

高等学校英语专业规划教材



英国国家概况

与文化

● 主编 黄建华 蒋戴丽

*B*ritish Society and Culture



华中科技大学出版社
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前 言

本书以英国社会与文化为主要线索,重点介绍英国的地理环境、政体、文化教育、宗教信仰、商务经济、社会福利、习俗与婚姻、传媒、艺术、交通运输、旅游及娱乐等方面内容,所选资料主要出自近年国外出版物、官方网站及一些重要的参考文献。

全书共分为十二章,每章包含 Text I 和 Text II 两节内容,Text I 为主体信息文章,Text II 为相关知识性文章。本书内容新颖、知识丰富、图文并茂。编者旨在突破传统教材的编写模式,突出语言与文化知识面,使读者能够对知识性文化和交际性文化在社会和语言中的关系进行多方位和多层次的学习和研究。

本书面向非外语院校的普通理工科本科院校、综合类院校以及师范类院校的英语专业学生,同时可供英语学习者自学使用,也能为英国社会与文化研究者提供内容丰富、翔实的研究资料。另外,还能为出国留学及工作人员提供一本理想的案头参考书。

本书编写工作由黄建华和蒋戴丽共同完成。白红星和黄婷婷参与了部分章节编写、文字输入和审校工作。英国外籍教师 Alan Sparks 博士、加拿大外籍教师 Bonnie Wule 和澳大利亚外籍教师 Stacy Meeking 审阅了本书,广西大学外国语学院同行对本书提出了许多宝贵的建议,作者特此表示衷心的感谢。

黄建华
2010年3月

Contents

Unit One Geography	(1)
Text I Geography of the United Kingdom	(1)
1. Topography	(1)
2. Climate	(2)
3. Human geography	(3)
4. Natural resources	(4)
5. Environment	(4)
Reference	(8)
Text II Ben Nevis	(8)
Unit Two Political Structure	(11)
Text I Political Structure	(11)
1. The Monarchy of the United Kingdom	(11)
2. Executive	(12)
3. Legislatures	(14)
4. Judiciary	(14)
5. Government	(15)
Reference	(23)
Text II Legislatures	(23)
1. House of commons	(24)
2. House of lords	(24)
3. Scottish parliament	(24)
4. Welsh assembly	(25)
5. Northern Ireland assembly	(25)
Unit Three Education	(28)
Text I Education in the United Kingdom	(28)
1. Educational policy	(28)
2. Educational stages	(30)
Reference	(40)
Text II Open University	(40)
1. Students	(41)
2. Teaching methods	(42)
3. Assessment methods	(43)
Unit Four Religion	(46)
Text I Religion in the United Kingdom(1)	(46)
1. Christianity	(47)

2. Islam	(50)
3. Judaism	(51)
4. Other faiths	(51)
Reference	(57)
Text II Religion in the United Kingdom(2)	(57)
1. Religion and education	(57)
2. Religion and modern politics	(57)
3. Religion and the media	(58)
Unit Five Economy	(61)
Text I Economy in the United Kingdom	(61)
1. Recent economic growth	(62)
2. Industries	(62)
3. Production	(64)
4. Service industries	(66)
5. Real estate and lettings	(69)
Reference	(76)
Text II Taxation in the United Kingdom	(76)
1. Income tax	(76)
2. Capital gains tax	(76)
3. Value added tax	(77)
4. Corporation tax	(77)
5. Business rates	(78)
6. The tax year	(78)
Unit Six Social Welfare	(80)
Text I Healthcare in the United Kingdom	(80)
1. Healthcare	(80)
2. Healthcare in England	(81)
3. Healthcare in Scotland	(83)
4. NHS Wales	(84)
5. Health and social care in Northern Ireland	(85)
Reference	(90)
Text II National Health Service	(90)
Unit Seven Customs and Marriage	(95)
Text I People, Customs and Society	(95)
1. The English nationalities	(95)
2. Customs and life	(95)
3. Marriage and weddings in Britain	(104)

