

## Materiali integrativi per Civiltà Inglese 12 CFU

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### 1. BILL BRYSON'S BIOGRAPHY

- Bill Bryson (1951) is an American author of humorous travel books. He also wrote books on science and on the English language. He was born in Iowa, but lived in Britain for most of his adult life and returned to the U.S. in 1995. In 2003 Bryson moved back to Britain, (Norfolk).
- Bryson became famous in the United Kingdom with the publication of *Notes from a Small Island* (1995), a text in which he explores Britain. The book also became a television series.
- Bryson attended University for two years before leaving in 1972, deciding instead to backpack around Europe for four months. He returned to Europe the following year with a high-school friend. Some of his experiences from this trip were relived as flashbacks in *Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe*.
- The author first visited Britain in 1973 during his tour of Europe and decided to stay. He met a nurse (Cynthia Billen), they married and moved to the United States in 1975 where he completed his college degree. In 1977 they settled in Britain, where they remained until 1995.
- He lived in North Yorkshire and worked as a journalist. He worked for the business section of *The Times* and for the business section of *The Independent*. He left journalism in 1987 and started writing independently.
- In 1995 Bryson returned to the United States for some years. While there he wrote a column for a British newspaper for several years, reflecting on humorous aspects of his life back in the United States. These columns were selected and adapted to become his book *Notes from a Big Country*.
- In 2003 the Brysons and their four children returned to Britain and now live in Norfolk.

- In 2003, British chose Bryson's book *Notes from a Small Island* as that which best sums up British identity and the state of the nation.
- In 2004 Bryson won the prestigious Aventis Prize for best general science book with *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, where he explores the histories of the sciences and their often humorous beginnings. In 2005, the book won the EU Descartes Prize for science communication.
- Bryson has also written two popular works on the history of the English language: *Mother Tongue* and *Made in America*.
- In 2005 Bryson was appointed chancellor of Durham University. He has also been awarded honorary degrees by numerous universities.
- In 2012, Durham University renamed the Main Library the Bill Bryson Library for his outstanding contributions as University Chancellor.
- In 2013, he was conferred an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society.

## 2. NOTES FROM A SMALL ISLAND

- After nearly two decades in Britain, Bill Bryson took the decision to move back to the States for a few years, to let his kids experience life in another country.  
But before leaving his much-loved home in North Yorkshire, Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around Britain, a tour of the green and kindly island that had so long been his home. His aim was to think about the nation's public face and private parts, and to analyse what precisely it was he loved so much about the country.
- He tells us of his first stay in the country upon his original arrival, at a small hotel with an innkeeper named Mrs. Smegma, who has rules for everything from how to use the loo to what to do with the mysterious "counterpane" (AmEn 'bedspread').
- The second time around, England turns out to be both very different and very similar. Prices are higher and inns are somewhat less rule-bound. In many respects, however, it is still the same country – of people who are polite and cheerful even in the face of adversity, of strange and endearing mannerisms, of boring seaside resorts, and of a culture with which Bryson is deeply in love.
- The book takes us on a tour of the countryside. Throughout the tour, Bryson shows us, and himself, how much he loves this country, how much he has become a part of it, and how much he still has to learn about it.

**Interview: Rob Savage meets travel writer extraordinaire - Bill Bryson**

My days of being a student are sadly disappearing over the horizon at an alarming rate - kind of like an over eater chasing a mobile, all you can eat buffet. However a memory that will always stay with me is the time I graduated and shook hands with the wonderful travel writer and Chancellor of Durham University, Bill Bryson.

I decided to go back to my student roots and ask this amazing man how the St Christopher's travel writers can improve their game and what it's like to be one of the greatest authors of all time.

**As a Yorkshire man I'm going to go straight in there with a couple of northern questions. You lived in North Yorkshire for a while - what are your fondest memories of your time there?**

I love the landscape there and there's something about the Yorkshire Dales that gets me. I think there's just something wonderful about the combination of the red and green valleys. I love driving through, you know up and through the hills. And I really like the Yorkshire people - they're very happy. My children completed their primary education in Yorkshire and they were very happy times. I have some very fond memories of our lives there.

**What would you say you can find in Yorkshire that you can't find anywhere else?**

There's nothing really but you can find combinations of things that you can't find anywhere else - like the scenery and the people. But for me Yorkshire will always have a soft spot in my heart because I lived there and I was part of that community for a very important period of my life.

**One of my favorite parts of Thunderbolt Kid is the sterile but radioactive toilet seat. What would you say is the modern day equivalent to this?**

The only thing that I've ever seen, that reminded me of those toilet seats was when I was in Japan. There are these wonderfully technological toilets and I'm sure if I push the right button, I can tell whether you've got haemorrhoids or not. They're quite

amazing things but there are so many buttons and that makes it quite scary – you never know what you're going to do.

**You describe Durham as: "the perfect little city." In one sentence, how would you sum up London?**

London is the greatest city in the world. It has a combination of everything. It's a combination of rich history and it's also an incredibly important world city. Not only this, there are only a few cities in the world that can call themselves world class. New York, Paris and London are just about it and today London has so much more to it. It's got the history and also it has the parks, so you have quiet space which makes it comfortable. I mean you can go to London and have all the hustle and bustle but you can also get away from it and have a little tranquillity - there are places where it feels like you're in a small village.

**Having got to know Durham during your time as Chancellor there, would you alter your description of the city at all?**

I wouldn't say my opinion has altered at all. The only thing that has changed is my affinity and affection for the city. Both have deepened. I've got to know the city and the people a lot more and there's nothing there that's negative at all.

