

Wiðowinde Bindweed



Exploring the
culture, history and language
of Anglo-Saxon England

Issue 184 · Winter 2017



JARROW
HALL:
A NEW SUN

Also inside

Carlton in Lindrick church
Anglo-Saxon riddles
The York Festival of Ideas: Anglian York
The land at Tidenham
What did the Normans ever do for us?

Contact Details

Ða Engliscan Gesithas · The English Companions

www.tha-engliscan-gesithas.org.uk

Witan (Directors of the Limited Company)

Gerefa (Secretary): Geoffrey Littlejohns

108 Selby Lane, Keyworth, Notts NG12 5AJ
0115 8461752 grnlittlejohns@gmail.com

Ealdor (Chairman): Peter Horn

22 Jowitt Avenue, Kempston, Bedford MK42 8NW
01234 852943 admin@tha-engliscan-gesithas.org.uk

Ferscipes getælere (Membership Secretary): David Hinch

30 Tudor Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3SY 01227 457719
d.hinch@sky.com

Hordere (Treasurer): Ian Geary

152 Swithland Lane, Rothley, Leicestershire LE7 7SF
01162 376675 ian.geary@tesco.net

Gelimpa þegn (Events Officer): Harry Ball

Bottom Lane Farm, Bottom House nr. Leek, Staffs ST13 7QL
01538 266440 harrywulfgar@btinternet.com

Wiðowinde bocere (Bindweed Editor): David Jones

6 Myrtle Court, Myrtle Street, Southville, Bristol BS3 1JE
bocere@tha-engliscan-gesithas.org.uk

Webb þegn (Website Administrator): Tom Wright

28 St Katherines Close, Hitchin SG5 3XS
Reiburn_80@hotmail.com

Wita without portfolio: Tim Hawke

247 Colchester Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 4SJ
trhawke@googlemail.com

Gegaderung Administrator: Linden Currie

48 Leamington Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 2SW 01702 600963
linden.currie@btinternet.com

Scirgerefan (County Representatives)

Essex

Linden Currie 01702 600963 linden.currie@btinternet.com

Leicestershire

Alison Skinner, 16 Wood Hill, Spinney Hill Park, Leicester
LE5 3JB 0116 2519668 beowulf48@btinternet.com

Nottinghamshire / Derbyshire

Geoffrey Littlejohns, 108 Selby Lane, Keyworth, Notts NG12 5AJ
0115 8461752 grnlittlejohns@gmail.com

Suffolk

Tim Hawke, trhawke@googlemail.com

Surrey

Andy Smith, wordsmithreviews@yahoo.co.uk

Tungerefan (Contact Points)

Ryedale, North Yorkshire

Phyllis Wicks, Ducks Farm, Main Street, Kirby Misperton, North
Yorkshire YO17 6XL 01653 669244 phyllis@wicks.org

Wetherby and York

George Roe, 18 Heuthwaite Avenue, Wetherby, West Yorkshire
LS22 6RR 01937 919173 georgeroe@talktalk.net

Manchester

Martin Singer, 14 Silverdale Road, Chorlton, Manchester
M21 0SH 07920 460417 vikingmart@metronet.co.uk

Bedford

Peter Horn 01234 852943
admin@tha-engliscan-gesithas.org.uk

South Gloucestershire and North Somerset

Hugh Soar, 'Yew Corner' 29 Batley Court, Oldland, South Glos.
BS30 8YZ 0117 9323276 bogaman@btinternet.com

Canterbury, Kent

David Hinch 30 Tudor Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3SY
01227 457719 d.hinch@sky.com

West Sussex

Patrick Marshall, 25A Park Avenue, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex
BN43 6PH 01273 453056 pm@starzacher.co.uk

Wessex (Hamtunscir, Meonware)

Peter O'Sullivan, Stokedown, New Road, Meonstoke, Hampshire
SO32 3NN

East Anglia

John Chatwin, 75 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, Norwich NR13 4LG
johnchatwin43@gmail.com

North Staffordshire

Harry Ball 01538 266440 harrywulfgar@btinternet.com

Yorkshire Coast

Carol Robinson, 4 Mayfield Drive, Seamer, North Yorks YO12
4RA 0776 4799553 carol.robinson13@btinternet.com



Wiðowinde is published by
Đa Engliscan Gesiðas (The English Companions)

ISSN 30962463

Editor: Dr David Jones

Sub-Editors: Jenny Ashby & Phyllis Wicks

Printer: Whitehall Printing Co (Avon) Limited, Peter's Terrace
Barton Hill, Bristol BS5 0BW

Magazine designed using Scribus Version 1.4.1

Đa Engliscan Gesiðas (The English Companions) is a Company
Limited by Guarantee.

