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History of Northumbria: Viking era 866 AD - 1066 AD

VIKING INVASION AND SETTLEMENT

On June 8th 793, in an unprecedented attack which shocked the whole of Europe, a raiding party of Vikings from Norway attacked Lindisfarne. Monks fled in fear and many were slaughtered. Bishop Higbald sought refuge on the mainland and a chronicler recorded- "On the 8th June, the harrying of the heathen miserably destroyed God's church by rapine and slaughter."

For seven decades the Vikings would continue raiding the coast of Britain and it seemed inevitable that they would eventually launch a full scale invasion of our shores. This is precisely what occurred in the year 866, when a huge army of Danes invaded East Anglia from their well established bases in the Low Countries of the Continent. They arrived under the leadership of Ivar the Boneless and his brothers, Halfdene and Hubba and after camping the winter, turned their attention to Northumbria.

The Danes were well aware of the civil war that had weakened the great northern kingdom and as warriors the Danes were extremely opportunistic. After crossing the Humber, they headed for York, a great defensive stronghold, still well protected by its Roman walls. The city was a strategic jewel for whoever could capture it and the Danes would take their chance. On November 1st, the city was sacked and captured by the Danes, despite fierce Northumbrian resistance.

The Northumbrians were now unified under King Aelle and Earl Osbert. Unfortunately this resolution of differences in the face of a common enemy, had come too late for the Northumbrian leaders. On March 23, 867, during the attempt to retake York from the Danes, Osbert was killed and King Aelle was captured. The Danes were determined to make an example of the surviving leader and impress their claim on the Northumbrian kingdom.

DANISH TAKEOVER

Aelle, the king of Northumbria was subjected to the most horrific Blood Eagle ordeal. His ribs were torn out and folded back to form the shape of an eagle's wings. It was reputedly punishment for Aelle's alleged murder of Ragnar Lodbrok (Loth-broek meaning shaggy breeches/trousers), a great Danish leader who was the father of Ivar, Halfdene and Hubba, but the gruesome practice was in fact a tradition of the Danish warriors. With Aelle and Osbert dead, the Danes employed an Anglo-Saxon called Egbert as temporary King in Northumbria, but Egbert was little more than a tax collector for the Danes, helping to bring them greater wealth and emphasising their power.

So with a puppet king installed in Northumbria, the Danes turned their military attention to Mercia, where they seized the Anglo-Saxon stronghold of Nottingham. The Danes returned to York for a year in 869 and from here set off on the successful conquest of East Anglia in 870, but their expansion was kept in check in the south of England by Alfred the Great, the King of Wessex. Alfred defeated the Danes in a great battle at Ashdown in Berkshire in 871. However the Danes were not discouraged and their conquest of York and Deira meant that they could launch attacks on almost any part of Britain.

One major target for the Danes was the Norwegian colony at Dublin in Ireland, established by the Norse in 841 and captured by the Danes for a short period in 851. Ivar the Boneless wanted to make another attempt at capturing the great colony which could virtually guarantee control of the Irish Sea. It is worth noting that the Northumbrian province of Deira, now under Danish, although centred on Yorkshire also extended into Lancashire and so stretched to the shores of the Irish Sea. This may have encouraged the Danes to launch an attack on Dublin. But the Danish campaign in Ireland in 873 was not a success and resulted in the death of Ivar

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the Boneless.

Ivar was replaced by his brother Halfdene who returned to England to find greater military success, seizing the Kingdom of Mercia in 874. Wide scale Viking domination and settlement now seemed inevitable in the eastern midlands and in the north. By 876 the Danes were actively sharing out land in the Deiran province of Northumbria. This included all the land in Yorkshire and in the south western portion of Northumbria we know today as Lancashire.

BERNICIA AND JORVIK

Strangely, the Danes seem to have taken less interest in the Northumbrian province of Bernicia, north of the Tees, where the rugged scenery may have been less appealing than that of Yorkshire. Seizure of Bernicia might have overstretched the resources of the Danes.

Perhaps the Bernician region was also a focus of Northumbrian resistance against the Danes. In 872 many native Northumbrians had rejected the rule of Egbert, the Danish appointed king of Northumbria and they had attempted to replace him with their own candidate, a nobleman called Ricsige. This rebellion was crushed in Deira, but it seems likely that this resistance was centred on Bernicia, where the Danish influence was not so strong. Remember that Bernicia was a huge province extending from the Tees to as far north as Edinburgh and also stretched as far west as the Cumbrian coast.

