

THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE UNITED STATES

张国英 编著

河北教育出版社

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前 言

《英国与美国》的主要对象是高等院校英语专业的学生、参加高等教育英语专业自学考试的学员，以及从事英、美国家问题研究的人员。它可作为高等院校英语专业“概况”课教材，亦可作泛读教材。同时，它也是一本涉外工作人员的英美知识手册，对出国留学学生及出国访问人员提供了必要的知识资料。

本书向广大读者介绍了英国和美国的历史、地理、社会、文化、教育等方面的基本情况，以帮助学生在学习英国语言和英美文学的同时获得一些有关这些国家的基本知识，提高他们的文化素质。英国曾为世界上头号帝国，但在两次世界大战后，却每况愈下；美国是个疆域辽阔且仅有两百多年历史的国家，今天却成了一个超级大国。有关这些，书中都有较详细的阐述。此外，对近几年来国际上就哥伦布发现新大陆所进行的争议，本书也作了详述。

学习一个国家的语言、文化，就应当对它的地理、历史、社会、政治、教育、文化和艺术等方面进行研究。英国的社会文化，远则可以从传说中的阿瑟王开始算起，近则是从罗马人入侵后，随着民族的变迁而发展起来的。美国的文化是从殖民地的建立开始，通过人口的增加、经济的发展、疆域的扩大、社会的稳定、独立运动的胜利、内战、经济工业化

和城市化等阶段而逐渐发展起来的。读者可从本书中得到大量有关参考资料。

河北师范大学美籍教师阿诺德博士(D. W. Arnold Jr.)对本书全部手稿进行了通读,并提出了宝贵意见,在此表示感谢。

本书资料选自国内外近年来出版的书刊,内容和数据较新。在此特向这些文章的作者表示谢意。

由于水平所限,错误难免,谨希广大读者提出宝贵意见。

编者

1988年5月

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Part I
The United Kingdom

GEOGRAPHY

1. Great Britain

The British Isles consist of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland (the southern part of which is the Republic of Eire), and a great number of small islands, especially in the west of Scotland.

To the west lies the Atlantic. Across and beyond it is America. To the North is the North Sea, facing Scandinavia (comprising the countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark). Across the North Sea lie Germany and Holland. To the south across the English Channel lie Belgium and France.

The difference between Britain, the United Kingdom and the British Isles is often confused. The Island of Great Britain includes England, Scotland and Wales. These, plus Northern Ireland, constitute the United Kingdom. With the Republic of Ireland, the isle of Man and the Channel Islands they make up the British Isles. The full title of the United Kingdom is therefore "the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". The total area of this country is about 94,250 square miles with a population of 56,009,000 (1983 census).

The flag, known as the Union Jack, is a combination of red-on-white crosses of England's St. George and Ireland's St. Patrick, with the white-on blue cross of Scotland's St. Andrew.

Britain is comparatively small, but there is hardly a country in the world where such a variety of scenery can be found in so small a compass. There are wild desolate mountains in the northern Highlands of Scotland—the home of deer and eagles. You have noticed in the map of Britain how deeply indented the coastline is. This indentation offers a good number of splendid harbours for ships, you will note, too, that owing to the shape of the country there is no point in it that is more than seventy miles from the sea—a fact that has made the English a sea-loving people.

The indentation is much more marked on the west than on the east coast. East and south of England is low-lying land. Inland is a lovely pattern of green and gold—for most of England's wheat is grown here. Its rich brown soil is deeply cultivated—much of it is under wheat; fruit-growing is extensively carried on, and jams and jellies (juice of fruit boiled with sugar) are locally made; a quarter of sugar used in this country comes from sugar-beet grown inland, but the most important crop is potatoes. Ten million people in London get their potatoes and most of their peas and

beans from this area.

The climate is generally mild and temperate. The average range of temperature between winter and summer is greatest inland, in the eastern part of the country. During a normal summer the temperature occasionally rises above 30°C (86°F) in the south, winter temperatures below -10°C (14°F) are rare. January and February are usually the coldest months, July and August the warmest. Most of the land is agricultural, of which over one third is arable, yielding various crops, and the rest pasture and grazing-land. Woodlands cover about 9 per cent of the country.

Mountains and Rivers,

In the north you find the Cheviots separating England from Scotland. The Pennines going down England like a backbone and the Cumbrian Mts. occupy the wettest parts of England. In this district are several peaks of more than 3,000 feet, e.g. Scafell.

