BRitain EXploration / Information Trip (BREXIT)

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June 9, 2019

1 A Brief Overview of my Interpretation of English History

To avoid an enormous amount of information, lacking context, relevance, and interest, being spewn at everyone on the trip, I have assembled a very high level overview of the history of England. I realize that the trip is not confined to only England and includes all of Britain, however my knowledge has a strong bias toward England between AD 500 and 1500, and again from 1800 to around 1950. I am, by no means, a proper historian; my aim is to provide an informal briefing to give everyone context to hang on to.
The island of Britain today holds the three countries of England, Scotland, and Wales. Since 1707, when Scotland came under English rule, they have existed as a single entity, the United Kingdom; Wales has been under English rule since 1290 or so. The smaller island (Ireland) contains Ulster (northern) Ireland, which is also part of the UK at this moment. The southern part of Ireland (Republic of Ireland) has been independent since 1916 plus or minus a few years based on who is counting. Nearly countless tiny islands surround these two, the so-called isles.

1.1 Pre-history to the Iron Age

Humans have inhabited what is now Britain since before the end of the last ice age, which came to an end between 10,000 and 11,000 years ago. The land now called Scotland, in northern Britain, would have been encased in ice, and the recently glaciated landscape there is stunning, if not creepy. Neolithic peoples erected large stone structures like Stonehenge, the Dartmoor alignment, and other monuments in southern Britain, the land now called England and Wales. The bronze age came to Britain sometime around 4,000 to 4,500 years ago, and some sites from this era still exist. Bronze age peoples made significant technological progress, including subterranean mining. By around the 8th century BC, Britain entered the iron age. In the south, this meant more intentional farming, organized cities with defenses and ports at rivers and harbors. In the north it is believed that less contact between groups took place. Greek explorers may have made contact with Britain as early as the 4th century BC. Strong evidence exists to suggest that the people in southern and southeastern Britain traded with mainland Europe prior to the arrival of the Romans in 55 BC. In Scotland, the iron age likely lasted until the 5th century AD.

1.2 Roman Britain

Julius Caesar failed to conquer Britain after his invasion in 55 BC. The scale and nature of fighting at that time are unclear to me. Some years later Calligula tried again but never reached the shores of Britain. Finally, in 43 AD Roman Emperor Claudius successfully invaded and occupied Britain. It is unclear how the Romans treated the indigenous peoples. In some cases, such as the Roman city of Dorchester, the Romans seemed content to build a settlement a few miles away and not destroy what had existed before. Of course, we don't have anything that the Romans did destroy to tell us whether it existed or not.
Britain was extremely important to Rome. The Romans built roads and fortified cities all over what is now England. Three different Roman Emperors died in England (not in combat). Constantine the Great was, in fact, proclaimed Emperor in York, not Rome. The Romans were initially pagan but became Christian officially some time in the 4th century. They spoke, and wrote, in Latin; some records of what happened during this ear survive, along with extensive ruins. These ruins include military, cultural, industrial, and domestic structures.

1.3 Medieval Britain

1.3.1 The Fall of Rome

By the early 5th century, Rome was on the ropes and withdrew the Roman Army from Britain. Unsurprisingly, this quickly led to instability. In 411 the Senate of Rome sent a letter to Roman officials in Britain telling them they were on their own and to figure out how to survive. Between 420 and about 500, the Angles and Saxons arrived from mainland Europe. Exactly how this happened is not well understood. Three major hypotheses dominate modern historians' views. The first states that the Roman officials hired Anglo-Saxon mercenaries to help maintain stability, but their failure to pay or some other abuse led to mutiny. A second hypothesis has the Anglo-Saxons deliberately invading from the continent. The third hypothesis, far tamer, posits that mass migration of Anglo-Saxon peoples from the mainland eventually came to dominate the culture of the island. The Saxons themselves wrote (unusual for them) that the second hypothesis was correct; albeit with some embellishment. They claimed (centuries later) that seven elite bands of warriors landed at different points on the island and conquered it. Certainly at least one major battle between the so called sub-Romans (the Roman leftovers) and Saxons took place; the Saxons lost. However, in the end the Roman remnant did fall to the Saxon groups.

1.3.2 Monasticism

Amidst the political changes taking place, several religious orders were rapidly growing in popularity. Monasticism played an important role in life in England (and Europe) for the following thousand years. While specifics aren't important, Abbots (in charged of Abbeys) and priors (in charge of Priories) were powerful political figures, although some popes toward the end of the first millennium argued that the church should be independent of the state, this view ultimately did not win out in Europe or England. Monastic life was divided into orders such as the Augustines, Cistercians, Benedictines, and others, named for the founder of the order. Monks were often educated, and many of England's universities such as Oxford and Cambridge came to exist from mergers of major monasteries. Agriculture and industry were also important for monasteries, which were typically self sufficient communities of up to hundreds that also engaged in trade. The Cistercian order, formed from a sect of the Benedictines, was among the more popular flavor of monasticism in England specifically. The Cistercians vowed poverty, piety, and chastity; it is possible that at least one of them may have temporarily kept the vow. Joking aside, many monasteries underwent stages of existence where sincerity and corruption ebbed and flowed. At different times in history kings were or were not allowed to appoint abbots and priors, which may have been connected with the degree of political involvement of the monasteries. In addition to rulers and educated monks, monasteries also housed lay brothers who worked at tasks like farming and blacksmithing. These lay brothers would enjoy the security and stability of the monastery but not participate in all of the religious activities that the monks performed. At different times and places this led to greater and lesser degrees of mistreatment, but lay brothers did not mass defect, so it is likely that they had the perception that it could be worse elsewhere. Nuns could also serve in monasteries, but all monasteries were single sex.

1.3.3 The Anglo-Saxon Era

The Saxons were initially pagan, and little is known about their interaction with the Christian Romans. Similarly, little is known about the indigenous British language, which seems to have coexisted with Rome, but not the Saxons. However, by later in the Saxon era, at least six social classes existed for Brittons (i.e., pre-Saxons) of which at least two were what we might today consider wealthy, but not royal or even aristocratic. Many Brittons fled to what is now Wales, Cornwall, Brittany France, and in lesser numbers to the Iberian peninsula. Christianity became popular among the Saxons fairly quickly after their arrival in England, certainly by the 7th century.