When Halfdene returned to the North from his victory in the midlands in 875 he was proclaimed King of Northumbria, but some factions further north may only have accepted him as the King of Deira. From this period Deira was known as the Kingdom of York (Jorvik) and Halfdene was its first king. The Anglo-Saxon estates in Yorkshire were shared out among Halfdene's army and his followers but there is a great deal of debate about how many Danes actually settled. What is certain is that a huge proportion of Yorkshire place names are still of Danish origin. This is most apparent in names ending in -by which is Danish for a farm or village. Thus we have Danby, Ormesby, Whitby, Thornaby, Wetherby and so on. It was also the Danes who divided Yorkshire into the three Ridings (or thirds) for the purposes of military and political control.

With such vast Danish influence in Yorkshire it seems likely that many Northumbrians fled north to Bernicia, a possible focus for resistance. By late 875 the Danes realised that they must turn their attention to this northern province. Under the leadership of Halfdene they entered the Tyne and destroyed Tynemouth priory before wintering at the mouth of the River Team near Gateshead. Once the winter was over the Danes began their battle campaign in Bernicia and Scotland and the monastery town of Hexham was ransacked. Despite this campaign, Bernicia north of the Tees (Northumberland and Durham) seems to have largely escaped Danish settlement.

There were some pockets of Danish settlement here and there in Bernicia, particularly in what is now southern Durham around Sadberge and Gainford where there are many Danish place names in the Darlington area but Bernicia remained largely Anglo-Saxon and continued to speak the Anglian language with some Viking influence drifting in from the south and later the west. However, one major Danish stronghold established at this time in Bernicia was Tynemouth. This naturally defended promontory strategically located at the entrance to the Tyne was a useful stop off point on the Northumbrian coast and helped the Danes control access to the Tyne. Interestingly, an unusually high number of Scandinavian personal names were still common in Tynemouth at the time of the Norman conquest, suggesting that Scandinavian influence survived here for many years. In fact Dialect experts, as late as the nineteenth century remarked that Tynemouth had a non Angle dialect, quite distinct from the rest of Tyneside and Northumberland. It was remarked that it more closely resembled that of the Durham coast (an area of later Viking settlement). The distinction is no longer apparent today.

The most important Anglian stronghold in northern Northumbria was of course Bamburgh, several miles along the Northumbrian coast to the north. Here the descendants of the Angle kings of Northumbria claimed that they were the rightful rulers of Northumbria. As proof, they claimed to trace their line back to Ida the Flamebearer. Defeat at the hands of the Danes meant that these leaders could no longer regard themselves as absolute kings in the north and so they had to make do with the title of High Reeve or Earl of Bamburgh/Bernicia. A few claimed to be kings, notably in the early 900s but most were forced to accept subordination to the Viking rulers of York.

So with Bernicia subdued, one part of the huge Danish army under Halfdene continued the settlement of Yorkshire, while another took control of the East Midlands. The shires of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford in the East Midlands would come to be known as 'the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw' while the West midlands, like Bernicia remained Anglo-Saxon. It was possible to talk of their being two Northumbrias and two Mercias each under the respective influence of Danes or Angles.



Photo: Bamburgh Castle
photographed by David
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But the Danes were still restless for further conquest and Halfdene, the Danish King of York still had ambitions in Ireland. Around 877 he disappears from history, probably killed somewhere in the Irish Sea fighting the Norwegians. Danish power in the North now passed to Guthred, who went into battle with Alfred the Great of Wessex in 878. Guthred was defeated, but although he had to recognise Alfred's superiority, the Danes authority in the North was not under question.

CUTHBERT'S BUFFER ZONE

Relations between the Danes and Bernicia improved during the reign of Guthred. The year 882 saw the creation by Guthred of a new region in southern Bernicia where the Christian heritage of Northumbria was actively preserved. This new region would serve as a buffer zone between the surviving Anglian culture of northern Northumbria and the emerging Danish culture of southern Northumbria. Centred around the old Anglo-Saxon minster church of Chester-le-Street (then known as Conecaster) this territory was the beginning of what would eventually develop into the Bishopric and later the county of Durham.

