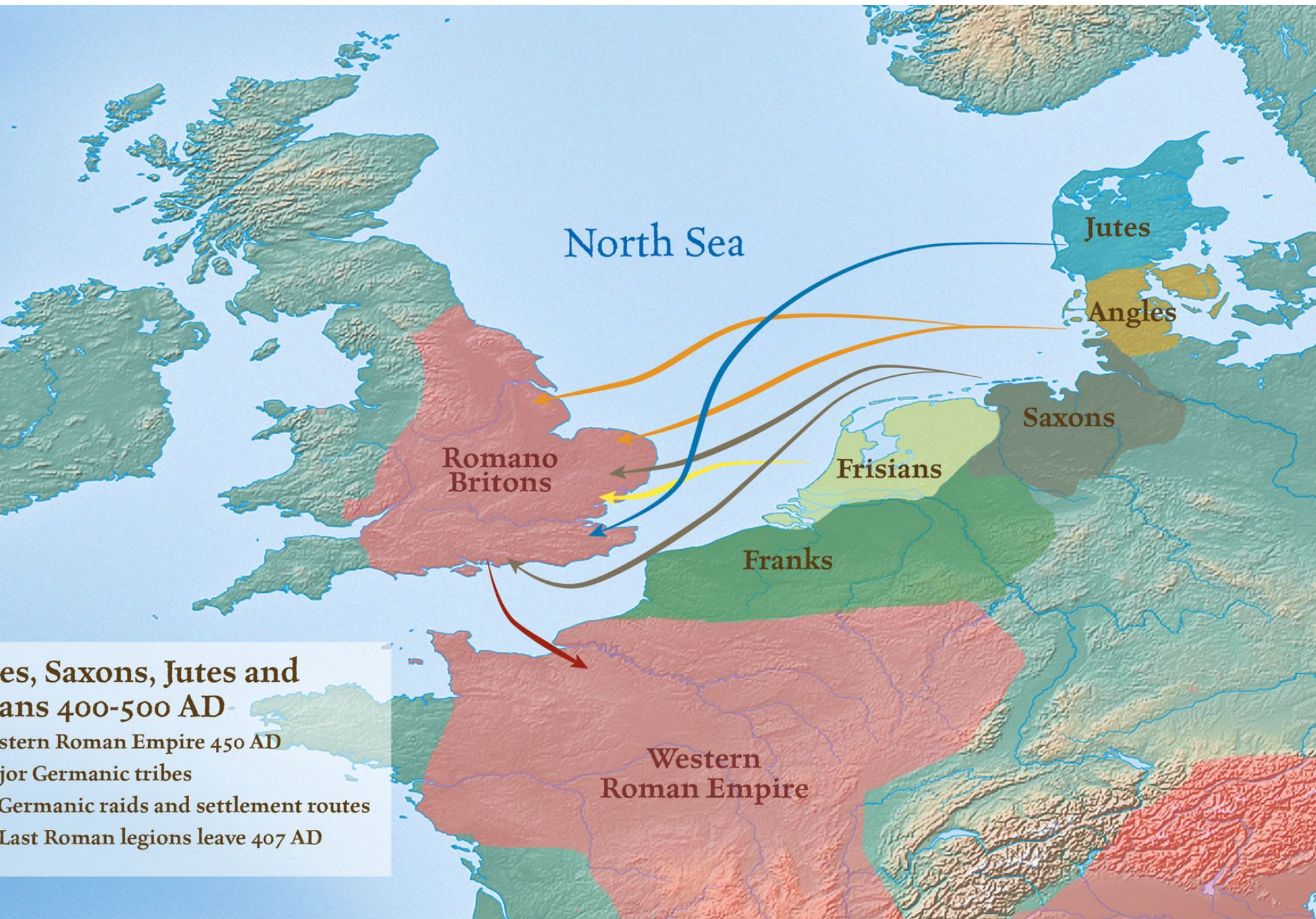


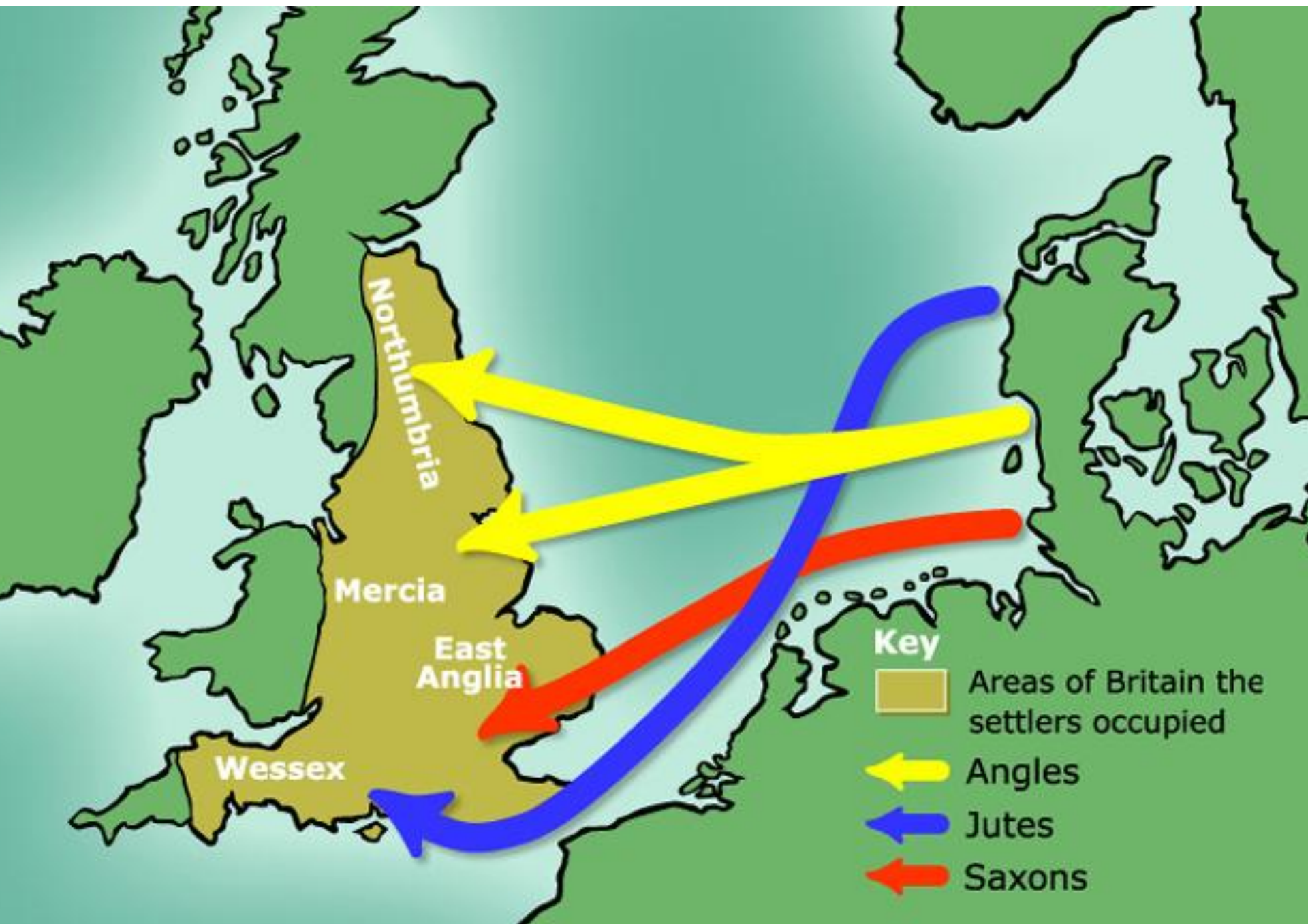
# Who were they?

- **Settlers in Britain**
- The Romans invaded Britain in AD43. After that, for 400 years southern Britain was part of the Roman world. The last Roman soldiers left Britain in AD 410, and then new people came in ships across the North Sea.
- The Celts resisted the invaders for a number of years under the leadership of a great king, possibly the inspiration for the legendary King Arthur.

. Historians call them Anglo-Saxons. The new settlers were a mixture of people from north Germany, Denmark and northern Holland. Most were Saxons, Angles and Jutes. If we use the modern names for the countries they came from, the Saxons were German-Dutch, the Angles were southern Danish, and Jutes were northern Danish.







