THE ROMANS
One of the most important peoples in history were the Romans. Between 390 BC and 43 AD they went from their city being destroyed to developing a very strong army. They then went on to build an extremely powerful empire.

On the timeline above we can see that it took the Romans a long time to defeat the Gauls. The Gauls belonged to a group of people called the Celts who today are known as the Celts.
The Celts had their own ancient languages such as Gaulish and Lepontic and had many different customs. For example, they often lit huge fires to symbolise the changing of the seasons and to worship their many gods. These Celts who conquered Rome in 390 BC came from a land called Gaul. But Rome slowly recovered from this attack and started to build a huge empire which gradually spread all over Europe and into parts of Asia and north Africa.

For four hundred years, the Romans would fight many battles and wars building their empire. In 51 BC, they finally defeated the Gauls, led by their most famous ruler of all, Julius Caesar.

JULIUS CAESAR AND GAUL – THE ROMAN EMPIRE EXPANDS

Do you recognise the country shown on this map? This was the Celtic nation known as Gaul. Do you know what it’s called today?

After the Romans defeated Gaul in 51 BC, Caesar didn’t stop there. He wanted to make the Romans the most powerful people in the world. The Romans began to invade and overthrow the countries surrounding Gaul. Gradually, all countries on the continent where Celts lived fell under Roman rule.
Scotland, which is in northern Britain, was not part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Emperor Hadrian had a wall built in 122 AD to protect the south from any possible attacks from the north. You can still see the remains of Hadrian’s Wall in parts of northern Britain today.

Do you know of any other walls which were built to keep warring peoples apart?
THE CELTS IN BRITAIN

For the next three hundred years, the Romans ruled Britain, but eventually they had to leave. This is because their empire was coming under attack from people who lived outside the Roman borders. Their armies were needed at home and the last Romans left Britain around 410 AD.

Even though the Romans defeated Boadicea and ruled over Britain, the Celts and their languages survived and still survives to this day.

HIBERNIA

There was a country very close to Britain that the Romans called Hibernia. Historians still don’t know if the Romans invaded Hibernia or, if they did, how important they were there. One theory is that Ireland was even colder and less fertile than Britain, so it would have been no real use to them.

However, Hibernia was inhabited by Celts who called their country Ériú. Today we call this island Éire or Ireland.

SUMMARY

• Between 390 BC and 43 AD, the Romans gradually built an empire to become the most powerful people in Europe.
• The Romans invaded Celtic Britain and stayed until 410 AD.
• Parts of France, Scotland, Wales, parts of England and the Isle of Man were Celtic regions and their languages survive to this day.
• The Romans referred to Ireland as Hibernia. We don’t exactly know how powerful they were in Ireland.