

# ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



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## **Episode #232**

# **When Britain Killed Its King**

### **28th Jan, 2022**

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by

Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about When Britain Killed Its King.

[00:00:29] On January 30th, 1649, outside the Palace of Whitehall, in central London, a man walked up to a large, raised<sup>1</sup> stage. Below him, thousands of people waited eagerly<sup>2</sup> to see history made.

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<sup>1</sup> put in a higher position, lifted

<sup>2</sup> showing great interest

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:00:47] The man knelt<sup>3</sup> on the ground, and made a signal<sup>4</sup> with his hand.

[00:00:53] On this signal, a man whose face was covered raised an axe<sup>5</sup> high and brought it down on the other man's neck, cutting it clean off from his body.

[00:01:06] That man was King Charles the First of England, the first and only British king to be executed.

[00:01:14] In this episode we are going to tell this story, of the English Civil War, how Britain came to kill its king, what happened in the subsequent<sup>6</sup> 11 years when there was no official king, why the monarchy<sup>7</sup> was eventually restored<sup>8</sup>, and how it changed the country forever.

[00:01:35] This episode has not only been a really fun one to write, but it also deals with an important period in British history, so I hope you'll enjoy it.

[00:01:45] OK then, When Britain Killed Its King.

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<sup>3</sup> stood with his knee or knees on the ground

<sup>4</sup> sign with his hand, gesture

<sup>5</sup> a tool with a blade on a handle used also as a weapon

<sup>6</sup> following

<sup>7</sup> a form of government ruled by a King or Queen

<sup>8</sup> brought back, re-established

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:01:51] For many people, when they think about kings or queens, the UK comes to mind.

[00:01:57] Unlike other countries, France, Germany or Italy, for example, the UK still has a monarchy, there is a king or queen.

[00:02:06] Queen Elizabeth, the current queen of the United Kingdom, has been on the throne<sup>9</sup> for 70 years, since 1952.

[00:02:15] And for anyone under the age of 70, in fact, they will have never known another British monarch<sup>10</sup>, and no living person has ever known a United Kingdom without a monarch.

[00:02:28] And when you think about countries that have had revolutions and decided to execute their monarchs<sup>11</sup>, you might think of the guillotine<sup>12</sup> and the French Revolution, not of Britain.

[00:02:41] But it might surprise you to find out that Britain too killed a king and got rid of<sup>13</sup> its monarchy, and indeed the country lived without a monarch for a period of 11 years in the 17th century.

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<sup>9</sup> special chair used by a King or Queen

<sup>10</sup> a King or Queen

<sup>11</sup> Kings or Queens

<sup>12</sup> machine with a heavy blade held high and dropped to cut people's heads off

<sup>13</sup> removed, did away with

**When Britain Killed Its King**

[00:02:56] This period, from 1649 to 1660 is known as the Interregnum - or the time between reigns.

[00:03:06] It is this unique and fascinating and [turbulent<sup>14</sup>](#) period that we are going to explore in today's episode.

[00:03:13] Our journey will involve five different stages – all [interlinked<sup>15</sup>](#): the background to the [dispute<sup>16</sup>](#) and the nature of the four countries involved at its start; the causes of the civil wars and the major events, especially the battles; the trial and and execution of the King; the Interregnum or period of rule when there was no king and the people who had [deposed<sup>17</sup>](#) and executed him were in power; and finally, the [restoration<sup>18</sup>](#) or return to power of the next king, Charles II, who was the dead king's son.

[00:03:52] It is quite a complicated period in British history, so I will try to stick to the most important parts and also to give you a clear sense of the [chronology<sup>19</sup>](#) – in other words the key dates and events.

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<sup>14</sup> involving lots of arguments and violence

<sup>15</sup> connected together

<sup>16</sup> disagreement or argument

<sup>17</sup> removed him from his position

<sup>18</sup> the action of returning to the previous condition, return to power

<sup>19</sup> the key dates and events

[00:04:08] Right, let's start with some background. There had been a [monarch](#), a king or queen, on the [throne](#) of England since the year 849.

[00:04:20] So why, what circumstances caused the country to decide that it didn't want one 800 years later, in 1649, and to decide that it didn't just want to [get rid of<sup>20</sup>](#) the king, it publicly executed him?

[00:04:36] Well, let me paint you a picture of life in Britain in the early 17th century.

[00:04:43] King Charles the First had been on the [throne](#) since 1625.

[00:04:49] What this meant in practical terms was that he was king of the Kingdom of England, Scotland and Ireland. The Kingdom of England also included Wales, and the Kingdom of Ireland included all of Ireland, so Charles was the ruler of all of the British Isles.

[00:05:09] It may seem strange to you but the King saw himself as ruling on behalf of God, as God's agent on earth.

[00:05:19] This was a really important belief or [doctrine<sup>21</sup>](#) and was called the Divine Right of Kings.

