland. [73] By 1541, King Henry VIII of England had broken with the Church of England had broken with the Church of England. The pope's and declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England. grant of Ireland to the English monarch became invalid, so Henry summoned a meeting of the Irish Parliament to change his title from Lord of Ireland (see Monarchy of Ireland to King of Ireland).[74] Wales - which had been conquered centuries earlier, but had remained a separate dominion - was annexed to England under the Laws in Wales Acts 1535 and 1542.[75] Henry VIII's son and successor, the young Edward VI, continued with further religious reforms, but his early death in 1553 precipitated a succession crisis. He was wary of allowing his Catholic elder half-sister Mary I to succeed, and therefore drew up a will designating Lady Jane Grey as his heiress. Jane's reign, however, lasted only nine days; with tremendous popular support, Mary deposed her and declared herself the lawful sovereign. Mary I married Philip of Spain, who was declared king and co-ruler. He pursued disastrous wars in France and she attempted to return England to Roman Catholicism (burning Protestants at the stake as heretics in the process). Upon her death in 1558, the pair were succeeded by her Protestant half-sister Elizabeth I. England returned to Protestantism and continued its growth into a major world.[76][77] See also: List of Scottish monarchies emerged after the withdrawal of the Roman empire from Britain in the early fifth century. The three groups that lived in Scotland at this time were the Picts in the south, including the Kingdom of Strathclyde, and the west Kenneth MacAlpin is traditionally viewed as the first king of a united Scotland (known as Scotia to writers in Latin, or Alba to the Scots).[78] The expansion of Scottish monarchs did not inherit the Crown directly; instead, the custom of tanistry was followed, where the monarchy alternated between different branches of the House of Alpin. As a result, however, the rival dynastic lines clashed, often violently. From 942 to 1005, seven consecutive monarchy alternated between different branches of the House of Alpin. As a result, however, the rival dynastic lines clashed, often violently. continued to ruthlessly eliminate opposition, and when he died in 1034 he was succeeded by his grandson, Duncan I, instead of a cousin, as had been usual. In 1040, Duncan suffered defeat in battle at the hands of Macbeth, who was killed himself in 1057 by Duncan's son Malcolm. The following year, after killing Macbeth's stepson Lulach, Malcolm ascended the throne as Malcolm III.[80] With a further series of battles and deposings, five of Malcolm's sons as well as one of his brothers succeeded by his grandsons Malcolm IV, and then by William the Lion, the longest-reigning King of Scots before the Union of the Crowns.[81] William participated in a rebellion against King Henry II of England but when the rebellion failed, William was forced to acknowledge Henry as his feudal overlord. The English. In exchange for his release, William was forced to acknowledge Henry as his feudal overlord. sum of money needed for the Crusades.[82] William died in 1214, and was succeeded by his son Alexander II, as well as his successor Alexander III, attempted to take over the Western Isles, which were still under the overlordship of Norway. During the reign of Alexander III, attempted to take over the Western Isles, which were still under the overlordship of Norway. ensuing Treaty of Perth recognised Scottish control of the Western Isles and other disputed areas.[83] In 1603, James VI and I became the first monarch to rule over England, Scotland, and Ireland together. Alexander III's death in a riding accident in 1286 precipitated a major succession crisis. Scottish leaders appealed to King Edward I of England for help in determining who was the rightful heir. Edward chose Alexander's three-year-old Norwegian granddaughter, Margaret died at sea, and Edward was again asked to adjudicate between 13 rival claimants to the throne. A court was set up and after two years of deliberation, it pronounced John Balliol to be king. Edward proceeded to treat Balliol as a vassal, and tried to exert influence over Scotland. In 1295, when Balliol renounced his allegiance to England, Edward I invaded. During the first ten years of the ensuing Wars of Scottish Independence, Scotland had no monarch, until Robert the Bruce declared himself king in 1306.[84] Robert's efforts to control Scotland culminated in success, and Scottish independence was acknowledged in 1328. However, only one year later, Robert died and was succeeded by his five-year-old son, David II. On the pretext of restoring John Balliol's rightful heir, Edward Balliol, the English again invaded in 1332. During the next four years, Ballio was crowned, deposed, restored, deposed, restored, and deposed until he eventually settled in England, and David remained king for the next 35 years. [85] David II died childless in 1371 and was succeeded by his nephew Robert II of the House of Stuart. The reigns of both Robert II and his successor, Robert III, were marked by a general decline in royal power. When Robert III died in 1406, regents had to rule the country; the monarch, Robert III's son