

Mercian

IN ANGLO-SAXON TIMES, the kingdom of Mercia stretched across the North Midlands. King Ecgrith of Northumbria was defeated and killed by the Mercians in the year 678; and from this defeat down to the accession of Ethelbald as Mercian king in 716, there was an uneasy balance of power between the two kingdoms. From 716 to 796, a period covered by the reigns of Ethelbald and his successor Offa, Mercia replaced Northumbria as the dominant kingdom.

If (as must be doubtful) there is such a person at the present time as 'an average Englishman,' he should by rights be descended from an Anglo-Saxon ancestor who reached Britain at some time between the middle of the fifth and the end of the sixth century. The language that he speaks or writes developed not from Celtic or Latin but from the Old English Language that the

Anglo-Saxons brought with them to Britain.

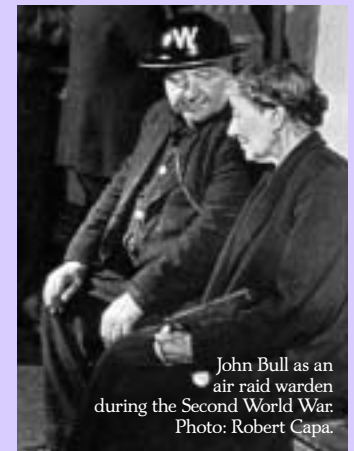
- Ralph Arnold: *A Social History of England* (Constable, Longmans, 1967)



The pirate Teuton has in the course of history become the modern 'John Bull,' the typical Englishman. He is ruddy, broad-shouldered, in every way solid, a

plain man, well-to-do, fond of his own comfort. Though he cares little for intellectual things, he is honest, resolute, and loyal, anxious to do his duty, and good-natured, though sometimes irritable and unreasonable.

- George M. Wrong: *The British Nation* (Toronto, 1916)



John Bull as an air raid warden during the Second World War. Photo: Robert Capa.

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