Reference	(115)
Text II	British Culture	(115)
1.	Comfort zone	(115)
2.	English surnames	(115)
3.	The superstitions attached to numbers	(116)
4.	The story of Mother's Day	(117)
5.	Etiquette	(118)
Unit Eight	Mass Media	(121)
Text I	The Mass Media	(121)
1.	The daily newspapers	(122)
2.	The press	(123)
3.	Television	(128)
4.	The broadcasting	(129)
5.	News agencies	(130)
6.	Internet	(130)
Reference	(136)
Text II	Newspaper and English Language	(136)
1.	Today's newspaper	(136)
2.	The power of English	(136)
Unit Nine	Literature and Arts	(140)
Text I	British Literature and Arts	(140)
1.	British literature	(140)
2.	Art of the United Kingdom	(149)
Reference	(157)
Text II	Drama	(157)
1.	The beginning of drama	(157)
2.	Western forms of drama	(158)
3.	Other Asian cultural forms	(158)
Unit Ten	Sports and Entertainment	(161)
Text I	Sports, Games and Entertainment	(161)
1.	Sports in Britain	(161)
2.	Cultural entertainment	(167)
3.	Entertainment for children	(177)
4.	Spending a night on the town	(177)
Reference	(181)
Text II	Events and Pastime	(181)
1.	The Welsh Eisteddfodau	(181)
2.	Pubs in Britain	(181)

3. A popular pastime of the English people	(182)
4. Town and country life in England	(182)
Unit Eleven Transport	(184)
Text I Survey of Transport in the UK	(184)
1. A history of transport in the UK	(184)
2. Present-day transport in the United Kingdom	(187)
Reference	(201)
Text II Highways Agency	(201)
1. History and operations	(201)
2. Traffic officers	(202)
3. Powers	(202)
4. Vehicle recovery	(203)
Unit Twelve Tourism	(205)
Text I Britain Travel Guide	(205)
1. Britain — A nation full of contrasts	(205)
2. Famous destinations	(208)
Reference	(222)
Text II How Has Tourism Changed the Way People Live?	(222)
Appendix I	(226)
List of UK Universities	(226)
1. Ancient universities	(226)
2. Red brick universities	(226)
3. Plate glass universities	(227)
4. New universities	(228)
Appendix II	(232)
Keys to Exercises	(233)
References	(256)

Unit One Geography

Text I Geography of the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or UK, is in Western Europe. It comprises the island of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and the northeastern one-sixth of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland), together with many smaller islands. The mainland areas lie between latitudes 49°N and 59°N (the Shetland Islands reach to nearly 61°N), and longitudes 8°W to 2°E . The Royal Greenwich Observatory, in South East London, is the defining point of the Prime Meridian. The United Kingdom has a total area of about $245\,000\text{ km}^2$, almost a quarter-of-a-million square kilometres.

The UK lies between the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea, and comes within 35 km (22 miles) of the northwest coast of France, from which it is separated by the English Channel. Northern Ireland shares a 360 km international land boundary with the Republic of Ireland. The Channel Tunnel bored beneath the English Channel, now links the UK with France.

1. Topography

The total area of the United Kingdom is approximately 245 000 square kilometres (94 600 sq mi) comprising of the island of Great Britain, the northeastern one-sixth of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland) and smaller islands. It lies between the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea, coming within 35 kilometres (22 mi) of the northwest coast of France, from which it is separated by the English Channel. Great Britain lies between latitudes 49°N and 59°N (the Shetland Islands reach to nearly 61°N), and longitudes 8°W to 2°E . The Royal Greenwich Observatory, near London, is the defining point of the Prime Meridian. When measured directly north-south, Great Britain is a little over 1 100 kilometres (700 mi) in length and is a fraction under 500 kilometres (300 mi) at its widest, but the greatest distance between two points is 1 350 kilometres (840 mi) between Land's End in Cornwall (near Penzance) and John o'Groats in Caithness (near Thurso). Northern Ireland shares a 360-kilometre (224 mi) land boundary with the Republic of Ireland.

England

England accounts for just over half of the total area of the UK, covering 130 410 square kilometres (50 350 sq mi). Most of the country consists of lowland terrain, with mountainous terrain north-west of the Tees-Exe line including the Cumbrian Mountains of the Lake District, the Pennines and limestone hills of the Peak District, Exmoor and Dartmoor. The main rivers and estuaries are the Thames, Severn and



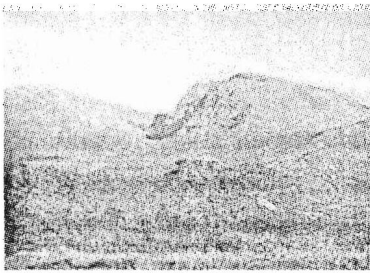
The topography of the UK

the Humber. England's highest mountain is Scafell Pike, which is in the Lake District 978 metres (3 209 ft). England has a number of large towns and cities, including six of the top 50 Larger Urban Zones in the European Union.

