

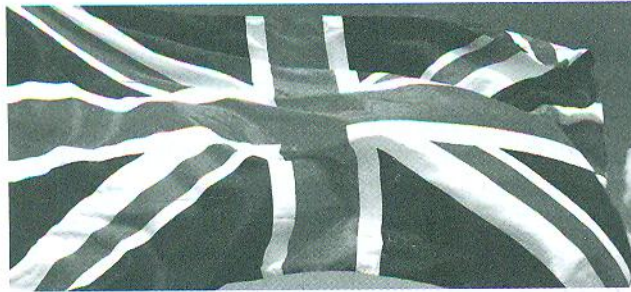
Chapter 1.

Great Britain and the United Kingdom

<i>Britannia</i>	[brɪˈtæniə]	<i>Brigantes</i>	[brɪˈgænteɪz]
<i>Boudicca</i>	[ˈbuːdɪkə]	<i>Bretayne</i>	[breˈteɪn]

Great Britain is a group of islands lying off the western coast of Europe, comprising the main territory of the United Kingdom. Great Britain is also used as a political term describing the combination of England, Scotland, and Wales, the three nations which together make up all the main island's territory.

The Union Flag below of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.



The Union Flag

The flag of the UK is sometimes wrongly called the **the Union Jack**, but Union Flag is actually the correct name as it only becomes a "Jack" when flown from a ship's jack mast.

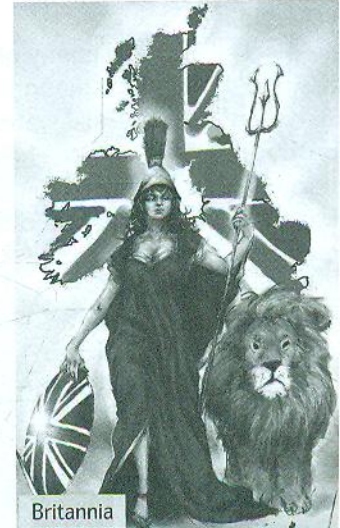
There are many coats of arms used in the UK and GB – in theory the arms of Queen Elizabeth should be used for the UK, but Scotland uses its own version and many English regions as well as Wales and Northern Ireland present their own version. None of these has been pictured.

There are two major iconic symbols of Britain, Britannia and John Bull.

In Renaissance times, **Britannia** upper right came to be viewed as the personification of Britain, in imagery that was developed during the reign of Queen

Elizabeth I. Both Royal and popular pageants have depicted her to symbolize Britain since then. The most likely origin of this symbol is **Queen Boudicca** (see the chapter on England).

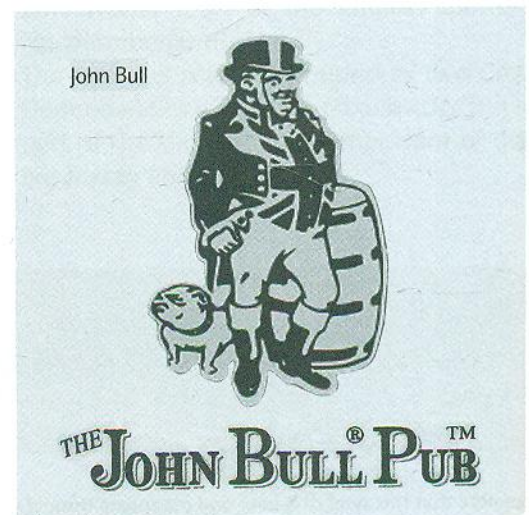
Britannia has appeared on many British coins and banknotes, but is currently only on the back of the 50 pence coin.