Reg. No. 04134039

Reg. Address:

Bottom Lane Farm

Bottom House nr Leek

Staffordshire ST13 7QL

Gesithas is a Registered Trade Mark wholly owned by
the Company

Who are The English Companions?

Founded in 1966, Đa Engliscan Gesiðas (pronounced "tha ehng-lish-an yuh-seeth-as", Old English for The English Companions) aims to bring together all those with an interest in the history, language and culture of Early England AD 450 - 1100. All aspects of the foundations and growth of English culture are covered, including language and literature, archaeology, anthropology, architecture, art, religion, mythology, folklore and material culture.

Though we try to stimulate interest and debate on relevant subjects through the pages of our magazine and our website, The English Companions does not follow any particular interpretation of history, and maintains a strictly neutral line on modern political and religious matters.

Find out more about the society by visiting

www.tha-engliscan-gesithas.org.uk

Our magazine: We welcome contributions from members and non-members: please see the guide for contributors on the inside back cover for details. The magazine name is pronounced "with-oh-wind-eh". It is Old English for some of the plants that are called bindweed in modern English.

Front Cover: An Anglo-Saxon helmet reconstruction at Jarrow Hall.

Wiðowinde · 184



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David Jones



IN THIS ISSUE WE HEAR ABOUT THE LATEST initiatives from Jarrow Hall. We also uncover the Anglo-Saxon history of Carlton in Lindrick church, explore an Old English charter, solve two Anglo-Saxon riddles, ask what the Normans did for the English and conclude our series of short articles on this year's York Festival of Ideas. There are also reports on the many Companions activities over the summer and autumn and most of our usual features.



MEMBERS WILL HAVE NOTICED THAT SOME recent issues of Wiðowinde have been somewhat longer than the 44-page standard established at the start of my tenure as Editor. Whilst this reflects the encouraging enthusiasm of our members (for which the Witan are very grateful; you make the magazine what it is!) and provides more reading material for those long winter nights, the increase incurs a cost: both in printing the extra pages and in postage for the heavier package. In order to avoid raising the membership fees to cover this additional expense, the Witan have decided rather to be more rigorous in keeping the magazine, as far as possible, to a constant length. This will inevitably mean that some articles that arrive before the copy deadline will be held over until the following issue. As I have said in previous editions of this column, please remember that the copy deadline is strictly nominal

(reflected in the caveat that accompanies it), and exists to ensure that the magazine is issued at regular intervals. If you want to maximise the chances of your contribution being included in a particular issue, please ensure that you submit it in good time!

The entries for the Cædmon Prize 2017 are printed in this issue; you can vote for which entry you think deserves to win. The entries are printed on page 12, along with details on how to vote.

Finally, may I wish all gesiðas a happy yuletide and a prosperous new year.

Peter Horn

LOOKING AT RECENT LETTERS IN WIDOWINDE, it seems to me that we must continually remind ourselves that our purpose is to “Explore the culture, history and language of Anglo-Saxon England.” That is to say it does not include discussing what it is to be English today. We are Anglo-Saxonists, and an Anglo-Saxonist does not have to be English, any more than an Egyptologist has to be Egyptian.

Another matter that does need clarifying has been raised by James Simister ðegn (Widowinde issue 183, Pages 42 / 43). James states that Companions have a partisan attitude in favour of the Anglo-Saxons, and particularly against the Normans. It is true that most Companions tend to favour the Anglo-Saxons over the Normans, and this is a view that has always hovered over the members of the Witan in my experience, and is exemplified in the ceremony of the wreath laying at the Haroldstone at Battle each year. However, this does not mean that we cannot criticise the Anglo-Saxons, for they were far from being perfect in every respect. If we do seem to have a partisan attitude it is no doubt because our subject matter is Anglo-Saxon England, not Norman England.

* * *

In a recent Widowinde the question was raised “What exactly were Anglo-Saxon houses like?” With reference

to the sunken-floor buildings, Fiona Dowson says why would anyone choose to have half the height of a building beneath the ground.

