



THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN

LECTURE 2

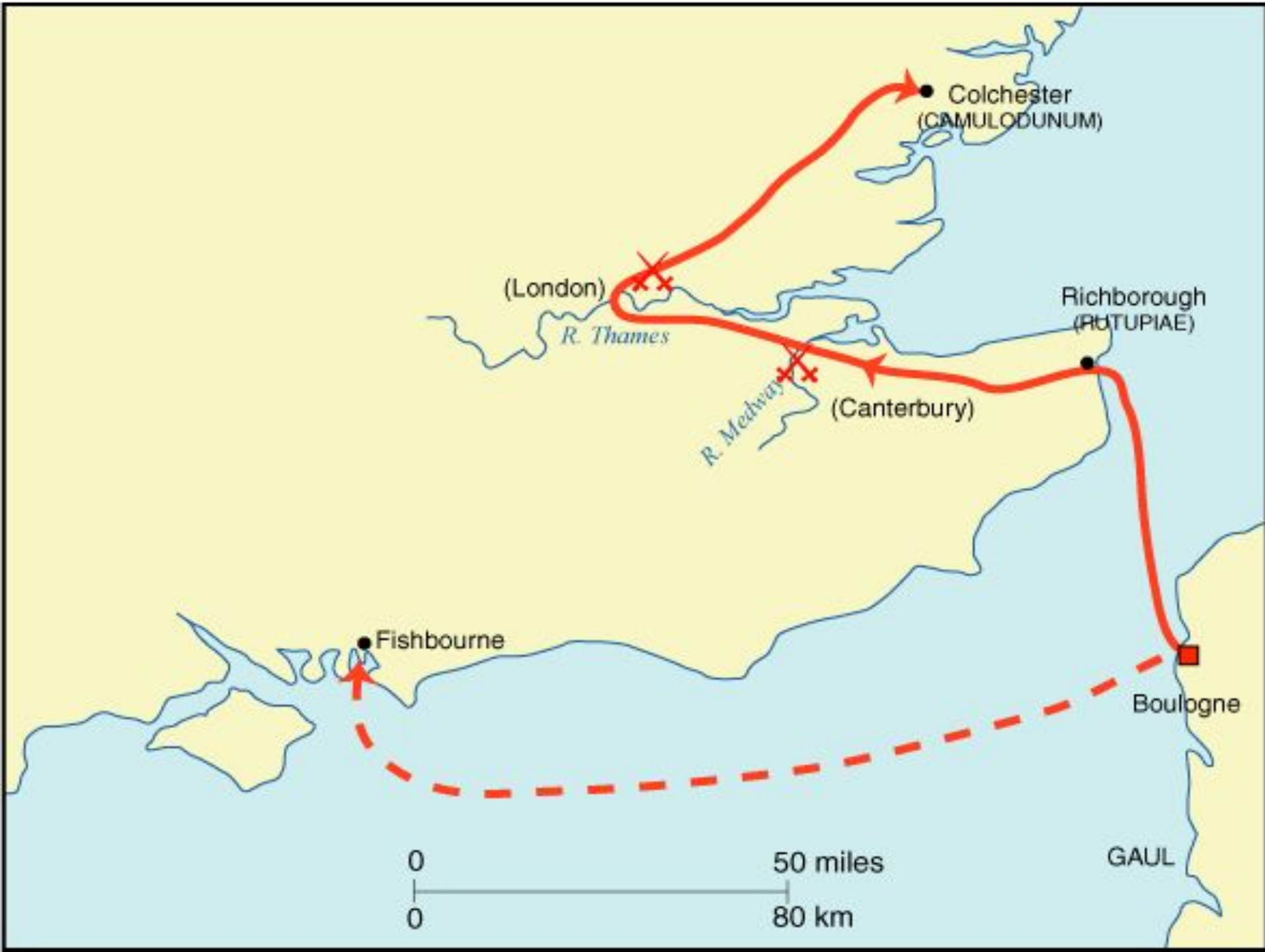
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