



Otázka: History of Great Britain

Jazyk: Angličtina

Přidal(a): klimka

The British Isles have been inhabited since the prehistoric times. It is believed that **Stone Age** man migrated to Britain across the land bridge that then joined Britain to the rest of Europe. The rising water levels cut Britain off from Europe and left these peoples to develop separately.

Some neolithic monuments can still be seen there – the most famous is Stonehenge (-nobody knows what it was built for, perhaps a Druid temple or an astronomical calculator or a calendar.) – it is dated to 2500BC

The next inhabitants of the British Isles were **Celts** – they arrived from Europe about 450 BC and lived there in the Bronze and the Iron Age. They built fortresses and were good artists. The Celtic languages still survive in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. (Gaelic, Welsh – languages)

The Romans visited the country in 55 BC (Julius Caesar), but invaded it in 43 AD (Emperor Claudius) – the land became Roman province- they named it Britannia. The Romans never conquered the northern parts, they built the Hadrian's wall to protect themselves from the Picts (rebelious tribes in Scotland), they built roads, bridges, too. In the 5th century the Romans left Britain. (They needed to protect Rome) Many towns in England cover Latin names in their names – Winchester – from Latin castra – means camp) The Romans also founded London – Londinium in that time. (the revolt of the Queen Boudica (– Boadicea) at 61 AD- she was defeated and killed herself)

When in the 5th century AD the Romans left Britain, **Angles, Saxons a Jutes** – Germanic tribes- came from Europe and settled there (the Angles in the east, Saxons in the southeast) At this time the Arthurian legend was born – The Celtic leader – king Arthur defeated the invaders (Angles and Saxons) – this theme is known from the books or films (The Round table at Camelot, knights searching for the Holy Grail, sword Excalibur, Merlin – the magician, lady Guinevere, sir Lancelot) We can again see their languages in the names of the towns or regions – Essex. Sussex – east Saxons, south Saxons, Engla-land – England etc.(today we call their language- Old English)

These people were barbarians -Christianity was only in Ireland at that time, they converted to Christianity in the 7th century. They formed several kingdoms(3in the end) and most of them were farmers. The invasion of the **Vikings (Danes)** from Scandinavia came next. The Vikings (Danes) were defeated by **Alfred the Great** (849-899) – the king of Wessex, who unified all the kingdoms against the enemy. Alfred was a remarkable man – he encouraged the education, culture, writing the chronicles, translating Latin books ... more and more attacks after his death brought England to be the a part of the empire of Denmark (1066)

The last invasion to Britain happen in **1066** by **the Normans(** – they were in fact former Vikings, who came to France) – the Norman duke **William (the Conqueror)** invaded England, he landed with 12,000 men and defeated King Harold in the **battle of Hastings** (the children in England learn that he was the last foreign enemy who entered English soil).

William was crowned in Westminster, he built a fort – The Tower of London. He confiscated the estates(money, houses, land...) from English nobility and distributed it among his followers, he established a strong central government. The French language spread – that is why many English words have their French synonyms (e.g. pig- pork) The Normans built churches, cathedrales, castles and monasteries – the centres of education and knowledge). Feudalism starts.

12th century – the reign of the Kings from the House of Plantagenet -known from the stories of **Robin Hood** – king **Richard the Lion Hearted** – who spent most of the time fighting against Moslems in Holy Land or against French in France and his brother **John (Lackland)** –

he was less popular than Richard. He wanted more and more money to defeat his French possessions, but in 1204 he lost Normandy. There appeared a conflict between the barons and the king – which resulted in writing of a contract called **Magna Carta** (now in Salisbury Cathedral) – it protected the privileges for the nobility and guarantee of rights and the rule of law, it limited power of the king, too. It is regarded as the beginning of English democracy and the Parliament – House of Commons (former Great Council)

14th century – the beginning of English nationalism – 1301 England and Wales united. (no Welsh flag – red dragon on the white-green field in the Union Jack). Invasion to Scotland – king Edward I., but Scotland stayed independent

1337-1450 Hundred Years' War – between England and France – about who should rule in France) – Joan the Arc- she helped the French to win, England lost almost everything in the continent, except a small part in Calais

Moreover there was the first epidemic of **Black death** – plague (1348 – one third of the people were killed by this disease)

Peasants revolt against paying taxes started in 1381, the revolt failed because the leader was killed.

1455-1485 In fact the civil war – the **War of Roses** – The House of **York**(red rose) against the House of **Lancaster** (white rose in emblem) – they both wanted the throne and to control the country. The war ended when Henry Tudor (Lancaster) defeated Richard III. (York) and married Elizabeth (of York) – the new Tudor dynasty appeared. When the Tudor age started, the middle ages nearly ended.

The Tudor Age 1485-1603

Town manufactures were developing, new invention of the gunpowder – new way of guns and fighting



Literature is written, but there are wars, civil wars, too.

The best known Tudor monarch - **Henry VIII - and his 6 wives** - he wanted a son, but had only daughters at first (some of the wives were executed, some died and some he divorced) - divorcing led to a controversy with the Pope - Henry was excommunicated from the Catholic church - Henry made himself the head of a new type of religion called the Church of England - protestant - it is different from the Catholic church)

Henry loved hunting and music, but he was cruel. After his death there all his 3 children ruled Edward (died young) - his wife 9day Queen Jane Grey,

Mary I - violent persecution of the protestants- Bloody Mary(she dragged the country to war and lost Calais - 1558).

Elizabeth I. (lived 1533-1603, ruled from 1558)

She was respected for her education and intelligence. During her reign England became very rich and the most powerful seafaring power (colonies). She used policy of compromise in problems of religion. Unfortunately - Ireland became an enemy for England - because of suppressed rebellion.

Culture - the most famous playwright - Shakespeare lived in this time.

Elizabeth never married, she didn't have any children (offsprings) - Virgin Queen

SLOVÍČKA - VOCABULARY