What was the Personal Union of the Crowns ?

In 1603, Elizabeth I died unmarried and childless so the English Crown passed to the next available heir, her cousin James VI, King of Scotland. England, Ireland and Scotland then shared the same monarch under what was known as a union of the crowns

What happened in 1066 ?

In 1066, the Battle of Hasting put an end to the Anglo-Norman conflict with the victory of William the Conqueror. After this victory, William the Conqueror established a strong, centralised power in England which laid the foundations for the subsequent unification of the realm.

Define assimilation as opposed to integration.

Assimilation and integration are two distinct conceptions of immigration. The first one holds that the immigrant should adapt to the culture of his new country, letting go of defining features of his previous national identity if needs be. The second one, which is favoured in the UK, holds that the immigrant can retain his culture of origin as long as he follows the general values of the new country.

Is monarchy still relevant in modern Britain ?

One of the first things coming to the mind of a foreigner thinking of Britain, along with Big Ben and the London Bridge, is probably an image of late Queen Elizabeth, with her colourful outfits and her neat, outdated haircut. However, the very idea of a monarch is strange to most people, used as we are to the functioning of our modern democracies.

To what extent is monarchy still relevant in Britain ?

1. An outdated institution…

There is no arguing that monarchy displays some very archaic characteristics. In our democratic societies, the very idea that someone may inherit a position by the mere fact of being born the son or daughter to a King or a Queen appears very outdated.

Moreover, the British monarch does not have any real powers. For instance, the monarch still appoints His Prime Minister, but he has no say in the actual choice. Constitutionally speaking, he still is the head of all three branches of power in the UK, but a reform is always possible – and would it be more complex than what Brexit entailed ?

1. … which nevertheless serves a purpose.

However, if the monarchy is by no means essential in modern Britain in theory, it still serves an essential purpose in practice. The Monarch is a symbol of continuity, of national unity. The unwavering popularity of the late Queen Elizabeth was a testimony to this, and Charles III, even though he is less popular than his mother, is still an important figure for many British citizens.

 Furthermore, the monarch plays a crucial role for British diplomacy. As Head of the Commonwealth, Charles III is the figure-head of British influence on member countries, while his various travels abroad do play an important role in the international image of the UK – a case in point would be the recent visit of Charles III and Camilla in France.

 To conclude, the monarchy is still very much relevant in the UK. It would be perfectly possible to abolish it, of course, but it still serves a purpose, and is an asset to the UK as whole both nationally and internationally.

What is your opinion on the way Britain deals with multiculturalism ?

Immigration can be dealt either through assimilation or integration. The first holds that the immigrant should adapt to the culture of his new country and is the historical model adopted in France. The second one, favoured in the UK, holds that the immigrant can retain his culture of origin as long as he follows the general values of the new country.

Is the way the UK deal with multiculturalism the best option ?

1. The beauty of integration …

Integration is part of the UK’s history and has shaped British identity. The notion that people from different backgrounds, different origins, with different traditions, different religions, can coexist, is a beautiful testimony to our shared humanity. It can also contribute to the general open-mindedness of a society and, in that respect, is to be treasured.

1. … is increasingly challenged in modern UK …

Unfortunately, the tensions which have recently emerged in the UK cruelly highlight the limits of the British model. The increase of racism and the wish to put an end to immigration on the one hand, and the recent terrorist attacks, on the other, do question the notion that people with different values can coexist peacefully.

1. … but assimilation does not seem to work any better.

However, the same problems exist in France, despite our distinct tradition of assimilation. This shows that without real policies on immigration, no system is better than the other. Whether people are asked to assimilate or allowed to integrate, if equal opportunities to thrive, both economically and socially, are not given to them, then multiculturalism is just one big empty word.

Assimilation and integration both have their advantages, but neither of them can work if proper policies are not implemented.