

The Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of

# BRITISH HERITAGE

Edited by Alan Isaacs and Jennifer Monk

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## FOREWORD

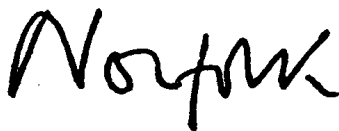
I am delighted to be writing this foreword for the *Cambridge Illustrated Dictionary of British Heritage* because it fills a major gap in the books in our libraries dealing with our unique history. Previous dictionaries have now become out-of-date and few of them combine such a range – ACAS as well as Arundel Castle!

Today it is remarkable that English has become the major world language in diplomacy, trade, scientific research, and historical criticism. This is a result of our history; during the last three centuries we created, partly by design and partly by accident, a global empire through our command of the seas. And when, during my lifetime, we voluntarily gave it independence, the Commonwealth countries were very willing to continue our customs and language.

As is well known, our language is very rich, making it easy for our poets, because we have added the French of the Norman invaders to the language of the Saxons whom they conquered in 1066, and it is generally considered that this language emerged with our great poet Chaucer, who died in 1400. It has been continually enriched since, with words adopted from other countries, including India.

I have often pointed out that, although we are part of Christendom and have taken part in so many of the activities of our European neighbours, such as the Crusades and the Renaissance, our heritage of buildings (castles, palaces, country houses, cathedrals and, indeed, whole towns) has not suffered to the same extent from the destruction that took place across the English Channel owing to the wars and revolutions that have ravaged their lands. Many of our political, legal, educational, and economic institutions too, have survived for many centuries with little change. We can indeed be proud of our continuity, which is well illustrated by the fact that our Queen can prove direct descent from the Saxon King, Cerdic, who died in 534 AD.

I commend this book to all English-speaking peoples now living and their descendants.



The Duke of Norfolk

## PREFACE

The idea for this book came from an American friend resident in London, who protested that he frequently met words and phrases in the media that he could not understand and could not look up in a convenient book. Examples he gave not only included **Privy Purse**, **Black Rod**, and **Earl Marshal** but also **ACAS**, **MI5**, and the **Samaritans**.

Having accepted the need for a book to explain these terms to the foreigner, the next task was to design it so that it would be as interesting and useful to natives as it should be to visitors. The alphabetical format, rather than the thematic, was chosen because it provides the most simple and rapid access to the information. It also gives the most diverse and stimulating juxtaposition of entries for the browser – the eye can wander from the compassion of the **hospice movement** to the adjacent pageantry of the **Household Cavalry**, from the exclusive **peerage** to the mass-market **Penguin Books**, and backwards in time from the **Rolling Stones** to **Roman Britain**. Within the compass of a single page, the casual reader can swing from one extreme of British culture and history to another.

The prime task the editors set themselves was to encourage the contributors to be both accurate and interesting. If they have succeeded it is the contributors who should be praised – if they have failed the blame lies with the editors.

A.I.

J.M.

*Note:* An asterisk before a word in the text of an article indicates that further information can be gained at the entry for the asterisked word.

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# A

**AA (Automobile Association)** The world's largest motoring organization. Founded in 1905 with some 90 members and Sir Stenson Cooke (1874–1942) as its secretary, the Association's initial aim was to protect motorists from the increased use of police traps. (Police-men with stopwatches would hide behind hedges and time the unsuspecting motorists.) Subsequently the Association broadened its services, erecting warning signs at danger spots, village signposts with mileages, gradient and other road signs, and indeed, until the early thirties, providing the only countrywide signposting system. It also pioneered the provision of roadside filling stations. The first AA handbook listing appointed hotels and break-down services was published in 1908, with the now universally recognized "star" ratings for hotels being introduced four years later. In 1910 it amalgamated with the Motor Union (see RAC) and by 1914 its membership had risen to 83,000. In 1986 its membership topped six million. Members benefit from break-down, technical, and insurance services, legal representation and advice, and touring and travel information for the British Isles and abroad. It operates a chain of travel agencies, publishes books, guides, and maps, and campaigns on behalf of motorists at local, national, and international levels. As a founder member of the AIT (International Touring Alliance) it is closely involved in international road traffic and tourism matters.

**ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service)** A government-funded, yet wholly independent, organization set up in 1974 to promote good labour relations, to resolve industrial disputes through conciliation, and to prevent such disputes through the provision of advisory services and codes of practice. The service was the idea of Jack Jones, head of the Transport and General Workers' Union (1969–78) and was formed by the then Secretary of State for Employment, Michael Foot. Since 1974 its negotiators have

handled nearly 500,000 disputes ranging from national stoppages over pay to individual complaints about conditions of employment. In resolving collective disputes ACAS's conciliation procedures have resulted in a success rate of more than 80%.