In the west are the Cambrian Mts. which occupy the greater part of Wales. Here are Snowdon (3,560 feet) and Cader Idris (2,929 feet). The Mts. of North Wales are the most rugged and perhaps the most beautiful range of mountains in the British Isles.

The Grampian Mountains, which occupy the whole

of Scotland down to Strathmore (in E. Scotland), are the Highlands which are poor in all except beauty. For many Highlanders the chief occupations remain fishing, farming patches of arable land by the coast or in the valleys and home industries, like weaving tweed fabrics. Today there is an aluminium industry in the Highlands, based on hydroelectric power. A very advanced nuclear reactor has been built at Dounreay in Caithness.

The Clyde river, rising in Dumfries, is in Strathclyde, Scotland. It is a great commercial waterway, flowing 171 km., passing through Glasgow, and reaching the North Channel at Dumbarton.

The Severn river is about 338 km. long, navigable for 286 km., rising in central Wales and flowing eastward or southeast for the greater part of its length.

The Thames is about 336 km. long, rising in the Cotswolds, S. England, flowing east to the North Sea. It is navigable by large ships to London.

In Ireland the longest river is the Shannon, which runs a slow and winding course through a number of lakes into the Atlantic Ocean.

2. England

England occupies the southern half of the island of Britain. Both Scotland and Wales are mountainous,

but England is low-lying. It is as if a colossus had put his weight onto the southeast corner of Britain.

The east and west coasts are deeply indented, the former by river and marsh and the latter by deep bays between rocky peninsulas. The south coast is fairly straight, a line of low cliffs backed by rolling downs. These downs constitute South England, which is bounded to the north by the Thames and the Severn valleys, and to the west by the Exe River. The long tail of England, which lies on the other side of the Exe and trails off into the Atlantic is called the West Country. The Midlands cover the middle of England, up to the River Trent. North of them is called the North Country, a long upland strip that runs to the Scots border.

Dover, Kent, is on the twenty-one mile wide Strait of Dover. The port lies in a little valley. During World War II, shells from the French coast fell on the town day after day. In the Norman period, Dover joined in the formation of the Cinque (Five) Ports with Hastings, Sandwich, Romney and Hythe.

Folkestone seems much smaller than Dover, in terms of the numbers of ferry passengers it handles and even in terms of the numbers of holidaymakers who come there for its own sake. Folkestone would make a good base from which to explore towns and villages inland including, for example, Lympne and Canterbury.

Twenty miles northeast of Dover is Canterbury, dominated by its Cathedral. Thomas Becket was murdered in the Cathedral by knights of Henry II on 29 December 1170 and when he was made a saint two years later it became a shrine for crowds of pilgrims.

Southwest of Dover is Romney Marsh. Once it was the haunt of smugglers. Much of it is now a fertile meadow, and cattle and sheep are brought from other parts of the country to pasture there.

Winchelsea and Rye are two "ancient towns", each of which is on the knoll, nestling close to each other farther along the coast. The parish church of Winchelsea, built around 1300 in honour of Thomas Becket, has some of the best modern stained glass in England.

Hastings is less genteel, but more earthy. It is near where William the Conqueror defeated King Harold in 1066. Battle Abbey—a school today—was built on the very spot where Harold fell.

Hurstmonceux, East Sussex, is the home of the Royal (Greenwich) Observatory, moved here from Greenwich (London) in 1948—1949.

At Beachy Head, which is a famous resort, a chalk headland almost six hundred feet high, the South Downs begin. Those between London and Dover—in the counties of Surrey and Kent—are called the North Downs. The South Downs, largely in Sussex, are much nearer the

coast.

Lewes, the charming seat of the County East Sussex, lies in the heart of the South Downs. On the Downs above Lewes, Henry III was defeated by Simon de Montfort in 1264, and Simon called a meeting of Parliament. From this meeting the House of Commons developed. Lewes had a long Protestant tradition, and was violently anti-Catholic during the first years of the seventeenth century, when Guy Fawkes's plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament and restore a Catholic monarchy was discovered.

Brighton, in East Sussex, is the largest and best known seaside resort in England. It is sometimes called "London by the Sea".

Between Portsmouth and Southampton (in Hampshire) there is no real country. The former is England's biggest naval base, and the latter is the biggest port after London. From Southampton sailed some of the Crusaders, and here the Pilgrims hired the Mayflower for their great venture.

Plymouth a port with a fine harbour, was the starting point for many expeditions of the Elizabethan sea rovers—Drake, Hawkins, and Captain Cook. The Mayflower set sail from here in 1620.

The county Cornwall has many remains of the ancient Britons. Many of legends of king Arthur are