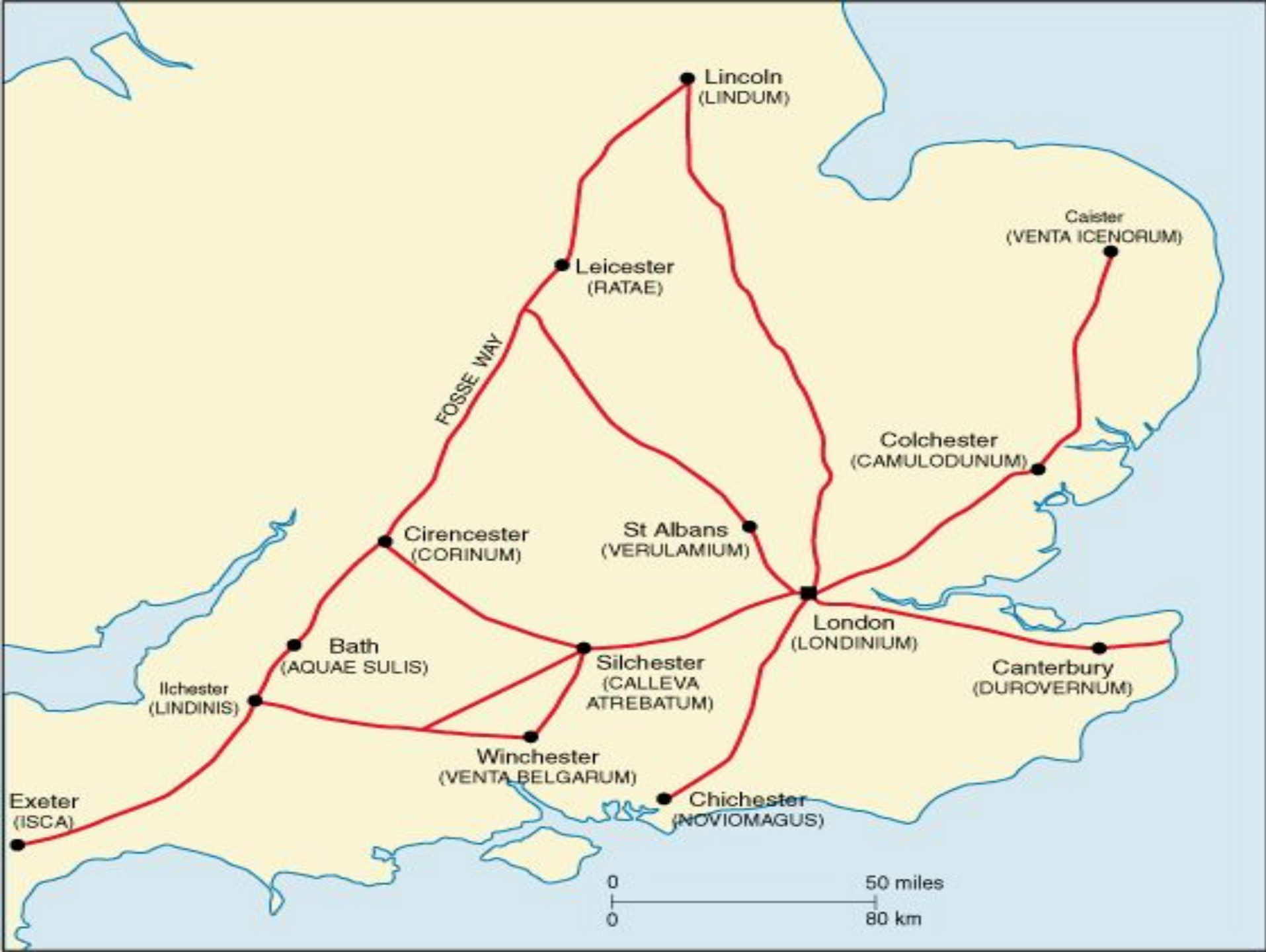
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<http://www.iadb.co.uk/romans/main.php?P=4>







THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN

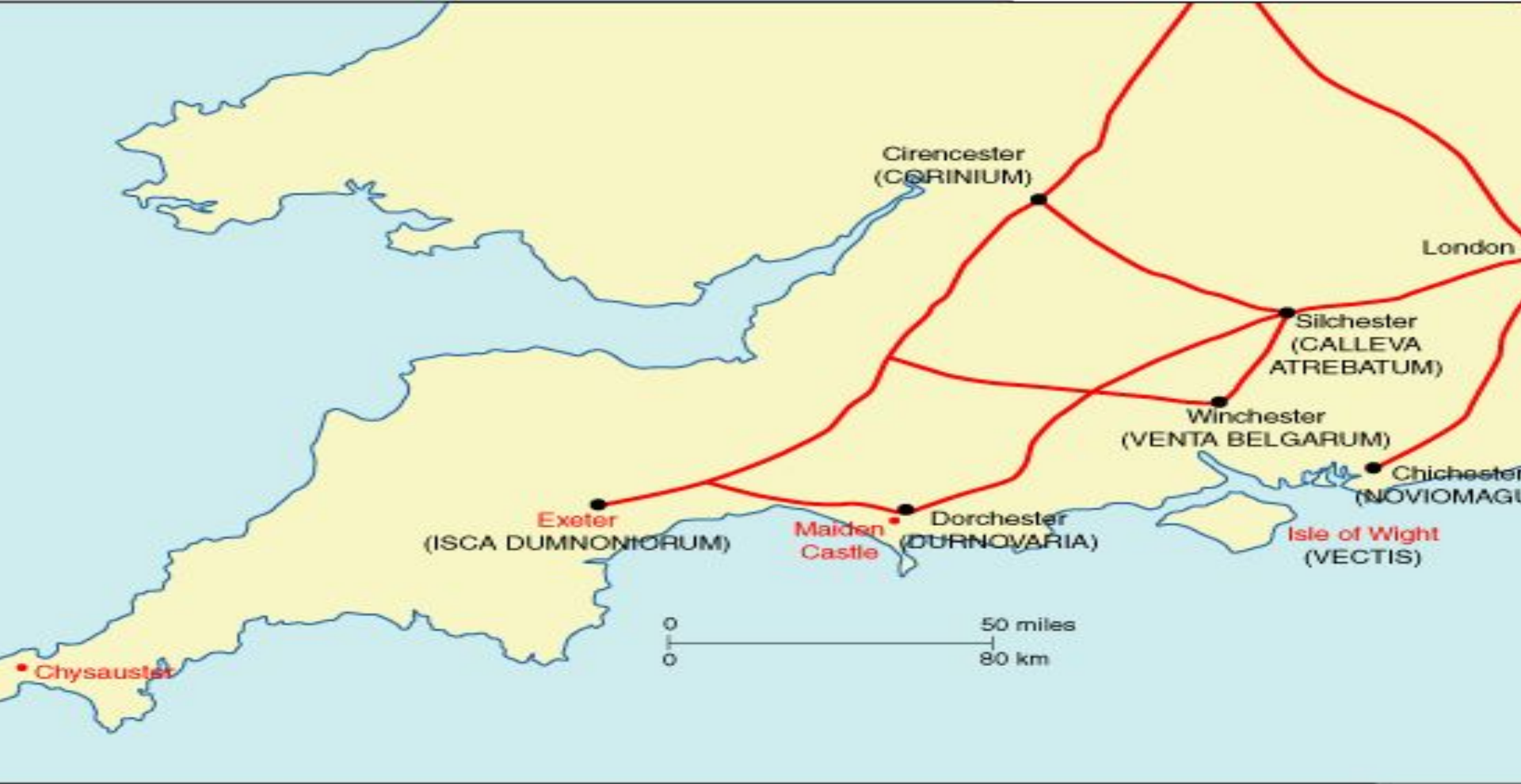


- **Julius Caesar first came to Britain in 55 BC, but Roman army occupied Britain almost a century later.**
- **Julius Caesar carried out two expeditions in 55 and 54 BC, neither of which led to immediate Roman settlement.**

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- **Almost a century later in 43 AD Emperor Claudius sent his legions over the sea to occupy Britain.**



Map of the west of England in the Roman conquest period in the years 43 - 55.

The Second Legion Augusta conquered the west of England under the command of a general named Vespasian who would later become an emperor.



The Iron Age hill fort of Maiden Castle (Dorset)

Vespasian met strong resistance from the people of Dorset, known as the Durotriges, who did not wish to be conquered by the Romans. The Durotriges lived in hill forts like Maiden Castle near Dorchester. Maiden Castle was surrounded by massive banks and ditches and the entrances were strongly fortified. After a siege the Romans broke down the gates and slaughtered the people inside.