**I read about how you worked in Journalism before you became a travel writer. What was it that encouraged you to break away from this and get into your current line of work?**

Well I was working as a copy and production editor on newspapers in Fleet Street. I used to work nights and come into London from the country on a daily basis, just to generate jobs. In the end I just got tired of that. All I was at the end of the day was an office worker in London who left work at 10.30pm. Eventually I gathered up the courage to quit my job and make a living, full time as a writer and I was lucky enough to get away with that. Then it was wonderful – there's no better way to make a living than being a travel writer.

**We have a lot of aspiring travel writers who compete to be published in the St Christopher's E-zine. What would be your top tips for them?**

I think the main thing is to just write. There are an awful lot of people that just talk about a book they are going to write, but they never get round to writing it. I think that unless you just get on with the writing, there's no way to tell whether you're a good writer or not.

Also I get an awful lot of people writing to me asking for advice on how to write a book. Instead of doing that they should just write the book. People just seem to put it off. Also don't be afraid of rejection. There are all kinds of reasons why articles and books don't get accepted. You shouldn't take it personally.

**What was the first piece of your work that was published?**

The very first thing was an article I did for Sports Illustrated, a magazine in the United States. It was about shotguns sold by a company called Purdey. They were special bespoke shotguns and they were some of the priciest guns in the world ever. I was writing about what went into them and what you get for your money.

**What is next in the grand scheme of things for Bill Bryson?**

In the immediate future I'll be in Durham promoting the organ donor campaign and then tomorrow I'm going to be getting back to Norfolk where I live now. I'm meant to be thinking about what my next book will be about but I'm not sure what that will be yet.

**What is the one thing that you haven't done that you would most like to do?**

The main thing that I haven't done is go to a lot of places with my wife. For the past twenty years I've been going to all these wonderful places and then coming home and telling my wife about it. What I look forward to is when my children are all finally grown up and then I'll be able to take her to some of these places and share them with her.

**You've lived in a lot of different places. Do you have an idea where you would like to end up eventually or do you think you'll always be a citizen of the world?**

Well a citizen of the world but I'm pretty sure that I'm in Britain now for good and as long as you'll let me, I'll happily stay here.

**Every month we pick out five top books for backpacker to read on the road. If you had to recommend five reads to our travellers, what would they be?**

1. In Trouble Again – A Journey Between Orinoco and the Amazon - by Redmond O'Hanlon
2. Hotel Honolulu – by Paul Theroux
3. All the Rough Guides
4. The Ascent of Rum Doodle by W.E Bowman
5. The Dig Tree – by Sarah Murgatroyd

**- Rob Savage**

See: <http://www.st-christophers.co.uk/travel-tips/blogs/interviews/bill-bryson-interview>

### 3. TRAVEL LITERATURE AND FOREIGN PERSPECTIVE

- *Notes from a Small Island* belongs to the genre of travel literature.
- Apart from accounts of visits to foreign countries, travel literature includes many varieties and subgenres such as exploration literature, adventure literature, and guide books. Other sub-genres are travel journals, diaries and direct records of travellers experiences.
- In the 18th century, travel literature was commonly known as the book of travels, which mainly consisted of maritime diaries. In 18th century Britain, almost every famous writer worked in the travel literature form. Captain James Cook's diaries (1784) were the equivalent of today's best sellers.
- Other later examples of travel literature include accounts of the Grand Tour. Aristocrats, clergy, and others with money and leisure time travelled Europe to learn about the art and architecture of its past.
- Travel books range in style from the documentary to the evocative, from literary to journalistic, and from the humorous to the serious. They are often associated with

tourism, and includes guide books, meant to educate the reader about the destination, provide advice for visits, and inspire readers to travel. As Bryson did, sometimes a writer will settle into a locality for an extended period, absorbing a sense of place while continuing to observe with a travel writer's sensibility.

- The systematic study of travel literature emerged as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry in the mid-1990s, with its own conferences, organizations, journals, monographs, anthologies... Travel literature is said to serve to recreate the portrait of the unknown. As a mirror, this otherness legitimizes the selfhood. This means that societies weave their own narratives in order to understand the events of history, national identity as well as the place of the other.
- Using narrative to draw a portrait of the described nation helps the reader to approach the concept of national identity through a characterization that emerges through a story, especially through the report of personal experience.

#### 4. ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

##### **John Bull and Uncle Sam: Four Centuries of British-American Relations**

In the more than 200 years since the American Revolution, the United States and Great Britain have moved from enmity to a firm alliance often spoken of as the "special relationship." However, the road to this friendship was not smooth.

The hostility aroused in the United States by the American Revolution was inflamed by various disputes that arose between the two nations during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815). The main issue was the forcible seizure of American seamen by the British Navy but disputes also arose about commerce, Indian policy, and boundaries. The spiralling anger culminated in what is known in the United States as the War of 1812, a conflict considered in Britain as a sideshow to the struggle against Napoleon. More or less a draw, the war was concluded in 1814 by the Treaty of Ghent. The treaty resolved none of the issues for which the United States had fought, but it created a framework for future friendly relations between the United States and Great Britain.

In the following decades, the two nations quarrelled about the Canadian boundary but settled the disputes by negotiation. The American Civil War brought Britain and the United States to the edge of hostilities because of attacks against Union commerce by Southern ships fitted out in British ports. After the war the British apologized to the United States for their part in the actions of the Confederate marauders and paid a large

indemnity for losses suffered, a sign that the United States had emerged from the war as a powerful nation whose good will Britain now wished to secure.

The last significant foreign-policy dispute between the United States and Britain occurred in 1895 over an American demand that Britain submit to international arbitration its dispute with Venezuela about the western boundary of British Guiana, near which gold had been discovered. Because neither the United States nor Britain wanted trouble, the dispute was resolved amicably.

Ever since the United States fought at Britain's side during World War I, relations between the two countries have grown so close that they habitually act in concert in war and diplomacy. The alliance of what Winston Churchill memorably called the "English-speaking peoples" in World War II is still fresh in many memories. Recent headlines about the cooperation between the two nations in the Balkans demonstrate that the "special relationship" shows no signs of weakening.

