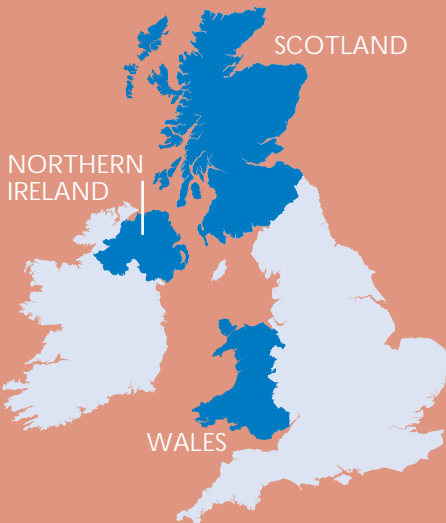




Foreign &
Commonwealth Office
London

INSIGHT UK

Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales



NORTHERN IRELAND

Population: 1.7 million

Religious profile: 54% Protestant
42% Catholic
4% undisclosed religious minorities

Government

1998 – The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement
Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK so long as the majority of people living there wish.

2 December 1999 – Power devolved to new Northern Ireland Assembly
Responsible for many services including education, regional development, health and social services and the arts.

At the heart of the Belfast Agreement are measures designed to promote human rights and equal opportunities in Northern Ireland.

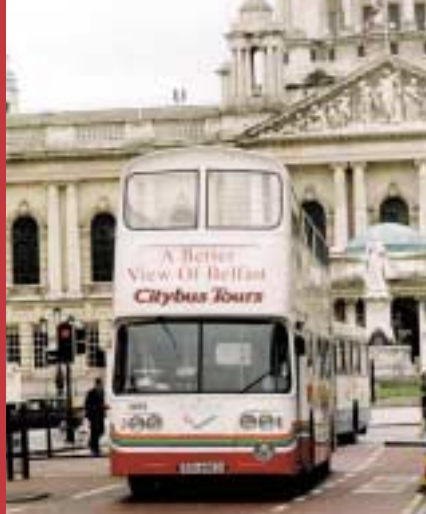
A Victim's Commission is deciding how best to recognise the suffering of the last three decades of conflict.

Education

Current budget: £1,500 million.

Protestant children often attend 'state' Controlled Schools while Roman Catholics attend separate Catholic schools.

Compulsory school age: four years old.



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Land and Culture

At 13,506 sq km, Northern Ireland is the size of Yorkshire.

Among its most famous landscapes are:

- Lough Neagh
The largest lake (396 sq km) in the UK
- Lough Erne
a lake and network of islands
- The Giant's Causeway

The gardens of Mount Stewart House, Greyabbey, have been declared a World Heritage Site.

Significant Northern Irish artists:

- Seamus Heaney Poet
- Van Morrison Singer/songwriter
- James Galway Flautist
- Kenneth Branagh Actor

Economy

Throughout the 1990s Northern Ireland enjoyed the fastest economic growth of any region in the UK. Manufacturing output grew by almost 22% between 1997 and 2001.

An average £17 million worth of manufactured goods are sold outside Northern Ireland every day of the year.

2,500 new jobs created during 1999–2000, particularly in computer software, telecommunications, electronics and network services.

SCOTLAND

Area: 77,097 sq km
Population: 5.1 million

Least densely populated part of the UK: 67 people per sq km.

Most people live in the industrialised central belt along the Forth–Clyde valley (population density is 400 people per sq km).

1.25% minority ethnic population – mainly Pakistani, Chinese and Indian. Largest concentration in Glasgow – 3.2% of the city's population.

Scotland has some 790 islands – 130 inhabited.

The Scottish form of Gaelic is spoken by 70,000 people.

In 2000 2,353,000 employed.
In 1998 – 72,000 people received unemployment benefit.
Glasgow – only 53% of its working age population in jobs, the lowest for any part of the UK.

In criminal cases, the jury consists of 15 members of the public (12 in the rest of the UK).

Government

July 1, 1999 – the Scottish Parliament opened by HM the Queen, the first Scottish Parliament for 300 years. It has 129 members – known as MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament). The MSPs select a First Minister.

Scottish Parliament responsibilities include social work services, health, local government and education.

Its budget in 2000/01 was £16.9 billion.