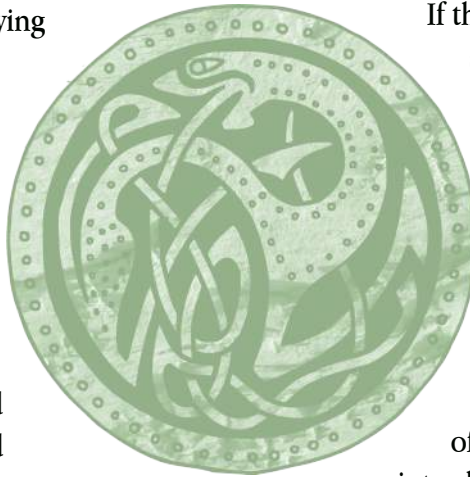
There doesn't appear to be a definitive answer to this question but there is some evidence that these ‘sunken-featured buildings’ were used for the storage of grain and used as a place for weaving and they would have provided a cool place for brewing.

If there were a need for additional sleeping quarters, SFB's would be a quick solution because of the saving in time and timbers. The SFB's were probably multifunctional.

With reference to the Halls, Byrhtferth describes the building of this larger type of building as follows: We first of all survey the site of the house, and also hew the timber into shape, and neatly fit together the sills and lay down the beams and fasten the rafters to the roof and support it with buttresses, and afterwards delightfully adorn the house. (Byrhtferth's Manual, Vol 1, AD 1011).

* * *

Since this issue of Widowinde should reach all gesithas before Christmas, I take this opportunity to wish all gesithas a merry mid-winter festival and a happy and prosperous new year.



Geoff Littlejohns

I START WITH NEWS OF AN EXCITING EVENT WE are arranging. Attentive readers of this magazine may have noticed that Jenny Ashby is a woman with a mission – to visit as many churches with Anglo-Saxon features as she possibly can and then to write fascinating articles for Wiðowinde about them. Jenny's mission took her to the church of St Mary's in Broughton which lies four miles east of Scunthorpe on Ermine Street. She was looking for a tower and stair turret that date from the late Anglo-Saxon period.



The author hard at work on a reconstruction Anglo-Saxon building, preparing rafters by sawing notches

Jenny contacted the vicar to ask if she could look round the church. He replied that he would ask a local history expert, called Kevin Leahy, to oblige. Jenny assumed she would not be talking to “the” Kevin Leahy but just some resident of North Lincolnshire who happened to possess the same name. Surely Kevin Leahy, the nationally-renowned expert on the Staffordshire Hoard and Finds Advisor to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, would be tucked away in some busy corner of the British Museum and not at all accessible to ordinary visitors to our parish churches? But as he showed her round the church, it became apparent that his depth of

knowledge was extraordinary and, astounded, she realised that she was indeed talking to the acclaimed Kevin Leahy! With an initiative and verve that I find admirable, Jenny asked Dr Leahy if he would be willing to speak to the English Companions, perhaps in that very church. Dr Leahy willingly agreed, surely proof of the persuasive power of Jenny's enthusiasm.

So we in Ða Engliscan Gesiðas now have the splendid opportunity of holding a major event in which England's leading expert on the Staffordshire Hoard will be speaking to us. The day-school is to be held on 2nd June from 11am to 3pm with an interval for lunch at the Red Lion, the local inn. Broughton is very easy to reach as it lies just off the M180. Users of public transport should be able to reach it by taxi from Scunthorpe railway station.

For those not yet familiar with the names of the scholars at work on the Staffordshire Hoard, Dr Leahy is the author of 'Anglo-Saxon Crafts' (2003), 'Interrupting the Pots' (2007) and 'The Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Lindsey' (2008). (For those of you who might be unaware of precisely what the process of interrupting pots might involve, Dr Leahy wrote this book about his excavation of Cleatham cemetery, which is still the third largest Anglo-Saxon cemetery ever excavated in England.) He is a revered expert on early mediaeval metalwork.