The origins of this new region can be traced back to the year 875 when Eardwulf, the Bishop of Lindisfarne fled Norham on Tweed with a respected group of monks and followers known as the Community of St Cuthbert. They carried with them the coffin of St Cuthbert, the head of St Oswald (the former king of Northumbria) and some of the holiest relics in the North including the Lindisfarne Gospels. They fled to escape Halfdene's furious raids upon Bernicia and headed west, settling in Cumbria where Eadred, the abbot of Carlisle became their new leader.

Eadred, the leader of this Community emerged as a strong supporter of Guthred's claims to the Northumbria throne. Guthred, in co-operation with Egbert the Earl of Bernicia, rewarded Eadred's support by granting an area of land in the region between the Tyne and Tees to the Community of St Cuthbert. The saint's body and coffin was interred in the new church at Chester le Street in 883 and Eardwulf, previously the Bishop of Lindisfarne became the first Bishop of Conecaster (Chester-le-Street). This meant that the ancient see of Lindisfarne had been transferred to what would become the County of Durham, although in early times the Community called their new land 'Haliwerfolklond' - the land of the holy man people. The holy man in question was of course St. Cuthbert.

Guthred, like most of his fellow Danes was of course a pagan, so it may seem strange that Guthred would support the creation of a new community with strong Christian traditions. There may be both mystical and political reasons for the creation of this community. Firstly the Vikings, despite their paganism, were deeply intrigued by the mysticism and miracles associated with the relics of saints and in a superstitious age were quite open to tales of miraculous powers. Secondly the encouragement of a religious community with its roots deeply planted in Northumbria's golden age of Christianity may have encouraged the Angles of Bernicia to support the Danes or at least be less hostile towards them. With Dane and Angle promising to protect this ancient community mid way between their territories, rebellion in the far north would seem less likely.

NORWEGIAN IRISH

The year 899 saw the death of Alfred the Great and the succession of Edward the Elder to the throne of Wessex. In the North, Guthred, the King of York also passed away, but the Danes failed to produce a strong candidate and for a time Egbert of Bernicia styled himself as king. He was succeeded by another Bamburgh based Bernician called Eadwulf, sometime between 900 and 913, but the records of leadership in this period are poor. Viking power in the British Isles suffered a major setback in the year 918 when the Native Irish under the leadership of the King of Leinster expelled the Hiberno-Norse (a well established mixed race of Irish and Norwegians) from their great colony at Dublin.

The Irish-Norwegians took to their boats to seek land across the Irish Sea. They would find settlement in Cumbria, the Ribble valley of Lancashire (where there was already a substantial colony of Danes and Norwegians) and in the Mersey estuary where they established settlements like Croxteth and Toxteth. Even the name of Liverpool, may derive from this period, deriving from Old Norse words meaning 'muddy creek'. There was much activity and co-operation between Danes and Norsemen in this south western portion of Northumbria during this period. Around 905 A huge hoard of some 1300 Viking items were hidden under the river bank at Cuerdale near Preston, they would remain undiscovered until the nineteenth century. The Ribble was part of the Viking trade route between Dublin and York.

The Vikings appear to have been in turmoil during this period and many sought settlement elsewhere. Around 911 one great mass of Norsemen began the settlement of northern France, ultimately giving their name (Nor-Men) to the Normandy region.

Viking fortunes began to change around the year 913, first in the North of England, where the



Photo: Saint Aidan monument, Lindisfarne photographed by David Simpson



Photo: Hadrian's Wall
photographed by David
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death of Eadwulf of Bernicia provided new opportunities to exploit Anglo-Saxon weakness in the north. The following year Viking success in Ireland was achieved with exiled Irish-Norsemen successfully regaining Dublin. In the same year, the Irish-Vikings under the leadership of King Ragnald attacked the North East with the help of the Yorkshire based Danes. The Bernicians, in alliance with the Scots defeated the Vikings in a battle at Corbridge on Tyne. Ragnald would return to Dublin but regained his confidence and returned to Northumbria four years later defeating a joint army of Northumbrians, Danes and Franks in a second battle at Corbridge. The Danes of Yorkshire clearly now saw Ragnald as a threat.

