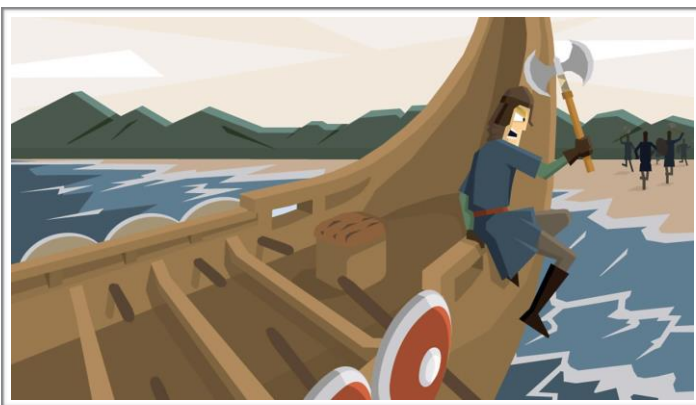# The Anglo Saxons

In the **AD400s**, towards the end of Roman rule, Britain was being attacked by the **Picts** and **Scots** from the north, and the **Anglo-Saxons** from the sea. The Romans had built forts along the coast to fight off the sea-raiders and Hadrian's wall defended the north. Things were changing, and in about AD410, the last Roman soldiers were ordered to leave.

Britain no longer had the strong Roman army to defend it from the **invaders**. There were many battles between Anglo-Saxons and Britons. Over time, the Anglo-Saxons took control of most of Britain.

The Anglo Saxons were most commonly divided into two **distinct races**: the Angles and Saxons. In reality, they were an **amalgamation** of tribes drawn from today's Denmark, Northern Germany and the Netherlands. As a result, the people of Britain (who then were mainly **Celts** speaking **Latin**) did not trust the blonde-haired, blue-eyed invaders.

Faced with **destruction**, due to being unable to defend Roman towns and cities from the Picts and Scots, the Celts decided to defend themselves by hiring **mercenaries**. Weak and **defenceless**, the Celts paid Angles and Saxons from northern Germany, invited their families and gave them land to farm. They

initially worked with them, however they not only **overpowered** the Picts and Scots but did not want to leave.

Instead the killed existing Britons and set down roots and **infrastructure**. They built villages and started to farm the rich, **ripe** farmland. Over the next hundred years, the Anglo Saxons gradually expanded and **overwhelmed** the peaceful Celts. By the time they ruled most of England things had changed: they now became peaceful farmers, who wanted to keep what they had.

These were the first people of Angle-land or England!

Anglo-Saxon Britain wasn't ruled by one person and the Anglo-Saxons were not united. They invaded as many different **tribes** and each took over different parts of Britain.

Each group of Anglo-Saxon settlers had a leader or war-chief. A strong and successful leader became '**cyning**', the Anglo-Saxon word for 'king'. Each king ruled a **kingdom** and led a small army.
From time to time, the strongest king would claim to be **'bretwalda'**, which meant ruler of all Britain.