The Saxons did not have a single kingdom. For most of the Saxon era seven kingdoms co-existed in what is now England: Mercia, East Anglia, Kent, Northumbria, Wessex, Sussex, and Essex. Mercia was the most powerful throughout the 6th through 8th century, with Mercian king Offa being responsible for a major earthwork between Mercia and modern Wales. For a few centuries the Saxons seemed to have enjoyed some political stability with kings possibly being elected by a body of Barons called the Witan on a per-kingdom

basis. The details of this are unclear. By the mid 8th century, Viking raids were starting all over Europe. The Saxons suffered many raids at the hands of the Vikings, and eventually faced a full army. The Vikings conquered most of East Anglia and Northumbria, and in the late 9th century, Saxon king Alfred the Great successfully mounted a defense and drove the Vikings out of his kingdom of Wessex. For some time Alfred ruled the Saxon kingdoms that did not belong to the Vikings. The Viking area was called the Danelaw. One of Alfred's greatest accomplishments was the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles. This document, written in Old English, not Latin or Greek, is one of precious few Saxon writings, and by far the most accurate and realistic. While it details events from centuries prior to its writing, most of what is written concerning 9th century and later events seems to reflect at least some version of real events. Alfred the Great is remembered as being educated, and advocated for primary education in English over Latin. He is also remembered for being level headed and concerned with his citizens' well being, but specific examples remain elusive. However he really was, he was the first person to bear the title King of the Anglo-Saxons, but that office did not survive him. It would take another few decades for the seven kingdoms to be united. Few Saxon buildings survive, as most were made of wood and either decayed, burned, or were upgraded to stone later. The Saxons and later the early Normans were fond of motte-and-bailey castles. A motte-and-bailey is a hill with a wooden building on top (the motte), often surrounded by a dry or wet moat, connected to a walled settlement (the bailey). When times grew desperate, townsfolk could fall back to the keep. In rare circumstances, such as at Oxford, the Saxons built stone structures, but these were often omni-functional. the building in Oxford, for example, is a watch tower gate house church with arrow loops (slits) to allow for defense.

1.3.4 Early Medieval Wales

Meanwhile in Wales, a loose collection of principalities existed. These groups were not Saxons, and fought frequently with the Saxons on the border it would seem. While almost certainly more advanced than the people living in Scotland at the same time, they were considerably more primitive than the Saxons. One interesting fact about Wales is that it entered the second millennium with the same flag that it uses today. Of course, saying that Wales prior to the year 1000 had a single flag or unified government would be a gross misrepresentation of reality; perhaps better to say that at least one group in Wales was using the present flag at that time.

1.3.5 Unification of the Seven Kingdoms and the Norman Conquest

By the 10th century, Wessex had grown to dominance, and the Kingdom of England was formed under one king. These kings reigns were recorded, and it would seem that this era may have gotten off to a good start, with many kings reigning for decades at a time. However, the Danes remained a threat. Danish warrior Swain Forkbeard invaded England in the late 10th century and was proclaimed king by right of conquest, but died shortly thereafter. A Saxon ruled again after this, but soon after Swain's sons ruled one after another as they died, the most famous being Canut. By the mid 11th century, the Saxons of House Wessex were back in charge. Unlike for most of their history, in which names starting with Ethel were popular (Ethelred, Ethelwulf, etc), in the 11th century, Ed names were popular (Edgar, Edward, Edmund, Edwyn, etc). This era contrasts the previous as having notable instability. Edward the Martyr ascended the throne at age 16 before being murdered at age 19. Eventually, Edward the Confessor ascended the throne. The reign of Edward the Confessor seems to have been prosperous and to have embodied rule of law and other concepts that helped the society to recover some stability. Unfortunately, Edward the Confessor died without an heir, leading to immediate military conflict upon his death. Three different factions contended for the throne of England: Harold Godwyn, a Saxon relative of Edward, Harald Hadrata, a Danish distant relative and relative of Swin, and William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy. Harold Godwyn defeated the other Harold in north England in September 1066. however, on October 14, 1066 he met William in battle at Hastings, where he was killed. The army of William (now William the Conqueror) was comprised partly of Danish descended Normans, who had intermingled culturally with the French, as well as descendants of the displaced Brittons living in Brittany, France. William was crowned William I of England shortly thereafter and began the Norman era of English history. This event represents the last time a foreign power conquered the realm of England.

1.3.6 Feudalism and Manorialism

After successfully conquering what is now England, William I instituted feudalism. How exactly this differed from Saxon law concerning land ownership is not clear to me, as I have never found very many details about how the Anglo-Saxons did anything. Feudalism is an extremely orderly military and political system in which barons and knights receive a fee for services to the king. Such barons and knights are said to be enfiefed, and the fee itself was paid as a fief, a grant of land. This land was held fee simple if no strings were attached, the second highest form of possession. Only allodial possession is higher. Grants as a fee with some contingent conditions could also exist, which had other names like fee contingent. Allodial land is held sovereignly, by one's ability to defend it. Some pockets of allodial land that were not controlled by the crown (or crowns) may have existed within England, especially during the Saxon era. Today only national governments hold land allodially, but everyone on this trip still holds their land fee simple, check your closing documents. Services rendered could be military (typically), administrative, financial, or other less common services.
Underneath feudalism existed the economic system of manorialism. The enfiefed barons controlled manors, which were large tracts of land and settlements. Major cities and chartered towns (boroughs) were never part of manors, and some rural land existed outside of manors as well. Individual barons may at any time be the lord of several manors. Many different types of people lived on a manor. One group was called freemen. These folks paid rent to a lord in cash for use of land, a lesser form of possession than fee simple. Freemen had no other relationship with the lord than their lease agreement and could leave as they chose. Freemen were a moderate portion of the population, accounting for more than 10

1.3.7 The Domesday (Doomsday) Book

In 1086, William conducted an exhaustive census of everything in England. Feeling that the judgement of this census (as far as taxation was concerned) was approximately as final as the judgement of God at the end times, the English nicknamed it the Doomsday Book. From this point forward, the historical record of England is far more complete. The Normans built stone buildings, unlike the Saxons. In a show of power, they often rebuilt (as in, demolished and remade, not repaired) earlier Roman structures, sometimes on different alignments. Norman architecture has several obvious characteristics. First, the Normans were fond of square towers, especially at the end of buildings like churches. Second, they relied on Roman-style single keystone arches, unlike later split keystone Gothic arches. Finally, while slightly less re-use oriented than the Saxons who built defensible churches, Norman builders generally planned for the eventuality of combat. This meant small windows, thick, short walls with few interior columns, and few (small) doors. Some Norman buildings had glass windows, many did not, and had only air or shutters depending on the weather. The Normans did not seek to destroy or eliminate Saxon culture, however, and this relative tolerance likely contributed to Norman success.

1.3.8 Early Limitation of Royal Power

By the time that Henry I became king in 1100, power had been centralized under the crown sufficiently so as to need limitation. Whether for political reasons or as a result of his (and everyone's) suffering under his older brother, William II, Henry proclaimed the Charter of Liberties. This document protected nobility from double taxation with the clear expectation that this good will would be passed on to those living on the lands of the nobility. It also declared rule of law, specifically stating that nobles who committed crimes would be held accountable before the crown, not allowed to pay a fine to avoid the common man's punishment. Many of these decrees were deemed a return to the law as it had been under William I, who had strived to preserve Saxon law, which he admired, in common law courts, with some amendments. Importantly, these protections, and later protection of the right of women to inherit property and hereditary political office like their male siblings under king Stephen in the mid 12th century, were not radical reforms, but instead protections of what had been happening already. Most of the provisions of the Charter of Liberties and also Stephen's statute would not survive uninterrupted until the modern era, being lost some time around the Renaissance. A notable difference between the Charter of Liberties and the later Magna Carta is that Henry I drafted and proclaimed the Charter of Liberties, whereas the nobility wrote Magna Carta, and King John merely signed it upon their demand.