The Danish fears were not unfounded, Ragnald seized York and established Irish-Viking control there. The Kingdom of York was reduced to a client kingdom of the great Viking stronghold of Dublin. Ragnald sought land to offer as a prize for his military supporters. Notably, he chose land in south and east Durham seizing it from the Bishop of Chester-le-Street and presenting it to his warrior generals called Scula and Olaf Ball. They would share it out amongst their Irish-Viking followers. The chosen land was the Bishop of Chester-le-Street's best farmland. Scula was given land in the south of the bishop's territory, including Billingham and School Aycliffe (Scula Aycliffe). Olaf Ball was given the east coast from Hartlepool to Sunderland. Ragnald could have taken land in Yorkshire but many powerful landowners in Yorkshire were of Danish descent and could have posed a military threat to Ragnald in the long run. The Bishop of Chester-le-Street, had been the virtual lord and ruler of much of the land between the Tyne and Tees but would not have the military strength to challenge Ragnald.

This increasing Irish-Norwegian expansion would not have gone unnoticed in the Anglo-Saxon territories of west Mercia and Wessex. The River Mersey, formed a natural border between the Anglian territory of Mercia and the Norwegian and Danish settlements in the Lancashire area of Northumbria to the north. Edward the Elder, the Anglo-Saxon King of Wessex and Mercia was already focusing his attention on this region in 919 with the construction of a great fort at Manchester, right on the border between the Mercians and the Lancashire Vikings. Other Mercian strongholds in this region, like Chester were strengthened during this period. This may have made some impression on Ragnald as by 920 he was acknowledging the supremacy of Edward.

Ragnald was succeeded as Irish Norse King of York by his cousin Sihtric in 920 and Sihtric continued to acknowledge the supremacy of Wessex, giving his allegiance to Edward's successor, Athelstan in 924. By this period Kings of Wessex could already claim to be the virtual kings of all England, but their hold over the Viking kings in the north was always precarious. By 927 Sihtric's successor Guthfrith seems to have turned his back on Wessex rule.

KING ATHELSTAN

On July 12, 927 Athelstan, king of Wessex, called a meeting of northern kings at Eamont Bridge in the Lake District. The Kings of Strathclyde and Scotland along with Ealdred, the ruler of Bernicia all attended but Guthfrith, King of Dublin and York chose not to attend. Athelstan's very credibility was now at stake. He had no choice but to attack and with his army in attendance marched into Yorkshire captured the city of York and expelled Guthfrith from his kingdom. It was a sign that military domination was slipping away from the Vikings in the north. Athelstan's power throughout England now seemed stronger than any Anglo-Saxon king since the beginning of the Viking age.

In the North Athelstan set about the restoration of the great Christian heritage of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria. In 934 he visited the shrine of St Cuthbert at Chester le Street and bestowed many great gifts. They would include a work by Bede entitled the Life of St Cuthbert - a special edition depicting Athelstan on the cover. During the visit to Chester-le-Street, the king returned Bishopwearmouth near Sunderland to the Bishop of Chester le Street. It was part of the land taken by the Irish Vikings in 918. Further south the king also granted rights of sanctuary to the monastery at Ripon.

Bernicia must have especially welcomed Athelstan's kingship of England, but the kingdoms of the far north were not so appreciative. Accused of not supporting Athelstan, they were suspected of rebellion and became the subject of Athelstan's military campaigns in 934 when Scotland was ravaged by Athelstan's forces. The Dublin Vikings ousted from power in York were still of course amongst Athelstan's most powerful enemies and on October 27, 937 they sided with the Scots in a great battle with Athelstan somewhere in the north west, probably at Bromborough in Cheshire.

Athelstan proceeded to destroy the Viking fortress at York in an attempt to suppress any further rebellion. It seemed as though Wessex could not be defeated and that Viking rule in the North was doomed, but on October 27, 939 Athelstan, King of Wessex and England passed away at Gloucester. He was succeeded by his eighteen year old brother Edmund.

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This was the opportunity the Vikings had been waiting for. Olaf Guthfrithson of Dublin, the son of Guthfrith arrived in England to succeed his late father as King at York.