[00:05:27] Although Charles had a small group of advisors, called the Privy Council and a larger group of men elected to Parliament [members of parliament or MPs as they are

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<sup>20</sup> remove, do away with

<sup>21</sup> belief

now known], he saw himself as the decision maker; he expected to be able to rule without the support of Parliament.

[00:05:50] In other words, Charles wanted to be an absolute ruler or autocrat<sup>22</sup>.

[00:05:57] Although Britain may have had elements of a democracy, a fledgling<sup>23</sup> or embryonic<sup>24</sup> democracy let's say, it was very much a dictatorship with some democratic elements.

[00:06:12] To add to the mixture, Charles was a vain<sup>25</sup> and by all accounts<sup>26</sup> rather stupid man who always thought he was right.

[00:06:22] And although Britain was 100 years away from the Industrial Revolution which would transform the country and create a great deal of wealth, it was, in 1639, prosperous<sup>27</sup> in the rural areas where the profitable trade in wool<sup>28</sup> was the main industry.

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<sup>22</sup> absolute ruler

<sup>23</sup> not developed

<sup>24</sup> unformed, incomplete

<sup>25</sup> having a high opinion of his abilities and worth

<sup>26</sup> according to what people say

<sup>27</sup> successful, especially financially

<sup>28</sup> the soft thick hair of sheep

[00:06:41] At the same time, London, which was even then about six times the size of the second largest city, Norwich, had many wealthy people and even had its own semi-official army, the militias.

[00:06:58] As the English wealthy business people and land owners grew in power, so understandably they expected to have more influence on how the country was run.

[00:07:11] This was especially the case with three matters which were **vital<sup>29</sup>** background to the **dispute** which led to the first English civil war.

[00:07:22] The first one has to do with tax. Although the King had **considerable<sup>30</sup>** private money of his own, for spending to do with the country, he needed to raise additional money through taxes.

[00:07:37] Parliament often would not vote to raise or authorise taxes as they did not agree with what the king wanted to spend the money on. This was often, understandably, an area of conflict.

[00:07:52] The second battle ground or area of **dispute** was religion. In England the Church of England, otherwise known as the Anglican Church, was Protestant, following the break with the Catholic Church under Henry VIII more than a century earlier.

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<sup>29</sup> very important

<sup>30</sup> large amount of

[00:08:10] However, there were still many people in England who continued to follow the old faith of Catholicism, there were still plenty of Catholics.

[00:08:20] There was great suspicion<sup>31</sup> amongst the most hardline<sup>32</sup> or fanatical<sup>33</sup> protestants, especially those who were described as puritans, that the King was secretly inclined<sup>34</sup> towards Catholicism, that he was a secret Catholic.

[00:08:38] This religion was linked in their minds with foreigners, especially those from England's most fierce enemies, France and Spain.

[00:08:49] Something that added fuel to this already combustible<sup>35</sup> fire was the fact that the King had married a Catholic, Princess Henrietta Maria of France.

[00:09:02] The third area of dispute links with the first and has to do with economic policy, especially as it provided funds for foreign wars.

[00:09:13] Charles had conducted an expensive and disastrous war with Spain between 1625 and 1629.

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<sup>31</sup> a belief that it was probably true

<sup>32</sup> extreme, strict

<sup>33</sup> extremely enthusiastic, loyal or devoted

<sup>34</sup> having a preference, was in favour of

<sup>35</sup> easy to spread

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:09:21] Parliament refused to vote for more money for this foolish<sup>36</sup> war. The King had to resort to<sup>37</sup> an unpopular and illegal method of raising funds: he forced people to lend him money and imprisoned those who didn't.

[00:09:39] This gives you a sense of what Charles thought he could get away with<sup>38</sup> - he thought that Parliament essentially existed as a way to provide him with whatever he needed.

[00:09:52] This dispute led in 1629 to the King eventually dismissing<sup>39</sup> or dissolving<sup>40</sup> Parliament and not recalling<sup>41</sup> it again for 11 years. Essentially, he got rid of the main element of democracy in the country.

[00:10:11] OK, let's move on to the events and unrest<sup>42</sup> which led to the first Civil War.

[00:10:18] Problems with religion were not confined<sup>43</sup> to England.

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<sup>36</sup> not showing good judgment, stupid

<sup>37</sup> do it because he didn't have any other options

<sup>38</sup> escape blame or criticism for

<sup>39</sup> removing

<sup>40</sup> ending, disbanding

<sup>41</sup> bringing back

<sup>42</sup> disagreement and fighting

<sup>43</sup> limited, kept

[00:10:22] Scotland was much more dominated by **hardline** protestants than England.

The influence of the **radical<sup>44</sup>** Swiss **preacher<sup>45</sup>**, John Calvin had been especially strong in Scotland the century beforehand.

[00:10:36] King Charles **unwisely<sup>46</sup>** tried to **impose<sup>47</sup>** on Scotland his own idea of a prayer book, which was called the Book of Common Prayer.