It was during the second half of the fifth century that more and more Anglo-Saxons arrived to take land for themselves. It is for this reason that the time of the Anglo-Saxons is usually thought of as beginning about AD 450.

# How long did the Saxons stay in England?

They ruled in England for about 500 years ( a hundred years longer than the Romans). However, unlike the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons never 'went home'; many people living in Britain today have Anglo Saxon ancestors. The name England even comes from the Saxon word 'Angle-Land'.

# Counties

The Saxons settled in areas of Essex (East Saxons), Sussex (South Saxons), Middlesex (Middle Saxons), and Wessex (West Saxons).

The Jutes settled mainly in Kent. They did not call themselves 'the Jutes', they referred to themselves as 'the Kentings', that is the men living in Kent.

The Angles settled in East Anglia



# Invasion and settlement

- **Peaceful settlement?**
- Some Anglo-Saxons came to Britain to fight, but others came peacefully, to find land to farm. The Anglo-Saxons knew Britain was a rich land. Their own lands often flooded, making it difficult to grow enough food. There was not enough land for everyone.
- Whole families set off across the North Sea in small boats. Each boatload of people formed a settlement with its own leader. They brought their tools, weapons, belongings and farm animals with them to Britain.

# Anglo-Saxon Society

- Warrior-based society, led by strong warrior chief
- “Warfare was the order of the day” (between clans, tribes, and outside invaders)
- Anglo-Saxon life was dominated by the need to protect the clan and home from enemies.
- Fame and success were achieved through loyalty to a leader, and success was measured by gifts received from leaders.

- **Anglo Saxon Houses**

- We know what Saxons houses may have looked like from excavations of Anglo Saxon villages, such as the one at West Stow in the east of England. Here, an early Anglo-Saxon village (c.420-650AD) has been carefully reconstructed where it was excavated. Using clues from the what was discovered, archeologists have reconstructed the houses as they may have looked about 1,500 years ago.
- We know that the Saxons built mainly in wood, although some of their stone churches remain.



# Anglo-Saxon life

- **Where did the Anglo-Saxons settle?**
- When the Anglo-Saxons arrived in Britain, most kept clear of Roman towns. They preferred to live in small villages. However, warrior chiefs knew that a walled city made a good fortress. So some Roman towns, like London, were never completely abandoned. Many Roman buildings did become ruins though, because no one bothered or knew how to repair them.
- Some Saxons built wooden houses inside the walls of Roman towns. Others cleared spaces in the forest to build villages and make new fields. Some settlements were very small, with just two or three families.

# Kings and laws

- **One king or many?**
- Each group of Anglo-Saxon settlers had a leader or war-chief. A strong leader became 'cyning' - Anglo-Saxon for 'king'. Each king ruled a kingdom and led a small army. There were many quarrels and wars between kings, to see who was the strongest.
- By around AD600 there were seven important Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. They were Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Sussex, Essex, Kent and East Anglia. From time to time, the strongest king would claim to be 'bretwalda' - which meant ruler of all Britain.



# Anglo-Saxons at war

- **How Anglo-Saxons fought**
- Anglo-Saxon armies were usually small, with only a few hundred men. The soldiers had spears, axes, swords and bows and arrows. They wore helmets on their heads and carried wooden shields. Everyone fought on foot during a battle. It must have been a bit like a giant rugby scrum, with lots of pushing and yelling, and nasty wounds.
- The most feared Anglo-Saxon weapon was a battle axe, but the most precious weapon was a sword. It took hours of work by a smith to craft a sword. He softened iron in a red-hot fire, twisted iron rods together and hammered the sword into shape.



# Alfred the Great

- **Why was Alfred so great?**
- Great Anglo-Saxon kings included Offa of Mercia (who built Offa's Dyke) and Edwin of Northumbria (who founded Edinburgh or 'Edwin's burh'). But the most famous of all is Alfred, the only king in British history to be called 'Great'.
- Alfred was born in AD849 and died in AD899. His father was king of Wessex, but Alfred became king of all England. He fought the Vikings, and then made peace so that English and Vikings settled down to live together. He encouraged people to learn and he tried to govern well and fairly.

# King Alfred the Great against the Danes

- 8th–9th centuries Vikings, called Danes, invade Britain
- 871 Alfred of Wessex becomes king of England.
- King Alfred unifies the Anglo-Saxons against the Danes. England becomes a nation.