(The Library of Congress)

## **Introduction**

- Anglo-American relations, encompass many complex relations. Since 1940 they have been close military allies enjoying the Special Relationship built as wartime allies, and NATO partners.
- The two nations are bound together by shared history, an overlap in religion and a common language and legal system, and kinship ties that reach back hundreds of years.
- Through times of war and rebellion, peace and estrangement, as well as becoming friends and allies, Britain and the US cemented these deeply rooted links during World War II into what is known as the "Special Relationship".
- The two countries combined make up a huge percentage of world trade, a significant impact of the cultures of many other countries and territories, and are the largest economies and the most populous nodes of the Anglosphere, with a combined population of over 370 million in 2010. Together, they have given the English language a dominant role in many sectors of the modern world.

## **First British settlements and the 13 colonies**

- After several failed attempts, the first permanent English settlement in mainland North America came in 1607 in the Colony and Dominion of Virginia. By 1624,



the Colony and Dominion of Virginia would cease as a charter colony administered by the Virginia Company of London as it became a crown colony.

- The Pilgrims were a small Protestant-sect based in England and Amsterdam; they sent a group of settlers on the Mayflower. After drawing up the Mayflower Compact by which they gave themselves broad powers of self-governance, they established the small Plymouth Colony in 1620. In 1630 the Puritans established the much larger Massachusetts Bay Colony; they sought to reform the Church of England by creating a new and more pure church in the New World.
- Other colonies followed in Province of Maine (1622), Province of Maryland (1632), Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations (1636) and Connecticut Colony (1636). Later came the founding of Province of Carolina (1663) (divided in 1729 into the Province of North Carolina and the Province of South Carolina). The Province of New Hampshire was founded in 1691. Finally came the Province of Georgia in 1732.
- The Province of New York was formed from the conquered Dutch colony of New Netherland. In 1674, the Province of New Jersey was split off from New York. In 1681 William Penn was awarded a royal charter in 1681 by King Charles II to found Province of Pennsylvania.
- The colonies each reported separately to London. There was a failed effort to group the colonies into the Dominion of New England, 1686-89.
- During the 17th century, an estimated 350,000 English and Welsh migrants arrived as permanent residents in the Thirteen Colonies, which in the century after the Acts of Union 1707, was surpassed in rate and number by Scottish and Irish migrants.
- The period of British settler colonization saw the introduction of liberal administrative, juridical, and market institutions positively associated with socioeconomic development. At the same time, colonial policy was also quasi-mercantilist, encouraging trade inside the Empire, and discouraging trade with other powers, and discouraging the rise of manufacturing in the colonies, which had been established to increase the trade and wealth of the mother country. Britain made much greater profits from the sugar trade of its commercial colonies in the Caribbean.
- The introduction of coercive labour institutions was another feature of the colonial period. All of the Thirteen Colonies were involved in the slave trade.

Slaves in the Middle Colonies and New England Colonies typically worked as house servants, artisans, labourers and craftsmen. Early on, slaves in the Southern Colonies worked primarily in agriculture, on farms and plantations growing indigo, rice, cotton, and tobacco for export.

- The French and Indian War, fought between 1754 and 1763, was the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War. The conflict resulted in the British acquisition of New France, with its French Catholic population. As part of the terms dictated in the Treaty of Paris signed in 1763, the French ceded control of French Louisiana east of the Mississippi River to the British, which became known as the Indian Reserve.
- From the religious point of view as well, England and the colonies established a strong relation. Most of the churches were transplants from England (or Germany). The Puritans of New England seldom kept in touch with nonconformists in England. Much closer were the transatlantic relationships maintained by the Quakers, especially in Pennsylvania. The Methodists also maintained close ties.

The Anglican Church was officially established in the Southern colonies, which meant that local taxes paid the salary of the minister, the parish had civic responsibilities such as poor relief, and the local gentry controlled the parish.

The church was disestablished during the American Revolution. The Anglicans in America were controlled by the Bishop of London, and there was a long debate over whether to establish an Anglican bishop in America. After the Revolution the newly formed Episcopal Church selected its own bishop and kept its distance from London.

### **The War of Independence**

- The Thirteen Colonies gradually began to experience more limited self-government. Additionally, British mercantilist policies became more stringent, benefiting the mother country which resulted in trade restrictions, thereby limiting the growth of the colonial economy and artificially constraining colonial merchants' earning potential.
- Tensions escalated from 1765 to 1775 over issues of taxation without representation and control by King George III. Stemming from the Boston Massacre when British Redcoats opened fire on civilians in 1770, rebellion

consumed the outraged colonists. The British Parliament earlier imposed a series of taxes such as the Stamp Act of 1765 and later on, the Tea Act of 1773, of which an angry mob of colonists protested about in the Boston Tea Party by dumping chests of tea into Boston Harbour. The British Parliament responded to the defiance of the colonists by passing what the colonials called the Intolerable Acts in 1774.

