



UK 2005

**The Official Yearbook of the
United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland**

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About the Office for National Statistics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the government agency responsible for compiling, analysing and disseminating many of the United Kingdom's economic, social and demographic statistics, including the retail prices index, trade figures and labour market data, as well as the periodic census of the population and health statistics. It is also the agency that administers the statutory registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales. The Director of ONS is the National Statistician and the Registrar General for England and Wales.

A National Statistics publication

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political influence.

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1 The United Kingdom

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The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) was created by the *Act of Union 1800* and constitutes the greater part of the British Isles, a group of islands lying off the north-west coast of Europe. The largest of the islands is Great Britain, which comprises England, Wales and Scotland. The next largest is Ireland, comprising Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, and, in the south, the Republic of Ireland.

North-west Scotland is fringed by two large island chains, the Inner and Outer Hebrides. To the north of the Scottish mainland are the Orkney and Shetland Islands. These, along with the Isle of Wight, Anglesey and the Isles of Scilly, have administrative ties with the mainland. The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not part of the United Kingdom (see page 7).

Physical features

The oldest rocks, dating back 2.6 billion years, are found in the Scottish Highlands and Outer Hebrides. Metamorphic and igneous rocks are widespread in Wales, the Lake District and southern Scotland.

Devonian and Carboniferous strata in south-west England have been intruded by granite. The largest granite area is Dartmoor. Carboniferous limestone forms the Mendip Hills, and part of the Pennine chain in the Peak District and around Malham Tarn in North Yorkshire. Deep valleys, such as the Avon gorge, have cut into the limestone and rivers commonly disappear underground where cave networks have developed. The overlying millstone grit of the Upper Carboniferous age makes up much of the Pennines, with coal measures forming the lower ground flanking the Pennine Hills. Coal seams are also widespread in the Midlands, South Wales and around Bristol.

Permian and Triassic rocks stretch from Devon to north-west and north-east England, but are at their widest across the Midlands, where the sandstones are a major aquifer.¹ Jurassic rocks are dominated by limestone layers, extending from the World Heritage coastline in Dorset, through the Cotswolds and Northamptonshire into Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Many prominent buildings in London, such as those in Whitehall, are constructed from Jurassic limestone quarried in Dorset.

Cretaceous chalk strata cover wide areas of southern England, such as the South Downs, where they are exposed in white cliffs at Beachy Head and Dover. Younger strata, mainly soft sandstones and clays, are found in east and south-east England and are associated with fertile farmland.

On the Antrim coast in Northern Ireland is the Giants Causeway. At this World Heritage site there are almost 40,000 massive polygonal basalt columns, formed around 60 million years ago from slowly cooling volcanic rock intruded into the surrounding chalk.

About 2 million years ago, ice sheets covered much of the United Kingdom north of a line roughly between the Bristol Channel and London. Glacial erosion shaped landscapes in North Wales, Cumbria, and much of upland Scotland. As the glaciers melted, extensive areas of clay, sand and gravel were deposited, almost entirely obscuring the underlying bedrock of much of East Anglia.

England

England covers about two-thirds of the island of Great Britain. It is mostly low hills and plains, forming meadowlands and pastures. Uplands

¹ A layer of rock that is able to hold or transmit large quantities of water

include the Pennine chain, known as the 'backbone of England', which splits northern England into western and eastern sectors. The highest point is Scafell Pike (977 metres) in the north west. The north east includes the rugged landscape of the Yorkshire moors, while the south west has the upland moors of Dartmoor and Exmoor.

Wales

Wales is on the western side of Great Britain. It is mountainous – around one-quarter is above 305 metres and in the north its highest peak, Snowdon (*Yr Wyddfa*), rises to 1,085 metres. The Cambrian Mountains run from north to south and to the south are the Brecon Beacons, with flat, grassy summits, and the steep-sided South Wales Valleys. The Welsh coastline varies from estuaries to sheltered bays, high cliffs, peninsulas, and marsh and low-tide sandbanks.