Reconstruction illustration of the Roman legionary fortress at Exeter.

In about 55, 12 years after the invasion, the Romans built a fortress at Exeter which they called Isca. The fortress was on the east bank of the River Exe overlooking an important crossing point.

From Exeter the Romans could control the local British tribe known as the Dumnonii who lived in the south-west of England. One of their villages has been found at Chysauster in Cornwall.

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- **The Roman occupation lasted for over 350 years.**
- **The Romans saw their mission of civilizing the country.**
- **There was a resistance in Wales, East Anglia. Wales, Scotland and Ireland remained unconquered areas preserving Celtic culture and traditions.**





Richborough Roman fort (Kent)

For about forty years after the Roman invasion Richborough was a supply depot for the army. In about the year 85, after the battle of Mons Graupius in the Highlands of Scotland, it is thought that the Romans built a huge triumphal arch about 25 metres high at Richborough to commemorate the conquest of Britannia.



Richborough Roman fort (Kent)

Richborough is a good example of a place which was occupied by the Romans for the whole of the 360 or so years in which Britain was part of the empire. In the 3rd century the Romans built a new fort with massive stone walls.

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- **The Romans had invaded because the Celts of Britain were working with the Celts of Gaul (France) against them.**
- **The British Celts were giving them food, and allowing them to hide in Britain.**
- **There was another reason. The Celts used cattle their ploughs and this meant that richer and heavier land could be farmed.**
- **Under the Celts Britain had become an important food producer.**
- **It exported corn, animals to the European countries.**




THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN

- **The Romans brought the skills of reading and writing to Britain.**
- **While the Celtic peasantry remained illiterate and only Celtic speaking with ease, a number of town dwellers spoke Latin and Greek with ease, and the richer landowners in the country used almost Latin.**



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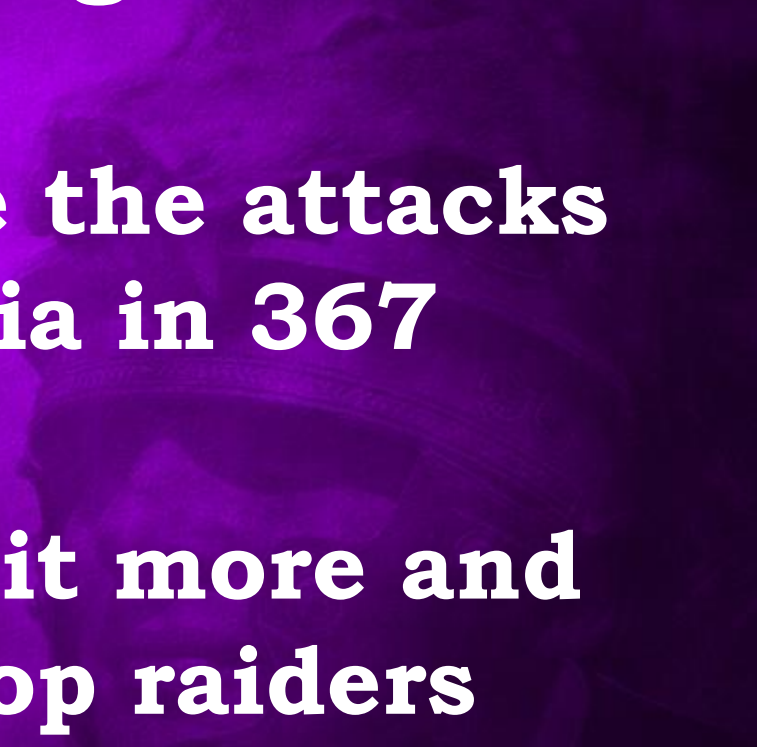
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- A Roman helmet, likely a galea, is shown in the top left corner. It is a dark, metallic helmet with a prominent crest and a face mask with a grid pattern.
- **The Romans could not conquer “Caledonia”, as they called Scotland, although they spent over a century trying to do so.**
 - **At last they built a strong wall along the northern border, named after Emperor Hadrian who planned it.**
 - **It marked the border between the two later countries, England and Scotland.**
 - **When there was no war the Wall turned into an improvised market place.**



Map of Roman Wales

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- **Roman's control came to an end as the empire began to collapse.**
- **The first signs were the attacks by Celts of Caledonia in 367 AD.**
- **The Romans found it more and more difficult to stop raiders from crossing Hadrian's wall.**