James I, had been taken captive by the English. Having paid a large ransom, James returned to Scotland in 1424; to restore his authority, he used ruthless measures, including the execution of several of his enemies. He was assassinated by a group of nobles. James II continued his father's policies by subduing influential noblemen but he was killed in an accident at the age of thirty, and a council of regents again assumed power. James IV launched an invasion of England, attempting to take advantage of the English King Henry VIII. His forces met with disaster at Flodden Field; the King, many senior noblemen, and hundreds of soldiers were killed. As his son and successor, James V, was an infant, the government was again taken over by regents. James V led another disastrous war with the English in 1542, and his death in the same year left the Crown in the hands of his six-day-old daughter, Mary. Once again, a regency was established. Mary caused in Scotland. As a result of the efforts of reformers such as John Knox, a Protestant ascendancy was established. Mary caused alarm by marrying her Catholic cousin, Lord Darnley, in 1565. After Lord Darnley's assassination in 1567, Mary contracted an even more unpopular marriage with the Earl of Bothwell, who was widely suspected of Darnley's murder. The nobility rebelled against the Queen, forcing her to abdicate. She fled to England, and the Crown went to her infant son James VI, who was brought up as a Protestant. Mary was imprisoned and later executed by the English queen Elizabeth I's death in 1603 ended Tudor rule in England. Since she had no children, she was succeeded by the Scottish monarchsElizabeth I's death in 1603 ended Tudor rule in England. sister and hence Elizabeth's first cousin twice removed. James VI ruled in England as James I after what was known as the "Union of the Crowns". Although England and Scotland were in personal union under one monarch - James I & VI became the first monarch to style himself "King of Great Britain" in 1604[88] - they remained two separate kingdoms. James I & VI's successor, Charles I, experienced frequent conflicts with the English Parliament related to the issue of royal and parliament from 1629 to 1640, unilaterally levying taxes and adopting controversial religious policies (many of which were offensive to the Scottish Presbyterians and the English Puritans). His attempt to enforce Anglicanism led to organised rebellion in Scotland (the "Bishops' Wars") and ignited the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. In 1642, the conflict between the King and English Puritans). article: British Interregnum The Civil War culminated in the execution of the king in 1649, the overthrow of the English monarchy, and the establishment of the Commonwealth of England. Charles I's son, Charles II, was proclaimed King of Great Britain in Scotland, but he was forced to flee abroad after he invaded England and was defeated at the Battle of Worcester. In 1653, Oliver Cromwell, the most prominent military and political leader in the nation, seized power and declared himself Lord Protector (effectively becoming a military dictator, but refusing the title of king). Cromwell ruled until his death in 1658, when he was succeeded by his son Richard. The new Lord Protector had little of king). interest in governing; he soon resigned.[90] The lack of clear leadership led to civil and military unrest, and to a popular desire to restore the monarchy. In 1660, the monarchy was restored and Charles II returned to Britain.[91] England and Scotland were united as the Kingdom of Great Britain under Queen Anne in 1707. Charles II's reign was marked by the development of the first modern political parties in England. Charles had no legitimate children, and was due to be succeeded by his Roman Catholic brother, James, Duke of York. A parliamentary effort to exclude James from the line of succession arose; the "Petitioners", who supported exclusion, became the Whig Party, whereas the "Abhorrers", who opposed exclusion, became the Tory Party. The Exclusion Bill failed; on several occasions, Charles II dissolved Parliament of 1681, Charles ruled without a Parliament until his death in 1685. When James succeeded Charles, he pursued a policy of offering religious tolerance to Roman Catholics, thereby drawing the ire of many of his Protestant subjects. Many opposed James's decisions to maintain a large standing army, to appoint Roman Catholics to high political and military offices, and to imprison Church of England clerics who challenged his policies. As a result, a group of Protestants known as the Immortal Seven invited James II & VII's daughter Mary and her husband William III of Orange to depose the king. William obliged, arriving in England on 5 November 1688 to great public support. Faced with the defection of many of his Protestant officials, James fled the realm and William and Mary (rather than James II & VII's Catholic son) were declared joint Sovereigns of England, Scotland and Ireland. [92] James's overthrow, known as the Glorious Revolution, was one of the most important events in the long evolution of parliamentary power. The Bill of Rights 1689 affirmed parliamentary supremacy, and declared that the English people held certain rights, including the freedom from taxes imposed without parliamentary consent. The Bill of Rights required future monarchs to be Protestants, and provided that, after any children of William III & II as the sole monarch. By 1700, a political crisis arose, as all of Anne's children had died, leaving her as the only individual left in the line of succession. Parliament was afraid that the former James II or his supporters, known as Jacobites, might attempt to reclaim the throne. Parliament was afraid that the former James II or his supporters, known as Jacobites, might attempt to reclaim the throne. relations, the family of Sophia, Electress of Hanover, next in line to the throne after his sister-in-law Anne.