Scotland

Scotland is located in the north of Great Britain. The Scottish Lowlands and Borders are largely areas of gentle hills and woodland, contrasting dramatically with the rugged landscape of the Highlands to the north. A striking physical feature is the Great Glen, a geological fault, which cuts across the central Highlands from Fort William on the west coast for 97 kilometres north-east to Inverness on the east coast. A string of lochs in deep narrow basins is set between steep-sided mountains that rise past forested foothills to high moors and remote rocky mountains. Ben Nevis, at 1,343 metres, is the highest point in the United Kingdom. Scotland has about 790 islands, of which some 130 are inhabited.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's north east coast is separated from Scotland by a stretch of water – the North Channel – only 21 kilometres wide at its nearest point. It has a 488-kilometre border with the Republic of Ireland, forming the only UK land boundary with another Member State of the European Union. The landscape is mainly low hill country. There are three mountainous areas: the Mourne in the south east with Northern Ireland's highest point, Slieve Donard (852 metres); the Sperrins in the north west; and the Antrim Plateau, parallel to the north-east coast. Lough Neagh is the largest freshwater lake in the United Kingdom and one of the largest in Europe.

Physical geography

Length and breadth: just under 1,000 kilometres from south to north, and just under 500 kilometres across at the widest point

Highest mountain: Ben Nevis, in the Highlands of Scotland, 1,343 metres

Longest river: the Severn, 354 kilometres, rises in Wales and flows through Shrewsbury, Worcester and Gloucester in England to the Bristol Channel

Largest lake: Lough Neagh, Northern Ireland, 382 square kilometres

Highest waterfall: Eas a'Chual Aluinn, from Glas Bheinn, in Scotland, with a drop of 200 metres

Deepest cave: Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, Powys, Wales, 308 metres deep

Most northerly point on the British mainland: Dunnet Head, north-east Scotland

Most southerly point on the British mainland: Lizard Point, Cornwall, England

Climate

The climate is generally mild and temperate. Prevailing weather systems move in from the Atlantic, and the weather is mainly influenced by depressions and their associated fronts moving eastwards, punctuated by fine, settled, anticyclonic periods lasting from a few days to several weeks. The temperature rarely rises above 32°C or falls below -10°C. The hottest day in 2003 was 10 August, with temperatures at Brogdale, near Faversham, Kent, reaching a record 38.5°C. The coldest night in 2003 was on 7/8 January, when Aviemore in the Scottish Highlands recorded a minimum of -18.6°C. There are four distinct seasons: spring (roughly March to May); summer (June to August); autumn (September to November) and winter (December to February).

Rainfall is greatest in western and upland areas, where the annual average exceeds 1,100 millimetres; the highest mountain areas receive

150th anniversary of the Met Office

The Met Office was set up in June 1854 to provide information about the weather and sea currents to the Royal Navy and the UK maritime community. From its origins as a small department in the former Board of Trade, it has grown into a government agency employing 1,800 staff at over 40 UK locations and overseas. It is also one of two World Area Forecast Centres, providing weather information for all international flights from the eastern North Atlantic area to central Australia.

In 2004 the Met Office completed its move to new headquarters in Exeter. The £80 million building won Major Project of the Year and Best Office Building of the Year in awards organised by *Building Services Journal* and the *Electrical and Mechanical Contractor* in June 2004.

more than 2,000 millimetres. Over much of lowland central England, annual rainfall ranges from 700 to 850 millimetres. Parts of East Anglia and the south east have the lowest rainfall, just 550 millimetres. Rain is fairly well distributed throughout the year.

The length of the day varies throughout the year. The relatively high latitude of Scotland means that winter days there are very short, while summer

days are long, with an extended twilight. On the longest day, 21 June, there is no complete darkness in the north of Scotland and Lerwick, Shetland, has about four hours more daylight (including twilight) than London.

During May, June and July (the months of longest daylight) the mean daily duration of sunshine varies from five hours in northern Scotland to eight hours in the Isle of Wight. During the months of shortest daylight (November, December and January) sunshine is at a minimum, with an average of an hour a day in northern Scotland and two hours a day on the south coast of England.

Population

The population of the United Kingdom at mid-2003 was 59.6 million (Table 1.1). Official projections, based on 2002 population estimates, suggest that the population will reach 64.8 million by 2031. Longer term projections suggest that the population will peak around 2050 at over 65 million and then begin to fall (see page 100).

The population grew by 5.7 per cent between 1991 and 2003, partly a result of a greater number of births than deaths, with migration an increasing factor from the late 1990s (see page 103).