We are expecting that Dr Leahy will be lecturing on Anglo-Saxon architecture in the morning and on the Staffordshire Hoard in the afternoon. I am sure that Peter, our Ealdor, and all the other Witan join me in sending our warm thanks to Jenny for her quick-wittedness and enterprise in grasping what opportunities could lie before us thanks to her well-timed trip to Scunthorpe. This day-school will be a major accomplishment for Ða Engliscan Gesiðas. I hope that as many as possible of you can keep 2nd June free in your diaries so that you will be able to join us for a lively and informative day at St Mary's, Broughton.

I turn from the excitement of next year to our activities over the past season. I always feel a sense of horror when approaching what William Cobbett aptly termed 'the Great Wen'. I find even travelling the M25 far too close for comfort to our self-styled capital city. So I decided that this year I would give our Battle Abbey commemoration a miss and leave it in the safe hands of David Hinch. I was saving my energies for the Stamford Bridge Festival in lovely Yorkshire and then for Waltham Abbey's King Harold Day, which, although perilously close to London, would be just about tolerable if I kept my eyes firmly closed and talked to myself loudly enough to crowd out any other sensations.

My plans, however, did not run at all smoothly. Just as plans for our participation in the Stamford Bridge Festival were reaching fruition, Jenny Ashby circulated us with the dismaying news that the team of re-enactors, who usually provide a major display in the Festival's programme, had decided that the Battle of Fulford should be celebrated instead. Jenny sent us a dispiriting message that this decision had thrown plans at Stamford Bridge into disarray.

Sadly I told my wife that I would no longer be off to Yorkshire in September as the Stamford Bridge Festival was undoubtedly cancelled. 'Oh good,' she exclaimed; 'that means we can do Offa.' I must explain here that Hilary and I have this year begun a project to walk the Offa's Dyke Way. As soon as I told Hilary that Stamford Bridge was off, she sprang into action, booked an appropriate camp-site and alerted our loyal support team. I gave my eager support for this rapid response as our project is proving a wonderful walk which I recommend to all gesiþas with a functioning pair of legs.

With these plans ahead of me, the news broke that the Stamford Bridge Festival was back on after all. I was faced with a wrenching choice – either I would fail to give our dedicated Yorkshire gesiðas my support at this lively commemoration or I would infuriate my wife and dismay our loyal back-up team who had already bought their rail tickets.

My dilemma was resolved thanks to Harry Ball, our gelimpa thegn, who assured me that he at all costs would be driving to Stamford Bridge to offer his support. Confident that Harry, clad as always in the garb of a holy man of God, would carry out a more

charismatic performance than any profane contribution I could deliver, I could with a more clear conscience wander the uplands of the Welsh Marches. Harry assured me afterwards that the Stamford Bridge Festival had been a glorious success, with our Yorkshire gesiþas once again providing a range of creative activities and displays for adults and children alike.

Back home from the Offa's Dyke Way, I was getting ready for the King Harold Day Festival at Waltham Abbey when a message came from David Hinch that Tricia, the Festival's organiser, had been obliged to cancel it. This time the problem was not wayward re-enactors but the proprietors of the Abbey grounds where the Festival has always gathered. The grounds would no longer be available. David was deeply disappointed. As those of you who dwell in the South East must know, he had been contacting local gesiðas about the festival. Twelve of you had responded which had delighted him. He had been looking forward to putting on the best ever display at the King Harold Festival that we had ever mounted.



The author, leaning happily against a post

Deflated as I was by this, my freed time would not be wasted. All gesiðas who dwell in the Midlands should be aware that Peter Graystone, who tutors our Englisc correspondence course, also runs a language course that meets in a room within Keele University. As far as I am aware, this is the only class for Englisc offered anywhere in the country. The King Harold Day cancellation would allow me to sign on at the opening session of the year's classes. I must urge any gesið who lives within travelling distance of the Potteries and who

is eager to learn more about our Englisc tongue to sign up as well. Peter can be contacted at his e-mail address of plgraystone@btinternnet.com.

Peter and the class are always very welcoming.

I had my journey to Keele arranged when another message came through. Tricia, heartened by fervent messages of sympathy that she had received, had decided to do what she could to retrieve the event. She would lead a wreath-laying within Waltham Abbey at the stone that commemorates Harold Godwinson, the abbey's patron. Eight gesiþas turned up at Waltham Abbey to support David Hinch in our activities there.