**accent** The features of a person's pronunciation of English resulting from the interaction of such factors as place of birth, education, and social class of parents. Generally, the most influential factor in determining a person's accent is the language of his peer group as a child; children starting at a new school rapidly acquire features of the peer-group accent in the school, relinquishing earlier speech habits, even those of the parental home. Two people from quite different backgrounds who have attended public schools will probably have very similar accents; whereas two sons of farmworkers from the same village may end up with quite different accents if one stays on the farm and the other moves away at an early age. British English has a standard accent, called \*Received Pronunciation (RP), which is used mainly by the middle class, especially in the south. It has a high social status, being widely regarded as "more correct" than regional accents; it is this accent, therefore, that is taught to foreign learners and is the accent transcribed into the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in the pronunciation guides of standard English dictionaries. However, while local variations of grammar and vocabulary may previously have been regarded as "ignorant" or "wrong" (see dialects), there is a growing tendency to regard a slight regional accent as acceptable and even fashionable. Indeed, there is a view that RP is not to be regarded as more "correct" than any other accent and that it is no more than one of many accents with which English is spoken in the British Isles.

There are two aspects to a person's accent: intonation and the phonetic quality of speech sounds. Each accent has its own set of characteristic "tunes", or intonation patterns, which is the aspect usually first seized on by mimics. It sometimes happens that a "question" intonation in one accent is similar to a "confirming" intonation in another, and this can lead to confusion. Differences between accents are



standardly described in terms of the quality of the vowels and consonants, often with reference to the norm of R.P. Some words are more informative than others about a speaker's local origins. The pronunciations of "face" and "boat" differ considerably from region to region of the British Isles, whereas such words as "kit", "dress", "goose", and "fleece" are pronounced much the same in most accents.

Some broad characteristics of regional accents can be listed. One of the most obvious is the short front vowel heard in "bath" in northern England and Scotland, as opposed to the long back vowel of the southeast and R.P. A characteristically northern vowel sound occurs in such words as "cup", which is the same as that in R.P. "foot". In the south, the -u- is more open in words like "strut" and "cut"; but others, such as "put", are pronounced to rhyme with "foot". This distinction, which cannot be predicted from the spelling, is confusing for northerners and leads to mistakes when they try to adopt this feature of R.P. but apply it too widely. The open -u- in such words as "put" and "butcher" is neither authentic by the standards of the local accent nor correct by the standards of R.P. A similar example is the southwestern English -o-, as in "lot", which is similar to the vowel of R.P. "bath". Londoners and other "grockles" (tourists or outsiders) usually assume erroneously that the southwestern -o- is always pronounced in this way; but words such as "cloth" are pronounced as in R.P. To speak with a correct Devon or Bristol accent, one has to know which word belongs to which set.

Birmingham, lying on the boundaries of northern, southeastern, and southwestern accent areas, has an interesting mixture of vowel qualities. In "start", it uses the southern -a-, but in words with no -r- after the vowel, such as "bath" and "palm", Birmingham has the short northern -a-. In this accent, both the northern and southern -u- may be heard, varying freely in the accent of a single speaker. "Price", rhyming with "choice", is characteristic of a wide area of the West Midlands.

Another major distinguishing feature of accents of English is whether -r- is pronounced when it occurs before a consonant (e.g. start) or at the end of the word (e.g. cure). Scots and

Irish accents are rhotic (that is, -r- in these positions is pronounced), but in England it is heard only in Bristol and the southwest, and in a small area near Manchester. A quite different -r- is heard in Scotland from the vowel-like English consonant; the Scottish -r- is generally quite strongly trilled, the English -r- varies phonetically from accent to accent. In many nonstandard accents of English, -t- between two vowels may be replaced by a glottal stop: "dau'er" for "daughter", "le'er" for "letter". This phenomenon is heard in places as far apart as London (Cockney) and Glasgow. Also, in most nonstandard accents, h- at the beginning of a word is dropped, and -ing at the end of words is pronounced as -in. Ironically, this last is a feature of extreme upper-class pronunciation too ("huntin', shootin', and fishin'"), though not of the middle-class R.P. In Birmingham, by contrast, the -g- is given its full value as an independent speech sound, so that Birmingham "singer" rhymes with "finger". Other speech sounds may be characteristic of a very restricted locality. An example is Bristol's intrusive -l after vowels, so that in this accent "area" is pronounced identically to "aerial". "Bristol" itself was originally called "Bristow". In rural Devon, -oo in words such as "too" is sometimes pronounced like the vowel in French *tu* or German *für*.

