

## VILLAGE HISTORY LESSON PART 3

While the jury is out regarding whether or not the Anglo-Saxons actually invaded the country, there is absolutely no doubt about the Vikings. What probably started off as little more than a trading relationship was shattered in the North by a raid in 793 CE on the monastery of Lindisfarne in which several monks were killed. As a matter of interest this was not the first recorded raid: in 787 CE three ships from Norway landed on the Isle of Portland on the southern coast of Wessex and when approached by the royal reeve from Dorchester proceeded to kill him.

There followed more raids on monasteries by these “pagan people” including Iona and many in Ireland. But then the Norse attitude towards the British Isles changed as they began to see it as a place for colonisation and from 865 CE large armies began arriving on British shores.

This culminated in the capture of York and eventually, after many battles, in 886 CE under King Alfred the country was divided and the Danelaw was established to the north of a line roughly from London to Chester. Our village was clearly part of the area settled by Vikings, one of the many *Kirkbys* in Yorkshire and surrounded by *Kear-by*, *Nether-by* and *Hu-by*.

Alfred’s policy of opposing the Norse settlers was continued by his daughter Æthelflæd and her brother King Edward the Elder and England as a country was for the first time united in 920 CE. But the peace was frail and further raids by the Vikings led to more bloodshed culminating in the bloody battle of Stamford Bridge in which most of their army were killed.

Meantime the Vikings had established a kingdom in Normandy and the Norman King William claimed the English throne. So King Harold and his exhausted force had to trudge south to meet the invaders at Hastings. And three weeks later we all know what happened.

Next time; land grab?

Part 2 quiz question: where was the village mortuary?

Answer: Tithe Cottage (opposite Walton Head Lane). There was a joiner's shop near where there are now garages and an upstairs room in the cottage was used as a mortuary (said by one-time resident, Tony Bekk, to be haunted)

Part 3 quiz question: where was the early post office?