[00:10:46] It was a terrible error of judgment, and the Scots simply said “no, we’re not accepting this”.

[00:10:55] When the Scots would not accept Charles’s **command<sup>48</sup>**, he tried to **beat them into submission<sup>49</sup>** and started a war in 1639. As well as leading him into further conflict with Parliament, Charles’s **unwise<sup>50</sup>** war led to a **humiliating<sup>51</sup>** defeat.

[00:11:15] Back in London, in January 1642, the King tried to arrest the members of Parliament who were leading a rebellion against him.

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<sup>44</sup> supporter of the belief that there should be great change

<sup>45</sup> a person who gave religious speeches

<sup>46</sup> in a way that was likely to cause problems

<sup>47</sup> force, apply as obligatory

<sup>48</sup> order, instructions

<sup>49</sup> use violence to make them obey

<sup>50</sup> foolish, stupid

<sup>51</sup> making him feel ashamed and foolish

## When Britain Killed Its King

[00:11:25] He wanted to imprison<sup>52</sup> them and then likely execute them for treason<sup>53</sup> or rebellion against the king.

[00:11:34] Very sensibly<sup>54</sup>, the MPs involved, including a man we will hear much of later, a strict<sup>55</sup> protestant called Oliver Cromwell, decided to not attend Parliament.

[00:11:47] Clearly, trust between the monarch and Parliament had broken down<sup>56</sup> completely. There was no going back<sup>57</sup>.

[00:11:56] By June that year, Charles had moved his court and army to the city of York in the north of England, and a full-blown<sup>58</sup> civil war was imminent<sup>59</sup>.

[00:12:08] The forces of Parliament, or the Parliamentarians, as they came to be called, set up<sup>60</sup> their base in London. A formal declaration of war followed and the first major

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<sup>52</sup> put them in prison

<sup>53</sup> betraying his country

<sup>54</sup> in a way that showed wisdom

<sup>55</sup> following rules and beliefs exactly

<sup>56</sup> failed, stopped to exist

<sup>57</sup> no possibility for the situation to change

<sup>58</sup> fully developed

<sup>59</sup> likely to happen very soon

<sup>60</sup> placed, created

## When Britain Killed Its King

battle, an inconclusive<sup>61</sup> one, took place in October 1642 at Edgehill in Warwickshire, in the heart of England.

[00:12:31] I will not attempt to deal with all of the elements of the first English Civil War, but will firstly try to give you some flavour of<sup>62</sup> what kind of war it was and secondly tell you what were the factors which led to the Parliamentarians eventually winning.

[00:12:49] Like any war it involved a tremendous<sup>63</sup> amount of destruction, death and suffering.

[00:12:56] As with any civil war, it divided communities and families, even setting brother against brother, father against son.

[00:13:07] Whereas some civil wars, the Spanish Civil War, for example, set different social classes against each other, the first English Civil War did not divide simply by social class, it wasn't a case of left vs right, poor vs. rich.

[00:13:26] Religion was a big element, with the hardline protestants or puritans [as they were sometimes known] being more likely to side with Parliament.

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<sup>61</sup> not leading to a clear result

<sup>62</sup> give you an idea of

<sup>63</sup> great, huge

**When Britain Killed Its King**

[00:13:36] Geographical region also played a part, with the King strongest in the north of England, the Midlands and much of the south and west, while the Parliamentarians were strongest in London and the East of England.

[00:13:51] A major factor in the victory of the Parliamentarians or Roundheads as they were sometimes called, was that, although they occupied a smaller portion of the country, they held the more significant parts of it than the King's side – they held the ports, making it easier to trade, and they held the places where [gunpowder](#)<sup>64</sup> and [ammunition](#)<sup>65</sup> were stored, called “arsenals”.

[00:14:18] For the football fans out there, yes the football team “Arsenal” gets its name because it was founded next to the Royal Arsenal.

[00:14:28] As to the kind of [warfare](#)<sup>66</sup> [waged](#)<sup>67</sup>, the kind of war that was actually fought, there were lots of small battles or [skirmishes](#)<sup>68</sup>, many [sieges](#)<sup>69</sup> of towns and a handful of major battles which typically involved between 12,000 and 20,000 soldiers on each side.

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<sup>64</sup> an explosive mixture used in guns and cannons

<sup>65</sup> material fired by a gun or canon

<sup>66</sup> activities involved in war

<sup>67</sup> engaged in, carried on

<sup>68</sup> small battles

<sup>69</sup> military operations in which enemy forces surround a town or castle

## When Britain Killed Its King

[00:14:50] Cavalry<sup>70</sup> was important, so that's soldiers on top of horses. So was the use of infantry<sup>71</sup>, the foot soldiers, who would be armed with large spears<sup>72</sup> or pikes<sup>73</sup>.