ERIC BLOODAXE

Significantly, under military pressure or due to a feeling of blood allegiance, the people of Yorkshire rejected the claims of the young Wessex king Edmund. Viking rule in the north continued after 942 when Blacair Guthfrithson succeeded as King of York and Dublin upon the death of his brother Olaf. However, the maturing Edmund would not stand by forever and in 944 he seized York. However, Edmund's reign would not last much longer and on May 26, 946 he was the victim of assassination.

In 946 the kingdom of England passed to Edmund's son Eadred. In the north, Wulfstan the Archbishop of York submitted to the new King at Tanshelf in southern Northumbria, but Northumbrian allegiance was not assured since Wulfstan, unbeknown to Eadred, planned to offer the Kingdom of York to a very powerful Viking, Eric Bloodaxe, King of Norway.

Bloodaxe, part Norse, part Danish, was elected king of York in 948 and made claims to all Northumbria. But he was ousted later in the year by Eadred in a battle centred in and around Ripon. Turmoil ensued and King Malcolm of Scotland taking advantage of northern weaknesses raided Northumbria as far south as the River Tees. Perhaps sensing disaster, Eadred now changed his policy in the North and in 949 he seems to have supported the claims of Olaf Sihtricson, a Dublin Viking as King of York. It is likely that Eadred, saw Sihtricson as a less powerful threat than Eric Bloodaxe who was somewhere in exile.

Unfortunately for Eadred, Sihtricson was not popular in the North and failed to gain the support of his people. In 952 the people of York ousted Sihtricson and reinstated Bloodaxe as King of York. Eric Bloodaxe, seems to have sought the support of the Bernicians as he is known to have made a pilgrimage visit to the the shrine of St Cuthbert at Chester le Street. His action of pilgrimage had become something of a tradition amongst powerful kings as previous visitors St Cuthbert's shrine at Chester le Street had included King Athelstan, King Edmund and King Eadred.

Evidence suggests that Eric Bloodaxe failed to gain the support of the Bernicians and they may have played a part in Eric's death. In 954 he was murdered in the bleak moors of Stainmore in Teesdale by Maccus who is thought to have been working as an agent of Oswulf Ealdulfing, the High Reeve or Earl of Bamburgh, who still claimed to rule Northumbria north of the Tees. Oswulf was a supporter of Eadred, the King of Wessex and England, who is likely to have played a major part in the murder. Bloodaxe was ambushed in Satinmore in the company of several powerful Vikings and evidence suggests that they had been lured into a trap. Whatever the truth surrounding Eric's death may be, the incident was certainly a major as it signified the end of northern independence. From this point the North East and Yorkshire would be ruled as part of England by Kings in the south.

With power increasingly concentrated in the south there would be plenty of opportunities for the Scots to exploit northern weaknesses and in 954 this became apparent when the Scots, under the leadership of their King Indulf, seized the Northumbrian stronghold of Edinburgh.

WESSEX CONTROL

In 955 Eadred, King of wessex and England died and was succeeded by his nephew Eadwig. The Northumbrians rejected the king in alliance with the Mercians but on this occasion they opted not for a Viking replacement, but came out supporting the claims of Eadwig's brother Edgar. They failed in their challenge but by 959 Edgar had succeeded as king of England. In the North, York was now ruled by Earls in allegiance to the king and the same situation existed in Bernicia with the Earls of Bamburgh ruling in allegiance to the king north of the Tees.

Gradually the Vikings in Yorkshire were beginning to intermingle with the existing communities and Viking words would gradually infiltrate the English language even in areas where the Vikings had not settled. It now almost impossible to distinguish a Viking Englishman from a non-Viking Englishmen. That is not to say there were no longer any new Viking incomers settling in the north. It is known for example that in the year 966 two Viking brothers called Thorgils and Kormak in the service of King Harald Grafeld, King of Norway established a stronghold at Scarborough while harrying in Ireland, England and Wales. Thorgils was known to his brother by the nickname 'Hare Lip', or in the Viking language 'Skarthi'. It is probable that 'Hare-Lip' gave his name to Scarborough.

By this time, however, the real threat in the north came from the Scots. In 971 Kenneth King of Scotland had raided the North East as far as Stainmore in Teesdale and for centuries to come the Scots would lay claim to Bernicia. Edinburgh, a former Bernician stronghold now belonged to the Scots and expansion into the rest of Anglian Bernician seemed a natural aim.

