

# Anglo-Saxon and Scots Invaders

Despite the increase in attacks on England from the Picts, Scots and Saxons, by around 410AD the last of the Romans had left to go and defend their home territory as they were under increasing threat from external invaders. This meant England was left to its own devices for the first time in about 400 years. Emperor Honorius told the people to defend themselves, but after years of protection under Roman rule they were quite unprepared for fighting!



The Gaelic-speaking Scotti, who came from Ireland, were descendants of the Picts, who had earlier invaded Ireland around 200AD. Historians believe that these Irish Scots invaded and claimed land in Scotland in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Scots divided the land in Scotland into 4 separate kingdoms that were named Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia. The Picts and the Scots were a constant threat to the Britons and it was even harder to fight them off without support from the Romans. They were described as 'foul' and 'with a lust for blood' by an historian from the time, named Gildas. They are said to have streamed over Hadrian's Wall, killing everyone in their way.

The British King Vortigem was left in charge after the Roman armies left, but he faced great difficulty organising troops to hold back the Picts and Scots who were very powerful and superb fighters. He worried they would take over in England. In a bid to retain control and keep the Picts at bay, it is believed that Vortigem asked two brothers called Hengest and Horsa from Jutland to come and fight for him and keep the Picts and Scots out.



Hengest and Horsa were glad to oblige and the Picts and Scots were successfully held back. However, the men liked what they found in England and decided that they wanted to stay and take the land for themselves, as it was rich and plentiful and the Britons could be easily defeated. They brought more warriors and over time the invaders began to settle around England, pushing the Brits farther and farther out!

The brothers and their warriors weren't the only ones who had their sights set on colonising England. Other Germanic tribes had also been invading for some time, and without Roman protection they proved to be a formidable force against the Brits. We know these invaders as the Anglo-Saxons because the two biggest invading tribes were called the Angles and the Saxons. Other invaders were the Jutes, Franks and Frisians. They came from the modern places of Germany, Holland and Denmark.

The Anglo-Saxons went on to rule in England until the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was William the Conqueror from Normandy's victory over King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066AD that marked a dramatic end to Anglo-Saxon rule and established the beginning of the Norman era.