[00:15:04] Cannons destroyed old style castles and city walls. You can still see many examples of castles whose fortifications were destroyed in these wars.

[00:15:15] A crucial<sup>74</sup> factor was that, until 1644, neither side had what we would call nowadays a professional army.

[00:15:26] However, in 1644 Parliament created a professional army, known as the New Model Army.

[00:15:35] This was very well trained and therefore disciplined<sup>75</sup> in battle. It was a vital factor behind the decisive<sup>76</sup> victory of the Parliamentarians in June 1645 at Naseby in Lincolnshire when they defeated the King's forces for good<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> the group of soldiers who fight on horses

<sup>71</sup> the group of soldiers who fight on foot

<sup>72</sup> weapons with pointed tips on a long pole

<sup>73</sup> weapons with pointed tips on a long pole

<sup>74</sup> very important

<sup>75</sup> fighting in a very controlled way

<sup>76</sup> deciding, final

<sup>77</sup> definitely, without possibility of change

## When Britain Killed Its King

[00:15:55] King Charles tried to figure out<sup>78</sup> a way to get out of<sup>79</sup> the situation, and to make a deal with Parliament, but there was none.

[00:16:04] He surrendered<sup>80</sup> to the Scottish army in 1646, who were on the side of the Parliamentarians.

[00:16:11] This was the end of the First English Civil War, but let's remember that Charles I is technically still the King of England, Scotland and Ireland.

[00:16:23] Back to the chronology and onto what is called the Second Civil War which I will deal with<sup>81</sup> briefly.

[00:16:30] In this war, which occurred after the King's surrender<sup>82</sup> to the Scottish army in May of 1646, there was a rebellion both of the English Navy and also of various remaining pockets<sup>83</sup> of Royalist forces.

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<sup>78</sup> find, think of

<sup>79</sup> escape

<sup>80</sup> accepted defeat and stopped resisting

<sup>81</sup> focus on, include

<sup>82</sup> the action of accepting defeat and stopping resisting

<sup>83</sup> small groups

## When Britain Killed Its King

[00:16:47] The result of these uprisings<sup>84</sup> was that the New Model Army, with Oliver Cromwell as one of its leading commanders, seized<sup>85</sup> power, expelling<sup>86</sup> the more moderate<sup>87</sup> members of parliament and executing the leaders of the various uprisings against them.

[00:17:06] This led to Parliament becoming smaller in number and, critically<sup>88</sup>, becoming composed of much more extreme, hardline members.

[00:17:17] Now, we need to move on to the third part of the story, which is the trial<sup>89</sup> and execution of King Charles I. After trying his luck<sup>90</sup> negotiating both with Parliament and the Scots, he was handed over<sup>91</sup> to Parliament in 1647, and in January of 1649 he was accused of treason.

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<sup>84</sup> acts of resistance or rebellion

<sup>85</sup> took and hold quickly

<sup>86</sup> forcing them to leave

<sup>87</sup> modest, not extreme

<sup>88</sup> in a way that was very important

<sup>89</sup> the hearing of the events in a court in order to decide whether he was guilty or not

<sup>90</sup> doing it in the hope that he would succeed

<sup>91</sup> given to parliament to decide his fate

[00:17:40] The charge against the captured King was that he had tried “to achieve<sup>92</sup> a tyrannical<sup>93</sup> power” and to “overthrow<sup>94</sup> the rights and liberties of the people”.

[00:17:52] He stood trial<sup>95</sup>, although he refused to accept the legality<sup>96</sup> of the process, and he was unsurprisingly found guilty.

[00:18:02] As we heard at the start of the episode, he was beheaded<sup>97</sup> at Whitehall in London on 30th January 1649.

[00:18:12] British monarchs had been killed in battle before, but Charles was and still is the only British monarch to have been executed following a trial, and Oliver Cromwell was the man held responsible, for better or for worse, for his execution.

[00:18:31] For many people, even people in Britain today, the killing of a king – or regicide<sup>98</sup> as it is known – was a terrible, evil, ungodly<sup>99</sup> thing.

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<sup>92</sup> successfully gain or obtain

<sup>93</sup> cruel and controlling

<sup>94</sup> remove

<sup>95</sup> judged in a court of law

<sup>96</sup> the fact that it was allowed by the law

<sup>97</sup> had his head removed, decapitated

<sup>98</sup> the killing of a king

<sup>99</sup> unholy, evil

[00:18:43] Remember, the divine right of kings is this idea that the king or queen is literally placed on the [throne](#) by God, and so the idea that God's own king could be murdered was, well, it was [heretical](#)<sup>100</sup>.

[00:19:01] Each year on the 30th of January there is a [procession](#)<sup>101</sup> of people towards Whitehall, mainly dressed in 17th-century [costume](#)<sup>102</sup>, that [commemorates](#)<sup>103</sup> his execution. I have a photo of myself maybe aged eight, my [siblings](#)<sup>104</sup> and cousins that shows us dressed up and taking part in this [procession](#), although the whole event was much more about having fun dressing up and [waving](#)<sup>105</sup> swords and shields than it was about [commemorating](#)<sup>106</sup> Charles's execution or [martyrdom](#)<sup>107</sup> as it was viewed, especially in Catholic France and Spain.