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This was not accepted by Edgar, the king of England and in 974 he held a meeting with Kenneth King of the Scots and the Kings of Cumbria, the Islands and five other kings at Chester on the River Dee. The meeting is thought to have focussed on the Scottish claim to North East England north of the Tees. Edgar who impressed the northern kings with his great army is likely to have told the Scots to keep their hands off the region. For the time being the Scots would accept this, but the seeds of a centuries long age of Scottish border warfare had begun.

The rising power of Wessex weakened the North of England in the last decade of the first millennium and left the region vulnerable to attacks by the Scots and new wave of Danes. In 988 Swein Forkbeard became King of Denmark and set his sites on conquest in England. These Danes had no definite links with England and in 993 they attacked Bamburgh, the coastal stronghold of the Eadulfsons who were the virtual rulers of Bernicia. It was as if the Viking raids of 793 had started all over again some two hundred years later.

DUNHOLM - DURHAM

Viking raids continued and it seemed as if they would be once more a constant threat. In 995 the Community of St.Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street, a remnant of Northumbria's greater days, fled to Ripon in 995 perhaps to escape one such raid, although the Scots were also raiding the north at this time and posed an additional threat. In that year Kenneth of Scotland was defeated in an invasion of the North East after his attack was fought off by Uhtred Eadulfson, son of the Earl of Bamburgh.

After staying at Ripon for a few months, the Community of St.Cuthbert returned north but settled at Dunholm (Durham) rather than Chester-le-Street. This new site was naturally defended like an island, formed by the horse-shoe gorge of the River Wear. They are said to have been guided to the site by a vision, but it is likely to have been a deliberate political decision made in the interests of safety. Later that year a minster called the 'White Church' was constructed of wood for St Cuthbert's remains at Durham. Uhtred Eadulfson of Bamburgh employed labour from the River Coquet to the River Tees to fortify the site and Aldhun, Bishop of Chester-le-Street became the first Bishop of Durham. In 999, a new 'White Church' minster was built at Durham but this time it was built of stone.

Meanwhile, the Danes continued to attack England, subjected the country to continuous raiding, although they were temporarily stopped in their tracks in 1005 by an outbreak of Plague that spread across England, killing many. The Danish fleet returned to Denmark to escape the disease. It did not, however deter the Scots who raided the north under King Malcolm, only to be heavily defeated during an attack on Durham City. Malcolm was attempting to seize the North East. In celebration of victory, the heads of the best looking Scottish soldiers were displayed around Durham's city walls. Durham women were presented with the gift of a cow for washing the heads and combing the hair. The Northumbrians who defeated the Scots were once again led by Earl Uhtred Eadulfson of Bamburgh and son in law of the Bishop of Durham.

KING CANUTE

In 1006 Earl Uhtred's lordship in Bernicia was extended south of the River Tees after Athelred, King of England appointed Uhtred as Earl of York. This meant that Uhtred effectively became earl of all Northumbria. But this new unification of Northumbria was not enough to prevent the Danish threat and by 1013 Swein Forkbeard, King of Denmark entered the Humber and encamped at Gainsborough. Uhtred the Earl of Northumbria was forced to submit. Forkbeard went on to capture London and seized the English throne.

Forkbeard died in February 1014 and his son Canute was elected King of England by the Danish army. Uhtred the Earl of Northumbria led an army into the West Midlands to challenge Canute but Canute moved up the eastern flank of the country into Lincolnshire and crossed to York. Uhtred visited Canute's court at Wighill near York in an attempt to make peace but was assassinated before he even got to see the king. On November 30, 1016 Canute appointed a Norwegian called Eric Hlathir as Earl of York, and Eadulf Cudel of the house of Bamburgh as the Earl of Northumbria north of the Tees. Canute had begun the division of England into earldoms.

The territory of the Bishops of Durham, which will develop into County of Durham is expanding. Lands acquired by Bishop Aldhun since 995 include territory in the Tees and Wear valleys, some of which belonged to the Vikings. In 1003 Darlington had been given to the Bishop of Durham by Styr, son of Ulphus at a ceremony in York. Around 1018 Sockburn on Tees and land near Sedgfield was acquired by Durham from Snaculf, while Norton and Stockton were acquired from Ulfcytel. Escomb and Aucklandshire in the Wear Valley which belonged to an earl called Northman were also acquired.