1.3.9 High Medieval England

After the death of Henry I the Norman line ended. Henry had, in fact, proclaimed that his daughter Matilda would succeed him, and his barons and nobles agreed. Matilda was extremely close to becoming England's first female head of state in the mid 12th century, but war broke out prior to her coronation. The result of the war was that Stephen, a Norman, would be king. King Stephen was weaker than Henry I, and some corruption returned under his rule. Contemporary writers viewed Henry I with great nostalgia, but as part of the treaty between Stephen and Matilda, the heir of Matilda would rule after Stephen, and this did indeed come to pass. Matilda's children formed a line known as the Plantagonates, or Anjouvans. These kings had extensive land holdings on the continent, and spent little time in England until those lands were lost. King John, who lost most of them, was forced into signing Magna Carta in 1215, adding significantly more limitation to the authority of the crown. Magna Carta is viewed by some modern historians as the first meaningful codified limitation of royal authority, but many of its provisions were nullified by popes and otherwise forgotten quickly. However, it did establish a tradition of English kings renewing or proclaiming a new coronation charter as they ascended the throne, a contract of sorts, between the new king and the nobility. This continued for a very long time (I'm not sure how late, but I think up to the 18th century). Meanwhile in academia, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge formed in the early 13th century from unions of a handful of monasteries each. Note that teaching activities were happening at Oxford before the 13th century, but the university, as such, became organized around this time.

To be clear, the High Medieval era was no stranger to political bullshit intertwined with religion. One example can be found during the so-called Octave of Christmas, the first eight days or the twelve days of Christmas. Roman Catholic and Anglican churches still celebrate the Octave to this day as it contains a variety of feast days. These feasts celebrate topics such as the birth of Christ, the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts, the family of Jesus Mary and Joseph, the abstract concept of innocence, and other things. One feast seems out of place, the feast of St. Thomas Becket, a 12th century Englishman. St. Thomas Becket is venerated as a martyr, but assassination describes his death in a more fitting manner than does martyrdom. Thomas was a secular ruler and friend of Henry II. Upon the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry figured he should install his friend as the new archbishop. Bear in mind that the Archbishop of Canterbury was then and is now the highest church office in England, higher than the other archbishops. Thomas agreed and accepted his appointment to the office, then a month or so later became a priest, then a few days later assumed the top office of that profession. For some combination of reasons that likely include a mixture of spite to Henry, sincere conviction, and political power playing, Thomas went full monk on Henry. Henry and Thomas fought over the role and authority of the church and king in government, and Thomas sought to bring about his interpretation of the will of God. This version offered strangely detailed information about taxation, coronation rights, and other particularly English topics. Frustrated by his friend failing to use his new position to expand royal control over the church, Henry called a council and the other archbishops drafted a resolution that mostly agreed with Henry but compromised a little for Thomas. All of the other archbishops signed it, but Thomas only conceded that he agreed with the spirit of the resolution while refusing to sign it. Not long after this, Henry sent men to Canterbury. It is not clear what exactly he ordered them to do, but they seem to have understood their role as to arrest Thomas and bring him back to Henry, and upon his refusal to comply to kill him where he stood. One eyewitness account claims that as they arrived at Canterbury Cathedral, the four knights hid their weapons outside and put on plain clothes over their armor then went inside and demanded that Thomas come with them. As he refused, they ran outside, recovered their weapons, then began to kill Thomas. This particular eyewitness claims that Thomas stood boldly through the first couple of whacks, but quickly fell to the floor, where one of the knights cut off the top part of his head, spilling a blood brain slurry onto the floor. The knights were all excommunicated, and later made a pilgrimage to Rome to plead for forgiveness from the Pope, not God of course. They received pardon contingent the penance of serving in the papal army for 14 years each and helping to construct a wall on the southern border of the US.

1.3.10 The English Conquest of Wales

By the mid 13th century, Welsh raids had intensified on England. Henry III and later Edward I (named after Edward the Confessor) put down Welsh raids. Initially Edward I was happy to execute the leaders and send the troops home, but after renewed aggression, he conquered Wales in the 1270's and completed

his conquest around 1283. he built a series of castles called the Curtain of Iron (hmmm....) and proclaimed his son, Edward, as Prince of Wales. To this day, the heir to the British throne is installed as Prince of Wales. Edward also attempted to conquer Scotland in his later years, but he died of old age during the campaign. His son Edward II was weak, and lost the campaign. The Scots still have a song commemorating this event in which they "sent proud Edward's army homeward to think again" about invasion. Scotland would remain independent until king James I of England VI of Scotland (same guy) became king of both in the 17th century, but the kingdoms did not formally unite until 1707, after the death of king James (yes, same guy who did the Bible).
The building style in the 13th century was early Gothic, and Edward's castles represent some of the finest examples of true High Medieval fortresses in existence. Some historians describe his Welsh building spree as an "orgy" of military design. The end of the Norman style, which was utilitarian primarily, giving way to the ornate Gothic style, is evident in many buildings in England. Some buildings were partially or fully converted to Gothic style. Gothic buildings, particularly places of worship, emphasized light, open spaces, curves, and vertical lines. Many outstanding examples of this style survive. Gothic builders also covered their structures in ornate trim pieces and stained glass. Not all buildings were glazed still, though. By the 14th century polygonal buildings were popular, often with steep roof lines. The so-called fan vault was very popular. A vault in general is just an arched room, but a fan vault is the body of rotation formed by taking an arch through a circle and then merging it with neighboring arches to make a quasi-flat ceiling. Many other multi-arch faults other than the fan vault exist, and the term fan vault is itself used loosely to cover a variety of structures, not all of which are strictly bodies of rotation. The arch style in Gothic buildings was very pointed, using a split keystone to create a point at the top. Massive columns within a building to widen out the spaces were popular during this time as well.

1.4 Gunpowder and the Renaissance

Gunpowder arrived in England around 1350, marking the end of the high Medieval era. Various wars (the Barons' war, the wars of the Roses, the Crusades) took place during and before this epoch. However this event, combine with the Black Death in the mid 14th century, served to end the Medieval era and accelerate the arrival of the Renaissance in England by 1500. During this transition many items became decorative rather than functional. The Black Death had profound consequences. It is not clear (to me) what fraction of the changes of the Renaissance were to the credit of the plague and which were to the credit of 16th century people's lust for Roman style glory. For whatever combination of reasons, labor grew more expensive, private citizens became wealthier, and a ton of religious and political crimes hit the books, along with an expansion of capital punishment. On the note of expansion, colonialism was just around the corner, pending the development of accurate maritime clocks.