Our expert builder celebrating on the roof of the reconstruction Anglo-Saxon building with a green-leaf ceremony

David was also involved at our annual commemoration at Battle Abbey on Sunday 15th October. He and John Cross had travelled to Battle Abbey the Friday before to raise our Fellowship's replica Anglo-Saxon tent. They found Fiona Dowson in the abbey grounds and with her skilful hands to help, they were able to persuade the thing to behave itself. Fiona's mastery over our wilful tent, however, did her no good at all, for she was sadly ill throughout Saturday. David and John managed to carry on, entertaining encouragingly large audiences with their recitals in Englisc. They were nevertheless grateful and relieved when Fiona reappeared on Sunday in her full re-enactment kit, providing our display with more activity and variety. David was also grateful to Nigel and Maggie Rumble who helped man our tent and talk to visitors.

On the same day as our Battle Abbey commemoration, the revived Martinmas Fair was held in Lenton in Nottingham. This was not strictly an Anglo-Saxon project as the original fair was set up in the twelfth century. The organisers of the revived fair considered that a dark and dismal date in November would discourage visitors and moved Martinmas forward to 14th October. Nicola Wright came heavily laden with her Anglo-Saxon textile display and the two of us were able to cope with the gazebo that Harry Ball had kindly lent. The weather was more clement than it would have been a month later but I fear that the good people of Nottingham town came in no greater numbers than if the Fair had taken place on the true Martinmas of 11th November. Nevertheless it was pleasant to survey the other stalls and displays and meet again various members of Nottingham's mediaevalist community.

Lenton Priory once stood in open countryside well to the west of Nottingham's walls. Lenton village was later swept up in Nottingham's sprawl and it is difficult now to imagine the proud priory standing in meadows by the clear waters of the river Leen. The swirl of traffic and the ugliness of twentieth century buildings mar any attempt to re-imagine the past. A much more relaxing spot lies outside Nottingham to the south east on the Trent's flood plain. Here, a few years ago, the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust purchased a worked-out gravel quarry to turn into a welcoming wetland nature reserve. The Trust have agreed that a group of volunteers can use a corner of this new 'Skylarks' reserve for some experimental archaeological activity, such as building Anglo-Saxon houses. Our first efforts with a grubenhaus (sunken featured building) were brought to a close when hooligans burned it down one dark evening. Undaunted, we raised another grubenhaus, with, hopefully, a less flammable roof. We are now at work on a larger project, an Anglo-Saxon hall, which may shelter visitors to the reserve in rainy weather. I shall keep you informed as we progress.



· Companions news and events ·

New Companions

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members (gesiðas) to the Fellowship:

Joe Cook	Yorkshire
Michelle Cooper	Kent
Margaret & Philip Dean	Lincolnshire
Joanna Dunlop	East Sussex
Ash Marlow	Shropshire
Florence, Tom & Josh McGillivray	Surrey
Jane Surtees	Nottinghamshire
Peter Wiltshire	Oxfordshire

Please note: members should give their full name when paying subscriptions, and should notify the Membership Secretary of any changes in contact details.

Companions events

Please note: local events are subject to change at short notice. If you would like to attend, please confirm with the local contact before setting out.

Cantware scirgemot: Held on the second Tuesday of every month at the Phoenix pub (67 Old Dover Rd, Canterbury CT1 3DB) at 8 pm. Note that these will move to the second Thursday of the month, starting on 11 January. Please contact David Hinch for further information (contact details inside front cover).

Snotengaham / Deorbi scirgemot: Held on the last Wednesday of every month at 107 Curzon Street, Long Eaton, NG10 4FH, at 7.30 pm. Please contact Geoffrey Littlejohns for further details (contact details inside front cover.)

If you have a local event that you would like to advertise in the magazine, please email the Editor (contact details inside front cover).

Companions announcements

Would you like a cheaper membership option?

We now also offer the option to receive a full-colour, **digital / electronic** version of Wiðowinde, instead of the print version, for a lower annual membership fee of £18.00. Please contact the Membership Secretary (see inside front cover for contact details) if you wish to take advantage of this alternative membership and magazine option.

Please note: there is not, and never has been, any intention to discontinue the printed version of the magazine.

Want to get in touch with members that share your interests?

Our Membership Secretary, David Hinch, has kindly agreed to put members with particular interests, (eg coins, language) in contact with each other. If you'd like use this service, please contact the Membership Secretary (see inside front cover for contact details).

