The Middle Ages

# The Anglo-Saxon Period

Roman Britain

55/54 BC - Julius Caesar invaded Britain. The population was made up of the **celts** (Britons, various Celtic tribes) - they spoke a language known as **Gaelic** and **Brythonic** (Britannic)

43/50 AD - Romanization and Christianization of the island - Latin is introduced into the Celtic languages.

78/85 AD - Roman conquest of the majority of the southern and midland peoples.

121/127 AD - completion of **Hadrian’s Wall** (73 Miles long) as a fortification against the Picts, fierce dwellers to the north in what is now Scotland.

**410 AD** - Germanic tribes (Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, etc.) attacked Rome, necessitating the departure of the ROman legions from Britain.

# The Anglo-Saxon Invasions

Picts, Scots, and Saxons attacked the island upon the departure of the Romans.

449 AD - large scale invasions by the **Angles**, **Saxons**, **and Jutes** - the **Germanic tribes** - the Celts were driven into Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, and Brittany (Northwest coast of France)

500 AD - British resistance - **King Arthur** lead a British victory at Mt. Badon. The Anglo-Saxons, however won control by the 6th century - the country takes it from the Angles - Angle-long > Enga-long > England

597 AD - Pope Gregory sends St. Augustine (the “Apostle of the English”), a Benedictine monk, to Kent - Aethelbert I of Kent was converted to Christianity - he was the first Christian king of Anglo-Saxon England.

635-655 AD - gradual Christianization by ROman and Irish missionaries - an interesting era - the coexistence of Christian and pagan beliefs

670 AD - the oldest poetic vernacular work - “**The Hymn of Creation**” was written by **Caedmon**, a monk from the famous abbey at Whitby.

731 AD - **The Venerable Bede** wrote “**The Ecclesiastical History of the English People**” - written in Latin, the first great history of England. –> “**Beowulf**” was probably also written during this time period.

787 AD - the first Viking raids on the island - there was resistance - **King Alfred**, King of Wessex (849-899), had a number of victories over the Vikings

886 AD - Alfred captures London - is recognized as King of all England.

1000 AD - the “**Exeter Book**” - a manuscript containing “**The Seafarer**”, a famous **elegiac** poem.

**1066** **AD** - The Norman Invasion - William the Conqueror’s victory at the Battle of Hastings brings and end to the Anglo-Saxon period.