[00:19:38] So, we have had two civil wars and the death of Charles I; we now need to cover the third Civil War, the return of the next king and then finally, the lasting influence of these events on Britain.

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<sup>100</sup> against their religion

<sup>101</sup> a line of people moving forward as a part of a celebration or ceremony

<sup>102</sup> set of clothes typical of that period of history

<sup>103</sup> gives respect and remembers

<sup>104</sup> brothers or sisters

<sup>105</sup> moving up and down as a greeting or sign

<sup>106</sup> giving respect and remembering

<sup>107</sup> the death of someone because of his beliefs or position

[00:19:55] The Third Civil War went as follows. Although they didn't like him as an individual, the Scots had been against the execution of Charles.

[00:20:05] They were angry that they had not been listened to, although their army had been an important factor in the defeat of the King.

[00:20:14] As a result, they invaded England with Charles's son, Prince Charles, as their leader, with the [intention<sup>108</sup>](#) of putting him on the [throne](#).

[00:20:24] By now, however, the New Model Army, led by Oliver Cromwell, was quite a [formidable<sup>109</sup>](#) force.

[00:20:32] It initially defeated the Scots at Dunbar just south of Edinburgh in September 1650 then, after the Scots had invaded England, Cromwell's army of 32,000 troops defeated Charles and the Scots' 16,000 strong army at Worcester, in central England.

[00:20:53] Prince Charles now was a [fugitive<sup>110</sup>](#) – [pursued<sup>111</sup>](#) by the Roundheads, and he famously hid in an oak tree as part of his escape.

[00:21:03] Those of you who are admirers of English pubs will know that one of the most popular pub names is the Royal Oak. Each one of these pubs [commemorates](#)

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<sup>108</sup> plan

<sup>109</sup> causing fear and respect

<sup>110</sup> someone who was running away from danger

<sup>111</sup> followed, chased

that story of Prince Charles hiding in an oak tree, before he managed to get to safety in France.

[00:21:23] Well, having got rid of the royalist threat<sup>112</sup>, first of King Charles the first and then his son, Prince Charles, what does the leader of the Parliamentarians, Oliver Cromwell do?

[00:21:36] Well, he argues with his MPs about what sort of constitution<sup>113</sup> or rulebook<sup>114</sup> should be established.

[00:21:44] In the end, no one can agree and, to cut a very long story short, Oliver Cromwell ends up by ignoring Parliament and ruling pretty much as a dictator<sup>115</sup> – which for many people must have seemed like no improvement on what they had under Charles.

[00:22:04] This type of rule was described as the Protectorate, which, along with the name of Cromwell's small advisory committee, the Committee of Safety, will probably sound quite sinister<sup>116</sup> to you, it sounds almost Orwellian<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>112</sup> problem, danger

<sup>113</sup> ideas or principles according to which the state should be governed

<sup>114</sup> standards or regulations that should be followed

<sup>115</sup> a leader with complete power

<sup>116</sup> giving the impression of something harmful or evil

<sup>117</sup> characteristic of the writings of George Orwell

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:22:20] The final stop in our [whistle stop tour<sup>118</sup>](#) of this action-packed 21 years of British history is the return of a king, otherwise known as the Restoration.

[00:22:33] Oliver Cromwell, who had ruled the country [with an iron fist<sup>119</sup>](#), died in 1658, and was replaced by his son, Richard.

[00:22:43] [Influential<sup>120</sup>](#) people in England, especially the head of the Army, a man called General Monck, decided that this new ruler, Richard Cromwell, was [not up to the job<sup>121</sup>](#); so he contacted the [exiled<sup>122</sup>](#) Prince Charles.

[00:23:01] Prince Charles was invited back and was crowned as Charles II, ruling from 1660, and the country has had a king or queen ever since.

[00:23:14] This period directly after Charles II was put back on the [throne](#) was called the [Restoration](#), because the [monarchy](#) was “[restored](#)”.

[00:23:25] During the Protectorate, religion had become stricter, theatres had been closed and the Puritans made sure that not much fun was had.

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<sup>118</sup> tour with many brief stops

<sup>119</sup> having complete power and authority

<sup>120</sup> having a big effect on people and things, important

<sup>121</sup> not suitable for or good at that job

<sup>122</sup> having been removed from his own country due to political reasons

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:23:36] So the country was ready for a party and in Charles II it had found a true [party animal](#)<sup>123</sup>.

[00:23:45] He was known as the [Merry](#)<sup>124</sup> [Monarch](#) - [merry](#) means happy, by the way. And he set an example of [extravagant](#)<sup>125</sup> living – wine, women and song.