Scotland

Scotland accounts for about a third of the total area of the UK, covering 78 772 square kilometres (30 410 sq mi), including nearly eight hundred islands, mainly west and north of the mainland, notably the Hebrides, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. The topography of Scotland is distinguished by the Highland Boundary Fault—a geological rock fracture—which traverses the Scottish mainland from Helensburgh to Stonehaven. The faultline separates two distinctively different regions; namely the Highlands to the north and west and the lowlands to the south and east. The more rugged Highland region contains the majority of Scotland's mountainous terrain, including Ben Nevis, which at 1 343 metres (4 406 ft) is the highest point in the British Isles. Lowland areas, especially the narrow waist of land between the Firth of Clyde and the Firth of Forth known as the Central Belt, are flatter and home to most of the population including Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, and Edinburgh, the capital and political centre of the country.

Wales



Ben Nevis, in Scotland's Grampian Mountains, is the highest point in the British Isles.

Wales accounts for less than a tenth of the total area of the UK, covering 20 758 square kilometres (8 010 sq mi). Wales is mostly mountainous, though south Wales is less mountainous than north and mid Wales. The main population and industrial areas are in south Wales, consisting of the coastal cities of Cardiff (the capital, political and economic centre), Swansea and Newport and the South Wales Valleys to their north. The highest mountains in Wales are in Snowdonia, and include Snowdon, which, at 1 085 m (3 560 ft) is the highest peak in Wales.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland accounts for just 14 160 square kilometres (5 470 sq mi) and is mostly hilly. It includes Lough Neagh, at 388 square kilometres (150 sq mi), the largest body of water in the UK and Ireland. The highest peak in Northern Ireland is Slieve Donard at 849 metres (2 785 ft) in the Mourne Mountains.

2. Climate

The United Kingdom has a temperate climate, with plentiful rainfall all year round. The temperature varies with the seasons but seldom drops below -10°C (14.0°F) or rises above 35°C (95°F). The prevailing wind is from the southwest, bearing frequent spells of mild and wet weather from the Atlantic Ocean. Eastern parts are most sheltered from this wind and are therefore the driest. Atlantic currents, warmed by the Gulf Stream,

bring mild winters, especially in the west, where winters are wet, especially over high ground. Summers are warmest in the southeast of England, being closest to the European mainland, and coolest in the north. Snowfall can occur in winter and early spring, though it rarely settles to great depth away from high ground.

The prevailing winds are southwesterly, from the North Atlantic Current. More than 50% of the days are overcast. There are few natural hazards, although there can be strong winds and floods, especially in winter.

Average annual rainfall varies from over 3 000 mm (120 inches) in the Scottish Highlands down to 553 mm (21.8 inches) in Cambridge. The county of Essex is one of the driest in the UK, with an average annual rainfall of around 600 mm (24 inches), although it typically rains on over 100 days per year. In some years rainfall in Essex can be below 450 mm (18 inches), less than the average annual rainfall in Jerusalem and Beirut.

3. Human geography

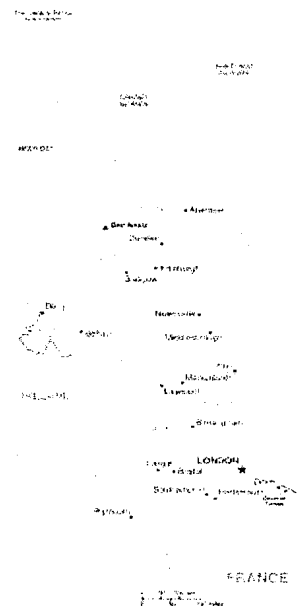
England, despite being the largest country in the UK, has no devolved system of government and is governed by UK government ministers and legislated for by the UK parliament. Within England, London has a devolved assembly but proposals for elected Regional Assemblies in England were rejected in the first referendum covering North East England.

The UK (specifically, Northern Ireland) has an international land boundary with the Republic of Ireland of 360 km. There is also a boundary between the jurisdiction of France and of the UK on the Channel Tunnel.

Historically the UK was divided into counties or shires: administrative areas through which all civil responsibilities of the government were passed. Each county or shire had a county town as its administrative centre and was divided into individual parishes that were defined along ecclesiastic boundaries.

