



History

The Romans



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Who were the Romans?

The Romans were a group of people who lived in Rome, a city in Italy. Around 2000 years ago, the Romans invaded Britain mainly because they were greedy and wanted Britain's precious metals. However, for about a century before this, the Roman army had been invading countries all across Europe building a large empire. The red on the map shows the countries that became part of the Roman Empire.

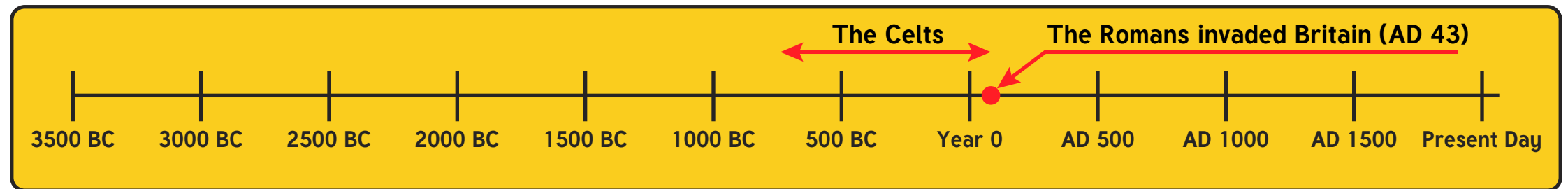


Interesting Fact
During the times of the Romans, countries were not called by the same names they are now. For example, Britain was known as Britannia.



The Celts

At the time that the Romans invaded Britain, the Celts lived there. The Celts were the most powerful people in central and northern Europe. They lived in Britain during the Iron Age which occurred from about 750 BC to AD 43 when the Romans took over. The era was called the Iron Age because this is when people discovered a new metal called iron. The Celts learnt to make iron tools and weapons.



Failed attempt 1

The Romans invaded Britain in AD 43 however, almost 100 years before this in 55 BC there was a failed attempt to invade Britain! Julius Caesar, who was Rome's best general, ordered 20,000 ships to invade the coast of Kent. When they got there, it was stormy and there were thousands of Celtic warriors waiting for them on the beach. The Romans struggled to land and the stormy seas wrecked their ships. Caesar had underestimated the Celts and he was forced to turn around and go home.



Failed attempt 2

Caesar did not want to be defeated so the next year he went back with 50,000 soldiers. They defeated many Celtic tribes and made it all the way to the River Thames. However, after three months of fighting, the Roman soldiers had to stop to attend to a rebellion in Gaul. The Romans did not fully invade Britain this time.



New Word

Gaul – this was the name that the Romans gave to part of western Europe. This area we now know as France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Northern Italy, Netherlands and Germany.



The Invasion

Approximately 100 years after Caesar's failed attempt, the Roman's tried again. This time they meant business. They had new weapons, catapults and even war elephants! They wanted to look for treasures in Britain such as iron, gold, silver, copper, zinc and lead.

In AD 43 the Roman army landed on the coast in Kent yet again but this time they were led by the Emperor Claudius. It was not a short battle.



Did you know?

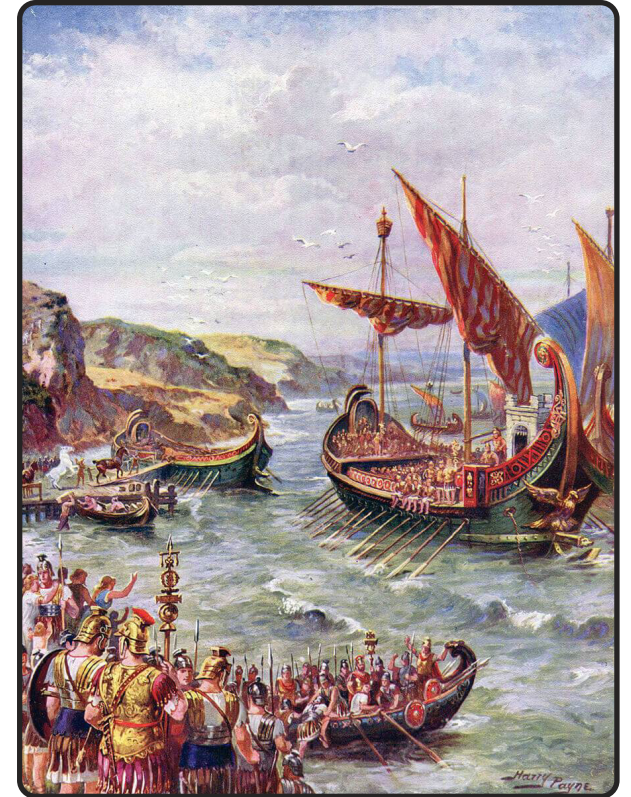
There are no photographs of the Roman period because cameras did not exist. Stone sculptures or statues were made of important leaders. This statue is of Emperor Claudius.



The Invasion

Over the next year the Romans battled the Celts. They stormed through villages and towns and fought anyone who stood in their way. However, the Romans weren't just destructive – they built new settlements and new roads. They also spread their culture, language and laws.

Overall it took around 4 years of fighting for the Romans to control most of southern Britain. Many Celts tried to defeat the Romans. It took about another 30 years for the Romans to conquer all of the West Country and Wales.



Roman Invasion

Can you describe the three main Roman attempts to invade Britain?



