



H.E. Marshall

*The Best Of*  
**OUR ISLAND STORY**

*from The Romans in Britain to Queen Victoria*

Read by **Anna Bentinck** and **Daniel Philpott**



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1	Introduction	0:59
2	The Coming of the Romans	7:57
3	The Romans come again	4:19
4	How Caligula conquered Britain	7:58
5	The Story of a Warrior Queen (Boadicea)	8:38
6	The Last of the Romans	7:49
7	The Story of St. Alban	9:36
8	The Coming of Arthur	8:36
9	How King Alfred learned to read	6:17
10	King Alfred in the Cowherd's Cottage	9:02
11	More about Alfred the Great	8:08
12	The Battle of Hastings	5:42
13	Here in London they rested a few days...	5:17
14	William the Conqueror – Hereward the Wake	6:44
15	Still, the English were not all conquered...	5:08
16	Henry Plantagenet – The Story of Thomas à Becket	7:57
17	After a time, Henry forgave Thomas...	7:49
18	The Story of Richard, Coeur de Lion	5:08
19	One of the most famous of these...	6:43
20	The Story of how Blondel found the King	7:36
21	John Lackland – The Story of Prince Arthur	5:05
22	John Lackland – The Story of the Great Charter	7:07
23	But King John was very unwilling to grant it...	7:41
24	Richard II and the Story of Wat Tyler's Rebellion	6:46

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25	A great many of the people when they heard this...	6:20
26	The Battle of Agincourt	5:59
27	Edward V – The King who was never crowned	9:52
28	Richard III – Two Little Princes in the Tower	4:04
29	Queen Elizabeth I	2:33
30	Elizabeth I – How England was saved from the Spaniards	8:12
31	Elizabeth I – The Story of Sir Walter Raleigh	9:00
32	James VI of Scotland, I of England – The Story of Guy Fawkes	9:18
33	James VI of Scotland, I of England – The Story of the Mayflower	8:13
34	Charles I – The Story of how The King and Parliament Quarrelled.	9:06
35	Charles I – How the King was brought to his death	6:33
36	The Story of the Plague	3:51
37	Charles II – The Story of how London was Burned	4:03
38	George II – The Story of Bonnie Prince Charlie	7:22
39	George II – The Story of Flora MacDonald	6:49
40	The Story of the Black Hole of Calcutta	4:13
41	The Story of how Canada was won	8:23
42	The Story of how America was lost	9:59
43	A Story of the Spinning Wheel	8:52
44	England expects that every Man will do his Duty	8:34
45	George IV and William IV	2:14
46	Queen Victoria	5:33

**Total time: 5:13:33**

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H.E. Marshall  
*The Best Of*  
**OUR ISLAND STORY**

*Our Island Story* is a remarkable history book. It was written at the beginning of the 20th century by H. E. Marshall – her full name was Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall – and she wrote a number of books for younger readers (boys and girls, she called them in the gracious manner of the time). They included *Scotland's Story: A History of Scotland for Boys and Girls* (1906), *Beowulf: Translations* (1908), *The Child's English Literature* (1909), *A History of France* (1912), *This Country of Ours* (1917), *The Story of the United States* (1919), and *Kings and Things* (1937).

History fascinated her, and she liked nothing better than to re-tell history through the personalities of the people who made it. *Our Island Story for Boys and Girls* to give it the full original title, tells the story of Britain by shining a friendly spotlight on the major figures – the rulers, the heroes, the villains and even the weak and the vanquished.

Addressing her readers, H. E. Marshall wrote:

'I must tell you that this is not a history lesson, but a story-book. There are many

facts in school histories that seem to children to belong to lessons only. Some of these you will not find here.

But you will find some stories that are not to be found in your school books – stories which wise people say are only fairy tales and not history. But it seems to me that they are part of *Our Island Story*, and ought not to be forgotten, any more than those stories about which there is no doubt.

So, although I hope you will not put this book beside your school books, but quite at the other end of the shelf, beside *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Noah's Ark Geography*, I hope, too, that it will help you to like your school history books better than ever, and that, when you grow up, you will want to read for yourselves the beautiful big histories which have helped me to write this little book for little people.

Then, when you find out how much has been left untold in this little book, do not be cross, but remember that, when you were very small, you would not have been able to understand things that seem quite simple and

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very interesting to you as you grow older.

Remember, too, that I was not trying to teach you, but only to tell a story.'