1.4.1 Hints of Empire

The design of castles had bifurcated into palaces and forts by the reign of Henry VIII in the mid 16th century. Gunpowder era forts had sloping walls, curves, and gun ports, but lacked earlier features of what we might call castles, like towers, walls, and drawbridges. Palaces, on the other hand, were more or less houses; with some being large enough to have several floors of apartments for guests. Monasticism had played an important role in English life prior to Henry VIII, but his English Act of Supremacy, establishing the Anglican Church with himself as Pope, allowed Henry VIII to dissolve these institutions, which he did with haste. Between 1536 and 1540 all of the monasteries in England had been dissolved, and their lands and property forfeit to the crown. Being less of an asshole than we might expect, Henry did provide a lifetime pension to all those who had previously lived or worked in monastic orders. If only our modern politicians could find it in their heart to be as nice as henry VIII, well known psychopathic and crazy dictator. The separation of the administrative functions of the state from the military become slightly more noticeable in this era as well. The government of England, even back to the Saxon era, was not a military dictatorship, but the military as an arm of the state seems to come into its own in the 16th century. Henry VIII built a national system of coastal defense forts called "the Device" which were of similar design and provisioning, unlike the one off castles of his ancestors (with the notable exception of Edward I's Welsh building spree). The device forts were more regular even than Edward's castle, however, and we have records of their rather

systematic provisioning.

1.5 The British Empire

By the 17th century the age of empire had begun with settlements in the Americas getting off to a (slow) start. Explorers like Sir Walter Raleigh returned with stories and goods that made them very rich. Tragically, several unfortunate events for historians took place in the 17th century. The most devastating was the English Civil War from 1644 to 1648, in which Parliamentary forces defeated king Charles I, executed him, then destroyed all monuments and other structures they considered to be symbols of royal power. These include many of the castles in England proper, along with other statues and monuments. After installing a military dictator in place of Charles named Oliver Cromwell, lord Protector, the people decided that sucked, too, and brought Charles I's son, Charles II, back and made him king. After this, many wealthy landowners decided that ruins looked very attractive, so they bought and intentionally destroyed many older buildings and structures in order to make romantic gardens.
I previously mentioned that the time after the Renaissance saw a widespread increase in capital punishment, religious laws, and other general bullshit that we associate with the Old World. One great example of this took place during the English Civil War. The Round Heads (Parliamentarians) feared the Irish, and more generally all Catholics, so they enacted the Ordinance of No Quarter for the Irish. This law was actually enforced by the summary execution of Irish combatants taken as prisoners. Not many Irish folks fought in the war, however, so occasionally English soldiers were executed. Sometimes unrelated groups of unarmed Welsh women were massacred, too. In Shrewsbury, several Irish men were forced to cast lots to see who would be executed to make room for the English men to sleep inside the town, and then the losers were executed. The Royalists responded in kind, executing prisoners every time they heard about this law being enforced. What the actual fuck, nothing like this would have happened in the Medieval era, or today. I do not claim that massacres don't happen, and I do not claim that civilians are not killed, sometimes intentionally, but we don't enact laws that are tantamount to genocide.

1.5.1 Further Limitation of Royal Power

The pattern of the crown asking Parliament for money in exchange for concessions of power took place over hundreds of years. These limitations of power changed with the fashions of the eras, along with the names of various offices for nobles to hold power. Colonialism helped make new and interesting offices and ways to mistreat people. Generally it is thought that a private citizen would have had a trial by a jury in England through all of the time it was called England, but increasing numbers of political crimes with secret courts emerged leading into the 18th century. An example of this is the Vice Royalty courts in colonial America used to try cases of smuggling in a different region than where the crime took place (typically forbidden in English courts) and with no jury. Widespread use of capital punishment also typified this era.

1.6 The Industrial Revolution and Modern Era

By the 19th century what we might call modern scientific inquiry was beginning along with the Industrial Revolution. England abolished slavery in 1834, a key factor keeping England from entering the US Civil War on the side of the south. The cities of Birmingham, Newcastle, Cardiff, Swansea, London, and some others, but mostly Birmingham ushered in the era of cheap comfort. Rail lines connected the country quickly. Factors such as the commercialization of steam power, the Bessemer steel making process, and the ensuing collapse in transportation cost brought about by these set the background for engineering and industrial research to generate significant wealth. This, of course, came at the price of filthy, unsafe cities, short life expectancy, and environmental devastation. It would take some decades (centuries?) for society to understand how to act in light of industrialization. The height of British world influence was reached at the dawn of the 20th century.

1.6.1 World Wars and Post-War

Both world wars were unkind to Britain, but the inter war period was not a cakewalk either. In 1933, king George VI, being unable to pay his bills, asked Parliament for money. His request was granted on the

condition that a new government charter be issued, giving rise to the modern government of the UK. After WWII the railroads were nationalized and the National Health Service was founded. The history of WWII alone could fill a years worth of travel to the UK, so do not take its light treatment here as a sign of its insignificance. Truly heroic acts, like stapling the names of new families to orphans shirts before putting them, unattended, on trains to be handled by the conductors, took place in England during WWII. Major bombing of the cities resulted in enormous civilian casualties. After the war, the UK developed and gave up both nuclear weapons and independent access to space. In addition, most of the British Empire was granted independence through a variety of methods (peaceful, not, both). We don't know enough about what happened since the mid 20th century for me to summarize it at this pace. I believe that everyone in our group who cares about WWII already knows enough about it to leave off a more detailed description.

2 What I Plan to do Each Day

2.1 June 22

Lodging

Apple house, York.

Activities

Arrive, travel to York, see Clifford's Tower, use the wall as a tour after hours. Our B&B is just outside the city wall and only a few minutes walk from the train station.

2.2 June 23

Lodging

Apple House, York

Activities

York Minster, National Railway Museum

2.3 June 24

Lodging

Pickersgill Manor Farm, Yorkshire West Riding

Activities

Pick up car, Fountains Abbey, Rievaux Abbey and nearby Helmsley Castle

2.4 June 25

Lodging

Carr Edge Farm, Northumberland

Activities

Beamish Living History Museum, Hadrian's Wall or Durham if we finish early

2.5 June 26

Lodging

The Branstone, Llandudno, Wales

Activities

Hadrien's Wall and meander to Llandudno, Flint and Rhuddlan Castles are on the way if we get bored, but Llandudno is itself a 18th/19th century resort town so things exist there.