Hadrian's wall

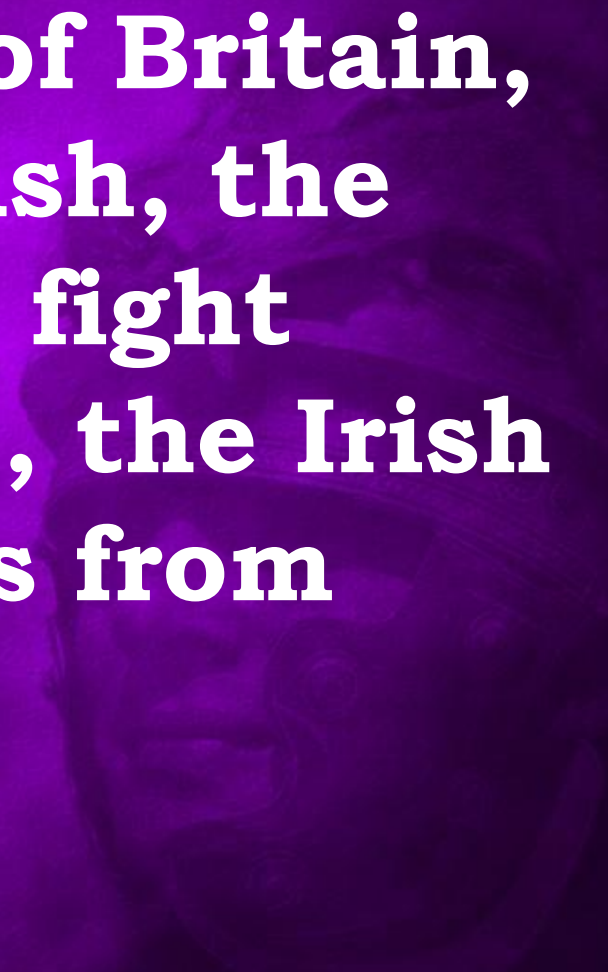


Hadrian's Wall was built of stone, mainly sandstone, quarried locally. The stones were held together with stiff clay or good quality mortar.

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- **In 409 AD Rome pulled its last soldiers out of Britain, the Romano-British, the Celts were left to fight against the Scots, the Irish and Saxon raiders from Germany.**




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• Roman Life

- **The most obvious characteristic of Roman Britain was its towns, which were the basis of Roman administration and civilization.**
- **Many grew out of Celtic settlements, military camps or market centers.**
- **At first these towns had no walls.**
- **Then, probably from the end of the second century to the end of the third century AD, almost every town was given walls.**
- **At first many of these were no more than earthworks, but by 300 AD all towns had thick stone walls.**

THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN

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- **The Romans left about 20 large towns of 5,000 inhabitants, and almost one hundred smaller ones.**
 - **Many of these towns were at first army camps, and the Latin word for camp, *castra*, has remained part of many town names to this day (with the ending chester, caster or cester): Doncaster, Winchester, Chester, Lancaster and many others besides.**

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- **These towns were built with stone as well as wood, and had planned streets that crossed at right angles, markets and shops.**
- **The streets had a drainage system.**
- **Fresh water was piped to many buildings.**
- **Some buildings had central heating.**
- **They were connected by roads.**