[93] Soon after the passage of the Act, William III & II died, leaving the Crown to Anne. After Anne's accession, the problem of the succession re-emerged. The Scottish Parliament, infuriated that the English Parliament did not consult them on the choice of Sophia's family as the next heirs, passed the Act of Security 1704, threatening to end the personal union between England and Scotland. The Parliament of England retaliated with the Alien Act of Union 1707, under which England and Scotland were united into a single Kingdom of Great Britain, with succession under the rules prescribed by the Act of Settlement.[94] This section needs expansion with: content from American War of Independence, Kingdom of Hanover, and British Raj. You can help by adding to it. (June 2022) In 1714, Queen Anne was succeeded by her second cousin, and Sophia's son, George I, Elector of Hanover, who consolidated his position by defeating Jacobite rebellions in 1715 and 1719. The new monarch was less active in government than many of his British predecessors, but retained control over his German kingdoms, with which Britain was now in personal union [95] Power shifted towards George's ministers, especially to Sir Robert Walpole, who is often considered the first British prime minister, although the title was not then in use.[96] The next monarch, George II, witnessed the final end of the Jacobite threat in 1746, when the Catholic Stuarts were completely defeated. During the long reign of his grandson, George III, Britain's American colonies were lost, the former colonies having formed the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was created by the Acts of Union 1800.[97] From 1811 to 1820, George III suffered a severe bout of what is now believed to be porphyria, an illness rendering him incapable of ruling. His son, the future George IV, ruled in his stead as Prince Regent. During the Regency and his own reign, the power of the monarchy declined, and by the time of his successor, William IV, the monarch was no longer able to effectively interfere with parliamentary power. In 1834, William dismissed the Whig Prime Minister, William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne, and appointed a Tory, Sir Robert Peel. In the ensuing elections, however, Peel lost. The king had no choice but to recall Lord Melbourne. During William IV's reign, the Reform Act 1832, which reformed parliamentary representation, was passed. Together with others passed later in the century, the Act led to an expansion of the electoral franchise and the rise of the House of Commons as the most important branch of Parliament. [98] The final transition to a constitutional monarchy was made during the long reign of William IV's successor, Victoria. As a woman, Victoria could not rule Hanover, which only permitted succession in the male line, so the personal union of the United Kingdom and Hanover came to an end. The Victorian era was marked by great cultural change, technological progress, and the establishment of the United Kingdom as one of the world's foremost powers. In recognition of British rule over India, Victoria was declared Empress of India in 1876. However, her reign was also marked by increased support for the republican movement, due in part to Victoria's permanent mourning and lengthy period of seclusion following the death of her husband in 1861.[99] Map of the British Empire in 1921 Victoria's son, Edward VII, became the first monarch of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1901. In 1917, the next monarch, George V, changed "Saxe-Coburg and Gotha" to "Windsor" in response to the anti-German sympathies aroused by the First World War. George V is reign was marked by the separation of Ireland, which remained a part of the United Kingdom, and the Irish Free State, an independent nation, in 1922.[100] Current Commonwealth realms and Dominions that are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms and Dominions that are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms and Dominions that are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms and Dominions that are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century, the Commonwealth realms are now republics During the twentieth century are now republics. collectively; the Dominions and Crown Colonies were subordinate to the United Kingdom. The Balfour Declaration of 1926 gave complete self-government to the Dominions, effectively creating a system whereby a single monarch operated independently in each separate Dominions. The concept was solidified by the Statute of Westminster 1931,[101] which has been likened to "a treaty among the Commonwealth countries".