2.6 June 27

Lodging

The Branstone

Activities

Conwy Castle and town, the Great Orme

2.7 June 28

Lodging

Allytyfyrddin

Activities

Carreg-cennen castle, Dinefwr Castle and Dryslwyn Castle, all within a couple miles, all Native Welsh. Getting there takes us through Snowdonia national park which is supposed to be very beautiful. The route should contain at least some extremely rural parts, although I've opted for the way through the park which may put a lower limit on civilization compared to the non-park route. My thought is that they made the prettiest places into the national park.

2.8 June 29

Lodging

Haynall Villa

Activities

Slow day, 1 week in. Travel to Shropeshire, optionally by way of Kidwelly with very complete castle and industrial museum or Caerphilly castle. If we get to Shropeshire early enough we can see Iron Bridge.

2.9 June 30

Lodging

Haynall Villa

Activities

Stokesay Castle, Goodrich Castle, Iron Bridge if we missed it

2.10 July 1

Lodging

The Old Pound Inn, Somerset

Activities

Ludlow castle, Brockhampton Estate

2.11 July 2

Lodging

The Old Pound Inn

Activities

Stonehenge, Fleet Air Arm Museum Old Sarum, Salisbury Cathedral (Time permitting)

2.12 July 3

Lodging

Cavendale Guest House, Weymouth

Activities

The Tank Museum, The New Forest (backups: Corfe Castle, Sherborne, Maiden Castle Iron Age Settlement)

2.13 July 4

Lodging

Cavendale Guest House, Weymouth

Activities

Weymouth, Nothe Fort, Portland Castle

2.14 July 5

Lodging

The Three Acres Guest House

Activities

Portsmouth Dockyard, HMS Victory, Porchester Castle

2.15 July 6

Fly home.

3 Cities and Regions on the Trip

3.1 York

York can be understood as a time capsule. Beginning with at latest the Romans, York was a city of regional and occasionally global significance until around 1840. While little is known about pre-Roman York, the Romans loved the place, which was their northernmost city. As mentioned in the history section, several Roman emperors died in York, none in combat, and Constantine the Great was proclaimed emperor of the Roman empire there. York likely remained a cultural center after the fall of Rome, even well into the Saxon era. Unfortunately, it fell into the hands of the Vikings, so whatever activity the Saxons had there sits mostly beyond the reach of historians. By the arrival of the Normans, however, the city remained intact, and was promptly rebuilt as a show of strength. From 1080 on York underwent considerable construction and economic growth. BY 1300 a guild of investors existed in York who engaged in overseas trade with more or less all of the known world. By 1500 many of the prominent old buildings of today were present. Like other places in England, the crazy got more intense post Renaissance and led to such insane things as installing a bronze door knocker on the northernmost gate and enacting a law that all Scots who wished to enter must ceremonially knock on the door. York was a big enough deal around the time the American colonies were getting off the ground to get a new version. By the 19th century, York looked like it would be a major participant in the Industrial Revolution. Positioned between Birmingham, Newcastle, and London, York got its first railway station in 1839 (although the existing station dates from 1877). However, due to a variety of political and economic factors, York more or less fell off the map immediately after that, and did not meaningfully participate in the Industrial Revolution. In the 20th century York played home to Cadbury, as in cream eggs. York today uses traditional names for many structures and can be confusing to a modern audience. For example, in York the Medieval roads are called gates, and the Medieval gatehouses are called bars. So, for example, the gate house in the city wall connected to the street that goes to York Minster is called Monkgate Bar. A place you can order a drink called Monkgate Bar sits next to it today.

3.1.1 York City Walls

York retains approximately 3/4 of its original Medieval wall. Part of the wall is visible almost immediately after exiting the train station, which sits just outside the wall. The top of the wall is open as a walking path, and it makes for a good way to see the city after other attractions have closed.

3.1.2 Clifford's Tower

Like many cities, York once was part of a motte-and-bailey castle. In fact, after the Norman conquest William I built two. The early post-Viking years were rough, and both were burnt. The castles were rebuilt. Today one of them is only a bare motte, but the other, part of York Castle proper, is Clifford's Tower. The stone keep now atop the motte was built by Henry III in the mid 13th century and is not original Norman construction. The castle remained in military use until 1684 and remained in use in an official capacity, mostly as a jail, until 1929. The wooden decks that made up the second and third floors have burned, but the outer rooms made of stone remain. As castle ruins go this one is small since it is just the keep, but offers excellent views of the city and a good introduction to Medieval ruins since you can still climb all the way to the top.

3.1.3 National Railway Museum

Trains, any questions? This museum houses some unique locomotives and rollingstock, along with lots of engines and other railroad related items. Be sure to pack your drool cup.

3.1.4 York Shambles

York retains its original Medieval street layout, along with many of its original Medieval storefronts. This is more of a see-it-on-the-way-somewhere type deal, since the stores and restaurants operating there now are just modern stores.

3.1.5 York Minster

York minster may be incorrectly called York Cathedral from time to time. A Cathedral contains a cathedra, which is Latin for throne, and is the office of a bishop. The archbishop of York does use this building as his office, so it is also a cathedral church, but due to its pre-Norman establishment as a teaching center, it retains the name minster. A minster can also be a church that was formerly associated with a monastery, just for reference. All the same, the present building took 252 years to build, and was finished around 1450. It sits on top of an older Norman church from around 1080 that sits on top of a Roman basilica. York Minster contains the world's largest collection of original Medieval stained glass, which still sits in the windows. It is an outstanding example of high gothic architecture. Many important building features that we will see again, such as transepts, a chapter house, nave, presbytery, undercroft, fan vaults, bosses, and others can be readily viewed here. The basement contains an exhibit about how the building was saved from collapse in the 20th century along with Roman murals and the modern concrete piers that now hold the building.

3.1.6 Merchant Adventurer's Guild Hall

This is the meeting place of that investment group mentioned in the blurb above. It is unique for two main reasons. First, it contains a significant amount of original Medieval joinery, as in, the wooden parts of the building from 1308 are still there. Second, it has never changed hands. It has been continuously owned by and is still owned by the Merchant Adventurer's Guild, who built it originally in 1308. Until the mid twentieth century a large part of the building was used as a hospital funded by the guild, and today it houses a collection of historic artifacts from York's past.

3.1.7 Yarvik Center

This is a time walk style exhibit displaying Viking ruins unearthed during excavation in the early 21st century. It shows some unaltered ruins and others that have had exhibits installed in them to show what may have happened there with sights sounds and smells to match. York was a Viking city and while most of the Viking influence has subsided under Norman influence, this museum gives a little glimpse of the centuries that the Vikings lived here.

3.1.8 Cold War Bunkers

These were opened to the public very recently, and I know very little about them other than that they are extensive.

3.1.9 Bridges of York

Many bridges exist in York, most that exist today were built in the 19th century. Some exotics make it into the list, an early 20th century drawbridge, and one of England's cast iron bridges. We will see these no matter what we do.