The study of pronunciation and differences between accents is made more complex by the increasing mobility of the population, and by people's skill in changing, often subconsciously, from a local to a (more or less) standard accent, depending on the circumstances under which they are speaking, and the class and origin of the people they are addressing.

**Accession Council** A plenary session of the Privy Council that is convened as soon as possible after the death of a king or queen in order to proclaim the new sovereign. It is the successor to the old Anglo-Saxon council, the *witenagemot*. The Accession Council's business is in two parts: the first authorizes the proclamation of a new sovereign; the second, which normally follows immediately, hears the sovereign's declaration in which he or she swears to uphold constitutional government. (When Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the throne in 1952, she was in Kenya and there was a delay

of 48 hours between the first and second parts.) The Accession Council meets at St James's Palace, and those invited to attend include members of the House of Lords, both spiritual and temporal, the Lord Mayor of London, aldermen, and prominent citizens of the City of London, and (for the first time at Elizabeth II's accession) Commonwealth High Commissioners in London. They attend as onlookers, not participants, and only for the first part of the Council. The Privy Counsellors used to take a fresh oath of allegiance to the new sovereign on this occasion and kiss his or her hand, a practice that ceased after 1910. During the Council the sovereign signs two copies of a declaration promising to maintain the Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland – the only signatures necessary on this occasion.

**Act of Parliament** A document, also known as a statute, by which \*Parliament (or, more accurately, the Queen in Parliament) either makes new law or reformulates the existing law. It originates as a \*Bill, which undergoes various stages of consideration by both Houses of Parliament, and becomes an Act on receiving the \*royal assent. Normally, this can be given only after both Houses have passed it, but the Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949 made it sufficient for a Bill to have been passed by the House of Commons alone in certain circumstances. The 1911 Parliament Act was forced through Parliament by a Liberal government under Asquith, after the House of Lords had rejected a finance Bill giving effect to Lloyd George's "People's Budget" of 1909. Under this Act, any primarily financial Bill can, after passing the Commons, be submitted directly for royal assent if not passed unaltered by the Lords within one month; and under that Act as amended in 1949, other Bills rejected or blocked by the Lords may be similarly submitted after a delay of one year. Bills to extend the life of a Parliament are, however, excluded from these provisions.

Acts of Parliament are classified in a variety of ways. For publication by the Queen's printer, they are either public general, local, or personal, according to whether they relate to matters of public interest, to a particular locality such as the area of a local authority, or to a

private individual or estate. Acts that make new law are described as "enacting", while those that restate existing law are either "consolidating" or "codifying" (the former if they merely pull together the existing Acts relating to a particular subject and the latter if they include case law). With reference to duration, they are either permanent or temporary (as for example, the Acts relating to the armed forces, which require annual renewal). An Act begins with a long title, summarizing its aims, which helps the courts with its interpretation; and it ends with a short title by which it is usually known. It comes into force at the beginning of the day on which it received the royal assent unless, as is usually the case, it either specifies a later date or empowers the government to activate it by a commencement order.

Acts of Parliament constitute the most important form of legislation in the UK, but by far the greater volume of written law consists of subordinate legislation (or delegated legislation), i.e. law made by other bodies acting under the authority of Parliament. Parliament has neither the time nor the expertise to grapple with the minutiae of control, and a vast number of orders, regulations, rules, directions, and schemes, are made under powers delegated by statute to ministers, local authorities, the courts, and other officials and bodies. The substantive distinction between the two derives from the sovereignty of Parliament. As a sovereign body, Parliament itself can, in the words of an 18th-century commentator, "do everything but make a woman a man and a man a woman". It can enact any law that it pleases, and the validity of an Act cannot be questioned in the courts. Equally, as a sovereign body Parliament can have no rival, and it follows that subordinate legislation is always open to challenge. All subordinate legislation must be authorized by an Act of Parliament. If it is, it is *intra vires* (within the powers); if it is not, it is *ultra vires* (beyond the powers), and, on an application for judicial review, the courts will declare it null and void.

**Admiral's Cup** A yachting trophy competed for by international three-boat teams in waters to the south and west of Britain. The contest, which is one of the most important

events in the ocean-racing calendar, was initiated in 1957 by Sir Miles Wyatt, then admiral of the Royal Ocean Racing Club, with the purpose of encouraging competition in off-shore sailing events by other countries in addition to the USA and Britain. The competition, which is held biennially, consists of four races, two inshore and two offshore, the best-known being the Fastnet Race, which is held during \*Cowes week in August. In this race the yachts sail from Cowes (Isle of Wight) round the Isles of Scilly (off the coast of Cornwall), up to and round the Fastnet Rock (off the southwest tip of Ireland), and back to Plymouth – a distance of 968 kilometres (605 miles). Disaster struck this race in 1979 when force 11 winds blew up off southwest Ireland almost without warning and caught many yachts unprepared, leading to the deaths of 15 competitors. Amongst the expert sailors who have taken part in British Admiral's Cup teams are the former Prime Minister Edward Heath and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