And the stories are fascinating. Generations of young readers first encountered St Alban, King Alfred, King Harold, William the Conqueror, Thomas à Beckett, Edward I, Robert the Bruce, Henry V, Sir Francis Drake, and Queen Elizabeth I for the first time in *Our Island Story*.

These accessible life stories stayed with the young readers because the accounts are well-told – in a lively and colourful fashion. The fact that legend mixes with history doesn't seem to matter. Wat Tyler rebelled and was slain – this is true. King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, the bowman of England won the Battle of Agincourt against exceptional odds, and the Wars of the Roses – the red and the white – divided England and civil war raged. All this did happen.

But the the stories of Robin Hood and perhaps the greatest story of them all, King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, are the stuff of myth. Does it matter that fact and fiction interweave seamlessly? Not really, because fiction can influence history, as it has done so powerfully in the case of King Arthur. Knightly chivalry affected the behaviour, thought and art of following

centuries – and even today.

H. E. Marshall was writing at a time when the British Empire cast its rule over a quarter of the globe. Now, in the 21st century, Britain plays a very different role in world affairs. And within itself, it is a very different place, having much more of a multi-ethnic populace with broader horizons and more versatile attitudes towards life and the way to live it than when *Our Island Story* was written

Yet there is no reason to ignore the rich and thrilling history that made England and, wider still, Britain. There may be times when H. E. Marshall speaks in a tone which seems dated. That is inevitable. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that many of our current prominent historians say it was this book that started them on the historical road, that awoke in them a love for the past, the characters and the events.

She takes her story to the beginning of the 20th century, the death of Queen Victoria and the gathering clouds of the First World War. Another century has now passed, where the world has changed in ways that not even she could have imagined. But her book lives on.

**Notes by Nicolas Soames**

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## **LIST OF MONARCHS FROM EDWARD THE CONFESSOR**

### **SAXON MONARCHS**

Edward the Confessor reigned 24 years, from 1042 to 1066 A.D.

Harold II. reigned a little more than nine months, from January 5th to October 14th, 1066 A.D.

### **NORMAN MONARCHS**

William I reigned 21 years, from 1066 to 1087 A.D.

William II reigned 13 years, from 1087 to 1100 A.D.

Henry I reigned 35 years, from 1100 to 1135 A.D.

Stephen reigned 19 years, from 1135 to 1154 A.D.

### **PLANTAGENET MONARCHS**

Henry II reigned 35 years, from 1154 to 1189 A.D.

Richard I reigned 10 years, from 1189 to 1199 A.D.

John reigned 17 years, from 1199 to 1216 A.D.

Henry III reigned 56 years, from 1216 to 1272 A.D.

Edward I reigned 35 years, from 1272 to 1307 A.D.

Edward II reigned 20 years, from 1307 to 1327 A.D.

Edward III reigned 50 years, from 1327 to 1377 A.D.

Richard II reigned 22 years, from 1377 to 1399 A.D.

Henry IV reigned 14 years, from 1399 to 1413 A.D.

Henry V reigned 9 years, from 1413 to 1422 A.D.

Henry VI reigned 39 years, from 1422 to 1461 A.D.

Edward IV reigned 22 years, from 1461 to 1483 A.D.

Edward V reigned a little more than two months, from April 6th to June 26th, 1483.

Richard III reigned 2 years, from 1483 to 1485 A.D.

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## **TUDOR MONARCHS**

Henry VII reigned 24 years, from 1485 to 1509 A.D.  
Henry VIII reigned 38 years, from 1509 to 1547 A.D.  
Edward V reigned 6 years, from 1547 to 1553 A.D.  
Mary I reigned 5 years, from 1553 to 1558 A.D.  
Elizabeth I reigned 45 years, from 1558 to 1603 A.D.

## **STUART MONARCHS**

James I of England, VI of Scotland reigned 58 years, 36 as King of Scotland only, from 1567 to 1603, and 22 as King of Great Britain and Ireland, from 1603 to 1625 A.D.  
Charles I reigned 24 years, from 1625 to 1649 A.D.

The Commonwealth lasted 11 years, from 1649 to 1660 A.D.

## **STUART MONARCHS (cont)**

Charles II reigned 25 years, from 1660 to 1685 A.D.  
James II of England, VII. of Scotland, reigned 3 years, from 1685 to 1688 A.D.  
Mary II and William III. reigned together for 5 years, from 1689 to 1694 A.D.  
William III. reigned alone for 8 years, from 1694 to 1702 A.D.  
Anne reigned 12 years, from 1702 to 1714 A.D.