Between 1889 (1890 in Scotland) and 1974, the political boundaries were based on the traditional counties, but due to changes in population centres, the traditional counties became impractical as local government areas in certain highly urbanised areas. The Local Government Act 1972 created a new system of administrative counties, designed to take account of the widely differing populations across different parts of the country.

In the 1990s further population growth led to more political changes on a local level. Unitary authorities were formed across the entire of Scotland and Wales, and in larger cities in England. Many unpopular administrative counties were also abolished at this time, leading to a mixture of two-tier and single-purpose authorities. Further reorganisations are



The United Kingdom is composed of four parts: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

planned if and when regional assemblies in England are revisited in the future.

4. Natural resources

Historically, much of the United Kingdom was forested. Since prehistoric times, man has deforested much of the United Kingdom.

Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanised, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60% of food needs with only 1% of the labour force. It contributes around 2% of GDP. Around two thirds of production is devoted to livestock, one third to arable crops.

In 1993, it was estimated that land use was:

- Arable land: 25 % ;
- Permanent crops: 0 % ;
- Permanent pastures: 46 % ;
- Forests and Woodland: 12 % ;
- Other: 17 % ;
- Irrigated: 1 080 km².

The UK has a variety of natural resources including:

- **Geological:** coal, petroleum, natural gas, limestone, chalk, gypsum, silica, rock salt, china clay, iron ore, tin, silver, gold, lead.
- **Agricultural:** arable land, wheat, barley, hill farms, sheep.

The UK has large coal, natural gas, and oil reserves; primary energy production accounts for 10% of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial nation. Due to the island location of the UK, the country has great potential for generating electricity from wave power and tidal power, although these have not yet been exploited on a commercial basis.

5. Environment

Current issues

The United Kingdom is reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has met Kyoto Protocol target of a 12.5 % reduction from 1990 levels and intends to meet the legally binding target of a 20% cut in emissions by 2010. By 2005, the government aims to reduce the amount of industrial and commercial waste disposed of in landfill sites to 85% of 1998 levels and to recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste, increasing to 33% by 2015. Between 1998 – 99 and 1999 – 2000, household recycling increased from 8.8% to 10.3% .

International agreements

The United Kingdom is a party to many international agreements, including: Air Pollution, Air Pollution-Nitrogen Oxides, Air Pollution-Sulphur 94, Air Pollution-Volatile Organic Compounds, Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Seals, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands and Whaling.

Vocabularies and phrases

1. **arable land** an agricultural term, meaning land that can be used for growing crops. It is land suitable for producing crops 耕地
2. **greenhouse** *n.* a building where plants are cultivated. A greenhouse is a structure with a glass or plastic roof and frequently glass or plastic walls; it heats up because incoming solar radiation from the sun warms plants, soil, and other things inside the building. Air warmed by the heat from hot interior surfaces is retained in the building by the roof and wall 温室
3. **GDP** The gross domestic product (GDP) or gross domestic income (GDI) is one of the measures of national income and input for a given country's economy. 国内生产总值
4. **longitude** *n.* the geographic coordinate most commonly used in cartography and global navigation for east-west measurement 经度
5. **tidal power (tidal energy)** a form of hydropower that converts the energy of tides into electricity or other useful forms of power 潮汐能
6. **wave power** the transport of energy by ocean surface waves, and the capture of that energy to do useful work — for example for electricity generation, desalination, or the pumping of water (into reservoirs). Wave power is a renewable energy source. 波能

Notes

1. **The English Channel** — an arm of the Atlantic Ocean that separates England from northern France, and joins the North Sea to the Atlantic. It is about 562 km (350 miles) long and varies in width from 240 km (150 miles) at its widest, to only 34 km (21 miles) in the Strait of Dover. It is the smallest of the shallow seas around the continental shelf of Europe, covering an area of some 75 000 square kilometres (29 000 sq mi).
2. **The Prime Meridian** — the meridian line of longitude at which longitude is defined to be 0°. By international convention, the modern Prime Meridian is one passing through Greenwich, London, United Kingdom, known as the **International Meridian** or **Greenwich Meridian**.
3. **A shire** — is an administrative division of Great Britain and Australia. The first shires were created by the Anglo-Saxons in what is now central and southern England. Shires were controlled by a royal official known as a “shire reeve” or sheriff. Historically shires were sub-divided into hundreds or wapentakes although other less common sub-divisions existed. In modern English usage shires are sub-divided into districts.
4. **The Local Government Act 1972** — an Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom, that reformed local government in England and Wales, on 1 April 1972.