- This course of events ultimately triggered the first shots fired in the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775 and effectively, the beginning of the American War of Independence itself. A British victory at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775 would agitate tensions even further. While the goal of attaining independence was sought by a majority known as Patriots, a minority known as Loyalists wished to remain as British subjects indefinitely. However, when the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia in May 1775, deliberations conducted by notable figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and John Adams would eventually come to the conclusion of seeking full independence from the mother country.
- Thus, the Declaration of Independence, unanimously ratified on July 4, 1776, was a radical and decisive break. The United States of America became the first colony in the world to successfully achieve independence in the modern era.
- In early 1776 the Patriots forced all the British officials and soldiers out of the new nation. However, the British returned in force in August 1776, and captured New York City, which became their base until the war finally ended in 1783. The British, using their powerful navy, could capture major ports, but 90% of the Americans lived in rural areas where they had full control.
- After the Patriots captured a British invasion force moving down from Canada in the Saratoga campaign of 1777, France entered the war as an ally of the US, and added the Netherlands and Spain as French allies. Britain lost naval superiority and had no major allies and few friends in Europe. The British strategy then was refocused on the South, where they expected large numbers of Loyalists would fight alongside the redcoats. Far fewer Loyalists took up arms than Britain needed; royal efforts to control the countryside in the South failed. When the British army tried to return to New York, its rescue fleet was turned back by the French fleet and its army was captured by combined French-

American forces under General George Washington at the Siege of Yorktown in October 1781. That effectively ended the fighting.

- The Treaty of Paris ended the war in 1783 on terms quite favourable to the new nation. It gained control of nearly all the land east of the Mississippi and south of the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. However the British colonies of East and West Florida, were given to Spain as its reward. The Native American tribes allied with Britain were major losers; the British ignored them at the Peace conference, and most came under American control unless they moved to Canada or to Spanish territory. However the British kept forts in the American Midwest (especially in Michigan and Wisconsin), where they supplied weapons to Indian tribes.

### **After the Independence**

- The two nations started to trade again when the war ended. The British allowed all exports to America but forbade some American food exports to its colonies in the West Indies.
- In 1785, John Adams became the first American plenipotentiary minister, now known as an ambassador, to the Court of St James's. King George III received him graciously. In 1791, Great Britain sent its first diplomatic envoy, George Hammond, to the United States.
- When Great Britain and France went to war in 1793, relations between the United States and Great Britain also verged on war. Tensions were subdued when the Jay Treaty was signed in 1794, which established a decade of peace and prosperous trade relations. Probably, the treaty was the first to establish a special relationship between Britain and the United States. In his view, the treaty worked for ten years to secure peace between Britain and America.
- The US proclaimed its neutrality in the wars between Britain and France (1793–1815), and profited greatly by selling food, timber and other supplies to both sides.
- Thomas Jefferson had bitterly opposed the Jay Treaty because he feared it would strengthen anti-republican political enemies. When Jefferson became president in 1801, he did not repudiate the treaty. He kept the Federalist minister, Rufus King in London to negotiate a successful resolution to outstanding issues

regarding cash payments and boundaries. The amity broke down in 1805, as relations turned increasingly hostile as a prelude to the War of 1812.

- The international slave trade was suppressed after Great Britain passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807, and the United States passed a similar law in the same year.

### **War of 1812**

- The United States imposed a trade embargo, namely the Embargo Act of 1807, in retaliation for Britain's blockade of France, which resulted in the suppression of Franco-United States trade for the duration of the Napoleonic Wars. The Royal Navy also boarded American ships and impressed sailors suspected of being British deserters. Western expansion into the American Midwest (Ohio to Wisconsin) was hindered by Indian tribes given munitions and support by British agents. Indeed Britain's goal was the creation of an independent Indian state to block American expansion.
- After diplomacy and the boycott had failed, the issue of national honour and independence came to the fore.
- Finally in June 1812 President James Madison called for war, and overcame the opposition of North-eastern business interests. The American strategy called for a war against British shipping and especially cutting off food shipments to the British sugar plantations in the West Indies. Conquest of Canada was a tactic designed to give the Americans a strong bargaining position. The main British goal was to defeat France, so until that happened in 1814 the war was primarily defensive. To enlist allies among the Indians, the British promised an independent Indian state would be created in American territory. Repeated American invasions of Canada were fiascos, because of inadequate preparations, very poor generals, and the refusal of militia units to leave their home grounds. However the Americans took control of Lake Erie in 1813 and destroyed the power of the Indian allies of the British in the Northwest and Southeast. The British invasion of Chesapeake bay in 1814 culminated in the "Burning of Washington", but the subsequent British attack on Baltimore was repelled. The British invasion of New York state in 1814 was defeated at the Battle of Plattsburgh, and the invasion of Louisiana that launched before word of a

ceasefire had reached General Andrew Jackson was decisively defeated at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.

- Negotiations began in 1814 and produced the Treaty of Ghent, which restoring the status quo ante bellum. No territorial gains were made by either side, and the British plan to create an Indian nation was abandoned. The United Kingdom retained the theoretical right of impressment, but stopped impressing any sailors, while the United States dropped the issue for good. The US celebrated the outcome as a victorious "second war of independence." The British, having finally defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, celebrated that triumph and largely forgot the war with America. Tensions between the US and Canada were resolved through diplomacy. The War of 1812 marked the end of a long period of conflict (1775–1815) and ushered in a new era of peace between the two nations.

### **American Civil War**

- In the American Civil War a major Confederate goal was to win recognition from Britain and France, which it expected would lead them to war with the US and enable the Confederacy to win independence. Because of the astute American diplomacy, no nation ever recognized the Confederacy and war with Britain was averted.
- Nevertheless there was considerable British sentiment in favour of weakening the US by helping the South win. At the beginning of the war Britain issued a proclamation of neutrality. The Confederate States of America had assumed all along that Britain would surely enter the war to protect its vital supply of cotton.
- This "King Cotton" argument was one reason the Confederates felt confident in the first place about going to war, but the Southerners had never consulted the Europeans and were tardy in sending diplomats. Even before the fighting began in April 1861 Confederate citizens (acting without government authority) cut off cotton shipments in an effort to exert cotton diplomacy. It failed because Britain had warehouses filled with cotton, whose value was soaring; not until 1862 did shortages become acute.
- The Trent Affair in late 1861 nearly caused a war. A warship of the U.S. Navy stopped the British civilian vessel RMS Trent and took off two Confederate diplomats, James Murray Mason and John Slidell. Britain prepared for war and

demanded their immediate release. President Lincoln released the diplomats and the episode ended quietly.