Matters in Scotland that are still controlled from London include defence, foreign policy and employment.

Education

Scottish education policy is set down by The Scottish Executive Education Department.

The 32 Scottish local authorities are responsible for educational provision in their areas.

Devolved School Management (DSM) – most Scottish schools control their own budgets.

There is no statutory National Curriculum in Scotland.



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In Scotland there are 2,716 state-funded schools (primary and secondary) for 682,753 students.

130 independent schools educate 3 in every 100 Scottish students.

Land and Culture

Highest point – Ben Nevis 1,343 metres.

Average temperature range in Edinburgh: January: 3°C (40°F)
July: 15°C (58°F)

The West Highlands average 3,810mm of rain a year.

The finest salmon river is thought to be the Tay – 188 km long.

There are 70 Nature Reserves in Scotland and 1,442 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The word 'tartan' originates from a French word. The Gaelic for the material is 'breacan'.

25th January – Burns' Night – commemorates the birthday of the Scottish poet Robert Burns. Celebrations may include the serving of 'haggis' – minced mutton, offal, oatmeal and spices boiled in a sheep's stomach.

Famous Scots include:

- Alexander Graham Bell developed the telephone
- John Logie Baird pioneered television
- Adam Smith philosopher and economist
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle creator of Sherlock Holmes
- Robert Louis Stevenson writer
- Dame Muriel Spark writer
- Sir Sean Connery actor
- Sir Eduardo Paolozzi sculptor.

Economy

Scotland's electronics industry employs over 50,000 people.

Scotland's manufactured exports were worth £18.5 billion in 1999. 54% are electrical and engineered instruments.

Nearly 9 in 10 bottles of Scotch whisky are sold abroad.

WALES

Area: 20,628 sq km
Population: 2.9 million

5% of the UK population lives in Wales.

Population density is 141 people per sq km. Nearly a third of the population lives in the industrialised south.

Inward migration from the rest of the UK boosted the population in the years 1991–98 by 120,000 people.

Welsh is spoken by two in ten of the population – in 1900 it was five in ten.

The Welsh Language Board (budget 1999/2000: £6million) is responsible for promoting the use of the Welsh language in Wales.

Sianel 4 Cymru – broadcasts a substantial number of Welsh language TV programmes each day.

All road signs in Wales appear in Welsh and English.

Government

Acts of Union in 1536 and 1542 unite England and Wales.

26 May 1999 – HM the Queen addresses the opening ceremony of the National Assembly of Wales.

The National Assembly of Wales has 60 elected members.

It has fewer powers than the Scottish Parliament and is responsible for passing 'secondary' legislation relevant to Wales on issues ranging from agriculture to the Welsh language.

Welsh MPs will still be elected to Parliament in Westminster.

The Assembly's budget for 2000/01 was £8 billion.



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Education

Welsh language is part of the curriculum.

The average school class size in Wales is 25.1 pupils.

Land and Culture

Wales has been Christian since the 5th Century. In the 19th Century rapid growth in new Protestant church movements.

Wales has 55 nature reserves and three National Parks. 25% of Wales is designated a National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu is the deepest cave (308m) in the UK.

The largest festival in Wales is the Royal National Eisteddfod at which competitions in music, singing, prose and poetry take place.

Significant Welsh artists past and present:

- Sir Richard Burton
- Dame Shirley Bassey
- Sir Anthony Hopkins
- Dylan Thomas
- The Manic Street Preachers

4 in 10 people in Wales participate in sport.

Welsh athletes won 15 medals, including three gold, at the Commonwealth Games in 1998.

The national game of Wales is rugby.

Economy

May 2000: 69.7% of people in Wales in employment (UK 74.6%). Aim to create 40,000 additional jobs by 2010.

7.7 million tonnes of steel were produced in 1999 – 42% of the UK's steel output.

Other significant industrial activities in Wales:

- Mining and quarrying
- Electricity, gas and water supply
- Tourism 100,000 visitors a year generate income of £1.9 billion
- Agriculture farmers are encouraged to develop new sources of income

Value of overseas companies' investment in Wales since 1983: £13.2 billion.

The Cardiff Bay Development Corporation promotes regeneration of the city's docklands.

Sources

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BRITAIN

Creativity, innovation and quality