Its pattern of two-tier metropolitan and non-metropolitan county and district councils remains in use today in large parts of England, although the metropolitan county councils were abolished in 1986 and it was replaced with unitary authorities in many areas in the 1990s. In Wales, it established a similar pattern of counties and districts. These have since

been entirely replaced with a system of unitary authorities. In Scotland, the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 regionalised local government with a system of two-tier regions and districts in 1975 – this was also replaced by a system of unitary council areas in 1996.

Elections were held to the new authorities in 1973, and they acted as “shadow authorities” until the handover date. Elections to county councils were held on 12 April, for metropolitan and Welsh districts on 10 May for non-metropolitan district councils on 7 June.

5. **A unitary authority** – a type of local authority that has a single tier and is responsible for all local government functions within its area or performs additional functions which elsewhere in the relevant country are usually performed by national government or a higher level of sub-national government.

Typically unitary authorities cover towns or cities which are large enough to function independently of county or other regional administration. Sometimes they consist of national sub-divisions which are distinguished from others in the same country by having no lower level of administration.

6. **The Kyoto Protocol** – a protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or FCCC), an international environmental treaty produced at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 – 14 June 1992. The treaty is intended to achieve “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”. The Kyoto Protocol establishes legally binding commitments for the reduction of four greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride), and two groups of gases (hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons) produced by “Annex I” (industrialized) nations, as well as general commitments for all member countries. As of 2008, 183 parties have ratified the protocol, which was initially adopted for use on 11 December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan and which entered into force on 16 February 2005. Under Kyoto, industrialized countries agreed to reduce their collective GHG emissions by 5.2% compared to the year 1990. National limitations range from 8% reductions for the European Union and some others to 7% for the United States, 6% for Japan, and 0% for Russia. The treaty permitted GHG emission increases of 8% for Australia and 10% for Iceland.

Questions and Answers

1. What is the official name of the United Kingdoms?
2. What are the three political divisions on the islands of Great Britain?
3. What are the highest mountain and the largest lake in Britain?
4. What are the capitals of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?
5. How many islands are there in Scotland?

Discussion

1. Find out the information about the highest peaks in each part of the UK and the ranges of mountains and hills in the UK.
2. Get to know the following information from the Internet.
 - (1) The longest river in the UK
 - (2) The largest lake in the UK
 - (3) The deepest lake in the UK

Comprehension

I. Translate the following into Chinese.

1. The longest river in Britain is the Severn River. The most important river is Thames River. River Clyde is the most important river in Scotland.
2. Though the weather in Britain is so changeable and unpredictable, the climate is in fact a favorable one. Britain has a steady reliable rainfall throughout the whole year.
3. The English are Anglo-Saxons, but the Welsh, Scots and Irish are Celts.
4. Though the Gaelic language is still heard in the Highlands and western isles, the English language is spoken all over the Scotland.
5. Britain has a population of 57 411 000. It is a densely populated country with an average of 237 people per square kilometer, and it is very unevenly distributed. 90% of the population is urban, and only 10% is in rural.

II. Determine whether the following statements are true or false. If it is false, correct it.

1. The total area of the United Kingdom is approximately 245 000 square kilometres (94 600 sq mi) comprising of the island of Great Britain, the northeastern one-sixth of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland).
2. The more rugged Highland region contains the majority of Scotland's mountainous terrain, including Ben Nevis, which at 1 343 metres (4 406 ft) is the lowest point in the British Isles.
3. The United Kingdom has a hot climate, with plentiful rainfall all year round.
4. The Local Government Act 1972 created a new system of administrative counties, designed to take account of the widely differing populations across different parts of the country.
5. The UK has large coal, natural gas, and oil reserves; primary energy production accounts for 30% of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial nation.
6. By 2005, the government aims to reduce the amount of industrial and commercial waste disposed of in landfill sites to 85% of 1998 levels and to recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste, increasing to 33% by 2015.
7. Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanised, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60% of food needs with only 1% of the total capital.
8. Historically the UK was divided into counties or shires: administrative areas through

which all civil responsibilities of the government were passed.