- Britain realized that any recognition of an independent Confederacy would be treated as an act of war against the United States. The British economy was heavily reliant on trade with the United States, most notably cheap grain imports which in the event of war, would be cut off by the Americans. Indeed the Americans would launch all-out naval war against the entire British merchant fleet.
- Despite outrage and intense American protests, London allowed the British-built CSS Alabama to leave port and become a commerce raider under the naval flag of the Confederacy.
- The war ended in 1865. In January 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which was strongly supported by liberal elements in Britain. However the British government predicted it would create a race war and that intervention might be required on humanitarian grounds. There was no race war, however, and the declining capabilities of the Confederacy—such as loss of major ports and rivers—made its likelihood of success smaller and smaller.

### **After the Civil War**

- Relations were chilly during the 1860s as Americans resented British and Canadian roles during the Civil War. After the war American authorities looked the other way as Irish "Fenians" plotted and even attempted an invasion of Canada. The Fenians proved a failure but Irish American politicians, a growing power in the Democratic Party demanded more independence for Ireland and made anti-British rhetoric—called "twisting the lion's tail"—a staple of election campaign appeals to the Irish vote.
- Britain persisted in its free trade policy even as its major rivals, the US and Germany, turned to high tariffs (as did Canada). American heavy industry grew faster than Britain, and by the 1890s was crowding British machinery and other products out of the world market. London, however, remained the world's financial centre, even as much of its investment was directed toward American railways. The Americans remained far behind the British in international shipping and insurance.

- The American "invasion" of the British home market demanded a response. Tariffs, although increasingly under consideration, were not imposed until the 1930s. Therefore British businessmen were obliged to lose their market or else rethink and modernize their operations. The boot and shoe industry faced increasing imports of American footwear; Americans took over the market for shoe machinery. British companies realized they had to meet the competition so they re-examine their traditional methods of work, labour utilization, and industrial relations, and to rethink how to market footwear in terms of the demand for fashion.
- The Venezuela Crisis of 1895 broke out when Britain and Venezuela disputed the boundary between Venezuela country and British Guiana, a British colony. President Grover Cleveland and Secretary of State Richard Olney demanded international arbitration. The tribunal in 1899 awarded the bulk of the disputed territory to British Guiana. By standing with a Latin American nation against the encroachment of the British Empire, the US improved relations with the Latin Americans, and the cordial manner of the procedure improved diplomatic relations with Britain.
- The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty of 1897 was a proposed treaty between the United States and Britain in 1897 that required arbitration of major disputes. Despite wide public and elite support, the treaty was rejected by the U.S. Senate, which was jealous of its prerogatives, and never went into effect.
- Arbitration was used to settle the dispute over the boundary between Alaska and Canada, but the Canadians felt betrayed by the result. The Alaska Purchase of 1867 drew the boundary between Canada and Alaska in ambiguous fashion. With the gold rush into the Yukon in 1898, miners had to enter through Alaska and Canada wanted the boundary redrawn to obtain its own seaport. Canada rejected the American offer of a long-term lease on an American port. The issue went to arbitration and the Alaska boundary dispute was finally resolved by an arbitration in 1903. The decision favoured the US when the British judge sided with the three American judges against the two Canadian judges on the arbitration panel. Canadian public opinion was outraged that their interests were sacrificed by London for the benefit of British-American harmony.

## **The Great Rapprochement**



- The Great Rapprochement is a term that was used to specifically describe the convergence of social and political objectives between the United Kingdom and the United States from 1895 until World War I began in 1914. The large Irish Catholic element in the US provided a major base for demands for Irish independence, and occasioned anti-British rhetoric, especially at election time.
- The most notable sign of improving relations during the Great Rapprochement was Britain's actions during the Spanish–American War. With the onslaught of war beginning in 1898, the British had an initial policy of supporting the Spanish Empire and its colonial rule over Cuba since the perceived threat of American occupation and a territorial acquisition of Cuba by the United States might harm British trade and commerce interests within its own imperial possessions in the West Indies. However, after the United States made genuine assurances that it would grant Cuba's independence, which eventually occurred in 1902 under the terms dictated in the Platt Amendment, the British abandoned this policy and ultimately sided with the United States unlike most other European powers who supported Spain. In return the US government supported Britain during the Boer War, although many Americans favoured the Boers.
- Victory in the Spanish–American War gave the United States its own rising empire. President Theodore Roosevelt built the Great White Fleet to demonstrate the power projection of a large blue-water navy that was second only to the Royal Navy in size and firepower.

## **World War I**

- The United States had a policy of strict neutrality. The United States was willing to export any product to any country. Germany could not import anything due to the British blockade, so the American trade was with the Allies. It was financed by the sale of American bonds and stocks owned by the British. When that was exhausted the British borrowed heavily from New York banks. When that credit ran dry in late 1916, a financial crisis was at hand for Britain.
- American public opinion moved steadily against Germany, especially in the wake of the Belgian atrocities in 1914 and the sinking of the RMS Lusitania in 1915. The large German American and Irish Catholic element called for staying out of the war, but the German Americans were increasingly marginalized. The Germans renewed unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 knowing it would

lead to war with the US. Germany's invitation to Mexico to join together in war against the US in the Zimmermann Telegram was the last straw, and the US declared war in April 1917. The Americans planned to send money, food and munitions, but it soon became clear that millions of soldiers would be needed to decide the war on the Western Front.