Please note: the Membership Secretary will never share a member's contact details without the express permission of that member.

Would you like funding for a Companions event?

If any member or group of members would like to organise an event for the Companions, or wishes to represent the Companions at a relevant external event, funding requests to support this will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Witan. Please contact any member of the Witan (see inside front cover for contact details).

Companions on Facebook

The Yorkshire gesiþas now have a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/yorkshiregesithas/

Wreath-laying Ceremony at Battle Abbey



Wita David Hinch and Nigel Rumble read from the Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Wanderer'.

Excerpt from The Wanderer

Woriað þa winsalo, waldend licgað
dreame bidrorene, duguþ eal gecrong,
wlonc bi wealle. Sume wig fornom,
ferede in forðwege...

"Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago?
Hwær cwom mabþungyfa?
Hwær cwom symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledreamas?
Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
Eala þeodnes þrym! Hu seo þrag gewat..."

Eorlas fornoman asca þrype,
wæpen wælgifu, wyrd seo mære...

Eall is earfoðlic eorþan rice,
onwendeð wyrdas gesceaft weoruld under heofonum.
Her bið feoh læne, her bið freond læne,
her bið mon læne, her bið mæg læne,
eal þis eorþan gesteal idel weorþeð!"

The halls decay, Their lords lie
Deprived of joy, The whole troop has fallen,
The proud ones, by the wall. War took off some,
carried them away...

Where is the horse gone? Where the rider?
Where the giver of treasure?
Where are the seats at the feast? Where are the revels in the hall?
Alas for the bright cup! Alas for the mailed warrior!
Alas for the splendour of the prince! How that time has passed away...

The warriors taken off by the glory of spears,
the weapons greedy for slaughter, the famous fate...

All is troublesome in this earthly kingdom,
the turn of events changes the world under the heavens.
Here money is fleeting, here friend is fleeting,
here man is fleeting, here kinsman is fleeting,
all the foundation of this world turns to waste!



THIS YEAR ONLY THE MEMBERS WHO WERE manning the tent said that they wanted to come to the wreath laying. We did not want to leave the tent unmanned, so Nigel Rumble and I did the wreath laying while the others stayed at the tent.

Nigel laid the wreath and then we recited extracts from The Wanderer in Old and modern English. There were only two other people present.

David Hinch

David Hinch and Nigel Rumble pay their respects at the Haroldstone



Wreath-laying at Waltham Abbey

THE KING HAROLD DAY WAS cancelled this year. However, they decided to have an extended wreath-laying and invited us to recite some Old English at it. Therefore, John Cross and I went there to recite extracts from *The Wanderer*. I was very pleased to find eight from the English Companions there.

A few wreaths were laid and then some flowers from different groups represented there. John Sichel laid a flower for The English Companions and Anna Sichel took the photographs for this article.

John Cross and I did the recital with the words handed out by John and Anna Sichel for people to follow. I thought that went very well.

After this we had some time to chat and I chatted with all but one of the Companions. The one I missed must have left early. Then we moved inside the church for tea and biscuits. Then we had a recital from the Cambridge Renaissance Voices, singing ten pieces from the 16th to 17th centuries. They were very good but a bit over elaborate for me. This was followed by some pictures of the sort of images that would have been in Harold's Abbey and then a guided tour of the church.

David Hinch



THE ENTRIES for the CÆDMON PRIZE 2017



Below are the three entries for the Cædmon Prize 2017, printed as received:
original Anglo-Saxon alliterative poetry in Old English or modern English.

Now it's over to you!

Which do you think is most worthy of winning the Cædmon Prize 2017? There are two ways to vote:

1. Contact the bocere (details inside the front cover) **or**
2. Vote online at the gegaderung - a poll under **Important Announcements** will open on 20 December

The winner will receive a £30 Waterstones voucher and a certificate,
and will be announced in the next issue of Wiðowinde.

