THE ANGLO-SAXONS!

Join Max the mouse on his time-travelling adventure…

Welcome, readers, to the world of the Anglo-Saxons!
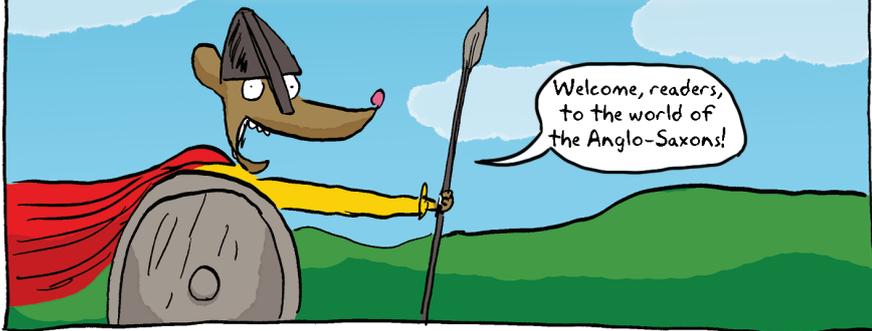
In 410 AD, after 400 years of strict rule, the Romans finally left Britain to protect their declining Empire from German Barbarians.

Byee!

Hooray! So glad they've gone. Now for some PEACE and QUIET!

Unfortunately, the Romans had been doing a good job of protecting Britannia from tribes called the Picts up north, who now threatened to invade!

Argh! Get those Romans back!

Britain also had trouble with invaders from Germany and Scandinavia - today known as the Anglo-Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons were actually invited to Britain to help fight the raiding Picts, but when they came over, they seized land for themselves!

Ooh! I'll take this lovely throne and crown, too!

Er … that's not what we had in mind.

Three Germanic tribes settled in Britain - The Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. Between them they created distinctive 'kingdoms', each ruled by a different king.

We're Angles!

Northumbria

The name England comes from 'Angle-land'!

Big ditch to keep Welsh out

Grr!

We're Angles too!

Mercia

East Anglia

We're East Angles!

We're West Saxons!

We're Jutes!

Wessex

Kent

There were also kingdoms of Sussex (South Saxons), Essex (East Saxons), and Middle Anglia (Middle Angles). These joined up with the bigger kingdoms a bit later.

Some Britons DID fight back against the Anglo-Saxons. Folklore places the mythical King Arthur at the forefront of these wars, but his existence is greatly debated.

It's all true! HONEST!

Grunt!

The Anglo-Saxons were renowned storytellers - even though most couldn't read or write. Their most famous story is that of the hero, Beowulf, a big inspiration for Tolkien's 'The Hobbit'!

He's been telling this story for 3 days now…

Must be the director's cut.

Early Anglo-Saxons were Pagans, who believed in lots of gods. But the Pope was determined to reinstate Christianity. In 597AD, he sent a monk called Augustine to convert the kings. Later, a monk named Aidan converted most ordinary people.

Don't make me cross.

Anglo-Saxons gave us our only official 'great' king - Alfred the Great (871-899AD)! When he wasn't burning cakes, he also translated books from Latin into English. Now everyone had the chance to read!

This book is GREAT, Alfred!

ARGH!

Alfred was also famous for tussling with the Vikings!

But we'll save that story for next month!

Illustration and words: Gary Northfield.