**Admiralty Court** A court that forms part of the Queen's Bench Division of the \*High Court of Justice and exercises the admiralty jurisdiction vested in that Division in 1970. It is concerned with all manner of marine disputes (e.g. claims relating to collisions at sea, and claims for salvage) and it deals also with questions relating to prize (see prize court). The court has special forms of procedure, the outstanding feature of which is the process by which a person's ship may be "arrested", i.e. impounded by the court, and detained to satisfy any damages for which he is held liable. The judges of the court are \*puisne judges of the Queen's Bench Division nominated by the Lord Chancellor to be Admiralty judges; in suitable cases they may appoint lay specialists (nautical assessors) to help them. In a case involving questions of navigation or seamanship, assessors are always chosen from the elder brethren of \*Trinity House.

**adult education centres** Centres offering a wide range of mainly practical or recreational courses for evening students. \*Local Education Authorities maintain nearly 5000 of these centres, which are generally housed in

schools or buildings used for other purposes during the day.

**advocate** A person (also called "counsel"), belonging to the \*Faculty of Advocates, and thus entitled to practise law in Scotland. Advocates constitute the senior branch of the legal profession in Scotland, \*solicitors or law agents forming the other; the functions of an advocate correspond closely to those of a \*barrister elsewhere in the UK. The right of audience in the courts is shared by advocates with solicitors in the \*sheriff courts and below, but is enjoyed exclusively in the \*Court of Session, the \*High Court of Justiciary, and (for the hearing of Scottish appeals) the \*House of Lords. As with barristers, it is open to successful advocates to become \*Queen's Counsel, and it is from amongst advocates that the majority of judicial appointments in Scotland are made.

In the broader sense an advocate is anyone who pleads the cause of another, and thus includes barristers, solicitors, and even laymen in the case of certain bodies whose procedure is largely informal (e.g. the \*Employment Appeal Tribunal).

**Age Concern** A charity for promoting the welfare of elderly people. Founded in 1940, it currently coordinates the efforts of 1400 local groups, working with over 124,000 volunteers throughout Britain. It has a strong emphasis on community service, and among the benefits it provides are day centres, lunch clubs, visiting schemes, foot care, transport, and bereavement counselling. It has a training department for people working with the elderly and publishes information for professionals and volunteers including the quarterly magazine *New Age*. Its research unit is called upon to advise the government on legislation in matters affecting the elderly, although Age Concern itself is dependent upon voluntary help and contributions rather than official funding. It works closely with two other organizations: the Centre for Policy on Ageing, which provides research and information for policy makers, and Help the Aged, which is mainly active in fundraising.

**agricultural show** An annual exhibition of farming technology, stock, produce, and

rural crafts and pastimes. Such shows are held throughout Britain during the summer months and are an integral part of British country life, appealing to a wide cross-section of people. They vary in size and importance from such national events as the Royal Smithfield Show, the Agricultural Machinery Exhibition at Earl's Court in London, the Royal International Agricultural Show at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire, and the Royal Welsh Show at Llanellwedd in Powys, to regional and county shows, as well as smaller events organized in market towns for the benefit of local areas. For farmers and landowners they serve a social as well as an economic purpose; they include displays of the latest techniques in husbandry, new agricultural equipment, and livestock competitions. For others, agricultural shows have numerous attractions, such as showjumping events, dog shows, and exhibitions of flowers, vegetables, and country produce.

#### Agriculture and Food Research Council

A body created as the Agriculture Research Council under the terms of the Science and Technology Act 1965, to promote and finance research in agriculture and food science. This it achieves both through its own research institutes and by sponsoring projects in universities, colleges, and other organizations. The work of the Council is steered by its three research committees – on animals, food, and plants and soils. The AFRC institutes, such as the Institute of Animal Physiology at Babraham, near Cambridge, and the three food research institutes at Bristol, Norwich, and Reading, study a wide variety of topics concerning the basic biology of farm animals and plants, production systems, and the foods that are derived from them. In addition, a number of other research institutes are funded directly by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food. The current chairman of the AFRC is Lord Selborne.

**Albert Medal** A civilian decoration instituted in 1866 to commemorate the Prince Consort (1819–61). It was designed to reward gallantry in saving life and subsequently could be awarded posthumously. In October 1971 all surviving holders of the Albert Medal

exchanged that decoration for the George Cross. Holders receive a £100 tax-free gratuity per annum.

