UNFORGETTABLE PERSONALITIES IN BRITISH HISTORY

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(Great Britain)

The history of the United Kingdom is rich and varied. The political union of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has often been bloody and turbulent but now the UK is one of the most peaceful and stable states in the world. Important and influential personalities shaped life on the British Isles and the "society" we live in today.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR
(ruled 1066 – 1087)

The appearance of William, **Duke** of Normandy (now northern France), with his army on the English **shore** in 1066 was a **major turning point** in English history. In that year, Harold, Earl of Wessex, was crowned King of England. William **was furious** because he thought that he had been promised the throne, and invaded England. Harold was defeated by William's forces in the Battle of Hastings. From that time the administration of England was governed by Norman aristocracy.

In 1086, William **ordered a survey to be made** of all things in his kingdom: this was to be the famous Domesday Book.

OLIVER CROMWELL
(ruled 1649 – 1658)

Cromwell's historical **legacy** to England was that he took power away from the monarchy and gave it to the people in the form of a stronger parliament.

Civil war **had broken out** between King Charles I and parliamentary forces in 1642. The king was eventually defeated and executed in 1649. In England, Cromwell became Lord Protector, having refused the crown. He died in 1658 and after the restoration of the monarchy his body was **dug up** and hanged. Nevertheless, the monarchy was never again so strong politically.

Oliver Cromwell also introduced a fashion of clothing that was **plain**, in contrast to the richness of the ruling classes.

ADMIRAL HORATIO LORD NELSON
(*1758 – †1805)

Nelson was a national hero. Over the period 1794 – 1805, under his leadership, **the Royal Navy proved its supremacy over** the French. He was **bold** when fighting and was known to ignore the orders of his **seniors**. This **defiance** brought him victory against the Spanish off **Cape** Vincent in 1797. In the Battle of the Nile in 1798, he successfully destroyed Napoleon's fleet and cut off the direct trade route to India. His most famous victory was at Cape Trafalgar in 1805 when he saved Britain from invasion by Napoleon.

QUEEN VICTORIA
(ruled 1837 – 1901)

Becoming Queen at the age of eighteen, Queen Victoria was the longest reigning English monarch. With Prince Albert she had nine children, many of whom married into European royalty.

Queen Victoria **was strongly in favour of** an imperial Britain. In 1887, she became Empress of India, and her **empire extended to include** Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand and large parts of Africa. At home, she **witnessed** huge economic expansion during the industrial revolution.

WINSTON CHURCHILL
(*1874 – †1965)

Winston Churchill will always be known as the man with the "V" for victory sign and a fat **cigar**, who led the British and her **allies** to victory during WWII.

He became Prime Minister in May 1940 and refused to **surrender** to the Nazis. He worked **tirelessly** throughout the war, building strong relations with US President Roosevelt **while maintaining** a sometimes difficult alliance with the Soviet Union. Victory came in 1945 but ironically the people wanted a new start and **voted him out of office**. He continued to campaign in opposition and focused on the problems of the Cold War (he **coined** the term '**The Iron Curtain**') while encouraging European and trans-Atlantic unity.

MARGARET THATCHER
(*1925)

Margaret Thatcher was Britain's first female Prime Minister and served three **consecutive** terms in office from 1979 to 1990. **She was an advocate of privatisation** of state owned industries (e.g. shipbuilding and **coal mining**). She reformed the **trade unions**, lowered taxes, and reduced inflation. On the negative side, unemployment rose rapidly and there were strikes and civil conflicts.

On the international scene, in 1982, she led Britain to victory in the Falklands War (war over Falkland Islands between Argentina and the UK). Known as the Iron Lady by the Soviets she warmly welcomed the rise of the reformist Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Cromwell is viewed by some people as a negative figure in British history; he is considered a cruel dictator who massacred many Catholics in Ireland.

After Albert died in 1861, Victoria never really recovered. She dressed in black for the rest of her life.

UK HISTORY TIMELINE

Prehistoric Britain (5000 BC – 100 BC)

This period is represented in Britain by the start of a farming culture (4000 BC). Stone circles **were being erected** (including Stonehenge) **according to astronomical measurements** and then, a thousand years later, tools made of bronze were being used (The Bronze Age). By 3000 BC, there was a race of hunters known as Iberians, who lived in Britain. Later on, the Celts **overran** the British Isles.

Roman Britain (55 BC – 410 AD)

When the Romans arrived, **they encountered a tribal people who were quite sophisticated**. However, they replaced their culture with their own. They also built an **extensive network** of straight roads and had a significant influence on architecture and town planning.

Vikings and Anglo Saxons (5th – 11th century)

During this period Britain was invaded many times by their continental neighbours – Germanic **peoples** from what is now northern Germany and southern Scandinavia. The true Britons **were driven to** the west and survive today as Celts on the Celtic **fringe** of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Cornwall.