3.2 Yorkshire

Yorkshire, like Eliren, is split into four ridings. We will mostly see the Northern Riding, but if you so desire you can easily get a tour through the moors or dales that will cover more of the shire. Plenty of interesting things happened in Yorkshire; if you're into bullshit the Bronte worshippers gather here to read poems or whatever. Many traditional villages also exist, along with several extensive abbey ruins and castles. I'm not the expert on how the arts interact with this region, but I do know that the long and short of it is a lot. Many of the towns and villages retain their original charters and market days, with market squares to facilitate those markets. House York was one of the royal lines descended from the Plantagonate Kings, but ultimately lost out the bid (war) for the crown against House Lancaster.

3.2.1 Fountains Abbey

Extensive ruins of a Cistercian abbey with hydroelectric facility from the early 20th century and massive 18th century gardens. Several buildings exist in the gardens, the entire abbey being one set.

3.2.2 Riveaux Abbey

Similar to Fountains, but having different structures being more complete. This is not far from Helmsley Castle, which did not make the list in its own right, but can be a quick side trip from here.

3.2.3 Helmsley Castle

Extensive dramatic ruin of a proper high Medieval fortress. Not far from Riveaux Abbey.

3.2.4 Whitby Abbey

Dramatic ancient abbey (actually a priory, not an abbey for its first handful of centuries). This abbey overlooks the North Sea and was one of the first places to be destroyed by Vikings in England. It was built by the Anglo-Saxons in the 7th century, but the replacement Benedictine Abbey dates from the 13th century if I'm not mistaken. Like all monasteries in England it dissolved around 1540, which wasn't good news for building upkeep. However, the abbey was in much better shape prior to WWI during which it was tragically shelled by German battleships who mistook it for a coast guard station.

3.2.5 Bolton Abbey

While the buildings are Bolton may not be as extensive as Fountains or Riveaux, it has several interesting characteristics. First, the nave of the church remains perfectly intact and in use to this day. Second, many of the ruined areas were not intentionally demolished, but instead abandoned mid-construction during the dissolution of the monasteries. Third, Bolton Abbey came as part of an estate, a fief. Unlike many such Medieval instruments, the estate of Bolton still exists, with all of the villages (no longer filled with Villains) and lands. The estate employs hundreds of people, as it has for centuries, and remains the primary seat of its owners. The Estate of Bolton, with corresponding castle, abbey, parish churches, and villages, gives an, admittedly faint, glimpse into the structure of Medieval life with a modern facade.

3.2.6 Richmond Castle

Extensive castle ruin, high Medieval. Walking distance from Easby Abbey

3.2.7 Easby Abbey

Extensive remains of a particular order of monastery. Not as large as others, but does contain 13th century paintings and is walking distance from Richmond Castle.

3.2.8 Conisborough Castle

Less complete but still extensive ruin than Richmond, also high Medieval.

3.2.9 Skipton Castle

Very complete Medieval castle with Tudor era upgrades, I have never been to this one, which is rare for castles in England.

3.2.10 Middleham Castle

Extensive castle ruin, high Medieval.

3.3 Northumberland

Part of the ancient Saxon kingdom of Northumbria (big surprise), this area remains quite rural with the notable exception of the Industrial Revolutionary city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the corresponding industrial coal mining activity in county Durham. The new castle was built in around 900, and no longer exists. I have not spent much time in Northumberland, but it needs to make it on the list due to its important museum collection.

3.3.1 Beamish Museum

Beamish is a bespoke living history museum that I have never visited but has been on my list for a long time. If I'm not mistaken, they have some very early locomotives still operating, and the site consists of a large town, mine, and extensive rural areas. The town is comprised of buildings moved to this site to avoid demolition, and the transit network around the park uses authentic Industrial Revolution era vehicles. The residents and workers are paid, of course, but they are also supposed to be well versed in their subject matter (printing, cooking, blacksmithing, mechanic work, dentistry, etc) from the late 19th century. All sources indicate that this is a whole-day affair. Honestly, I think I could just ride the miles of preserved 1890 vintage electric city tram for most of a day

3.3.2 Hadrian's Wall

Hadrian was a Roman emperor who shut down the government of Rome while trying to figure out how to make Scotland pay for a wall that... wait no sorry he wasn't that stupid. Hadrian's Wall is one of the many failed attempts to thwart off cultural and social change by way of erecting a physical barrier. There were a few other walls built north of it later, but none as extensive. It goes literally all the way, coast to coast, across England, which is something like 80 miles. most of it remains intact as its second millennium of existence draws closer to an end. Many forts and gate houses exist in the wall, and private and military structures from the Roman era exist near it.

3.3.3 Alnwick Castle

A heavily modified Medieval castle, one of the handful that remained in use through to the present. Very little of what is visible today is Medieval, and even the few Medieval buildings have 19th century interiors. This castle is notable in that it is the exterior, and part of the interior, of Hogwart's Castle. It is the present family home of the 12th Duke of Northumberland, who is nice enough to open nearly all of it, except his private quarters, to the public.

3.3.4 Durham

Durham has much less density of historic sites than York, but it is the namesake of the town I live in, and does feature an unfinished high gothic cathedral and the oldest surviving industrial steel furnace in England (likely the world). The cathedral was high Medieval and the furnace was pre-Bessemer. I've never been, and likely won't go this time, but I wanted to include it in this list.

3.4 Llandudno (Welsh, pronounced Klan-did-no)

This Welsh coastal city served as a popular vacation spot in the 19th century. It has been inhabited since at latest the bronze age. The High Medieval walled city of Conwy, more of an extensive outer bailey of Conwy Castle than a city, retains more than 99

3.4.1 Conwy Castle

Perhaps the most perfect Medieval castle, and certainly the image that many modern people conjure up when thinking about what a castle should be. Conwy was built in 1283, avoided substantial destruction in the English Civil War, and other than losing its roofs and finish pieces, is more or less intact. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and contains perhaps the finest extant examples of Medieval royal private

chambers as well as certain defensive structures in the walls. It was among the last true Medieval castles built, with gunpowder arriving only a few decades after its completion. It was built as part of Edward I's Curtain of Iron following his conquest of North Wales.

3.4.2 Conwy

Edward I also ordered the building of a town along with Conwy Castle. The town still exists, with several 13th and 14th century buildings and a complete wall with original gatehouses.

3.4.3 The Great Orme

This site can be reached via 19th/early 20th century tram. A Victorian era mineshaft appears at the top, but upon further inspection it turns out the mineshaft crosses a more primitive mining operation. It was clearly the Vikings, no the Romans, no even further back, it is one of the oldest known bronze age copper mines. The 4500 year old miles of underground mine are available for tour, in addition to the surface mining operations.