[00:23:58] In fact, many of the current English [aristocracy](#)<sup>126</sup> [trace their titles back](#)<sup>127</sup> to Charles II and his at least 12 [illegitimate](#)<sup>128</sup> children.

[00:24:10] So, finally, let us consider what were the main influences of this passage of events on British history.

[00:24:19] Well, most immediately, as happens with civil wars in general, there was [awful](#)<sup>129</sup> destruction, [bitterness](#)<sup>130</sup>, death and suffering. Just focussing on England, where most of the destruction happened, it is estimated that around 200,000 people died, half of whom were men who died in battle.

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<sup>123</sup> a very outgoing person who enjoys having fun at social activities

<sup>124</sup> happy

<sup>125</sup> very expensive and impressive

<sup>126</sup> a class of people with high social rank

<sup>127</sup> come or originate from

<sup>128</sup> born of parents not lawfully married to each other

<sup>129</sup> a lot of

<sup>130</sup> anger and disappointment

[00:24:43] Given that the English population was about 4.5 million people, this was just under 5% of the population – a higher proportion than died in the 1st World War.

[00:24:56] A second consequence was the [storing up<sup>131</sup>](#) of [resentment<sup>132</sup>](#) about English rule in both Ireland and Scotland.

[00:25:05] Both countries were occupied by Oliver Cromwell and his newly professionalised army. The Irish were treated particularly [brutally<sup>133</sup>](#), especially with the terrible [massacre<sup>134</sup>](#) of civilians in 1649 after the [sieges](#) of Drogheda and Wexford. And if you mention the name Oliver Cromwell in Ireland, you will certainly make some people very upset.

[00:25:31] Thirdly, the creation of the New Model Army was the beginning of the British Army and therefore, for better or for worse, the start of a [revived<sup>135</sup>](#) sense of British military [capability<sup>136</sup>](#) to defeat armies abroad.

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<sup>131</sup> gathering, building up

<sup>132</sup> a feeling of deep displeasure and anger

<sup>133</sup> in a cruel and violent way

<sup>134</sup> act of killing a lot of people

<sup>135</sup> brought back to existence

<sup>136</sup> power or ability

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:25:48] In Europe this culminated<sup>137</sup> in the victory of the Grand Alliance coalition led by John Churchill, yes an ancestor<sup>138</sup> of Winston Churchill, over the supposedly invincible<sup>139</sup> forces of Louis XIV at Blenheim in 1704.

[00:26:06] And with this increasing power of its new, professional army came the rise of the British Empire.

[00:26:15] Finally, it became apparent<sup>140</sup> several years into the Restoration that a more progressive and rational balance had eventually been struck<sup>141</sup> between the monarch and Parliament.

[00:26:28] Arguably, this development could not have happened had it not been for all the bloody turbulence<sup>142</sup> of the three civil wars and the flawed<sup>143</sup> experiment and the failure of the Protectorate.

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<sup>137</sup> reached its highest point of development

<sup>138</sup> a relative who had lived in the past

<sup>139</sup> impossible to defeat

<sup>140</sup> easy to be seen or understood

<sup>141</sup> achieved, reached

<sup>142</sup> a state of confusion

<sup>143</sup> containing weaknesses or mistakes

[00:26:42] The newly established constitutional monarchy helped create stability and led to the foundation of many important institutions<sup>144</sup> which increased prosperity<sup>145</sup> and laid the foundations<sup>146</sup> for The Industrial Revolution.

[00:26:58] Let's conclude with the man regarded<sup>147</sup> by some as one of the greatest English people of all time, and by others as a merciless<sup>148</sup> and power-hungry<sup>149</sup> dictator, Oliver Cromwell.

[00:27:10] Oliver Cromwell had died a hero in England, and was buried in Westminster Abbey in London.

[00:27:18] When he was made king, Charles II pardoned<sup>150</sup> most of his father's opponents, but for those who had signed his father's death warrant<sup>151</sup> there was no mercy<sup>152</sup>.

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<sup>144</sup> organisations for social purposes

<sup>145</sup> the state of being successful, especially financially

<sup>146</sup> provided the basis or the basic ideas for

<sup>147</sup> considered

<sup>148</sup> showing no mercy, cruel

<sup>149</sup> having a strong desire for power

<sup>150</sup> forgave

<sup>151</sup> official order for his execution or death penalty

<sup>152</sup> no forgiveness or compassion

## When Britain Killed Its King

[00:27:30] The only problem for Charles II was that the man he held most responsible for his father's death had died in 1658, a year before Charles II was made king.

[00:27:43] There's not much you can do to punish<sup>153</sup> a dead man, but Charles II sure did try.

[00:27:51] On the 30th of January 1661, two and a half years after he had died and on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I, Oliver Cromwell's body was dug up<sup>154</sup>, hung<sup>155</sup> in chains, and then his head was cut off.

