



Otázka: Great Britain in the 16th and 17th Century

Jazyk: Angličtina

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In 1509, Henry VIII became the king of England. Henry is best known for his six marriages, and, in particular, his efforts to have his first marriage (to Catherine of Aragon) annulled. Henry cited old church documents that allowed him to proclaim himself the head of the church and placed the pope and the rest of the hierarchy of the church (priests, cardinals, etc.) under his authority. This move caused the pope to excommunicate Henry, leaving Henry as the sole power to run the church in England, thus creating the Anglican Church in 1534.

The only child Henry had with Catherine and who survived past childhood is his daughter Mary, who later became the Queen regnant of England and Ireland. Henry then married Anne Boleyn, who miscarried a son she was expecting with the king but did give birth to their daughter Elizabeth, who we know as Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen. Anne Boleyn was later accused of adultery and executed. His third wife Jane Seymour did, however, give Henry a son. Their son, Edward VI, later became the king of England and Ireland, but never reached adulthood during his reign and died in 1553. Jane Seymour died short after the birth of Prince Edward and Henry got married twice (and ended the marriage with both of the women) before marrying his last wife, Catherine Parr. Parr helped reconcile Henry with his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. In 1543, the Third Succession Act put them back in the line of succession after Edward.

Upon Henry's death in 1547, he was succeeded by his son Edward VI. Since Edward was then only nine years old, he could not rule directly. Instead, Henry's will designated 16 executors to serve on a council of regency until Edward reached 18. He never did, though. After Edward's death, the throne belonged to Mary I, also known as Mary the Tudor, who was the daughter of

Catherine of Aragon. Mary is remembered for briefly re-making England a Roman Catholic country. Mary had almost 300 disagreeing religious people burned at the stake. Due to this, many called her „Bloody Mary“. Because she didn't have any children, she was succeeded by her younger sister Elizabeth in 1558.

Elizabeth was the last of the Tudor dynasty of monarchs. Elizabeth returned the nation to the Protestant faith made by her father. The years of Elizabeth's reign had many artistic achievements. William Shakespeare, for one, was an English playwright, poet, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is often called England's national poet. Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. Until about 1608, he wrote mainly tragedies, among them Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. Most of Shakespeare's greatest post-1599 plays were written for the Globe Theater, which was built in 1598. Elizabeth enjoyed the theater, patronized it, and attended some of Shakespeare's plays as well.

During her reign, many men sought adventure abroad. Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh and other of her "sea dogs" looted Spanish ships. They also sailed to the Americas. In 1580, Drake became the first Englishman to sail around the world. The expeditions of these men prepared England for an age of discovery and international trade and owning other parts of the world. In 1600, Elizabeth herself established a trading company known as the East India Company that became an important tool of the British Empire. Elizabeth never married, and she had no children. She died in 1603.

The Protestant King of Scotland James VI became King of England. He was the son of her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, who was forced to abdicate and executed for supposedly plotting against Elizabeth. James was the first monarch to be called the king of Great Britain and was the first monarch of England from the House of Stuart. By being king of both England and Scotland, he created a personal union. James was a target of the Gunpowder Plot. A group of Catholics planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5 November 1605 during a ceremony while James was in the building. The plot was stopped when a member of the group, Guy Fawkes, was found in a basement with barrels of gunpowder. During James' reign, in 1607, Jamestown was founded in the Virginia Colony and was the first permanent English colony in the Americas.

When it comes to America, I also have to mention the Pilgrims or the Pilgrim Fathers, who were Puritans who fled from England to the Netherlands for holding different beliefs than most Puritans (English protestants in the 16th and 17th century who sought to purify the English Church from Roman Catholic practices). In September of 1620, Pilgrims sailed their ship Mayflower to the new world and established their Plymouth Colony there. The Pilgrims' story became a central theme in the history and culture of the United States.

After James died, his son Charles tried to rule in the same way as James, but caused the English Civil War in 1642. At the end of the second part of the war (out of three parts in total) in 1649, Charles was executed. In the civil war, the Parliamentarians, the Parliament's supporters, decided that the country did not need a king. They fought against the Royalist and won. As a result, the three kingdoms spent 11 years without a king. For most of this time, they were run by Oliver Cromwell, a former Parliamentarian general. After the wars ended, Cromwell disbanded the Rump Parliament and took over the country. He chose to be „Lord Protector“ rather than King, because he did not think the country needed another king. His government was called „the Protectorate“ or „the Commonwealth“. After Cromwell's death, Parliament was reelected and the king, Charles II, who was the son of Charles I, returned, this act is known as the English Restoration, which began in the year 1660. However, kings were never as powerful as they had been before the war. In 1688 the Glorious Revolution took place in England. This term covers events leading to the deposition of the English and Irish king James II and VII, and replacement by his daughter Mary II, and her Dutch husband, William III of Orange.