Middle Ages (12th – 15th century)

In 1215, King John of England signed the Magna Carta which **outlined**, for the first time, the rights of ordinary people. War with France (The Hundred Years War – ending in 1453) started as a dynastic struggle between Edward III of England and Phillip VI of France. The **rise of the English bowmen** gave England **military superiority over** all opponents, especially the French.

Tudors: Henry VIII and Elizabeth I (16th century)

This period brought political intrigues and conflicts surrounding religion and state. Henry's reign was turbulent and saw the **split from** Rome and the establishment of the Church of England. His daughter, Elizabeth I, stabilised the country and encouraged the Age of Discovery.

Civil War and Restoration (17th century)

With the 17th century came a **breakdown** between the people and the King. Civil war in England (1642 – 60) marked the end of the King's real power and the rise of parliament. In the scientific world, the young Isaac Newton 'discovered' **gravity**.

Empire and Sea Power (18th – 19th century)

England, being an island, developed a fantastically efficient navy that sailed the world protecting all their **merchant vessels**. The Great Exhibition in 1851 was an outstanding example of the influence and wealth **derived from** the colonies **of which Britain was justifiably proud**.

The Modern Age (20th century)

After WWII, Britain looked forward to peace and prosperity under the rule of the young queen Elizabeth II. British influence on the world stage **declined** with the loss of its colonies and the rise of two world powers: the USA and the USSR. Britain remains an important player in financial and commercial world markets.

→ Vocabulary

turbulent [ˈtəːbjʊlənt] - bouřlivý, neklidný
stable [ˈsteɪb(ə)l] - stabilní
duke [djuːk] - vévoda
shore [ʃɔː] - pobřeží
major turning point [ˈmeɪdʒə] - zásadní zlom
was furious [ˈfjʊərɪəs] - zuřil
ordered a survey to be made [ˈsəːveɪ] - nařídil sestavit přehled
legacy [ˈlɛgəsi] - odkaz
to break out - vypuknout
to dig up - vykopat
plain [pleɪn] - jednoduchý, prostý
the Royal Navy proved its supremacy over [ˈrɔɪəl ˈneɪvi suːˈprɛməsi] - Královské námořníctvo prokázalo svou převahu nad
bold [bəʊld] - odvážný
senior [ˈsiːnɪə] - nadřízený
defiance [dɪˈfaɪəns] - vzpurnost
cape [keɪp] - mys
was strongly in favour of [ˈfeɪvə] - silně podporovala
empire extended to include [ˈɛmpaɪə ɪkˈstɛndɪd] - impérium se rozšířilo, takže zahrnovalo
to witness [ˈwɪtnɪs] - zažít
cigar [sɪˈgɑː] - doutník
ally [ˈælaɪ] - spojenec
to surrender [səˈrɛndə] - vzdát se
tirelessly [ˈtaɪəlɪsli] - neúnavně
while maintaining [meɪnˈteɪnɪŋ] - a přitom udržoval
voted him out of office - už ho do úřadu nezvolili
to coin [kɔɪn] - poprvé použít, vytvořit
the Iron Curtain [ˈkəːt(ə)n] - železná opona

consecutive [kənˈsɛkjʊtɪv] - po sobě následující
she was an advocate of privatisation [ˈædvəkət] - prosazovala privatizaci
coal mining [kəʊl ˈmaɪnɪŋ] - těžba uhlí
trade unions [treɪd ˈjuːnjənz] - odbory

UK HISTORY TIMELINE
to erect [ɪˈrɛkt] - vztyčit
according to astronomical measurements [æstrəˈnɒmɪk(ə)l mɛʒəm(ə)nts] - podle astrologických výpočtů
to overrun - obsadit, ovládnout
they encountered a tribal people who were quite sophisticated [ɪnˈkaʊntəd ˈtraɪb(ə)l səˈfɪstɪkeɪtɪd] - narazili tam na kmenové společenství, které bylo dost pokročilé
extensive network [ɪkˈstɛnsɪv] - rozsáhlou síť
people - národ
were driven to - byli vytlačeni na
fringe [frɪn(d)ʒ] - okraj
to outline [ˈaʊtlaɪn] - načrtnout, vymezit
rise of the English bowmen [ˈbəʊmen] - vzestup anglických lučištníků
military superiority over [suːˌpɪərɪˈɒrɪti] - vojenskou převahu nad
split from - odluka od
breakdown [ˈbreɪkdaʊn] - roztržka
gravity [ˈgrævɪti] - zemská přitažlivost
merchant vessel [ˈməːtʃ(ə)nt ˈvɛs(ə)l] - obchodní loď
derived from [dɪˈraɪvd] - odvíjejícího se od
of which Britain was justifiably proud [ˈdʒʌstɪfaɪəbli praʊd] - na které byla Británie po právu hrdá
to decline [dɪˈklaɪn] - slábnout, upadat