

VILLAGE HISTORY LESSON PART 2

It is commonly thought that after the Romans deserted us we were invaded by the Anglo-Saxons, but lack of any evidence of fighting has in recent years caused this concept to be challenged.

It now seems more likely that there was a gradual migration of economic migrants and refugees seeking a better life in a country where land was available to settle into a new family life, away from strife on the Continent. Sound familiar? They may even have been welcomed by the natives for the skills they brought, just as over the centuries we have always welcomed people fleeing persecution. At least until recently.

So between 400 and 800 CE it is likely that new faces appeared in our area. This is possibly attested by the origin of the village name. It has been suggested by Edmund Bogg in his 1904 book on Lower Wharfedale that Kirkby Overblow is derived from the obvious common Viking *Kirk-bi* (village with a church) and Anglo-Saxon *Ofre Lowe* (edge of the hill). But in the Domesday Book it is referred to simply as *Cherchebi*. The name *Orblauers* (ore blowers, about which more later) does not appear until the 13th century and gradually became corrupted to its present form.

What is certain is that the village was large enough by the end of the first Millennium to have a church. There was also a settlement nearby called *Todoure* where St Wilfred (634 – 709 CE), Bishop of York, is said to have performed a miracle. It was later subsumed into Kirkby Overblow and was possibly deserted in the 14th century at the time of a series of dreadful harvests followed by the Black Death which killed between one third and one half of the population of London. Let's hope Covid-19 is not like that.

Todoure has become one of the many lost medieval villages and some years ago was the object of a multi-disciplinary search by the Local History Group. Although techniques ranging from geo-magnetic survey to dousing and field walking failed to find a definitive position for the settlement, a new attempt is currently being made. If you hear the sound of a drone overhead don't be

alarmed that the US airforce is targeting an Isis terrorist – it will be John Fairfield on an expedition to see if there are interesting marks in the fields between Inghams Wood and Lund Head Farm.

Next time; raping and pillaging?

Part 1 quiz question: where was the old village dance hall?

Answer: in the old Reading Room behind Malt Kiln Cottages – before the War there were frequent Saturday evening dances with a bus back to Harrogate.

Part 2 quiz question: where was the village mortuary?