[102] The monarchy thus ceased to be an exclusively British institution, although it is often still referred to as "British" for legal and historical reasons and for convenience. The monarch became separately monarch of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and so forth. The independent states within the Commonwealth would share the same monarch in a relationship likened to a personal union.[103][104][105][106] George V's death in 1936 was followed by the accession of Edward VIII, who caused a public scandal by announcing his desire to marry the divorced American Wallis Simpson, even though the Church of England opposed the remarriage of divorcees. Accordingly, Edward announced his intention to abdicate; the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and of other Commonwealth countries granted his request. Edward VIII and any children by his new wife were excluded from the line of succession, and the Crown went to his brother, George VI. [107] George served as a rallying figure for the British people during World War II, making morale-boosting visits to the troops as well as to munitions factories and to areas bombed by Nazi Germany. In June 1948 George VI relinquished the title Emperor of India, although remaining head of state of the Dominion of India.[108] At first, every member of the Commonwealth retained the same monarch as the United Kingdom, but when the Dominion of India became a republic in 1950, it would no longer share in a common monarchy. Instead, the British monarch was acknowledged as "Head of the Commonwealth" in all Commonwealth member states, whether they were realms or republics. The position is purely ceremonial, and is not inherited by the British monarch as of right but is vested in an individual chosen by the Commonwealth heads of government.[109][110] Member states of the Commonwealth that share the same person as monarch are informally known as Commonwealth realms.[109] In the 1990s, republicanism in the United Kingdom grew, partly on account of negative publicity associated with the Royal Family (for instance, immediately following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales).[111] However, polls from 2002 to 2007 showed that around 70-80% of the British public supported the continuation of the monarchy.[112][113][114][115] This support has remained constant since then—according to a 2018 survey, a majority of the British public across all age groups still support the monarchy's continuation.[116] Family tree of British monarchy in Australia History of monarchy in Austral 1988, p. 13. ^ Borman 2021, p. 2. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 13-14. ^ Borman 2021, p. 3. ^ Huscroft 2016, pp. 19-20. ^ Maddicott 2010, pp. 25 & 29-30. ^ Borman 2021, p. 4. ^ Huscroft 2016, pp. 130 & 133. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 81-85. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 96 & 103-104. ^ Bartlett 2000, pp. 11 & 13 ^ Lyon 2016, p. 30. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 96-98 & 114. ^ a b Borman 2021, p. 16. ^ Lyon 2016, pp. 38 & 66. ^ Huscroft 2016, pp. 44-45. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 52 & 84-85. ^ Butt 1989, pp. 31-38. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 183 & 189. ^ Lyon 2016, pp. 54-55. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 131 & 133. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 139-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 199-200. ^ Cannon & Griffiths 1988, pp. 125-127. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 62-63. ^ Lyon 2016, p. 66. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 158-161. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 198-161. ^ 2012, pp. 195-196, 213, 220-222 & 378. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 211-212. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 70. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 252-253 & 266-267. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 76-77. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, p. 83. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 332-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 88-90. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, p. 83. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 332-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 88-90. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, p. 77. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 76-77. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 76-77. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 332-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 88-90. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 76-77. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 76-77. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 332-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 88-90. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 332-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 88-90. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 322-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 88-90. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 217-220. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 322-333. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 313. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 313. ^ Jones 201 2010, p. 225. ^ Jones 2012, pp. 363-365. ^ Starkey 2010, p. 229. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 432-433 & 436-439. ^ Starkey 2010, p. 230. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 494-496. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 494-496. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 494-496. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 432-433 & 436-439. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 244-245. ^ a b Cheetham 1998, p. 122. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 432-433 & 436-439. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 244-245. ^ a b Cheetham 1998, p. 122. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 432-433 & 436-439. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 244-245. ^ a b Cheetham 1998, p. 122. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 432-433 & 436-439. ^ Starkey 2010, pp. 244-245. ^ a b Cheetham 1998, p. 122. ^ Borman 2021, pp. 432-433 & 436-439. ^ 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OL 28474657M. Starkey, David (2010). Crown and Country: A History of England through the Monarchy. HarperCollins Publishers. ISBN 978-0007307715. Weir, Alison (1996). Britain's Royal Families: The Complete Genealogy. London: Pimlico. ISBN 0-7126-7448-9. OCLC 35042093. Retrieved from "You are here: Countries / The United Kingdom The United Kingdom, also known as Britain or the United Kingdom, also known as Britain or the United Kingdom The United Kingdom The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is a European region with a long and storied history. to 10,000 years ago), when the sea levels were lower and Britain was connected to the European mainland. It is these people who built the ancient megalithic monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury. Between 1,500 and 500 BCE, Celtic tribes migrated from Central European mainland. new culture slightly distinct from the Continental Celtic one. This came to be known as the Bronze Age. The Romans controlled most of present-day England and Wales, and founded a large number of cities that still exist today. London, York, St Albans, Bath, Exeter, Lincoln, Leicester, Winchester, Winchester, Colchester, Colcheste Manchester, Chester, and Lancaster were all Roman towns, as were all the cities with names now ending in -chester, -cester or -caster, which derive from the Latin word castrum, meaning "fortification." History of the United Kingdom: The Anglo-Saxons In the 5 century, the Romans progressively abandoned Britannia, as their Empire was falling apart and legions were needed to protect Rome. With the Romans vacated, the Celtic tribes started warring with each other again, and one of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains had the (not so smart) idea to request help from some of the local chieftains help from som arrived in the 5th and 6th centuries. When the fighting ceased, the Germanic tribes did not, as expected by the Celts, return to their homeland. In fact, they felt strong enough to seize the whole of the country for themselves, which they ultimately did, pushing back all the Celtic tribes to Wales and Cornwall, and founding their respective kingdoms of the country for themselves. Kent (the Jutes), Essex, Sussex and Wessex (the Saxons), and further northeast, the kingdoms of Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria (the Angles). These 7 kingdoms, which ruled over the United Kingdom from about 500 to 850 AD, were later known as the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy. History of the United Kingdom: The Vikings In the latter half of the 9 century, the Norse people from Scandinavia began to invade Europe, with the Swedes putting down roots in Eastern Europe and the Danes creating problems throughout Western Europe, as far as North Africa. Towards the dawn of the 10 century, the Danes invaded the Northeast of England, from Northumerland to East Anglia, and founded a new kingdom known as the Danelaw. Another group of Danes managed to take Paris, and obtain a grant of land from the King of France in 911. This area became the Normans (from 'North Men' or 'Norsemen', another term for 'Viking'). History of the United Kingdom: The Normans Depiction of Cnut the Great After settling in to their newly acquired land, the Normans adopted the French feudal system and French as the official language. During that same period, the Kings of Wessex had resisted, and eventually vanguished the Danes in England in the 10th century. Denmark and Norway and overlord of Schleswig and Pomerania, led two other invasions on England in 1013, and 1015, and became king of England in 1016, after crushing the 11 century, the Norman King Edward the Confessor (1004-1066) nominated William, Duke of Normandy, as his successor, but upon Edward's death, Harold Godwinson, the powerful Earl of Wessex, crowned himself king. William refused to acknowledge Harold as King and invaded England with 12,000 soldiers in 1066. King Harold was killed at the battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror become William I of England. The Norman rulers kept their possessions