**The closing date for voting is
20 January 2018**



ENTRY A

Se eald wita

Hwa ne hopað / on him hereword ne clife
nylle gesiþa geferscipe / and glenge ne earnað?
Oft sind eaforan / be ærfæderum unmyndig,
forþæm hysan giernað hieran / be hildum æscwlancum,
dyhtigum and dædcenum, / duguþe felamodigum;
eac be enta / and egefullum wihten,
be fela fiend ofslogenne / and forþmære sige.
Soþ and unsop, / spell and tala -
cnappan ne cunnaþ / hu þisne cnotta anbinden.
Ac forhtiaþ ealda, / hwa aer wæron grimm,
and we sittaþ in sceadum - / ne set us nan mann.
Mappum scinþ in mynd / ealswa mynd sweorþ.
þenden unforht and unfrod / utridaþ ure sunu,
swa utridon we ealle / in ærdagum,
sorgleas and strang. / Sacu us bebead!
Forsop þa we forþferað, / þa forþbringe wyrd mære.

The old advisor

Who does not hope / praise may cleave to him
Does not want the comradeship of companions
/ and to earn honours?
Often children are / thoughtless of forefathers,
For young fighters long to hear / of spear-proud heroes,
Doughty and deedkeen, / warriors brave;
Also of giants / and terrible creatures,
Of many a fiend slain / and famous victory.
Truth and untruth, / history and tales,
Young men don't know / how they might unravel this knot.
But old men fear, / who used to be fierce,
And we sit in shadows - / no one sees us.
Treasure shines in memory, / yet memory darkens.
Meanwhile unafraid and untried / our sons ride out,
As we all rode out / in olden days,
Carefree and strong. / Battle commanded us!
Indeed when we die, / Fate may bring forth fame.

ENTRY B

The Martyrdom of Alban

This servant of the son of Mary
fleet of foot, peace-weaver
seeking shelter wisely
his hands held high in grace
safely under stout roof
knowledge of a great king is gifted
devious falsehoods destroyed
but the brazen sky-shield bleeds
whispers of his white cloak
whose brutal fists beat
but willing Alban weaves deceit
a saintly life he saves
clad in Christ's byrnie
bright blood weeping
death's sentence served
a host gathers greatly
faithful followers
led down a path paved
through swift-swan's riding
where pious Alban prays
and a silvered spring gushes forth
as iron teeth tremble
but life's reaper does raise
capped by the crown of everlasting life

white cloak clad
he flees the shadow-walkers
in Alban's hearth-ship
he gives thanks to God
his saintly prayers gilding Alban's ears
truth divine triumphs
and Alban girds himself to God
and spear-points rise under red heavens
reaching ring-shirted hounds
upon Alban's hall-guard
by cloak cunningly swapped
a martyr's weird is set
Alban stands steady before his foe
loyal to the strong king of Rome
Alban is led from the town
many-footed, silent
wondering witnesses
by Alban's prayer
and up a green-girdled hill
to the great gift-giver
anointing holy lips
afraid to sever a saintly neck
and a sanctified head spills
a sainted miracle-maker

ENTRY C

Ancestral Echoes

I'm son of Harry son of someone certification	son of Harold I seek through annals and census returns
tasked by family I feel kinship those bards bidden some upstart son who seized a slice who needs renown a lordly lineage	to find ancestors to king-sworn poets to butter up or swashbuckler of southern Britain now he is crowned laid out as verse
son of Albert Edward	son of Edward Harold
my start is simple all hoary haired boldly embellished hold forth hearsay	sat with uncles and happy to tell bygone gossip hearth-side chatter
son of Charles	son of Joseph
beyond the yarns births and baptisms like a monk recording I write the requisite the earlier entries	a yield of papers burials and wills chronicle annals to register lives ever briefer
son of Josiah	son of Isaac
following further ancestral stories a patchy picture that mice and mould a legacy of legend where hazy heroes so I assume somehow like a scribe stretching	is a foreign land spoken to none parish records have managed to chew that lessens to myth hold the same name they're surely linked his sources taut
son of Edmund son of Wig	son of Ingeld son of Freawine
fourteen fathers back like the buttering bard a final flourish derived from the divine	the footprints die bold but desperate of far off gods a venerable line
son of Weland son of Bealdaeg	son of Wada son of Woden



Battle of Fulford tapestry

EVENT REPORT

Stamford Bridge Festival

After the larger scale festival last year, which commemorated the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Stamford Bridge, it was decided to take a breather and hold a much smaller scale event this year. Renamed "1066 Festival" (I will be campaigning to change its name back to the original next year!), it took place at a new venue: alongside the disused railway track and inside the Old Station and the old engine shed at Stamford Bridge.