**Aldeburgh Festival** An annual festival of music and the arts held in the Suffolk coastal town of Aldeburgh. Having spent most of the war in the USA, the composer Benjamin Britten (1913–76) returned to his native Suffolk and settled there with his lifelong friend, the singer Peter Pears (1910–86). In 1948 Britten, Pears, and their friends, including Imogen Holst (the daughter of the composer Gustav Holst), arranged the first of a series of annual festivals of music and the arts in Aldeburgh. From these small beginnings, the Aldeburgh Festival has become a major event in the musical calendar – operas, concerts, and some nonmusical events have been presented there each June for 35 years. Premieres of Britten's own works, including the operas *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960) and *Death in Venice* (1973), were staged at the festival; the former was held in Aldeburgh's small British Legion hall, the latter in the fine concert hall built in the old Maltings at nearby Snape. The Maltings was a complex of riverside industrial buildings that for many years served as the centre of a thriving North Sea trade in barley. The decline of the Maltings Quay with the development of road transport left the buildings in considerable disrepair and in 1966 the festival directors courageously decided to ac-



ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL Sir Peter Pears giving a master class.

quire a lease on the largest brick building. An imaginative conversion was completed in 1967 but the building was gutted by fire on the first night of the 1969 festival. It was, however, rebuilt for the festival the following year.

The church at Orford (some ten kilometres (six miles) from Aldeburgh) is also used during the festival and has been used for premières of several Britten operas, including *Noyes Fludde* (1958) and *Curlew River* (1964).

**alderman** A senior official in local government. In Anglo-Saxon times, *ealdorman*, meaning "elder", was an honorific title applied to high officials, especially to the governor of a \*shire. However, from the late 10th century, after the arrival of the Danes, this position was largely replaced by that of \*earl, and with the passage of time aldermen gradually became civic dignitaries. In 1394 Richard II decreed that they should be elected for life instead of annually; in 1741, under George II, they became \*justices of the peace. Today, the post is only actively maintained in the \*City of London; elsewhere, it is a title conferred on a councillor in recognition of past services. Outside the City the rank was an active one until quite recently. The councillors of each local council elected a number of aldermen, who would share the same duties, but who held office for a longer period. The system was designed to make outside expertise available to councils, and to promote continuity; but it was opposed as undemocratic, and too open to manipulation for political advantage. The office was abolished in England and Wales generally in 1974, and subsequently in Greater London (except the City).

**ale** See beer.

**A Level, GCE** See school-leaving examinations.

**All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club** The most famous lawn \*tennis club in the world, founded in 1869. It adopted its present title in 1882. The first lawn tennis championships were held at the club's courts at \*Wimbledon in southwest London in 1877, partly as a fundraising exercise to pay for the repair of the pony-drawn lawn roller. The All-England Club was the governing body of

the sport in its formative years until the foundation in 1888 of the Lawn Tennis Association. The two bodies now cooperate in the running of the annual championships.

**All Hallows Eve** See Hallowe'en.

**Alliance, the** The electoral alliance formed in 1981 between the \*Liberal Party under David Steel and the newly formed \*Social Democratic Party under Roy Jenkins (now led by David Owen). The two parties have not merged, although there has been some pressure for this from the Liberals. Each party retains its identity, and there is agreement as to which party will fight which constituencies at a general election; there is also sufficient agreement on fundamental policy to enable them to form a united government if they should win. In that event, the leader of the party having the larger number of seats will become Prime Minister, and the other his deputy.

**almshouses** Dwellings built and endowed by private charity for the accommodation of the aged, infirm, and poor. Before the \*Reformation, almshouses (or hospitals, as they were also called) were often attached to monasteries or convents and were places in which food, shelter, and medical aid were offered to the destitute (not necessarily only the elderly). The Hospital of St Cross, near Winchester (founded 1136), is a notable early example. After the Reformation laws were passed to deal with begging and vagrancy among the able-bodied poor, but those genuinely incapable of work were supported by a "poor rate", a tax levied on a parochial basis from those who had work or substantial property; those likely to prove "a burden on the parish" were moved on. To prevent such inhumane treatment befalling local people who became too old and infirm to support themselves, charitable gentry or tradesmen from the 16th to the mid-19th century founded almshouses, many of which still perform their original function of providing simple permanent accommodation for elderly members of the community who might otherwise be homeless. Architecturally, almshouses are often attractive examples of vernacular styles: identical small one- or two-storeyed dwellings built in a row or around a

courtyard, often with a chapel, communal eating hall, and other additional facilities.