There are more people in the United Kingdom aged over 60 (12.4 million) than there are children under 16 (11.7 million). Northern Ireland has the youngest population, with children under 16

Table 1.1 Population and area, June 2003, UK

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
Population (thousands)	49,856	2,938	5,057	1,703	59,554
% population aged:					
under 5	5.7	5.4	5.2	6.5	5.7
5–15	14.0	14.2	13.4	16.3	14.0
16 to pension age ¹	67.9	60.1	62.4	61.3	61.8
above pension age ¹	18.4	20.3	18.9	15.9	18.5
Area (sq km)	130,281	20,732	77,925	13,576	242,514
Population density (people per sq km)	383	142	65	125	246
% population change 1991–2003	6.5	4.4	–2.4	10.3	5.7
Live births per 1,000 population	11.8	10.7	10.4	12.7	11.7
Deaths per 1,000 population	10.1	11.5	11.6	8.5	10.3

¹ Pension age is currently 65 for males and 60 for females.

Source: Office for National Statistics; National Assembly for Wales; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

representing 23 per cent of the population, compared with 20 per cent in the United Kingdom as a whole in 2003.

The United Kingdom has one of the largest populations in the European Union (EU), accounting for 13 per cent of the total.

History of government

Major events in the development of government in the United Kingdom, together with a brief review of early history, are described below. There is a list of significant dates in appendix B (page 496).

'Britain' derives from Greek and Latin words that probably stem from a Celtic original. Although in the prehistoric timescale the Celts were relatively late arrivals in the British Isles, UK recorded history began with them. The term 'Celtic' is often used rather generally to distinguish the early inhabitants of the British Isles from the later Anglo-Saxon invaders.

After two expeditions by Julius Caesar in 55 and 54 BC, contact between Great Britain and the Roman world grew, culminating in the Roman invasion of AD 43. Roman rule, which lasted until about 409, gradually extended from south-east England to Wales and, for a time, the lowlands of Scotland.

England

When the Romans withdrew from Great Britain, the lowland regions were invaded and settled by Angles, Saxons and Jutes (tribes from what is now north-western Germany). England takes its name from the Angles. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were small and numerous, but in time fewer, larger areas of control developed. Eventually the southern kingdom of Wessex became dominant, mainly because of its leading role in resisting the Viking invasions in the ninth century. Athelstan (reigned 924–39) used the title 'King of all Britain', and from 954 there was a single kingdom of England.

The last successful invasion of England took place in 1066. Duke William of Normandy defeated the English at the Battle of Hastings and became King William I, known as 'William the Conqueror'. Many Normans and others from France came to settle; French became the language of the ruling classes for the next three centuries; and the legal

and social structures were influenced by those across the Channel.

When Henry II, originally from Anjou, was king (1154–89), his 'Angevin empire' stretched from the river Tweed on the Scottish border, through much of France to the Pyrénées. However, almost all of the English Crown's possessions in France were lost during the late Middle Ages (c.1300–1400).

In 1215 a group of barons demanded a charter of liberties as a safeguard against the arbitrary behaviour of King John. The rebels captured London and the King eventually agreed to their demands. The resulting royal grant was the *Magna Carta*. Among other things, the charter promised that 'to no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice'. It established the important constitutional principle that the power of the king could be limited.

The Hundred Years War between England and France began in 1337, leading to a period of high taxation. In 1381 the introduction of a poll tax led to the Peasants' Revolt, the most significant popular revolt in English history. The peasants marched on London, executed ministers and won promises of concessions, including the abolition of serfdom, although Richard II went back on these promises once the peasants had dispersed.

In 1485 Henry Tudor defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field and became Henry VII. His son, Henry VIII, broke away from the Catholic Church and founded the Church of England. During his reign England and Wales were united. The last of the Tudors, Elizabeth I, was childless. She named James VI of Scotland as her successor, thus uniting the monarchies of Scotland, England and Wales when she died in 1603.