- The US sent two million soldiers to Europe under the command of General John J. Pershing, with more on the way as the war ended. Many of the Allied forces were sceptical of the competence of the American Expeditionary Force, which in 1917 was severely lacking in training and experience. By summer 1918, the American doughboys were arriving at 10,000 a day, as the German forces were shrinking because they had run out of manpower.
- Although Woodrow Wilson had wanted to wage war for the sake of humanity, the negotiations over the Treaty of Versailles underlined in his Fourteen Points for Peace made it plainly clear that his diplomatic position had weakened with victory. The borders of Europe were redrawn on the basis of national self-determination, with the exception of Germany under the newly formed Weimar Republic. Financial reparations were imposed on the Germans, despite British reservations and American protests, largely because of France's desire for punitive peace and, in what many at the time deemed revenge, for previous conflicts with Germany in the 19th century.

### **Between the wars**

- By 1921 a cardinal principle of British foreign-policy was to “cultivate the closest relations with the United States.” As a result, Britain decided not to renew its military alliance with Japan, which was becoming a major rival to the United States in the Pacific.
- The US sponsored a successful Washington Naval Conference in 1922 that largely ended the naval arms race for a decade. World War I marked the end of the Royal Navy's superiority, an eclipse acknowledged in the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, when the United States and Britain agreed to equal tonnage quotas on warships. By 1932, the 1922 treaty was not renewed and Britain, Japan and the US were again in a naval race.
- In the 1920s, bilateral relations were generally friendly.

- The US refused to join the League of Nations, but its absence made little difference to British policy. While the United States participated in functional bodies of the League —to the satisfaction of Britain— it was a delicate issue linking the US to the League in public. Thus, major conferences, especially the Washington Conference of 1922 occurred outside League auspices. The US refused to send official delegates to League committees, instead sending unofficial "observers."
- During the Great Depression, the United States was preoccupied with its own internal affairs and economic recovery, espousing an isolationist policy. When the US raised tariffs in 1930, the British retaliated by raising their tariffs against outside countries (such as the US) while giving special trade preferences inside the Commonwealth. The US demanded these special trade preferences be ended in 1946 in exchange for a large loan.
- When Britain in 1933 called a worldwide London Economic Conference to help resolve the depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt killed it by refusing to cooperate.
- Tensions over the Irish question faded with the independence of the Irish Free State in 1922. The American Irish had achieved their goal, and in 1938 its leader Joseph P. Kennedy became ambassador to the Court of St. James's. He moved in high London society and his daughter married into the aristocracy. Kennedy supported the Neville Chamberlain policy of appeasement toward Germany, and when the war began he advised Washington that prospects for Britain's survival were bleak. When Winston Churchill came to power in 1940, Kennedy lost all his influence in London and Washington.

## **World War II**

- Though much of the American people were sympathetic to Britain during its dangerous confrontation with Nazi Germany, there was widespread opposition to possible American intervention in European affairs. This was put into law in a series of Neutrality Acts which were ratified by the United States Congress in 1935, 1936, and 1937 respectively. However, President Roosevelt's policy of cash-and-carry still allowed Britain and France to order munitions from the United States and carry them home.

- Churchill, who had long warned against Germany and demanded rearmament, became prime minister after Chamberlain's policy of appeasement had totally collapsed and Britain was unable to reverse the German invasion of Norway in April 1940. After the fall of France in June 1940, Roosevelt gave Britain and (after June 1941) the Soviet Union all aid short of war. The Destroyers for Bases Agreement which was signed in September 1940, gave the United States a ninety-nine-year rent-free lease of numerous land and air bases throughout the British Empire in exchange for the Royal Navy receiving fifty old destroyers from the United States Navy. Beginning in March 1941, the United States enacted Lend-Lease in the form of tanks, fighter airplanes, munitions, bullets, food, and medical supplies.
- In December 1941 at the important Arcadia Conference in Washington, top British and American leaders agreed on strategy. They set up the Combined Chiefs of Staff to plot and coordinate strategy and operations. Military cooperation was close and successful.
- Technical collaboration was even closer, as the two nations shared secrets and weapons, as well as airplane engines, Nazi codes, and the atomic bomb.
- Millions of American servicemen were based in Britain during the war. Americans were paid five times more than comparable British servicemen, which led to a certain amount of friction with British men and intermarriage with British women.
- In 1945 Britain sent a portion of British fleet to assist the American invasion of Japan in October, which was cancelled when Japan surrendered in August.
- Serious tension erupted over American demands that India be given independence, a proposition Churchill vehemently rejected. For years Roosevelt had encouraged Britain's disengagement from India. The American position was based on principled opposition to colonialism, practical concern for the outcome of the war, and the expectation of a large American role in a post-colonial era. However in 1942 when the Congress Party launched a Quit India movement, the British authorities immediately arrested tens of thousands of activists (including Gandhi). Meanwhile India became the main American staging base for aid to China. Churchill threatened to resign if Roosevelt pushed too hard, so Roosevelt backed down.

## Cold War

- In the aftermath of the war Britain faced a financial crisis whereas the United States was in the midst of an economic boom. The process of de-colonization accelerated with the independence Britain granted to India, Pakistan and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1947. The Labour government, which was alarmed at the threat of Communism in the Balkans, implored the US to take over the British role in Greece, which led to the Truman Doctrine in 1947, with financial and military aid to Greece and Turkey as Britain withdrew from the region.[73]
- The US provided financial aid in the Anglo-American loan of 1946. The aid was a gift and carried requirements that Britain balance its budget, control tariffs and maintain adequate currency reserves.
- The need to form a united front against the Soviet threat compelled the US and Britain to cooperate in helping to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization with their European allies. NATO is a mutual defence alliance whereby an attack on one member country is deemed an attack on all members.
- The United States had an anti-colonial and anti-communist stance in its foreign policy throughout the Cold War. Military forces from the United States and the United Kingdom were heavily involved in the Korean War, fighting under a United Nations mandate. A withdrawal of military forces occurred when a stalemate was implemented in 1953.
- When the Suez Crisis erupted in October 1956, the United States feared a wider war after the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact nations threatened to intervene on the Egyptian side. Thus the United States, with support from several European countries, applied sustained economic pressure, to encourage and ultimately force the United Kingdom and France end their invasion of Egypt.
- British post-war debt was at such an extent that economic sanctions could have meant a devaluing of the currency. This was something the UK government intended to avoid at all costs and when it became clear that the international sanctions were serious, the British and their French allies withdrew their forces back to pre-war positions.
- Dwight D. Eisenhower's victory in the American presidential election in 1952 might have been expected to guarantee a continuance of good United States-United Kingdom relations, if not a period of even closer collaboration. However,

