

Goodbye Romans



Despite the increase in attacks on Britain from the Picts, Scots and Saxons, by around 410AD the last of the Romans had left Britain to go and defend their home territory as they were under increasing threat from external invaders. This meant Britain was left to its own devices for the first time in about 400 years of protection under Roman rule, the British were quite unprepared for fighting!



The Scots

The Gaelic speaking Scotti who came from Ireland were descendants of the Picts who had earlier invaded Ireland, around 200AD. Historians believe that these Irish Scots invaded and claimed land in Scotland in the 4th and 5th centuries.

- The Scots divided the land in Scotland into 4 separate kingdoms which were named Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia.
- The Picts and the Scots were a constant threat to the Britons and it was even harder to fight them off without support from the Romans. They were described as 'foul' and with 'a lust for blood' by a historian from the time, named Gildas.
- They are said to have streamed over Hadrian's Wall killing everyone in their way.



Vortigern

The British King Vortigern was left in charge after the Roman armies left but he faced great difficulty organising troops to hold back the Picts and Scots who were very powerful and superb fighters. He worried they would take over in Britain.

In a bid to retain control and keep the Picts at bay, it is believed that Vortigern asked two brothers called Hengest and Horsa from Jutland (in modern day Denmark) to come and fight for him and keep the Picts and Scots out.



Hengest and Horsa

Hengest and Horsa were glad to oblige and the Picts and Scots were successfully held back. However the men liked what they found in Britain and decided that they wanted to stay and take land for themselves as it was rich and plentiful and the Britons could be easily defeated. They brought more warriors and over time the invaders began to settle around Britain pushing the Brits further and further out!



The Anglo-Saxons

The brothers and their warriors weren't the only ones who had their sights set on colonising Britain. Other Germanic tribes had also been invading Britain for some time, and without Roman protection they proved to be a formidable force against the Brits.

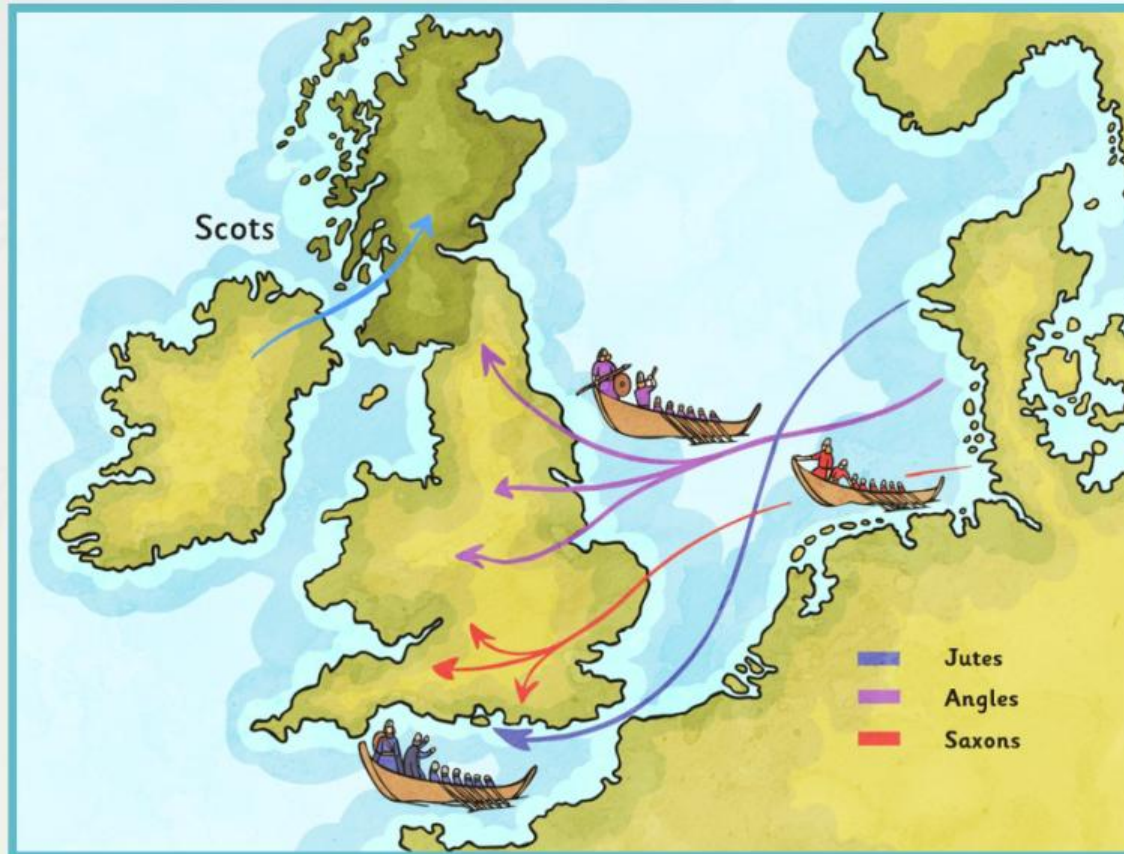
- These invaders are known to us as The Anglo-Saxons because the two biggest invading tribes were the Angles and the Saxons.
- Other invaders were the Jutes, Franks and Frisians. They came from the modern places of Germany, Holland and Denmark.



An Influx of Invaders



Look at this map.



Can you work out:

1. Where the invading troops came from?
2. What they were called?
3. Whereabouts in Britain did they settle?
4. Why did they not manage to take control?

Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms

The British fought hard against the Anglo-Saxons but by about 600AD they had either been forced to escape or had been taken as slaves.

Those who escaped retreated mainly to Wales and Cornwall. The rest of Britain divided into seven kingdoms:

1. Northumbria
2. Essex
3. Wessex
4. Sussex
5. Mercia
6. Kent
7. East Anglia

