

# An Introduction

Ipswich and its surrounding area has a long and rich history. As the oldest continuous town in Britain, there is much to learn about how it came to be. In this study, children will gain an understanding of how Ipswich became the place we know and love today.

## What you need to know

People have been living in the area surrounding Ipswich for thousands of years. There has even been evidence of close relatives of modern humans passing through the area more than 700,000 years ago. Later, people living in the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age also left behind clues of their existence in Ipswich.

In AD 43, the Romans invaded Britain capturing nearby Colchester. They made their mark on Ipswich taking over farmsteads and building roads and villas. One well-known example is the Castle Hill Villa which lies beneath the houses on the Castle Hill and Crofts estates.

After the departure of the Romans, there was little evidence to show a settlement existed in Ipswich until the Anglo-Saxons came to England. Excavations in the town, near places such as Hadleigh Road, revealed that a small settlement containing houses and halls actually existed. Several cemeteries also back up this claim. Further digs found evidence of a pottery industry – with kilns and broken pot pieces being found (known as the Ipswich wares).

In nearby areas, more profound excavations have taken place at Sutton Hoo and Rendlesham. Here findings show that Anglo-Saxon royalty called this area of the country their home, with many famous findings including the Sutton Hoo helmet. Rendlesham itself was the home of a royal residence, with remains of large grand halls and delicate items with high value being found.

After several years of Anglo-Saxon occupation, the Vikings also fought for control of Ipswich and neighbouring settlements. This continued until 1066 when the Norman conquest put an end to their rule. Ipswich continued to be a settlement long after this – giving it the title of Britain's oldest continuously habituated town today.

Jumping forward almost 1000 years later, the industrial revolution played an important part in shaping the town of Ipswich. In the early stages, Ipswich relied on its surrounding mills as a source of income and profit. Here, goods such as flour, were produced on an ambitious scale and sent across to London. The number of mills grew over the next 100 years until they were closed and replaced with modern machine based mills.



Other industries also thrived, such as the Ransomes group, Edward Packard's coprolite fertiliser and Tolly Cobbold's brewery. The addition of a wet dock in 1837 – during the height of the revolution – allowed for a greater number of ships and boats to dock and trade. This was soon followed by the arrival of Ipswich's first train station which prompted more workers to come and live and work in the area. By the end of the revolution, the population had grown from 11,000 to 66,000 in just 100 years.

During the 20th Century, Britain was involved in two World Wars that had a huge impact on Ipswich. During World War 1, many people from Ipswich served in battles abroad or helped at home. Ipswich was also subjected to Zeppelin air raids. Just over 20 years later, World War 2 began and Ipswich was once again called upon to play its part in the war effort.

In an attempt to rebuild Britain after World War 2, people from the commonwealth were invited to live and work here. Many came from the Caribbean on the Empire Windrush. The Windrush Generation, as they came to be known, played a vital role in the post war regeneration of the country. Some of these people moved to Ipswich and they and their families are still an important part of our community today.

## Resources

Our key enquiry questions, sources, PowerPoints, activities, and other resources will help to build children's understanding of their local area of Ipswich and answer the question 'How has Ipswich changed over time?'

## Get in touch

Is there an area of local history you'd love to see on our Local History Hub?  
Get in touch to learn how we can work together! Email

[LocalHistory@tpet.co.uk](mailto:LocalHistory@tpet.co.uk)  
to find out more.



Teacher's Pet



Historic England



# Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.

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Historic England



Teacher's Pet

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## Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

## Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](https://www.tpet.co.uk) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](https://www.historicengland.org.uk) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.