### **Amateur Athletic Association (AAA)**

The governing body of athletics in England and Wales. The Association is responsible for all official competitions in line with international rules agreed by the International Amateur Athletic Federation, to which the AAA is affiliated. The Association was founded in 1880 primarily to resolve a conflict between the athletes of Oxford and Cambridge universities, who preferred to train and compete in winter time, and those in the rest of the country, who had invariably treated athletics as a summer sport. Although the universities' athletes prevailed at first, the sport has developed into a fair weather one. Only at Oxford and Cambridge, where cricket, rowing, and examinations rule it out in the summer, is athletics seriously contested in winter out of doors: elsewhere competitors take part in an indoor season. By 1886, 154 athletics clubs representing some 20,000 athletes had joined the Association and national championships have been organized annually under its aegis. To compete in the "Three As" championships, which have long been regarded as the unofficial British championships, is the ambition of all top club athletes. Such contentious issues as ensuring the amateur status of competitors and the illegal use of drugs also come within the jurisdiction of the AAA.

**amateur theatre** The production of plays by unpaid enthusiasts in their spare time. The roots of amateur theatre may perhaps be traced to medieval liturgical drama and the \*mystery plays; and it has always existed alongside the professional theatre (which began in the 16th century). Many of the best-known amateur companies were founded in the 19th century, when this form of entertainment reached the height of its popularity amongst the upper and middle classes. Such companies include The Old Stagers, founded in Canterbury in 1842, the Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society (1854), and the university companies – the ADC (Amateur Dramatic Club) at Cambridge and the OUDS (Oxford University Dramatic Society), founded in 1855 and 1885 respectively. The

variety of amateur productions is enormous, ranging from the annual school play to a full-scale season. The majority of groups, however, specialize in one-act plays. Many of the best are "Little Theatres", members of the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain, founded in 1946. These include the Maddermarket theatre in Norwich, a replica of an Elizabethan theatre, built in 1919 to house the Norwich Players, and the Questors and Tower theatres, both in London. The National Youth Theatre, founded by Michael Croft in 1956, has had a powerful influence on the role of \*theatre in education, sometimes revealing, like the university companies, the talents of young people who have later become professional actors. The work of the various university drama departments can be seen at an annual drama festival run by the National Union of Students, as well as at the \*Edinburgh Festival.

Amateur theatre in England and Wales is fostered by the British Theatre Association (originally the British Drama League; founded 1919), which runs an annual festival with awards for the best amateur group and best new one-act play; and by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (founded 1899). In Scotland it is overseen by the Scottish Community Drama Association, which runs its own festival. Scotland has several Little Theatre groups, which concentrate on three-act plays, of which the Traverse Theatre Club is probably the best known.

**Amnesty International** An independent voluntary worldwide movement dedicated to the release of prisoners of conscience, the fight against torture, and the abolition of the death penalty. Amnesty International, which began in 1961 as the result of a newspaper article by Peter Benenson, a British lawyer, is the world's largest international voluntary organization dealing with human rights. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 and the United Nations Human Rights Prize in 1978, Amnesty works for the release of men and women detained anywhere in the world for their "beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language, or religion who have neither used nor advocated violence". It has over 350,000 supporters in more than 150 countries and territories, national sections in some 40 countries, 3000 local