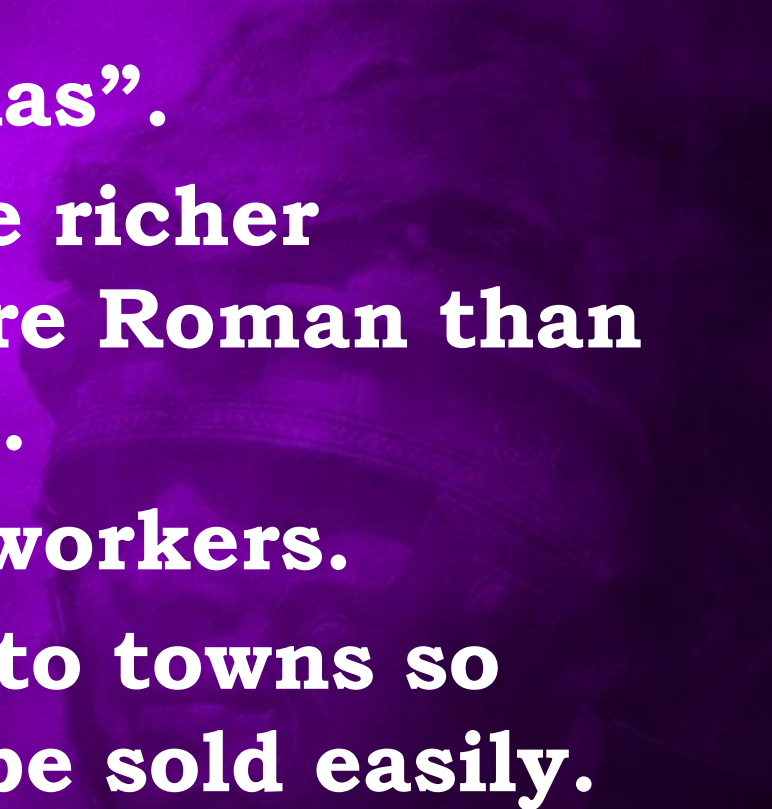
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- **These roads continued to be used long after the Romans left, and became the main roads of modern Britain.**
- **Six of these Roman roads met in London, a capital city.**
- **London was twice as size as Paris, and possibly the most important trading center of northern Europe.**



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- **The growth of large farms was outside the towns.**
- **They were called “villas”.**
- **These belonged to the richer Britons who were more Roman than Celt in their manners.**
- **Each villa had many workers.**
- **The villas were close to towns so that the crops could be sold easily.**



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- **Public and private dwellings were decorated in imitation of the Roman style.**
- **Sculpture and wall painting were both novelties in Roman Britain.**
- **Statues and busts in bronze or marble were imported from Mediterranean workshops.**
- **Mosaic floors found in towns and villas were at first laid by imported craftsmen.**



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- **There was a growing difference between the rich and those who did the actual work on the land.**
- **In some ways life in Roman Britain seems very civilized.**
- **Half the entire population died between the ages of 20 or 40, while 15 per cent died before reaching the age of 20.**



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- It is difficult to be sure how many people were living in Britain when the Romans left.
- Probably it was as many as 5 million, partly because of the peace and the increased economic life, which the Romans had brought to the country.



THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN



- **The new wave of invaders changed all that.**

The Saxon invasion



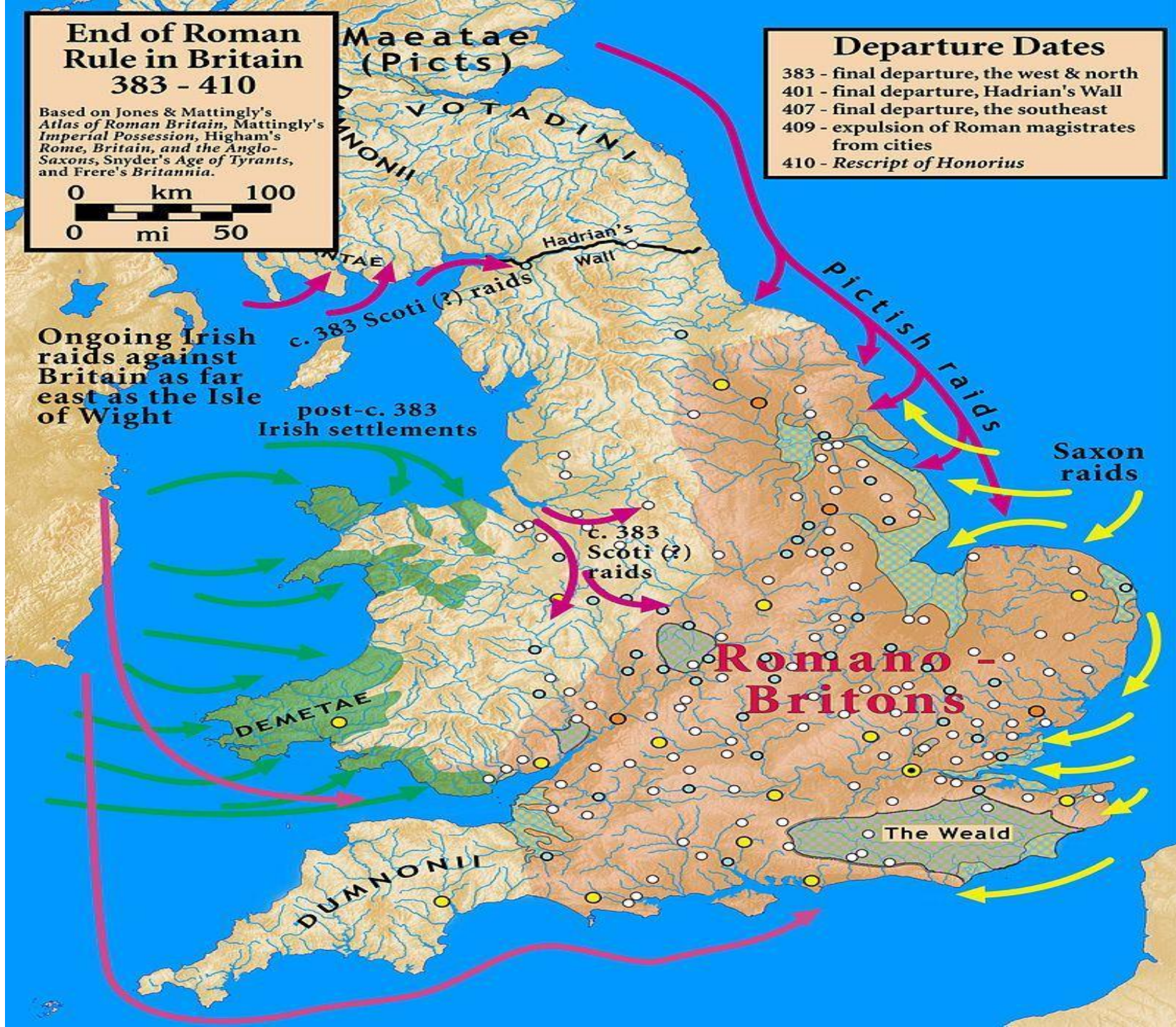
End of Roman Rule in Britain 383 - 410

Based on Jones & Mattingly's *Atlas of Roman Britain*, Mattingly's *Imperial Possession*, Higham's *Rome, Britain, and the Anglo-Saxons*, Snyder's *Age of Tyrants*, and Frere's *Britannia*.



Departure Dates

- 383 - final departure, the west & north
- 401 - final departure, Hadrian's Wall
- 407 - final departure, the southeast
- 409 - expulsion of Roman magistrates from cities
- 410 - *Rescript of Honorius*



Ongoing Irish raids against Britain as far east as the Isle of Wight

post-c. 383 Irish settlements

c. 383 Scoti (?) raids

Pictish raids

Saxon raids

Romano-Britons

The Weald

DEMETAE

DUMNONII

Maeatae (Picts)

VOTADINI
DUMNONII

Hadrian's Wall

- **The wealth of Britain by the fourth century, the result of its mild climate and centuries of peace, was a temptation to the greedy.**
- **At first the Germanic tribes only raided Britain, but after AD 430 they began to settle.**

- **The invaders came from three powerful Germanic tribes, the Saxons, Angles and Jutes.**
- **The Jutes settled mainly in Kent and along the south coast, and were soon considered no different from the Angles and Saxons.**

- **The Angles settled in the east, and also in the north Midlands, while the Saxons settled between the Jutes and the Angles.**

- **The Anglo-Saxon migrations gave the larger part of Britain its new name, England, "the land of the Angles".**

- The strength of Anglo-Saxon culture is obvious even today.
- Days of the week were named after Germanic gods: Tig (Tuesday), Wodin (Wednesday) etc.
- New place-names appeared on the map.
- The ending *-ing* meant folk or family, thus "Reading" is the place of the family of Rada.



Anglo-Saxon belt fittings



Frankish glass 'claw beaker' 5th-6th century, excavated in Kent



A type of Anglo-Saxon building called a Grubenhaus

- The Anglo-Saxons established a number of kingdoms:

Essex (East Saxons),

Sussex (South Saxons),

Wessex (West Saxons).

- King Offa of Mercia (757-96) was powerful enough to employ thousands of men to build a huge dyke, or earth wall.
- The length of the Welsh border to keep out the troublesome Celts.
- But although he was the most powerful king of his time, he did not control all of England.

