



BRITISH

Language & Culture

Acknowledgments

Associate Publisher Mina Patria

Managing Editors Bruce Evans, Martine Power

Editors Janet Austin, Kate Mathews

Managing Layout Designer Chris Girdler

Layout Designer Carol Jackson

Production Support Larissa Frost, Chris Love

Product Development Janine Eberle, Laura Jane, David Kemp, Michael Ruff, Laura Stansfeld

Language Writers Dr Elizabeth Bartsch-Parker, Stephen Burgen, Richard Crowe, David Else, Dr Roibeard O Maolalaign, Dominic Watt

Thanks

Sasha Baskett, Kylie McLaughlin, Trent Paton, Piers Pickard, Kirsten Rawlings

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

3rd Edition – March 2013

ISBN 978 1 74104 826 1

Text © Lonely Planet 2013

Cover Image Cover montage by Andy Lewis. Cover photographs: abzee, altugphotography, Brian A Jackson, Duncan Walker, kertlis, Life on White, Lillis Photography, PeskeyMonkey, Sashkinw, Simon Bradfield/iStockphoto©

Printed in China 0 987654321

Contact lonelyplanet.com/contact

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trade marks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: www.lonelyplanet.com/ip

Although the authors and Lonely Planet try to make the information as accurate as possible, we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by anyone using this book.

Paper in this book is certified against the Forest Stewardship Council™ standards. FSC™ promotes environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.





A SHORT
HISTORY OF
BRITISH

5



**SPORT &
ENTERTAINMENT**

87



SPEAKING
BRITISH
ENGLISH

25



**SLANG &
MISUNDERSTANDINGS**

121



**LIVING LIFE –
THE BRITISH WAY**

43



**REGIONAL
VARIATIONS**

145



**EATING,
DRINKING &
MAKING MERRY**

71



**REGIONAL
LANGUAGES**

187

NORWEGIAN SEA

SHEPHERD ISLANDS

Foula

Mainland

Fair Isle

Westray
Rousay
Mainland
Hoy

ORKNEY ISLANDS

South
Ronaldsay
Duncansby
Head

NORTH
SEA

St Kilda

Lewis

North Uist
Benbecula

South Uist
Barra

Rùm
Eigg

Coll
Tiree

Mull

Colonsay

Jura

Islay

Kintyre

North Channel

Arran

Machars

Cartistie

Solway Firth

Isle of Man

Anglesey

Llyn Peninsula

Cardigan Bay

Swansea

Newport

Bristol

Stonehenge

Southampton

Exeter

Bournemouth

Plymouth

Isle of Wight

Lyme Bay

Land's End

Isles of Scilly

Gulf of Saint Malo

Guernsey

Jersey

English Channel

Strait of Dover

Canterbury

Hastings

Eastbourne

Portsmouth

Brighton

Maidstone

Southend-on-Sea

Chelmsford

Ipswich

Cambridge

Leicester

Nottingham

Sheffield

Manchester

Leeds

York

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Pennines

Southern Uplands

Glasgow

Stirling

Dundee

Aberdeen

Grampians

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Mull

Tiree

Coll

Eigg

Rùm

Barra

South Uist

Benbecula

North Uist

Harris

The Minch

Skye

Loch Ness

Loch Lomond

Firth of Forth

Edinburgh

Bute

Arran

Kintyre

North Channel

Islay

Jura

Colonsay

Come on you lily-livered pansies!



A SHORT HISTORY OF BRITISH



Look out for these...

CLASSIC PHRASE:

'WASSSAMATTER WIV YER?'

The way they say 'What is wrong with you?' in the area around London

TRY THIS ONE:

SICK AS A PARROT

For times when 'I'm upset' just isn't emphatic enough

USE WITH CAUTION:

ENGLAND

Only use this term if you're referring solely to England; if you're also discussing Scotland or Wales, use Britain

MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

AIN'T NEVER DUN NUFFING

Not quite what the double negative infers, this Estuary English phrase means 'I haven't done anything wrong'



A SHORT HISTORY OF BRITISH

English is one of the most widely spoken languages on earth, and the closest thing we have to a global common tongue. It's the international language of science, business, aviation, technology and the internet – not to mention much of the international sporting circuit. It's the language of global cinema, and if you want to make it big in popular music, you generally sing in English – wherever you come from.

Originally derived from the dialects of obscure northern European tribes, English became the language of Britain around the middle of the first millennium AD, and as recently as the end of the 18th century the majority of English speakers still lived in England.

Today, however, English is the first language of around 400 million people globally, and the second language of perhaps 400 million more. It's the national language, official language or common language in more than 60 countries. In many parts of the world, English is the preferred second language – for example, it's the second language of choice of European school students, by a large margin.

“GOBSMACKED

— SURPRISED ”



As English was exported across the world this once minor language developed into many different forms, so that the English spoken in America is different from that spoken in Australia, the English spoken in Ireland is different from that spoken in India – and they're all different from the mother tongue that spawned them.

This book is about British English – the English spoken by around 57 million people on the island of Britain. This may be the birthplace of English, but the language here certainly isn't static. The British take great pleasure in using the English language fully and inventively, and it continues to evolve and be exploited – sometimes with amusing results. For example, British politicians don't lie, they **dissemble**; kids aren't simply surprised, they're **gobsmacked**; football fans suffering a defeat aren't just sad, they're **as sick as a parrot**.

On it goes – British English is a tirelessly inventive language, borrowing without shame, outrageously playful, always seeking simplicity and yet revelling in complexity. We hope this book helps you enjoy the language as much as we do.

English roots & offshoots

Britain may be a small island on the edge of Europe, but its history has been far from insular. Over the millennia, waves of invaders and incomers arrived, settled and made their mark – and were (eventually) absorbed.

The same thing happened to the English language. In the 15 centuries of its existence, English has been notable for its openness to other languages, and its readiness to adopt, absorb or adapt foreign words. Take, for example, the various ways of describing the coming together of two or more people. It could be a **rendezvous** or a **reunion** (both borrowed from French); a **gathering** or **meeting** (both originally Old English); an **assignation** or **encounter** or **rally** or **tryst** (Old French). Together, they allow the speaker a remarkable degree of precision about the kind of 'meeting'.



A NOT SO UNITED KINGDOM

This book is about British English. The state of **Great Britain** is made up of three separate countries – England, Wales and Scotland. England is the dominant country, but the peoples of Scotland and Wales have kept a strong sense of national identity (perhaps precisely because of English dominance).

It's important to remember that the terms **Great Britain** and **England** refer to different political entities; they're not interchangeable, and to say England when you mean Britain will almost certainly put the backs up of any Scottish or Welsh people present. Scotland has a separate parliament and church, plus its own systems of law, banking and education; while Wales has its own National Assembly.

Just for the record, the **United Kingdom (UK)** consists of Great Britain, Northern Ireland and some semi-autonomous islands such as the Isle of Man. The island of Ireland consists of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (also called **Éire**). And for you scholars out there, **the British Isles** is a geographical term for the whole group of islands that make up the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The more politically correct term is **Britain and Ireland**.

For another example, just look at the nautical lexicon. Dutch has contributed **cruise**, **deck**, **freebooter** and **yacht**. The words **armada** and **galleon** are borrowed from Spanish, **buccaneer** and **frigate** come from French, **capsize** comes from Catalan, **kayak** from Inuit languages and **catamaran** from Tamil.