

Last week I told you about William the Conqueror and the last successful invasion and conquest of England in 1066. Today I'm going to talk a bit more about that, but also talk about the first invasion and conquest of England - which was by the Romans.

The Romans first arrived in England in 55 BC, when the Roman general JULIUS CAESAR (you may have seen him in the ASTERIX books) crossed over from France (which was then called GAUL - you'll definitely know that from the Asterix books), but they didn't stay for very long - they just installed a king who would be friendly to them and pay them taxes. The Romans only got serious about taking over England when the EMPEROR CLAUDIUS assembled an army and invaded England in 43 AD (43 years after Jesus was born, and as Jesus died (and rose again) at the age of 33, just 10 years after that huge event). The Romans set about civilising England in ways explained in this funny scene set in Roman-occupied Israel where the native-born Israelites complain about 'what have the Romans ever done for us?':

<https://youtu.be/uvPbj9NX0zc?t=45>

But one woman rebelled against Roman rule. This was BOADICEA (pronounced 'Bo - de - see - ah'), otherwise known as BOUDICCA (pronounced 'Boo - dik - ah'). Boadicea was a princess, a member of a tribe called THE ICENI (pronounced 'I - see - nee') that lived in the East of England, not far from Cambridge. The Iceni were persecuted by the Romans, who wanted to take their land and money, and Boadicea herself was tied up and whipped by Roman soldiers. In response, Boadicea led a revolt against the Romans. She raised an army and led it to Colchester (then called 'CAMULODUNUM'), a Roman city which Boadicea's army burned to the ground. The rebel army then marched on London (then called 'LONDINIUM'), and burned that to that ground as well. Not content with that they then marched north to St Alban's (then called 'VERULAMIUM') - and guess what happened to that? Yep, burned to the ground. By now Boadicea was leading an army of 230,000 people - vastly more than the number of Roman soldiers that were available to fight her. But fight her they did, with a Roman army confronting somewhere in the West Midlands. Even though they were hugely outnumbered, the Romans were more experienced fighters and they used that experience to beat Boadicea's army. Boadicea refused to submit to Roman rule, and instead took poison and killed herself when it became clear that she was beaten.



So that was the rebellion against the first takeover of England. The rebellion against the last takeover was led by a man called HEReward THE WAKE. He was an Anglo-Saxon nobleman, who refused to accept Norman rule under WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR. (It was called 'Norman rule' because William the Conqueror was from NORMANDy, in the North of France.) He was about 30 years old when William the Conqueror defeated King Harold at the BATTLE OF HASTINGS. At the time, Hereward was living abroad, but when he heard that



Norman soldiers had killed his brother and taken over his brother's lands, he came back and killed the Norman soldiers responsible - about 15 of them. He then joined a general rebellion against Norman rule that started in Ely, which is just north of Cambridge (and where I own a flat) - and pretty much in the same area as Boadicea came from, almost exactly a thousand years before. But the Norman army was able to recapture Ely from the rebels, and Hereward escaped into the countryside where he continued to harass and resist the new Norman rulers. It was at this period he got his nickname 'The Wake' - it was said that he was so careful not to be captured by his enemies that he slept with one eye open, always watching out for anyone coming to trap him. It is not clear what happened to Hereward. Some say he eventually left England for a new life abroad, or in Scotland. Others say he eventually made peace with William the Conqueror and accepted Norman rule. Others say he was eventually captured and killed by Norman soldiers. But whatever happened to him, his name lives on - like Boadicea's - as a symbol of resistance to being ruled by foreign invaders.