3.4.4 Other Curtain of Iron Castles

Since Edward I did not have modern transportation, he build his castles close together. Caernarfon, Flint, Rhuddlan, Beaumaris, Harlech, and other Curtain of Iron castles are varyingly within reach of Llandudno; but to see more than one might burn up a large chunk of the day. Each one was built in a different architectural style, but with similar military structures and defenses. For example, Caernarfon is built with different color sandstone in layers in its outer walls to make it look like the walls of Constantinople. Conwy is more imposing, but was likely plastered and whitewashed in its day. many of them had specific purposes, either serving as ports, military centers, political centers, or other functions.

3.4.5 Bridges

The Conwy estuary is crossed by three bridges, one suspension bridge from the 19th century, one hideously ugly thing that looks like a shipping container that is significant in some way I forget, I think it was the longest single span at one point, and a reasonable looking modern bridge.

3.5 Central Wales

Get ready to not understand anything. I have never been to central Wales and it has been on my list for a long time. The area is supposed to have outstanding natural beauty. There are also a couple of castles that I need to check off my list (autism, a cruel disease). This part of Britain is the legendary home King Arthur and Merlin the Magician. We will be on the eastern side of central Wales, but the whole country is only about 70

3.6 Shropeshire

Shropeshire sits on the English side of the Welsh border near Birmingham, the birthplace of the industrial revolution. Several significant artifacts of industrial history can be found here. Dinosaurs liked it, too, apparently although that seems to be true for most of southern England.

3.6.1 Stokesay Castle

This 13th century castle was built and owned by a private citizen who was not a member of the nobility. Despite this, he was friends with Edward I, and was thus granted the license to build and fortify the place. The side facing Wales looks like Conwy, the side facing England looks like a house. Stokesay castle, like the Merchant Adventurer's Guild Hall in York, retains a large amount of original Medieval wooden construction.

3.6.2 Iron Bridge

Hilariously, this was a very original name at the time. This is the world's very first iron framed bridge; note, not the oldest surviving today, but the very first ever built. The techniques used later on bridges like those we see on A trips had not been invented yet, so the Iron Bridge was framed like a wooden bridge and held together with dove tails and other wood joinery cast into iron girders. It carried vehicle traffic for just under 200 years from the eighteenth into the second half of the twentieth century, but was eventually replaced by a wider, safer bridge. Today it is open to pedestrians only.

3.6.3 Ludlow Castle

Ludlow was among the first stone castles built in England. Here castle means Medieval fortification, the Romans had built in stone centuries earlier. After the Norman conquest when locations like York were receiving wooden motte-and-bailey castles like the one that evolved into Clifford's tower, the government went directly to stone for this strategically important location. Wars between England and Wales affected this castle and it fell under siege many times. Unlike many castles in England it was not destroyed during the Civil War, because even the Round Heads knew it had strategic value, so instead of blowing it up they garrisoned it. The castle fell into disrepair and became a ruin during the days of Empire, but by the time of the Romantic era everyone wanted to paint it, and by 1900 it had been cleaned up. A mansion from the eighteenth century sits in the outer bailey. The castle is still owned by the Earl of Povis, not English Heritage, but he is nice enough to open it to the public (for a fee).

3.6.4 Brockhampton Estate

Recall from the history section of this document that manorialism formed the foundation of Medieval feudalism. Most estates or manors in England and Wales no longer exist as such, with a few notable exceptions being the Bolton Estate in Yorkshire. In Scotland the old manors exist more frequently. The manor surrounding Brockhampton does not still directly control the villages within it I don't think, but does retain its farmland and, importantly, its Medieval manor house.

3.6.5 Goodrich Castle

Goodrich Castle serves as a good example of royal mimicry among the nobility. Goodrich is styled to look like Conwy, but was not built by Edward I as part of the Curtain of Iron. Some historians in the 19th century discussed Goodrich as an example of so-called Bastard Feudalism, a practice in which vassals of the Crown (nobility) would grant portions of their land to their underlings almost like a smaller version of what happened on a national scale. The term is not used in most modern discussions of the era as the idea of hierarchy of that sort would not have likely existed in the form imagined. Certainly nobles had underlings in charge of their estates, however. This was so common in the 13th century that Edward I passed a law requiring nobles to actually live in their own castles. Constables, reeves, and other officials would manage castles, manors, and shires while the nobility were away.

3.6.6 Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury resembles York in as much as it offers a very focused glimpse into the past, but the era on display came several centuries later. Though it has been a city since Roman times, Shrewsbury retains almost none of its Roman or Medieval features, even St. Chad's church collapsed due to a failed ratchet strap sometime in the 18th century. The town has considerable pride in its history being filled with progressive thought and liberalism. This is perhaps not undue, as Shropeshire was very literally the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, and birthplace of Charles Darwin and others.

3.6.7 Shrewsbury Coach Inns

As a coach stop along a major road, Shrewsbury had many coach inns from the Medieval era to present. Some of them still exist and operate as inns. Even if we end up not staying at one, they for the most part have pubs or other eateries.

3.6.8 Ditherington Flax Mill

While only a little over 50 feet tall, not as tall as the tallest stone masonry buildings, the Ditherington Flax mill has been called the father of the skyscraper because it is the world's first iron framed building. It is not always open to the public, but I have had good success asking for tours of places like this before, so I'll send an email before we go.

3.6.9 Abbeys

Two abbey ruins sit near Shrewsbury. Truly there may be more than two, but there are at least two good ones.

3.6.10 Chepstow, Wales

While Shrewsbury is in England, it the closest we will come (by travel time, not geographic distance) to the town of Chepstow, Wales. This town is small, around 10k inhabitants. The interesting bits of Chepstow are its massive mid-20th century motorway suspension bridge linking England and Wales over the confluence of rivers that is, at that point, beginning to form the Bristol Channel. Other interesting features are the extensive castle ruin, which may be the oldest post-Roman stone fortification on the entire island. An old iron bridge crosses the river Wye, which is the border of England and Wales (Chepstow is right on the border). The river Wye has a daily tidal range of over 40 feet, which changes on the order of unit hours. Sometimes traditional dance groups from the Forest of Dean and other places roam around here as well. From Shrewsbury, it is 2 hours by train, we can likely do better by car from further south, say when we are in south Shropeshire or western Somerset. I didn't give Chepstow its own section because there isn't enough there for several days, but I wanted to include it at least as a possible day trip.

3.7 Dorset and Somerset

Part of the ancient Saxon kingdom of Wessex, Dorset and Somerset contain numerous sites from the neolithic era through today. The most prominent Neolithic site is Stonehenge. One of the world's oldest working clocks live here. A cliff carving of a giant with a huge dick adorns the town of Cerne Abbas. The tiniest pub in England is here, along with plenty of castles, abbeys, and WWII sites.

3.7.1 Stonehenge

Druids can teleport to here after level 19, and bring their friends after level 29.

3.7.2 Fleet Air Arm Museum

I have never been to this museum, but they have some neat aircraft in several buildings of which one is set up to look like the deck of an aircraft carrier.