Civil War broke out in 1642. The capture and execution of Charles I in 1649 changed the balance of power between Monarch and Parliament. A leading parliamentarian in the civil war was Oliver Cromwell. He declared England a republic in 1649. Appointed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth from late 1653 until his death in 1658, Cromwell had supreme legislative and executive power in association with Parliament and the Council of State; he was the only non-royal to hold this position. The Monarchy was restored when Charles II ascended the throne in 1660. In 1707 the *Acts of Union* united the English and Scottish Parliaments and the *Act of Union 1800* united

Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Parliamentary reform was a recurrent issue in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 1832 *Reform Act* began dismantling the old parliamentary system and extending the franchise. The *Reform Acts* of 1867 and 1884 gave the vote to a gradually wider section of the population. During the 20th century, the *Representation of the People Acts* took the process further. In 1918, women aged 30 or over who were householders, householders' wives or graduates were enfranchised and in 1928 the *Equal Franchise Act* extended the franchise to women aged 21 or over, giving them the same voting rights as men. Universal suffrage for all eligible people over 18 was granted in 1969 (see page 40).

Wales

Wales was a Celtic stronghold ruled by sovereign princes under the influence of England after the Romans left around 409. In 1282 Edward I brought Wales under English rule; the castles he built in the north remain among the finest UK historic monuments. Edward I's eldest son – later Edward II – was born at Caernarvon in 1284 and became the first English Prince of Wales in 1301. The eldest son of the reigning monarch continues to bear this title; Prince Charles was made Prince of Wales in 1969.

At the beginning of the 15th century Welsh resentment of unjust English laws and administration, and widespread economic discontent, resulted in the nationalist leader Owain Glyndŵr leading an unsuccessful revolt against the English (see page 20). The Tudor dynasty, which was of Welsh ancestry, ruled England from 1485 to 1603 and during this period the *Acts of Union* (1536 and 1542) united England and Wales administratively, politically and legally.

This situation prevailed until July 1999, when devolution created a National Assembly for Wales with specific powers to make secondary legislation to meet distinctive Welsh needs (see page 18).

Scotland

Evidence of human settlement in what is now Scotland dates from about the third millennium BC. By the time the Romans invaded Britain, many tribes were living in the region and despite a number of attempts to control them, Roman rule never permanently extended to most of Scotland.

Great Black Britons

Mary Seacole, a veteran nurse in the Crimean War (see page 92), came first in an Internet poll of the 100 Great Black Britons. The poll highlighted the contribution that Black people have made to UK society since Roman times. The website for the poll received more than 1 million hits and 10,000 people voted.

Born in 1805 in Jamaica to a Scottish father and Jamaican mother, Mary Seacole came to England in the 1850s. As a nurse, she volunteered to help in the Crimean war. She was turned down, but went to the Crimea independently and was awarded a Crimean medal for her work.

Wilfred Wood, the first Black bishop, came second in the poll. He was followed by Mary Prince, the first Black female author to be published; Olaudah Equiano, a former slave and political activist; and Queen Philippa, the wife of Edward III. George of Lydda, who became St George, the patron saint of England, came 24th.

By the fifth century AD, the Scots, a Celtic people from Ireland, had settled on the north-west coast of Great Britain and a century later had formed the kingdom of Dalriada. The political connection with Ireland remained until the Battle of Mag Rath in 637. The kingdom of Dalriada lasted until the ninth century when Kenneth Mac Alpin imposed authority over the Scots and their neighbours and rivals, the Picts, to form a single kingdom. He and his successors expanded into traditionally independent territories and the kingdom of Scotland was formed during the ninth and tenth centuries.

The kingdoms of England and Scotland were frequently at war during the Middle Ages (c.1000–1400). When Edward I tried to impose direct English rule over Scotland in 1296, a revolt for independence broke out, which ended in 1328 when Edward III recognised its leader, Robert the Bruce, as King Robert I of Scotland.

The English and Scottish crowns were united in 1603 when James VI of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth I. He became James I of England and

was the first of the Stuart kings. In 1745 Charles Edward Stuart (also known as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' or 'The Young Pretender') attempted to retake the throne for the Stuarts (it had passed to the House of Hanover in 1714). He was eventually defeated at the Battle of Culloden, north-east of Inverness, in April 1746.

Politically, England and Scotland remained separate during the 17th century, apart from a period of union forced on them by Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s. It was not until 1707 that the English and Scottish Parliaments agreed on a single Parliament for Great Britain to sit at Westminster in London. Nearly 300 years later, in July 1999, devolution meant that power to administer Scottish affairs was returned to a new Scottish Parliament (see page 25).