III. Fill in the blanks with the given words or phrases.

depth annual between point the English Channel system change account for mainland population

1. The Royal Greenwich Observatory, in South East London, is the defining _____ of the Prime Meridian.
2. The UK lies between the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea, and comes within 35 km of the northwest coast of France, from which it is separated by _____.
3. Great Britain lies _____ latitudes 49°N and 59° N, and longitudes 8° W to 2° E.
4. England _____ just over half of the total area of the UK, covering 130 410 square kilometres (50 350 sq mi).
5. The topography of Scotland is distinguished by the Highland Boundary Fault — a geological rock fracture — which traverses the Scottish _____ from Helensburgh to Stonehaven.
6. The main _____ and industrial areas are in south Wales, consisting of the coastal cities of Cardiff (the capital, political and economic centre), Swansea and Newport and the South Wales Valleys to their north.
7. Snowfall can occur in winter and early spring, though it rarely settles to great _____ away from high ground.
8. Average _____ rainfall varies from over 3 000 mm (120 inches) in the Scottish Highlands down to 553 mm (21.8 inches) in Cambridge.
9. England, despite being the largest country in the UK, has no devolved _____ of government and is governed by UK government ministers and legislated for by the UK parliament.
10. In the 1990s further population growth led to more political _____ on a local level.

Creative Work

Find out more information about **Geography of the United Kingdom** from Internet or reference books.

Reference

Text II Ben Nevis

Ben Nevis is the highest mountain in the British Isles. It is located at the western end of the Grampian Mountains in the Lochaber area of Scotland, close to the town of Fort William.

In common with many other Scottish mountains, it is known to locals as simply The

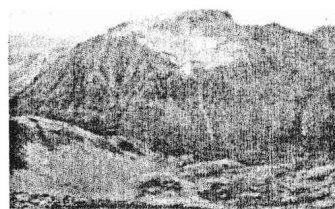
Ben. However, if walkers and climbers from outwith Scotland use the term “The Ben” they usually mean Ben Nevis. It attracts an estimated 100 000 ascents a year, around three-quarters of which are made using the well-constructed Pony Track from Glen Nevis on the south side of the mountain. For climbers and mountaineers the main attraction lies in the 700-metre-high cliffs of the north face; among the highest cliffs in Britain, they harbour some classic scrambles and rock climbs of all difficulties, and are one of the principal locations in the UK for ice climbing.

The summit, at 1 344 metres (4 406 ft) above sea level, features the ruins of an observatory which was permanently staffed between 1883 and 1904. The meteorological data collected during this period is still important for an understanding of Scottish mountain weather. C. T. R. Wilson was inspired to invent the cloud chamber after a period spent working at the observatory.

Ben Nevis forms a massif with its neighbour to the north-east, Carn Mòr Dearg, to which it is linked by the Carn Mòr Dearg Arête. Both mountains are among the eight in Great Britain over 4 000 feet (1 219 metres), as are Aonach Mòr and Aonach Beag immediately to the east; the other four are all in the Cairngorms.

The western and southern flanks of Ben Nevis rise 1 200 metres in around 2 km from the floor of Glen Nevis — the longest and steepest hill slope in Britain — with the result that the mountain presents an aspect of massive bulk on this side. To the north, in contrast, cliffs drop some 600 metres (2 000 ft) to Coire Leis. This corrie contains the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut (known as the CIC Hut), a private mountain hut located at 680 metres above sea level, owned by the Scottish Mountaineering Club and used as a base for the many climbing routes on the mountain’s north face.

In addition to the main 1 344-metre summit, Ben Nevis has two subsidiary “tops” listed in Munro’s Tables, both of which are called Carn Dearg (“red hill”). The higher of these, at 1 221 metres, is situated to the north-west, and is often mistaken for Ben Nevis itself in views from the Fort William area. The other Carn Dearg (1 020 m) juts out into Glen Nevis on the mountain’s south-western side. A lower hill, Meall an t-Suidhe (711 m), is located further west, forming a saddle with Ben Nevis which contains a small loch, Lochan an t-Suidhe. The popular tourist path from Glen Nevis skirts the side of this hill before ascending Ben Nevis’s broad western flank.



The steep south face of Ben Nevis from Sgurr a' Mhàim.

Vocabularies and phrases

1. a corrie (in Scotland and Ireland) *n.* A corrie is a landform found in the mountains as a result of alpine glaciers. They can be up to a square kilometre in size, situated high on a mountain side near the firn line, and are typically partially surrounded on three sides by steep cliffs. (苏格兰)山侧的凹地;冰坑