in France, and even extended them to most of Western France (Brittany, Aquitaine...). French became the official language of England, and remained that way until 1362, a short time after the beginning of the Hundred Years' War with France. Norse languages) with French and Latin (used by the clergy) slowly evolved into the modern English we know today. History of the United Kingdom: 12 and 13 Centuries The English royals that followed William I had the infamous habit to contend for the throne. William II was killed while hunting, although it is widely believed that he was in fact murdered so that William's second son, Henry, could become king. Henry I's succession was also fraught with agitation, with his daughter Matilda and her cousin Stephen (grandson of William I) starting a civil war for the throne. Although Stephen eventually won, it was ultimately Matilda's son that succeeded to the throne, becoming Henry II (1133-1189). It is under Henry II that the University of Oxford was established. The two children of Henry II—Richard I "Lionhearted" and John Lackland—also battled for the throne. The oldest son, Richard, eventually succeeded to the throne. the infidels in the Holy Land, his brother John Lackland usurped the throne and started another civil war. John's grandson, Edward I "Longshanks" (1239-1307) spent most of his 35-year reign fighting wars, including one against the Scots, led by William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. With the help of these men, the Scots were able to resist, as immortalized in the Hollywood movie Braveheart. History of the United Kingdom: 14 and 15 Centuries After a brief rule by Edward Longshanks son, his grandson, Edward III (1312-1377), succeeded to the throne at the age of 15 and reigned for 50 years. His reign was marked by the beginning of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1416) and deadly epidemics of bubonic plaque ("Black Death"), which killed one third of England's (and Europe's) population. Edward III was often off fighting in France, leaving his third son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, to run the government. Later, John's son, Henry IV (1367-1413). Henry IV (1367-1413). defeated the French at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, but his pious and peace-loving son Henry VI (1421-1471), who inherited the throne at age one, was to have a much more troubled reign. The regent lost most of England's possessions in France to a 17-year old girl (Joan of Arc) and in 1455 the Wars of the Roses broke out. This civil war opposed the House of Lancaster (the Red Rose, supporters of Henry VI) to the House of York (the White Rose, supporters of Edward IV). The Yorks argued that the crown should have passed to Edward IV's son, Edward IV's son being locked in the Tower of London by his evil uncle, Richard III (1452-1485). In 1485, Henry Tudor (1457-1509), the half-brother of Henry VII, founder of the House of Tudor. Following Henry (Tudor) VII to the throne was perhaps England's most famous and historically significant ruler, the magnificent Henry VIII (1491-1547). History of the United Kingdom: 16 Century Portrait of Henry VIII henry VIII is remembered in history as one of the most powerful kings of England. He changed the face of England. He changed the face of England. He changed the face of England. Wales and Ireland. In 1533, Henry VIII divorced Catherine of Aragon to remarry Anne Boleyn, causing the Pope to excommunicate him from the church. As a result, Henry proclaimed himself head of the Church of England. He dissolved all the monasteries in the country (1536-1540) and nationalized them, becoming immensely rich in the process. Henry VIII was the last English king to claim the title of King of France, as he lost his last possession there, the port of Calais (although he tried to recover it, taking Tournai for a few years, the only town in present-day Belgium to have been under English rule). It was also under Henry VIII that England started exploring the globe and trading outside Europe, although this would only develop to colonial proportions under his daughters, Mary I and especially Elizabeth I. Upon the death of Henry's elder half-daughter Mary. Mary I (1516-1558), a staunch Catholic, intended to restore Roman Catholicism to England, executing over 300 religious dissenters in her 5-year reign (which owned her the nickname of Bloody Mary). She married the powerful King Philip II of Spain, who also ruled over the Netherlands, the Spanish Americas and the Philippines (named after him), and was the champion of the Counterreformation. Mary died childless of ovarian cancer in 1558, and her half-sister Elizabeth ascended to the throne. The great Aue of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of great navigators like Sir Francis Bacon (1561) saw the first golden age of England. It was an age of England 1626), and playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616). Her reign was also marked by conflicts with France and Scotland, and later Spain and Ireland. She never married, and when Mary Stuart tried and failed to take over the throne of England, Elizabeth kept her imprisoned for 19 years before finally signing her act of execution. Elizabeth died in 1603, and ironically, Mary Stuart's son, James VI of Scotland, succeeded Elizabeth as King James I of England-thus creating the United Kingdom. History of the United Kingdom. 