However, Aldhun Bishop of Durham would be heartbroken by the news of Eadulf Cudel's

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defeat in battle against King Malcolm and the Scots at Carham on Tweed in 1019. This resulted in all Northumbrian territory from Edinburgh to the Tweed being lost to the Scot forever. Aldhun is said to have died from the shock of the news. Canute who could perhaps have assisted Cudel in the battle, was in Denmark. When the king returned to England he received tribute from King Malcolm in the year 1027 but the lands north of the Tees remained under Scottish control. In that same year Canute made a visit to Durham, walking bare foot from Garmondsway six miles to the south of the city to visit St Cuthbert's shrine, a mark of respect for Northumbria's great Christian tradition.

Canute the Dane returned to Bernicia in 1031 to quell rebellion but continued to bestow respect on the community of St Cuthbert at Durham, presenting it with land around land Staindrop. Canute is known to have owned a mansion in the district, probably located at Raby. Both Raby and Staindrop have distinctly Danish names.

EARL SIWARD

Canute appointed Siward as the Earl of York in 1031 and he was encouraged to settle disputes between his deputies Carl the Hold of York and Ealdred the Earl of Bamburgh. Ealdred has been earl since the death of Eadulf Cudel sometime after 1019. Peace seems to have been upheld but on November 12 1035 King Canute died at Shaftesbury. Within three years Ealdred of Bamburgh had been killed by Carl the Hold of York. He was succeeded by Eadulf of Bamburgh who would meet his end possibly at the hands of Siward who becomes Earl of all Northumbria.

In 1054 Siward, the Earl of Northumbria defeated the Scots under King Macbeth and Siward's nephew Malcolm Canmore was appointed Lord of Strathclyde and the Lothians. It was an attempt to bring the Scottish lowlands once more under Northumbrian control. But Siward passed away the following year and the earldom was given by King Edward the Confessor to Tostig Godwinson, brother of Harold, the Earl of Wessex.

Further north, Siward's nephew Malcolm Canmore, was rising to power, becoming King Malcolm III of Scotland after the death of King Macbeth in battle. Malcolm swore allegiance to Edward the Confessor at York but in 1061 he ravaged Lindisfarne and north Northumbria and captured Cumberland. It was a major defeat for Tostig, the Earl of Northumbria. malcolm may have had some support from, Cospatric a respected noble of Bamburgh who was murdered by Tostig in 1064. Rebellion broke out against Earl Tostig in the North following the murder but Tostig was safe in Wiltshire. By 1065 Edwin, Earl of Mercia had joined with Northern rebels against Tostig. King Edward responded to the rebellion with sympathy and exiled Tostig to keep the peace. Morcar, a Mercian was appointed Earl of York and was served by Osulf of Bamburgh, the earl north of the Tees.

1066

On January 6, 1066 Edward the Confessor, King of England died and Harold Godwinson was crowned King of England, despite William of Normandy's protests that he is heir to the English throne. In Easter 1066 Harold visited York and promised to keep his brother Tostig in exile. Peace had returned once again until August 1066 when Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway attacked the coasts of Northumberland and Cleveland and prepared to invade Yorkshire from the Humber. Tostig, the exiled Earl of Northumbria had also also planned an invasion from his base in exile in Flanders. Tostig's invasion of Yorkshire was repelled but during his retreat from Northumbria he was forced to join the army of the invading Norwegians. The Norwegians landed at Riccall ten miles from York and on September 20, 1066 the Norwegians under Hardrada defeated Morcar and his brother Edwin in a great battle at Gate Fulford near York.

The citizens of York gave their support to the Norwegian King and on September 25 1066 Hardrada encamped at Stamford Bridge on the River Derwent near York. His victory was short lived however. King Harold of England marched north and the Norwegians were defeated in a great battle. The King of Norway was shot dead with an arrow through the throat. Tostig was also killed.

Like his Norwegian namesake, King Harold's celebrations would be short lived. On October 1st 1066, Harold recieved the dreadful news that a huge force of Normans under Duke William had landed in Sussex and had set up a base at Hastings two days before. He had no choice but to take his tired army south to fight the Normans and October 14 1066 he would be defeated in a great battle and lose his life. William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day.

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