Anglo-American cooperation during Eisenhower's presidency was troubled, approaching in 1956 a complete breakdown that represented the lowest point in the relations between the two countries since the 1920s. During the years of 1953–1961 the friendship between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Winston Churchill restored the levels of cordiality that had been a feature of the wartime partnership.

- Through the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement signed in 1958, the United States assisted the United Kingdom in their own development of a nuclear arsenal. In April 1963, John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan signed the Polaris Sales Agreement to the effect of the United States agreeing to supply the UGM-27 Polaris ballistic missile to the United Kingdom and for use in the Royal Navy's submarine fleet starting in 1968.
- The United States gradually became involved in the Vietnam War in the early 1960s, but received no support this time from the United Kingdom. Anti-Americanism due to the Vietnam War and a lack of American support for France and the United Kingdom over the Suez Crisis weighed heavily on the minds of many in Europe. This sentiment extended in the United Kingdom by Harold Wilson's refusal to send British troops to Indochina.
- Edward Heath and Richard Nixon maintained a close relationship throughout their terms in office. Heath deviated from his predecessors by supporting Nixon's decision to bomb Hanoi and Haiphong in Vietnam in April 1972.
- Despite this personal affection, Anglo-American relations deteriorated noticeably during the early 1970s. Throughout his premiership, Heath insisted on using the phrase "natural relationship" instead of "special relationship" to refer to Anglo-American relations, acknowledging the historical and cultural similarities but carefully denying anything special beyond that. Heath was determined to restore a measure of equality to Anglo-American relations that had been increasingly characterized by American dominance as the power and economy of the United Kingdom flagged in the post-colonial era.
- Heath's renewed push for British admittance to the European Economic Community (EEC) brought new tensions between the United Kingdom and the United States. French President Charles De Gaulle, who believed that British entry would allow undue American influence on the organization, vetoed previous British attempts at entrance. Heath's final bid benefitted from the more

moderate views of Georges Pompidou, De Gaulle's successor as President of France, and his own Eurocentric foreign policy schedule. The Nixon administration viewed this bid as a pivot away from close ties with the United States in favor of continental Europe.

- After Britain's successful admittance to the EEC in 1973, Heath confirmed this interpretation by notifying his American counterparts that the United Kingdom would henceforth be formulating European policies with other EEC members before discussing them with the United States. Furthermore, Heath indicated his potential willingness to consider a nuclear partnership with France and questioned what the United Kingdom got in return for American use of British military and intelligence facilities worldwide.
- In return, Nixon and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger briefly cut off the Anglo-American intelligence tap in August 1973.[81] Kissinger then attempted to restore American influence in Europe with his abortive 1973 "Year of Europe" policy plan to update the NATO agreements. Members of the Heath administration, including Heath himself in later years, regarded this announcement with derision.
- In 1973, American and British officials disagreed in their handling of the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War. While the Nixon administration immediately increased military aid to Israel, Heath maintained British neutrality on the conflict and imposed an October 1973 British arms embargo on all combatants, which mostly hindered the Israelis by preventing them obtaining spares for their Centurion tanks. Anglo-American disagreement intensified over Nixon's unilateral decision to elevate American forces, stationed at British bases, to DEFCON 3 on October 25 in response to the breakdown of the United Nations ceasefire. Heath disallowed American intelligence gathering, resupplying, or refueling from British bases in Cyprus, which greatly limited the effective range of American reconnaissance planes. In return, Kissinger imposed a second intelligence cut off over this disagreement and some in the administration even suggested that the United States should refuse to assist in the British missile upgrade to the Polaris system. Tensions between the United States and United Kingdom relaxed as the second ceasefire took effect. Wilson's defeat of Heath and return to power in 1974 helped to return Anglo-American relations to normalcy.

- On July 23, 1977, officials from the United Kingdom and the United States renegotiated the previous Bermuda I Agreement, thus signing the Bermuda II Agreement to the effect of only four combined airlines, two from the United Kingdom and two from the United States, being allowed to operate flights from London Heathrow Airport and specified "gateway cities" in the United States. The Bermuda II Agreement was in effect for nearly 30 years until it was eventually replaced by the EU-US Open Skies Agreement, which was signed on April 30, 2007 and entering into effect on March 30, 2008.

### **The Eighties**

- Throughout the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher was strongly supportive of Ronald Reagan's unwavering stance towards the Soviet Union. Often described as 'political soulmates' and a high point in the "Special Relationship", both President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher met on numerous occasions throughout their political careers, speaking in concert when confronting Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev.
- In 1982, the British Government made a request to the United States, which the Americans agreed upon in principle, to sell the Trident II D5 ballistic missile, associated equipment, and related system support for use on four Vanguard class nuclear submarines in the Royal Navy.
- In the Falklands War, the United States initially tried to mediate between the United Kingdom and Argentina in 1982, but ultimately ended up supporting the United Kingdom's counter-invasion. The United States Defense Department supplied the British military with equipment as well as logistical support.
- In October 1983, the United States and a coalition of Caribbean nations undertook Operation Urgent Fury, codename for the invasion of the Commonwealth island nation of Grenada. A bloody Marxist-coup had overrun Grenada and neighbouring countries in the region asked the United States to intervene militarily, which it did successfully despite having made assurances to a deeply resentful British Government.
- On April 15, 1986, the United States Air Force with elements of naval and marine forces launched Operation El Dorado Canyon from RAF Fairford, RAF Upper Heyford, RAF Lakenheath, and RAF Mildenhall. Despite firm opposition from within the Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher nevertheless gave



Ronald Reagan permission to use Royal Air Force stations in the United Kingdom during the bombings of Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya, a counter-attack by the United States in response to Muammar Gaddafi's exportation of state-sponsored terrorism directed towards civilians and American servicemen stationed in West Berlin.