## **HANOVERIAN MONARCHS**

George I reigned 13 years, from 1714 to 1727 A.D.  
George II reigned 33 years, from 1727 to 1760 A.D.  
George III reigned 60 years from 1760 to 1820 A.D.  
George IV reigned 10 years, from 1820 to 1830 A.D.  
William IV reigned 7 years, from 1830 to 1837 A.D.  
Victoria reigned 68 years, from 1837 to 1901 A.D.

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## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

- WARLOCK** CAPRIOL SUITE 8.550823  
Bournemouth Sinfonietta / Richard Studt, Director
- CHOMINCIAMENTO DI GIOIA** SALTARELLO NO 4 8.553131  
Ensemble Unicorn, Vienna
- CHOMINCIAMENTO DI GIOIA** BELLICHA 8.553131  
Ensemble Unicorn, Vienna
- HILDEGARD VON BINGEN** HEAVENLY REVELATIONS 8.550998  
Oxford Camerata, Jeremy Summerly Director
- ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM (Music of the Medieval Pilgrim)** 8.553132  
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- MUSIC OF THE TROUBADOURS** 8.554257  
Ensemble Oni Wytars / Ensemble Unicorn / Michael Posch / Marco Ambrosini
- MUSIC OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE** 8.550615  
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- LAWES** CONSORT MUSIC FOR VIOLS, LUTES AND THEORBOS 8.550601  
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- PACHELBEL** ORGAN WORKS VOL 1 8.554380  
Wolfgang Rübsam, the Holzhhey Organ, Weissenau
- HANDEL** CONCERTI GROSSI OP 6 NO 4 IN A MINOR 8.550157  
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- MOZART** HAFFNER SERENADE K 250 8.550333  
Takako Nishizaki, Violin / Capella Istropolitana / Johannes Wildner
- PARRY** LADY RADNOR'S SUITE 8.550331  
Capella Istropolitana / Adrian Leaper
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New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / James Judd

**Music programmed by Sarah Butcher**

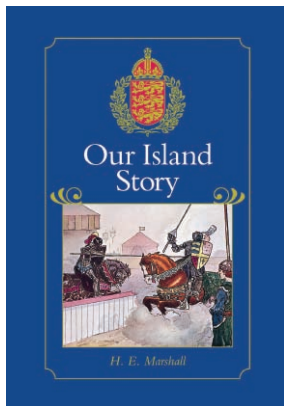




**Anna Bentinck** trained at The Arts Educational School and has made over 800 broadcasts for BBC radio. Animation voices include the series *64 Zoo Lane*, and on TV she has played Mary Dickens in *Charles Dickens* and Mary Rutherford in the *Marie Curie* series. Her many audio books range from *Lyra's Oxford* by Philip Pullman and *A Little Death* by Laura Wilson to *Queen Victoria* by Evelyn Anthony. She has also recorded *Five Children and It* and *The Phoenix and the Carpet* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Daniel Philpott** trained at LAMDA and, after success in the prestigious Carleton Hobbs Award for Radio Drama, has been prolific in BBC Radio and the Spoken Word industry. His theatre work includes numerous productions on the London fringe. For Naxos AudioBooks he has recorded *A Life of Shakespeare*, *Famous People in History – 2*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Pygmalion*.



The centenary edition of *Our Island Story*  
is available from [www.galorepark.co.uk](http://www.galorepark.co.uk)  
ISBN: 1902984749



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# *The Best Of* **OUR ISLAND STORY**

from **The Romans in Britain to Queen Victoria**

Read by **Anna Bentinck** and **Daniel Philpott**

Here are the key stories and figures that make up the history of Britain, from the coming of the Romans to the dawn of the 20th century. H.E. Marshall set out to make the great events, the leading personalities and their deeds come alive again. **King Alfred**, the cakes and the Vikings; **Harold** and **William the Conqueror**; **King John**, the Barons and the Magna Carta, **Queen Elizabeth I**, **Francis Drake** and the Spanish Armada; **Oliver Cromwell** and the Civil War, **Charles II**, The Restoration and the Fire of London; **Lord Nelson**, and The Battle of Trafalgar; **Queen Victoria** and the British Empire.

This volume is a skilful five-hour abridgement: history at its most entertaining and informative.



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CD ISBN:

978-962-634-438-5

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THE  
COMPLETE  
TEXT

UNABRIDGED



Recorded by Rupert Morgan at RNIB Talking Book Studios,  
London  
Edited by Sarah Butcher  
Abridged by Nicolas Soames

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Total time  
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