[00:28:08] During the restoration of the monarchy, although he was dead, Oliver Cromwell was public enemy number one.

[00:28:17] But with time, he has come to be viewed with less hostility<sup>156</sup>.

[00:28:23] He is certainly one of the most important individuals in British political history, and his statue stands proudly<sup>157</sup> outside the Houses of Parliament.

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<sup>153</sup> cause suffering to someone who has done something wrong

<sup>154</sup> removed from the ground where he had been buried

<sup>155</sup> held from above

<sup>156</sup> anger of unfriendliness

<sup>157</sup> in an impressive and confident way

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

[00:28:32] And, unlike many others, at the moment no one is [campaigning<sup>158</sup>](#) to have it [taken down<sup>159</sup>](#).

[00:28:41] OK then, that is it for today's episode on When Britain Killed Its King, the English Civil War and the Interregnum.

[00:28:50] I hope it's been an interesting one, and if you weren't aware of it before, now you know a little bit about what happened when Britain experimented with life without a [monarch](#).

[00:29:02] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:29:05] You can head right into our community forum, which is at [community.leonardoenglish.com](http://community.leonardoenglish.com) and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:29:15] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:29:20] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

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<sup>158</sup> asking in an organised and planned way

<sup>159</sup> removed

## **Key vocabulary**

| <b>Word</b>       | <b>Definition</b>  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Raised</b>     | put in a higher position, lifted   |
| <b>Eagerly</b>    | showing great interest   |
| <b>Knelt</b>      | stood with his knee or knees on the ground                                 |
| <b>Signal</b>     | sign with his hand, gesture  |
| <b>Axe</b>        | a tool with a blade on a handle used also as a weapon                      |
| <b>Subsequent</b> | following  |
| <b>Monarchy</b>   | a form of government ruled by a King or Queen                              |
| <b>Restored</b>   | brought back, re-established   |
| <b>Throne</b>     | special chair used by a King or Queen                                      |
| <b>Monarch</b>    | a King or Queen  |
| <b>Monarchs</b>   | Kings or Queens  |
| <b>Guillotine</b> | machine with a heavy blade held high and dropped to cut people's heads off |

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Got rid of</b>      | removed, did away with   |
| <b>Turbulent</b>       | involving lots of arguments and violence                           |
| <b>Interlinked</b>     | connected together   |
| <b>Dispute</b>         | disagreement or argument   |
| <b>Deposed</b>         | removed him from his position                                      |
| <b>Restoration</b>     | the action of returning to the previous condition, return to power |
| <b>Chronology</b>      | the key dates and events   |
| <b>Get rid of</b>      | remove, do away with   |
| <b>Doctrine</b>        | belief   |
| <b>Autocrat</b>        | absolute ruler   |
| <b>Fledgling</b>       | not developed  |
| <b>Embryonic</b>       | unformed, incomplete   |
| <b>Vain</b>            | having a high opinion of his abilities and worth                   |
| <b>By all accounts</b> | according to what people say                                       |
| <b>Prosperous</b>      | successful, especially financially                                 |

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

**Wool** the soft thick hair of sheep

**Vital** very important

**Considerable** large amount of

**Suspicion** a belief that it was probably true

**Hardline** extreme, strict

**Fanatical** extremely enthusiastic, loyal or devoted

**Inclined** having a preference, was in favour of

**Combustible** easy to spread

**Foolish** not showing good judgment, stupid

**Resort to** do it because he didn't have any other options

**Get away with** escape blame or criticism for

**Dismissing** removing

**Dissolving** ending, disbanding

**Recalling** bringing back

**Unrest** disagreement and fighting

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Confined</b>                  | limited, kept   |
| <b>Radical</b>                   | supporter of the belief that there should be great change |
| <b>Preacher</b>                  | a person who gave religious speeches                      |
| <b>Unwisely</b>                  | in a way that was likely to cause problems                |
| <b>Impose</b>                    | force, apply as obligatory                                |
| <b>Command</b>                   | order, instructions                                       |
| <b>Beat them into submission</b> | use violence to make them obey                            |
| <b>Unwise</b>                    | foolish, stupid   |
| <b>Humiliating</b>               | making him feel ashamed and foolish                       |
| <b>Imprison</b>                  | put them in prison  |
| <b>Treason</b>                   | betraying his country                                     |
| <b>Sensibly</b>                  | in a way that showed wisdom                               |
| <b>Strict</b>                    | following rules and beliefs exactly                       |
| <b>Broken down</b>               | failed, stopped to exist                                  |
| <b>No going back</b>             | not possibility for the situation to change               |