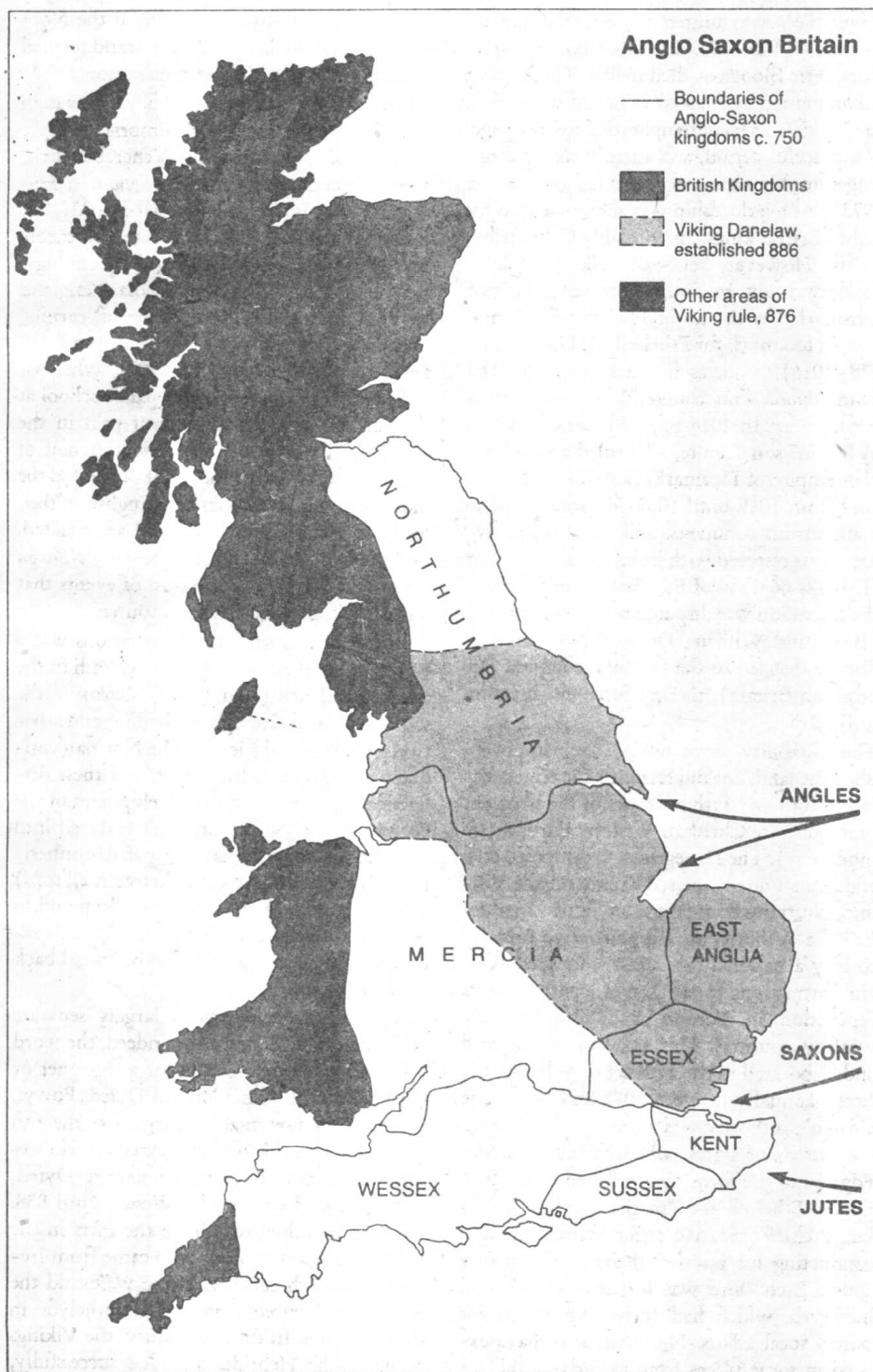
groups in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East, and maintains formal relations with the United Nations (ECOSOC), UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, and the Organization of African Unity.

**Anglican Communion** The 28 autonomous provinces of the Anglican denomination throughout the world that are in communion with and recognize the authority of the \*Archbishop of Canterbury. The Communion includes four British branches: the \*Church of England, the \*Church in Wales, the \*Scottish Episcopal Church, and the \*Church of Ireland. The Communion developed its links overseas in the 19th and 20th centuries as first bishoprics and then archbishopates of the Anglican Church were established throughout the British Empire. Initially under the control of the see of Canterbury, the main sees were in time granted their independence. The principal assembly of the Anglican Communion is the \*Lambeth Conference, held every ten years and presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Anglican Consultative Council, instituted in 1968, is an assembly of bishops, clergy, and lay persons that meets every two or three years. The first such Council was held in 1971.

**Anglo-Catholicism** A movement within the Anglican Church that emphasizes its historical links with Roman Catholicism. It places a high value on the sacraments, the priestly office, and the apostolic succession in the episcopate as well as seeking re-union with Rome. It is distinguished from the High Church by its readiness to accept that the Roman Catholic Church is the true Catholic Church, whereas the High Church regards the Church of England as the only true bearer of Catholicism. Anglo-Catholicism is essentially a product of the 19th century, when the increased prominence of Low Churchmen and dissenters led some High Churchmen to take a more favourable view of Rome. Following the failure of the \*Oxford Movement to reassert High Church dominance, Anglo-Catholicism became an influential attitude in the Church of England, which it still

remains, both at home and in other Anglican Churches.