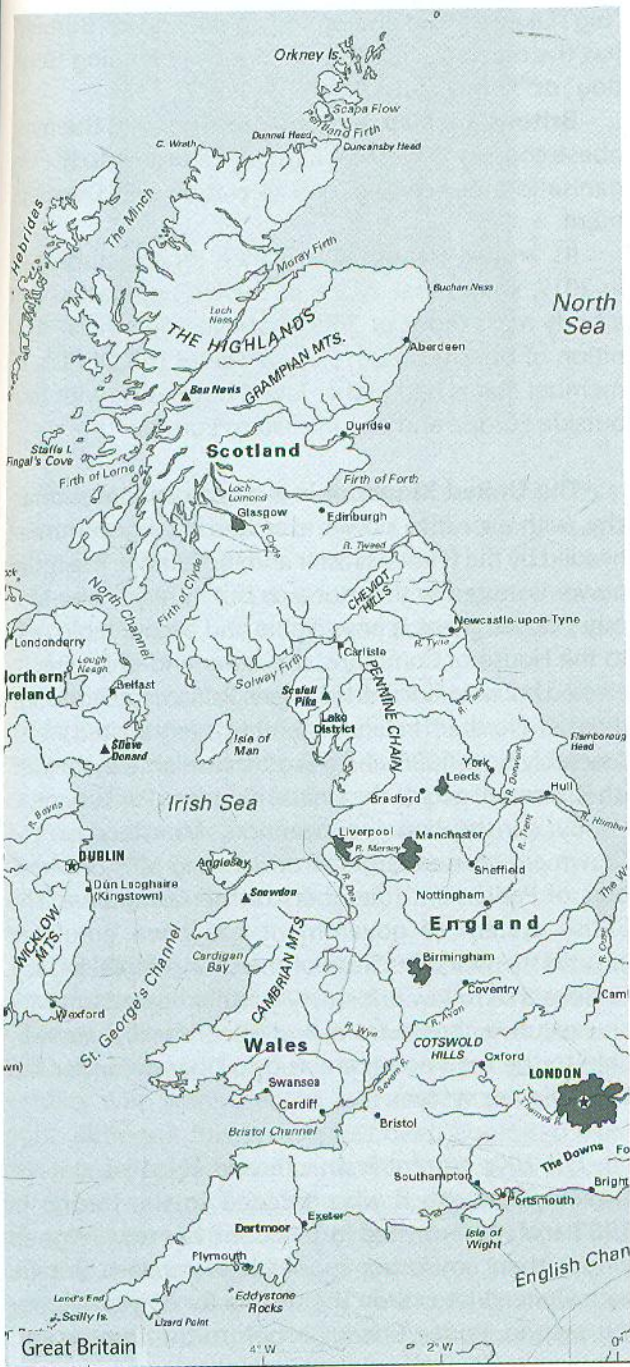


Britannia

John Bull is a literary and cartoon character created to personify Britain by Dr. John Arbuthnot in 1712 and popularized first by British printers and then overseas.

Bull is usually portrayed as a stout man in a tailcoat with breeches and a Union Jack waistcoat. He also wears a low top hat (sometimes called a John Bull topper) on his head and is usually accompanied by a bulldog, as on the pub sign below.





As well as the main island, Great Britain includes the *Isles of Scilly*, *Anglesey*, the *Isle of Wight*, the *Hebrides*, and the island groups of *Orkney* and *Shetland* but does not include the *Isle of Man* or the *Channel Islands*.

The part of the island of Ireland that includes Northern Ireland is also shown – this territory together with Great Britain is the United Kingdom.

“**Great Britain**” is also widely used as a synonym for the country properly known as the “**United Kingdom**”. This is **wrong** as the United Kingdom includes Northern Ireland in addition to the three countries of Great Britain.

The prefix “Anglo”, historically meaning English, is sometimes used to denote the UK, as in the Anglo-Irish Agreement or Anglo-French relations. Some people feel that this usage should be avoided, however, as it may cause offence to people from the other three nations which make up the UK. In the case of Anglo-English, used to describe language, it is much more precise, as it differentiates that form of English from the Scottish, Welsh, Irish and other dialects lumped together clumsily as “British English”.

The origin of the name “**Britain**” is unclear. Some historians say that when the Romans took over the southern part of Great Britain they named the island after the *Brigantes*, one of the largest Celtic tribes living there. The Romans gave it the name “*Britannia*”. The earlier Celtic inhabitants became known as “*Britons*” and the island as Britain. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the name *Britannia* largely fell out of use,

With an area of 229,850 km², the **main island of Great Britain** is the largest of the British Isles, itself an archipelago that comprises 6000 islands. The main island is the largest in Europe, and ranks either eighth or ninth in size among the islands in the world (depending on whether Australia is classified as an island or a continent).

This use of Great Britain is thought by some to derive from usage as an abbreviation of the correct full name of “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. But the British themselves occasionally use the abbreviation “GB”, such as in the Olympic Games where the UK team is sometimes informally referred to as ‘Team GB’ and the UK uses the international foreign vehicle identification code of “GB”. Similarly the currency in Northern Ireland as well as Great Britain is the GBP, which should logically be called the “UKP”.