3.7.3 Salisbury Cathedral

This High Gothic cathedral has the largest surviving example of several architectural features such as cloister, close, and spire of buildings from its era. It has been in continuous use for over 750 years and took 38 years for initial construction to be completed. It houses one of the world's oldest working clocks and one of four original copies of Magna Carta. It nearly collapsed under the weight of the spire, which was added after the building was complete, so the choir lofts had to be removed to make way for more support.

3.7.4 The Tank Museum

Like the Fleet Air Arm Museum except for tanks, including some very early examples of WWI tanks. I think they may have the only German Tiger tank that still exists.

3.7.5 Corfe Castle

Corfe was said to be the most secure castle in England in 1200. The remaining ruins display the vast inner and outer wards and baileys, along with some interior trim work and the remains of a keep. The castle was demolished in the 1640's by Parliament. The nearby town features a large number of buildings with unusually nice stonework from around that era. A traditional arts and music center exists on the site today with various ultra-hipster approved activities.

3.7.6 Sherborne

Sherborne is an otherwise unremarkable tiny town except for a few goodies. First, a castle has existed here since the 11th century. Unfortunately, that castle was substantially destroyed in the Civil War, and then finished off by Walter Raleigh, well known destroyer of castles (he found piles of rocks to be beautiful compared to slightly damaged buildings). Being a swell guy, he build us Sherborne New Castle across the river from Sherborne Old Castle. The new castle is just a mansion, not a proper castle. Additionally, Sherborne Abbey escaped destruction during the dissolution. The local peasants loved the building so much that they raised the funds to purchase it from Henry VIII, and it is a school to this day. The main Abbey church is open to the public.

3.7.7 Maiden Castle

Maiden Castle is not a castle, but the remains of an Iron Age Settlement. The Roman city of Dorchester sits around 2 miles from Maiden Castle. The site features huge earthworks whose purpose is not well understood although it is likely they were for defense.

3.7.8 Various Sites of Nature

The Jurassic Coast, Durdle Door, and other coastal and inland sites of natural beauty exist in these counties. They are also not too far from the New Forest. In the 1100's, King John (I think) was worried that all of the world's forests would go away due to rapid development and deforestation. This was a big deal, you see, because he enjoyed hunting. To combat this he order the installation of The New Forest (TM). This is significant now since it is more or less the first government organized nature preserve of this scale. It is also now a 900 year old forest, which has its own intrinsic interesting qualities; it is home to peacocks and miniature horses that do not fear humans. If we're being honest, nature preserve is perhaps not the best name for something that was created artificially to protect the king's ability to kill animals.

3.8 Weymouth

I spent some weeks in the summers as a kid in Weymouth while my dad worked at a facility near there. Weymouth hosted the 2012 Olympic sailing competition, because it is the sunniest place in England, so it only rains like 300 days a year instead of 364. Weymouth was one of the main ports from which the D-Day invasion launched, and has been a popular vacation spot since the 18th century. The Portland quarry (as in Portland Cement) is nearby. King George III, the one we fought in the Revolution, stayed in Weymouth for some time, and a very large cliff carving of him sits nearby. This angered the townsfolk, however, since it shows him leaving the town.

3.8.1 The Coast

There is a beach in Weymouth where water exists.

3.8.2 Nothe Fort

This fort was built in the 19th century and was used through WWII. Today it contains a museum with military hardware and is itself one of the best preserved forts of its era.

3.8.3 Portland Castle

Before Nothe Fort, Portland Castle was built as part of Henry VIII's campaign of building known as the Device. Portland is by far the best preserved Device fort and is entirely intact now, including plastered walls, with the exception of the upper gun platform's wooden section, which burnt. This is from after castles split into houses and forts, so it much more resembles a military building to a traditional castle. Some prototype Mulberry harbors can be seen from the castle's remaining gun decks. A sister fort was built across the harbor, but it lies in ruins.

3.8.4 Portland Quarry and Lighthouse

These things are not related, but are very close to one another. The lighthouse is from the 20th century, and had a particular blinking pattern to allow ships to known where they were (assuming they had the book with the blink codes in it). The quarry was an important source of stone and also Portland cement, but today houses extensive artistic work.

3.8.5 Abbotsbury

A nearby town with a swannery for Her Majesty's Swans (she officially owns all the swans in England). Abbotsbury has a 14th century chapel and also an example, not always open to the public, of a threshing barn. A threshing barn was a place where peasants paid tithes and taxes in grain during the Medieval era.

3.8.6 Time Walk

Weymouth has a decent time walk where historians have created or moved storefronts and other artifacts into a facility to create an approximation of how streets may have looked in different eras with an audio tour.

3.8.7 Drawbridge

The river in Weymouth is crossed by a drawbridge from the 1930's, built with the same mechanism as Tower Bridge in London (but with no towers). The bridge opens each day a few times on a strict schedule, very British.

3.9 Portsmouth

Portsmouth is home to the world's second largest natural harbor. The Romans and every civilization since have valued the city as an important strategic and trade center. Two castles exist here and the port and naval yard here remains the heart of the British Navy. During the era of the British Empire the navy was the primary source of military strength, and this port was from whence it hailed.

3.9.1 Portsmouth Harbor and Dockyard

This is why the trip goes through Portsmouth. We won't spend a night here so there probably won't be time for the other items. Several very significant ships are moored or in dry dock at this port. Notably it is home to the HMS Victory, a first rate ship of the line and the only surviving original (i.e., not salvaged) age of sail naval vessel of the British Empire, and I believe the only ship of the line left in the world. Also the first iron-hull ship of the British Navy, one of the one of the last World War I naval vessels in the world and a few later ships from World War II including a submarine.

3.9.2 Portsmouth Castle (Device Fort)

One of the nine forts of the Device, Henry VIII's plan to defend the realm from France. This one is not in as great a shape as Portland Castle and has been modified more extensively. One interesting thing about this fort, however, is that the last time it saw military action was World War II when it was over 400 years old. The action wasn't very fierce, just the capture of a few French vessels that were in the port, ironic given that it was built to keep French ships out of the port.

3.9.3 Porchester Castle

In Latin, a porta is a door or entrance and a castrum (plural castra) is a fortification. Over the millennia in England castrum has softened into caster and chester. Can you guess what the Romans were going for when they named this structure? Porchester differs from many other castles in England in that it contains extensive remains from both the Roman and Medieval eras. Most Roman forts were square to approximately golden ratio rectangles with semi-circular towers protruding from the walls every so often. The Roman wall still exists at Porchester, but a Medieval keep was added centuries later. The Roman wall remains in great shape, the keep is ruined but much of it remains.

3.9.4 Brownsea Island

The site of Bayden Powell's first Boy Scout campout, Brownsea is otherwise a tiny, uninspiring island in the middle of Portsmouth harbor. It is about half a square mile in area.