17 Century James I (1566-1625), a Protestant, aimed at improving relations with the Catholic Church. But 2 years after he was crowned, a group of Catholic extremists, led by Guy Fawkes, attempted to place a bomb at the parliament's state opening, hoping to eliminate all the Protestant aristocracy in one fell swoop. However, the conspirators were betrayed by one of their own just hours before the plan's enactment. The failure of the Gunpowder Plot, as it is known, is still celebrated throughout Britain on Guy Fawkes' night (5th November), with fireworks and bonfires burning effigies of the conspirators' leader. After this incident, the divide between Catholics and Protestant worsened. James's successor Charles I (1600-1649) was eager to unify Britain and Ireland. His policies, however, were unpopular among the populace, and his totalitarian handling of the Parliament eventually culminated in the English Civil War (1642-1651). Charles was beheaded, and the puritan Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) ruled the country as a dictator from 1649 to his death. He was briefly succeeded by his son Richard at the head of the Protectorate, but his political inability prompted the Parliament to restore the monarchy in 1660, calling in Charles II (1630-1685). Charles II (1630-1685). Charles II (1630-1685). Charles II (1630-1685). of New Amsterdam became English and was renamed New York, after Charles' brother, James, Duke of York (and later James II). Charles II was the patron of the arts and science, helping to found the Royal Society and sponsoring some of England's proudest architecture. laying the foundation for the British Empire. Although Charles produced countless illegitimate children, his wife couldn't bear an heir, and when he died in 1685 the throne passed to his Catholic and unpopularity led to his quick removal from power in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He was succeeded by his Protestant daughter Mary, who was married to his equally Protestant nephew, William of Orange. The new ruling couple became known as the "Grand Alliance," and parliament ratified a bill stating that all kings or queens would have to be Protestant from that point forward. After Mary's death in 1694, and then William's in 1702, James's second daughter, Anne, ascended to the throne. In 1707, the Act of Union joined the Scottish and the English Parliaments thus creating the single Kingdom of Great Britain and centralizing political power in London. Anne died heirless in 1714, and a distant German cousin, George of Hanover, was called to rule over the UK. History of the United Kingdom: 18 Century and the House of Hanover George I as Prince of HanoverWhen George I (1660-1727) arrived in England, he couldn't speak a word of English. The king's inability to communicate well with his government and subjects led him to appoint in the person of Robert Walpole (1676-1745). This marked a turning point in

British politics, as future monarchs were also to remain more passive figures, lending the reins of the government to the Prime Minister. George II (1683-1760) was also German born. He was a powerful ruler, and the last British monarch to personally lead his troops into battle. The British Empire expanded considerably during his reign; a reign that saw notable changes, including the replacement of the Julian Calendar by the Gregorian Calendar in 1752, and moving the date of the New Year from March 25 to January 1. George III was the first Hanoverian king to be born in England. He had one of the most troubled and interesting reigns in British history. He ascended to the throne during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) opposing almost all the major Western powers in two teams, chiefly British against French, and ended in a de facto victory for the UK, which acquired New France (Quebec), Florida, and most of French India in the process. Thirteen years later, the American War of Independence (1776-1782) broke out and in 1782 13 American colonies were finally granted their independence, forming the United States of America. Seven years later, the French Revolution broke out, and his mental health seriously deteriorated from 1788. In 1800, the Act of Union merged the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland. The United Kingdom during this time also had to face the ambitions of Napoleon, who desired to conquer the whole of Europe. Admiral Nelson's naval victory at Traflagar in 1805, along with Wellington's decisive victory at Waterloo, saved the UK and further reinforced its international position. The 19th century would be dominated by the British Empire, spreading on all five continents, from Canada and the Caribbean to Australia and New Zealand, via Africa, India and South-East Asia. History of the United Kingdom: 19 Century In 1837, then king William IV died of liver disease and the throne passed to the next in line, his 18-year old niece Victoria (1819-1901), although she did not inherit the Kingdom of Hanover, where the Salic Law forbid women to rule. Victoria didn't expect to become queen, and being unmarried and inexperienced in politics she had to rely on her Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne (1779-1848). She finally got married to her first cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1819-1861), and both were respectively niece and nephew of the first King of the Belgians, Leopold I (of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha). Britain asserted its domination on virtually every part of the globe during the 19 century, resulting in a number of wars, including the Opium Wars (1839-42 & 1856-60) with Qing China and the Boer Wars (1880-81 & 1899-1902) with the Dutch-speaking settlers of South Africa. In 1854, the United Kingdom was brought into the Crimean War (1854-56) on the side of the Ottoman Empire and against Russia. One of the best known figures of that war was Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), who fought for the improvement of women's conditions and pioneered modern nursing. The latter years of Victoria's reign were dominated by two influential Prime Ministers, Benjamin Disraeli (1808-1881) and his rival William Ewart Gladstone, a liberal, was often at odds with both Victoria and Disraeli. However, the strong party support for Gladstone kept him in power for a total of 14 years between 1868 and 1894. He is credited with legalizing trade unions, and advocating for both universal education and suffrage. Queen Victoria was to have the longest reign of any British monarch (64 years), but also the most glorious, as she ruled over 40% of the globe and a quarter of the world's population. History of the United Kingdom: 20 Century (Two World Wars) Victoria's numerous children married into many different European Royal families, The alliances between these related monarchs escalated into the Great War -WWI-from 1914-1918. It began when Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in Sarajevo, and Austria declared war on Serbia, which in turn was allied to France, Russia and the UK. The First World War left over 9 million dead (including nearly 1 million Britons) throughout Europe, and financially ruined most of the countries involved. The monarchies in Germany, Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire all fell, and the map of central and Eastern Europe was completely redesigned. After World War I, the Labor Party was created in Britain. The General Strike of 1926 and the worsening economy led to radical political changes, including one in which women were finally granted the same universal suffrage as men in 1928. In 1936, Edward VIII (1894-1972) succeeded to the throne, but abdicated the same year to marry Wallis Simpson, a twice divorced American woman. His brother then unexpectedly became George VI (1895-1952) after the scandal. Nazi Germany was becoming more menacing as Hitler grew more powerful and aggressive. Finally, Britain and France were forced to declare war on Germany after the invasion of Poland in September 1939, marking the beginning of World War II. The popular and charismatic Winston Churchill (1874-1965) became the war-time Prime Minister in 1940 and his speeches encouraged the British to fight off the attempted German invasion. In one of his most patriotic speeches before the Battle of Britain (1940), Churchill address the British people with "We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." And indeed, Britain did not surrender. Following World War II, the United Kingdom was bankrupt and in ruins. The British Empire was dismantled little by little, first granting independence to India and Pakistan in 1947, then to the other Asian, African and Caribbean colonies in the 1950's and 60's. Most of these ex-colonies formed the British Commonwealth, now known as the Commonwealth of Nations, 53 states are now members of the Commonwealth, accounting for 1.8 billion people (about 30% of the global population) and about 25% of the world's land area. In 1952, the current queen of England, Elizabeth II, ascended to the throne at the age of 26. The 1960s saw the dawn of pop and rock music, with bands like the Beatles, Pink Floyd, and the Rolling Stones rising to prominence, and the Hippie subculture developing. The 1970's brought the oil crisis and the collapse of British industry. Conservative Prime minister Margaret Thatcher (b. 1925) was elected in 1979 and served until 1990. Among other accomplishments, she privatized the railways and shut down inefficient factories, but she also increased the gap between the rich and the poor by scaling back social security. Her methods were so harsh that she was nicknamed the "Iron Lady." Thatcher was succeeded in her party by the unpopular John Major, but in 1997, the "New Labor" party came back to power with the appointment of Tony Blair (b. 1953). Blair's liberal policies and unwavering support for neo-conservative US President George W. Bush (especially regarding the invasion of Iraq in 2003) disappointed many Leftists, who really saw in Blair but a Rightist in disguise. Regardless, Blair has impressed many dissenters with his intelligence and remarkable skills as an orator and negotiator. Today, the English economy relies heavily on services and, like the rest of the world, is in the process of beginning to rebuild after the global economic recession of 2008. The main industries in the country are travel, education, prestigious automobiles and tourism.