Government and society

- The Saxons created institutions which made the English state strong for the next 500 years.
- One of these institutions was the King's Council, called the *Witan*.
- By the tenth century the Witan was a formal body, issuing laws and charters.
- It was not at all democratic, and the king could decide to ignore the Witan's advice.
- But he knew that it might be dangerous to do so.
- For the Witan's authority was based on its right to choose kings, and to agree the use of the king's laws.
- Without its support the king's own authority was in danger.
- The Witan established system which remained an important part of the king's method of government.
- Even today, the king or queen has a *Privy Council*, a group of advisers on the affairs of state.



Anglo-Saxon king with his witan.

- The Saxons divided the land into new administrative areas, based on shires, or counties.
- In 1974 the counties were reorganized.
- Over each shire was appointed a shire *reeve*, the kind's local administrator. In time his name became shortened to "sheriff".

- Anglo-Saxon technology changed the shape of English agriculture.
- The Anglo-Saxons introduced a far heavier plough.
- This heavier plough led to changes in land ownership and organisation.
- In order to make the best use of village land, it was divided into two or three very large fields.
- These were then divided again into long thin strips. Each family had a number of strips in each of these fields, amounting probably to a family "holding" of twenty or so acres.

- One of these fields would be used for planting spring crops, and another for autumn crops.
- The third area would be left to rest for a year, and with the other areas after harvest, would be used as common land for animals to feed on.
- This Anglo-Saxon pattern was the basis of English agriculture for a thousand years, until the eighteenth century.

- In each district was a "manor" or large house.
- This was a simple building where local villagers came to pay taxes, where justice was administered.
- The lord of the manor had to organise all this, and make sure village land was properly shared.

- At first the lords, or *aldermen*, were simply local officials.
- But by the beginning of the eleventh century they were warlords, and were often called by a new Danish name, *earl*.
- It was the beginning of a class system, made up of king, lords, soldiers and workers on the land.
- One other important class developed during the Saxon period, the men of learning.
- These came from the Christian Church.



Christianity

- We cannot know how or when Christianity first reached Britain, but it was certainly well before Christianity was accepted by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century AD.
- In 597 Pope Gregory the Great sent a monk, Augustine, to re-establish Christianity in England.
- He went to Canterbury, the capital of the king of Kent.
- Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury in 601.
- Several ruling families in England accepted Christianity.
- But Augustine and his group of monks made little progress with the ordinary people.

- It was the Celtic Church which brought Christianity to the ordinary *people of Britain*.
- *The* Celtic bishops went out from their monasteries of Wales, Ireland and Scotland, walking from village to village teaching Christianity.
- The bishops from the Roman Church lived at the courts of the kings, which they made centers of Church power across England.
- The two Christian Churches, Celtic and Roman, could hardly have been more different in character.
- One was most interested in the hearts of ordinary people, the other was interested in authority and organisation.
- The competition between the Celtic and Roman Churches reached a crisis because they disagreed over the date of Easter.

- Saxon kings helped the Church to grow, but the Church also increased the power of kings. The value of Church approval was all the greater because of the uncertainty of the royal succession.
- The Anglo-Saxon kings also preferred the Roman Church to the Celtic Church for economic reasons.
- Villages and towns grew around the monasteries and increased local trade.

The Vikings

Towards the end of the eighth century new raiders were tempted by Britain's wealth.

These were the Vikings, a word which probably means either "pirates" or "the people of the sea inlets", and they came from Norway and Denmark.

Like the Anglo-Saxons they only raided at first.

They burnt churches and monasteries along the east, north and west coasts of Britain and Ireland.

London was itself raided in 842.

- In 865 the Vikings invaded Britain once it was clear that the quarrelling Anglo-Saxon kingdoms could not keep them out.
- This time they came to conquer and to settle.
- The Vikings quickly accepted Christianity and did not disturb the local population.
- By 875 only King Alfred in the west of Wessex held out against the Vikings, who had already taken most of England.
- After some serious defeats Alfred won a battle in 878, and eight years later he captured London.
- He was strong enough to make a treaty with the Vikings.
- Viking rule was recognised in the east and north of England.
- In the rest of the country Alfred was recognised as king.