Northern Ireland

Henry II of England invaded Ireland in 1169. He had been made overlord of Ireland by the English Pope Adrian IV. Although Anglo-Norman noblemen controlled part of the country during the Middle Ages (c.1000–1400), little direct authority came from England.

During the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603) there were several rebellions, particularly in the northern province of Ulster. In 1607, after the rebel leaders had been defeated, Protestant immigrants from Scotland and England settled there.

The English civil war (1642–51) coincided with uprisings in Ireland, which Oliver Cromwell suppressed. More fighting took place after the overthrow of James II, a Roman Catholic, in 1688. At the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, the Protestant William of Orange (later William III) defeated James II, who was trying to regain the English throne from his base in Ireland.

In 1782 the Government in London gave the Irish Parliament power to legislate on Irish affairs. Only the Anglo-Irish minority were represented in this Parliament. Following the unsuccessful rebellion of Wolfe Tone's United Irishmen movement in 1798, Great Britain took back control of Ireland under the *Act of Union 1800*. The Irish Parliament was abolished in 1801; Irish interests were represented by members sitting in both Houses of the Westminster Parliament.

The question of 'Home Rule' for Ireland remained one of the major issues of British politics. By 1910 the Liberal Government in London depended for its political survival on support from the Irish Parliamentary Party. The conflict deepened as some unionists and nationalists in Ireland formed private armies. In 1914 Home Rule was approved in the *Government of Ireland Act* but implementation was suspended because of the First World War.

In 1916 a nationalist uprising in Dublin was put down and its leaders executed. Two years later the nationalist Sinn Féin party won a large majority of the Irish seats in the General Election to the Westminster Parliament. Its members refused to attend the House of Commons and instead formed their own assembly – the Dáil Éireann – in Dublin. In 1919 the Irish Republican Army (IRA) began operations against the UK administration.

In 1920 a new *Government of Ireland Act* provided for separate Parliaments in Northern and Southern Ireland, subordinate to Westminster. The Act was implemented in Northern Ireland in 1921, giving six of the nine counties of the province of Ulster their own Parliament with powers to manage internal affairs. However, the Act was not accepted in the South and the 26 counties of Southern Ireland left the United Kingdom in 1922.

From 1921 until 1972 Northern Ireland had its own Parliament. The unionists, primarily representing the Protestant community, held a permanent majority and formed the regional government. The nationalist minority was effectively excluded from political office and influence. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the civil rights movement and reactions to it resulted in serious inter-communal rioting. The UK Army was sent in to help the police keep law and order in 1969.

Terrorism and violence continued to increase. In 1972, the UK Government decided to take back direct responsibility for law and order. The Northern Ireland Unionist Government resigned in protest, the regional government was abolished and direct rule from Westminster began; this was to last until devolved powers were given back to a Northern Ireland Assembly in December 1999 (see page 32). The Northern Ireland Assembly and the Executive has been suspended on a number of occasions since 1999. The latest suspension was in October 2002, because the UK Government

considered that it was not possible to hold together an inclusive power-sharing Executive, since the confidence within the community necessary to underpin it had broken down.

Channel Islands and Isle of Man

The Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark being the largest in the group) were part of the Duchy of Normandy in the 10th and 11th centuries and remained subject to the English Crown after the loss of mainland Normandy to the French in 1204. The Isle of Man was under the nominal sovereignty of Norway until 1266, and eventually came under the direct administration of the British Crown in 1765, when it was bought for £70,000.

Today these territories each have their own legislative assemblies and systems of law, and their own taxation systems. The UK Government is responsible for their international relations and external defence. The Isle of Man Parliament, Tynwald, was established more than 1,000 years ago and is the oldest legislature in continuous existence in the world. It also has the distinction of having three chambers: the House of Keys; the Legislative Council; and the Tynwald Court, when the House of Keys and the Legislative Council sit together as a single chamber.

The United Kingdom is a member of the European Union (EU – see page 67) but the Channel Islands and Isle of Man are neither EU Member States in their own right nor part of the UK Member State. EU rules on the free movement of goods and the Common Agricultural Policy broadly apply to the Islands, but not those on the free movement of services or persons. Islanders

benefit from the latter only if they have close ties with the United Kingdom.

Further reading

Appendix B on page 496 lists significant dates in UK history.

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Regional Trends (annual publication). Office for National Statistics. The Stationery Office.

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The National Archives

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