

Roman Britain (AD43:410AC)

After Julius Caesar saw the Celts in the north of France where the Celts of Britain were fighting with the Celts of Gaul against the Romans, he decided to invade Britain. He made two expeditions in 55 and 54 BC. These two military expeditions were pushed down by fierce Celtic resistance and the Romans were forced to retreat. Yet, the actual successful Roman invasion was held by the emperor Claudius in 43 AD. They came to colonize and exploit Britain by right of superior civilization.

To fulfil their objective, they induced and subdued the Celts and assimilated the Latin language, culture, and roaming lifestyle. They encouraged the Celtic tribe chiefs to Romanize and Latinize them. These were the roman conditions to leave them live as chiefs. The name Britain comes from the Greco-Roman word “Pretani”, the Romans mispronounced the word and called the island “Britannia”.

Roman effects on Britain

- The Romans brought the skills of reading and writing to Britain
- The roman could not conquer “Caledonia” as they call her Scotland; they were pushed out by the Caledonian Picts who continued raiding over the Romanized cities and Celtic tribes. Finally, they built a protective wall to prevent them from causing damage to their cities. It was erected by the emperor Hadrian between 122-127 which later marked the frontiers between Scotland and Britain.
- The Romans built about twenty large towns and cities. Like Winchester, Chester, Lancaster, York, bath, London which became the greatest center of trade and government. These cities were decorated with villas and gardens and surrounded by forts for protection. In the roman manors or farms, they recruited workers to sow the crops and sold them in the markets. The workers were called the serfs.
- Besides, many popular baths were built which introduced a water culture to the British people.
- They connected towns with roads which continued to be used a long time after the roman departed from Britain.
- The roman introduced Christianity to the different parts of the British Isles and succeeded in Christianizing the Celts through the Christian missionaries and Saint Augustine.

The Roman Departure from Britain

The fall of the Roman Empire started in the second half of the 4th century AD. In Britain, it was precipitated by the Celtic resistance revival and the different raids over the Romans from

both Ireland and Scotland. In the first half of the 5th century AD, the Roman Empire could no more protect its subject in Britain and many other wars broke out in the different parts of the empire and they needed more legions to face them. Finally, they left Britain and the Romanized Celts unprotected; their withdrawal made another wave of conquerors come to invade Britain. These were the Anglo-Saxon.