**Anglo-Saxon Britain** Britain between the departure of the Romans (soon after 400 AD) and the Norman conquest (1066). The chronology of the settlement of England by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from northern Germany and Denmark is uncertain. Large-scale migrations appear to have begun around 450, and by 650 most of England had been settled so densely that it became the only one of the former Roman provinces to acquire a Germanic language (see English language). It is not certain what happened to the indigenous population: many, particularly those owning land, must have retreated to the Celtic kingdoms in Wales, Scotland, and Cornwall, or to Brittany; others were absorbed into Anglo-Saxon society as slaves or semi-servile peasants; others conceivably died in the invasions, as it is reasonably clear that England's population shrank drastically in this period. Petty kingdoms developed (see map): Northumbria, \*Mercia, and East Anglia were mainly inhabited by Angles; Essex, Sussex, and \*Wessex by Saxons; while the Jutes settled in Kent and the Isle of Wight. These kingdoms fought for supremacy, with particularly successful kings being acknowledged as *bretwalda*, or "overking". Northumbria was dominant in the 7th century and Mercia in the 8th, especially under Offa (r. 757–96), who conquered southeast England and regarded himself as the equal of his Frankish contemporary, Charlemagne. He was the first king to call himself "King of the English" (the name "England" did not emerge until the end of the 10th century). Wessex was briefly dominant in the early 9th century, before the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were almost overcome by the **Viking invasions**. These began as raids from Denmark and Norway in the 790s but soon developed into another migration. By 878 the Vikings held most of England north of the River Thames; but in that year Alfred the Great of Wessex (r. 871–99) defeated them at Edington and halted their advance. In 886 a treaty between Alfred and the Danish leader Guthrum defined the limits of Viking control, the "Danelaw". The Anglo-Saxon resurgence continued, and in 926 all England south of the





River Tees was united under Athelstan of Wessex (r. 924–40). The last Viking king of York, Eric Bloodaxe, died in 954. The Anglo-Saxon monarchy reached its height under Edgar (r. 959–75): contemporaries saw his reign as a peaceful period, and there were no challenges to his supremacy. At his coronation (973), his overlordship was acknowledged by eight “British kings”, presumably Celtic tribal chiefs. However, renewed Viking attacks, conducted now by Swein Forkbeard, king of Denmark, with a highly-trained army, proved too much for Ethelred the Unready (r. 978–1016), who, as his nickname (derived from *unraed*, “no counsel”) suggests, was a weak leader. In 1016 England was conquered by Swein’s son Canute, who ruled a Scandinavian empire of Denmark, Norway, and England from 1019 until 1035. His sons failed to maintain his conquests, and the Wessex dynasty was restored with Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–66), son of Ethelred. After his death the succession was disputed between Harold II (1066) and William, Duke of Normandy, a dispute that led to the Norman conquest (see Norman Britain), the last successful invasion of Britain.

The instability seems not to have impoverished the land, nor did it impair the emergence in the 10th and 11th centuries of the strongest monarchy in Christian western Europe (see monarchy). The Danegeld, a tax imposed several times under Ethelred to buy off the Vikings, illustrates both points: no other kingdom had the authority or administrative capacity to levy a national tax; and it increased Britain’s attractions to the Danes, confirming its reputation in Europe as a comparatively wealthy country. This tax was maintained and elaborated in the 11th century, being collected annually between 1012 and 1051. The Crown’s authority was administered through the system of shires, which stabilized under Edgar into the form they retained until 1974. Under Ethelred the \*sheriff emerged as the king’s chief executive agent in each county, conducting his business through the county court. Each shire was further divided into hundreds, which had their own courts for purely local affairs. Hundreds may have existed in some places from as early as the 7th

century. These institutions survived the Norman conquest virtually unscathed, and formed the basis of future local administration.

Culturally, the Anglo-Saxon heyday was in 7th- and 8th-century Northumbria. St Bede (c. 673–735), known as the Venerable Bede, is now remembered for his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, completed in 731, but in his own day his reputation embraced theology, grammar, saints’ lives, and chronology. He was one of the greatest scholars England has ever produced. This tradition of learning reached its climax with the Northumbrian cleric Alcuin of York (735–804), who became master of Charlemagne’s palace school at Aachen and played a significant part in the Carolingian renaissance. In the latter half of the 9th century Alfred the Great promoted the translation of Latin books into English so they could be more widely read and appreciated, and probably inaugurated the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (891–1154), a record of events that forms an important historical source.

A lasting consequence of the invasions was a variety of local custom and law: Danish in the area of the Danelaw and Anglo-Saxon in the south and west, though with differences between Wessex and Mercia. The Norman conquest added a French element, and these differences persisted until the development of the \*common law. Some variations endured into the Middle Ages: the laws of partible inheritance (i.e. division of estates between all sons) long observed in Kent have often been said to be of Jutish origin. Differences in local \*dialects and \*place names can also be traced back to these origins.

The Celtic areas remained largely separate from the Anglo-Saxon areas; indeed, the word “Welsh” was Anglo-Saxon for a foreigner or slave. The Welsh kingdoms of Dyfed, Powys, Gwent, and Gwynedd emerged in the 6th century. From the 9th century Gwynedd expanded to absorb them all except Dyfed. Cornwall held out against Wessex until 838. Scotland was divided among the Picts in the north and east; the Scots, who came from Ireland in the 6th century, in the west; and the Roman-influenced Britons in Strathclyde in the southwest. In the 9th century, the Vikings occupied the Hebrides and, less successfully,