- On December 21, 1988, Pan American Worldways' Flight 103 from London Heathrow Airport to New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport exploded over the town of Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 169 Americans and 40 Britons on board. The motive that is generally attributed to the country of Libya can be traced back to a series of military confrontations with the United States Navy that took place in the 1980s in the Gulf of Sidra, the whole of which Libya claimed as its territorial waters. Despite a guilty verdict announced on January 31, 2001 by the Scottish High Court of Justiciary which ruled against Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, the alleged bomber on charges of murder and the conspiracy to commit murder, Libya had never formally admitted carrying out the 1988 bombing over Scotland until 2003.
- During the Soviet war in Afghanistan, the United States and the United Kingdom throughout the 1980s provided arms to the Mujahideen rebels in Afghanistan until the last troops from the Soviet Union left Afghanistan on February 15, 1989.

### **Post Cold War**

- When the United States became the world's lone superpower after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, new threats emerged which confronted the United States and its NATO allies. With military build-up beginning in August 1990 and the use of force beginning in January 1991, the United States, followed at a distance by Britain, provided the two largest forces respectively for the coalition army which liberated Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's regime during the Persian Gulf War.
- In 1997, the British Labour Party was elected to office for the first time in eighteen years. The new prime minister, Tony Blair, and Bill Clinton both used the expression "Third Way" to describe their centre-left ideologies. In August 1997, the American people expressed solidarity with the British people, sharing

in their grief and sense of shock on the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, who perished in a car crash in Paris, France.

- Throughout 1998 and 1999, the United States and Britain sent troops to impose peace during the Kosovo War.
- Present British policy is that the relationship with the United States represents the United Kingdom's "most important bilateral relationship" in the world.

## 5. BEPPE SEVERGNINI'S BIOGRAPHY

- Beppe Severgnini is a journalist and has been writing for the *Corriere della Sera* since 1995, and has recently joined *The New York Times* as an op-ed columnist (2013). His most recent books are *La vita è un viaggio* (2014) and *Italiani di domani* (2012).
- Since 1998, Severgnini has been moderating his own forum, 'Italians' ([italians.corriere.it](http://italians.corriere.it)). He loves Twitter.
- Severgnini's books, published in Italy by Rizzoli, are bestsellers (= many have bought them, some have read them and the odd reader may have liked them). Beppe Severgnini has written four portraits of nations: *Inglesi* (translated in English as *An Italian in Britain*) (1990), *Un italiano in America* (1995), *La testa degli italiani* (2005) and *La pancia degli italiani. Berlusconi spiegato ai posteri* (2010); two books on language: *L'inglese. Lezioni semiserie* (1992) and *L'italiano. Lezioni semiserie* (2007); three travel books: *Italiani con valigia* (1993, revised 1997), *Manuale dell'imperfetto viaggiatore* (2000), and *Italians. Giro del mondo in 80 pizze* (2008). An autobiography, *Italiani si diventa* (1998), is his favourite and – of course – the one that has sold least.
- Severgnini has written for *The Sunday Times* (1992-1993); *The Economist* (from 1996 to 2003 he was the Italy correspondent); *The New York Times Syndicate* (2007-2009); and *The Financial Times* (2010-2012).
- In 2004, he was voted 'European Journalist of the Year' in Brussels. He has won a few more awards but the most important – he says – is the esteem of his readers.
- A keen soccer fan, Beppe has written for the *Gazzetta dello Sport* from 2001 to 2011.

- Severgnini wrote and presented the television programmes *Italians, cioè italiani* (RaiTre, 1997) and *Luoghi Comuni. Un viaggio in Italia* (RaiTre 2001 and 2002). From 2004 to 2011, he collaborated with SKY Tg24 as an interviewer, presenter and contributor. Since 2011, he has often appeared on Italian TV as guest of the talk shows *Le invasioni barbariche* and *Otto e mezzo* (La 7).
- Beppe Severgnini was born on 26 December 1956 at Crema, in the province of Cremona, where he graduated from a classics-oriented secondary school. He obtained his degree in international law at Pavia.
- After a training period at the European Community in Brussels, he was London correspondent for Indro Montanelli's *il Giornale* (1984-1988), subsequently becoming special correspondent in Eastern Europe, Russia and China (1988-1992). He was seconded to *The Economist* in London (1993) and then served as Washington correspondent for *la Voce* (1994-1995).
- Beppe Severgnini taught at the Walter Tobagi graduate School of Journalism at the University of Milan (2009-2012). He has been a research fellow/writer in residence at MIT/Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2009), a visiting fellow at Ca' Foscari Venezia (2013) and Isaiah Berlin visiting scholar at Oxford University (2013); he has taught also at Middlebury College Vermont (2006), and at the universities of Milan-Bocconi (2003 and 2006), Parma (1998) and Pavia (2002), which elected him 'Alumnus of the Year' in 1998 and 2011.
- In 2001, Beppe Severgnini was made an Officer of the British Empire (OBE) by HM Queen Elizabeth II and in 2011 the President of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano, conferred on him the title of Commendatore.