*Richard I*



*Richard I*



*Richard I*



*Richard I*



# Stories and pastimes

- **Story-telling**
- Anglo-Saxons liked to gather in the lord's great hall, to eat and drink, and to listen to songs and stories. They loved tales about brave warriors and their adventures. A favourite story told how Beowulf, a heroic prince, kills the fierce man-eating monster Grendel, and Grendel's equally horrid mother. The story of Beowulf was first written down in the 8th-9th centuries, but long before that the story was told around the fire. The storyteller played music to accompany the songs and poems, on a small harp or on another stringed instrument called a lyre.

# The Anglo-Saxon bards

- called “scops” Anglo-Saxon harp
- skilled storytellers and honored members of society.
- sang of heroic deeds • regarded as equals to warriors
- Anglo-Saxons did not believe in an afterlife
- warriors gained immortality through songs preserved in the collective memory

# Growing up

- **Girls**
- Anglo-Saxons thought sons and daughters were equally important, but girls' work centred on the home. They learned housekeeping skills such as weaving cloth, cooking, making cheese and brewing ale. Girls and boys collected sticks for firewood, and fetched water from a stream or well.
- Only a few girls learned to read and write. By the age of 10 a girl was considered grown-up. Most girls then married, though some became nuns in the Christian Church. A famous nun was Abbess Hild, born a Northumbrian princess, who founded Whitby Abbey (Northumbria) in AD657.



# Anglo-Saxon beliefs

- **Early Anglo-Saxon beliefs**
- In Roman Britain, many people had been Christians. The early Anglo-Saxons were pagans. Much like the Vikings of Scandinavia, they believed in many gods. The king of the Anglo-Saxon gods, for example, was Woden - a German version of the Scandinavian god Odin. From his name comes our day of the week Wednesday or 'Woden's day'. Other gods were Thunor, god of thunder; Frige, goddess of love; and Tiw, god of war.
- Anglo-Saxons were superstitious. They believed in lucky charms. They thought 'magic' rhymes, potions, stones or jewels would protect them from evil spirits or sickness.

# Where do the names of the days of the week originate from?

- Days of the Week  
Certain days of the week are named after early Saxon Gods.
- *Monandæg* ( Moon's day - the day of the moon ),  
*Tiwesdæg* ( Tiw's-day - the day of the Scandinavian sky god Tiw, Tiu or Tig),  
*Wodnesdæg* ( Woden's day - the day of the god Woden (Othin) ),  
*Ðunresdæg* ( Thor's Day - the day of the god Ðunor or Thunor ),  
*Frigedæg* ( Freyja's day - the day of the goddess Freyja or Frigg, wife to Woden),  
*Sæternesdæg* ( Saturn's day - the day of the Roman god Saturn, whose festival "Saturnalia," with its exchange of gifts, has been incorporated into our celebration of Christmas.),  
*Sunnandæg* ( Sun's day - the day of the sun ).

# What happened to them?

- **English and Vikings**
- The English often called the Vikings "Danes" - though there were Swedish and Norwegian Vikings as well as Danish ones. Anglo-Saxon history tells of many Viking raids, from the time in 793 when Vikings attacked the monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumbria and killed many of the monks.
- After King Alfred led the fight against them in the 870s, some Vikings settled down to live peacefully. They had their own part of eastern England called the Danelaw. English and Danelaw Vikings became neighbours, though other Vikings went on raiding from the sea.

# Why is Sutton Hoo famous?

- Much of what we know about the Anglo-Saxons comes from graves like the one discovered at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk.
- Near the River Deben in Suffolk, at Sutton Hoo, are eleven mounds or 'barrows' dating back to the 7th century. In 1939 archaeologists explored the largest mound and discovered a ship buried in the mound.





# The Spread of Christianity

- Around A.D. 400 Christian monks settle in Britain. Christianity and Anglo-Saxon culture co-exist .
- By A.D. 699 British pagan religions replaced by Christianity

# Who was the last Saxon King and where did he die?



In 1066, the last Anglo Saxon king of England died at the Battle of Hastings. His name was King Harold.

William from Normandy ( France) became the new King and replaced all the Anglo Saxon lords with Norman ones and so brought Anglo Saxon times to an end.