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

**Full-blown** fully developed

**Imminent** likely to happen very soon

**Set up** placed, created

**Inconclusive** not leading to a clear result

**Give you some flavour of** give you an idea of

**Tremendous** great, huge

**Gunpowder** an explosive mixture used in guns and cannons

**Ammunition** material fired by a gun or canon

**Warfare** activities involved in war

**Waged** engaged in, carried on

**Skirmishes** small battles

**Sieges** military operations in which enemy forces surround a town or castle

**Cavalry** the group of soldiers who fight on horses

**Infantry** the group of soldiers who fight on foot

**Spears** weapons with pointed tips on a long pole

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

**Pikes** weapons with pointed tips on a long pole

**Crucial** very important

**Disciplined** fighting in a very controlled way

**Decisive** deciding, final

**For good** definitively, without possibility of change

**Figure out** find, think of

**Get out of** escape

**Surrendered** accepted defeat and stopped resisting

**Deal with** focus on, include

**Surrender** the action of accepting defeat and stopping resisting

**Pockets** small groups

**Uprisings** acts of resistance or rebellion

**Seized** took and hold quickly

**Expelling** forcing them to leave

**Moderate** modest, not extreme

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Critically</b>      | in a way that was very important   |
| <b>Trial</b>           | the hearing of the events in a court in order to decide whether he was guilty or not |
| <b>Trying his luck</b> | doing it in the hope that he would succeed   |
| <b>Handed over</b>     | given to parliament to decide his fate   |
| <b>Achieve</b>         | successfully gain or obtain  |
| <b>Tyrannical</b>      | cruel and controlling  |
| <b>Overthrow</b>       | remove   |
| <b>Stood trial</b>     | judged in a court of law   |
| <b>Legality</b>        | the fact that it was allowed by the law  |
| <b>Beheaded</b>        | had his head removed, decapitated  |
| <b>Regicide</b>        | the killing of a king  |
| <b>Ungodly</b>         | unholy, evil   |
| <b>Heretical</b>       | against their religion   |
| <b>Procession</b>      | a line of people moving forward as a part of a celebration or ceremony               |
| <b>Costume</b>         | set of clothes typical of that period of history                                     |

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Commemorates</b>  | gives respect and remembers   |
| <b>Siblings</b>      | brothers or sisters   |
| <b>Waving</b>        | moving up and down as a greeting or sign                            |
| <b>Commemorating</b> | giving respect and remembering                                      |
| <b>Martyrdom</b>     | the death of someone because of his beliefs or position             |
| <b>Intention</b>     | plan  |
| <b>Formidable</b>    | causing fear and respect  |
| <b>Fugitive</b>      | someone who was running away from danger                            |
| <b>Pursued</b>       | followed, chased  |
| <b>Threat</b>        | problem, danger   |
| <b>Constitution</b>  | ideas or principles according to which the state should be governed |
| <b>Rulebook</b>      | standards or regulations that should be followed                    |
| <b>Dictator</b>      | a leader with complete power  |
| <b>Sinister</b>      | giving the impression of something harmful or evil                  |
| <b>Orwellian</b>     | characteristic of the writings of George Orwell                     |

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

**Whistle stop tour** tour with many brief stops

**With an iron fist** having complete power and authority

**Influential** having a big effect on people and things, important

**Not up to the job** not suitable for or good at that job

**Exiled** having been removed from his own country due to political reasons

**Party animal** a very outgoing person who enjoys having fun at social activities

**Merry** happy

**Extravagant** very expensive and impressive

**Aristocracy** a class of people with high social rank

**Trace their titles** come or originate from

**back**

**Illegitimate** born of parents not lawfully married to each other

**Awful** a lot of

**Bitterness** anger and disappointment

**Storing up** gathering, building up

**Resentment** a feeling of deep displeasure and anger

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

**Brutally** in a cruel and violent way

**Massacre** act of killing a lot of people

**Revived** brought back to existence

**Capability** power or ability

**Culminated** reached its highest point of development

**Ancestor** a relative who had lived in the past

**Invincible** impossible to defeat

**Apparent** easy to be seen or understood

**Struck** achieved, reached

**Turbulence** a state of confusion

**Flawed** containing weaknesses or mistakes

**Institutions** organisations for social purposes

**Prosperity** the state of being successful, especially financially

**Laid the foundations** provided the basis or the basic ideas for

**Regarded** considered

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #232

### When Britain Killed Its King

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Merciless</b>     | showing no mercy, cruel                                 |
| <b>Power-hungry</b>  | having a strong desire for power                        |
| <b>Pardoned</b>      | forgave   |
| <b>Death warrant</b> | official order for his execution or death penalty       |
| <b>No mercy</b>      | no forgiveness or compassion                            |
| <b>Punish</b>        | cause suffering to someone who has done something wrong |
| <b>Dug up</b>        | removed from the ground where he had been buried        |
| <b>Hung</b>          | held from above   |
| <b>Hostility</b>     | anger of unfriendliness                                 |
| <b>Proudly</b>       | in an impressive and confident way                      |
| <b>Campaigning</b>   | asking in an organised and planned way                  |
| <b>Taken down</b>    | removed   |

*We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*