The society stands, of which the English Companions was one, lined the track (now a cycle track and public footpath). This put us in a good position to catch the visitors as they entered the festival site! Homemade cakes, tea and coffee were served from the Old Station and the

bar was also open. There were three tapestries on view in the old engine shed (now a sports hall): the Battle of Stamford Bridge Tapestry, which is still being stitched (you could watch the ladies at work), the now-complete Battle of Fulford Tapestry and the Battle Tapestry, which was sewn by local people in the Sussex town of Battle. Between the

Harry Ball and Jenny Ashby



The Companions' stand



engine shed and the viaduct was the Viking Living History encampment and the arena, where several sessions of Viking skirmishes were staged throughout the day.

The site, although attractive and tree-lined, was quite small and I feared the event was not going to be a success. How wrong I was! There was a large and sustained attendance all day and the atmosphere was friendly and buzzing.

The English Companions had a very good day. Our gazebo was packed with displays, with books, DVDs and English

Companions publications for sale and we had four activities for children. Harry Ball travelled all the way from Staffordshire to join us and, dressed monkishly, offered writing with a quill. Ian Parker turned flogging books and DVDs (donated by George Roe) into an art form. George Roe, Chris Hewitt, Carol Robinson and I had children designing their own cardboard shields, making their own bead bracelets and writing their names in runes on wooden plaques. We were busy all day and at times had children

queuing to have a go at the activities. We also chatted to many interesting and interested people, including a visiting gesip. We made a very impressive profit, which will swell our coffers nicely. Carol's partner, Joe and my husband, Paul, provided muscle and common sense in setting up and taking down the stand. We all agreed that it had been a lovely day - it had been an event small in size but big in atmosphere.

Jenny Ashby



You are warmly invited to join the Yorkshire Gesiðas at
Broughton Church, near Brigg, Lincolnshire

to hear lectures by

Dr Kevin Leahy, FSA, MCIfA

Archaeological Finds Specialist

National Adviser, Early Medieval Metalwork

The Portable Antiquities Scheme

Hon. Visiting Fellow, School of Archaeology and Ancient History,
University of Leicester

on Saturday 2 June 2018, 11.00am - 3.00pm

Dr Leahy will give an hour's talk on the history of this fascinating Anglo-Saxon church, then we will be free to explore it. Lunch will be available at extra cost (details to be confirmed). In the afternoon Dr Leahy will talk about the context and significance of the Staffordshire Hoard, for which he prepared the first catalogue. The cost per person will be £12. If you would like to attend or want more details, please email Jenny Ashby at jenniferashby@btinternet.com or phone her on 07948620729.

EVENT REPORT

Yorkshire Companions visit Jarrow Hall and Durham Cathedral

ON 13TH - 14TH OCTOBER YORKSHIRE Companions and friends enjoyed a foray into the former Kingdom of Bernica to visit Jarrow Hall and Durham Cathedral.



Stonework in St Paul's church at Jarrow

In all 39 companions and friends travelled up on the "Great North Road" to the recently re-opened Anglo-Saxon farm and museum at Jarrow Hall - previously known as Bede's World. We arrived in time for lunch in the café which

Sanctuary knocker at Durham Cathedral



provided good quality light bites in excellent surroundings. Some travellers had visited Bede's World before but for most it was their first visit.

The party divided into two groups with the idea of switching between



One of our number being shown how to use a wood lathe by Jim the Saxon

the farm and museum. The farm has a number of domestic animals to view, including sheep, goats and pigs. In the reconstructed Anglo-Saxon hall the appropriately-attired Jim "the Saxon" gave us an account of village life and the role of women in Anglo-Saxon times. Jim was keen to stress the relative autonomy women enjoyed in the period in terms of property ownership. He also demonstrated the use of some replica tools, such as a wood lathe and drill which fascinated some of the DIY types in the party.

The painting above St Cuthbert's shrine



Interior of St Paul's church at Jarrow





St Cuthbert's coffin

The other group was given a tour of the Bede Museum by David. Whilst all found something of interest it was noted that several exhibits were reproductions and whilst David was a “character”, he didn’t really add much to the information already provided. Jim and David both gave the same account of the Anglo-Saxon origin of pot holes resulting from soft clay having been removed from tracks / roads to produce pots by itinerant potters.

The party were met at Jarrow Hall by former Elder Guy Points who was doing research nearby. Guy provided an ad hoc tour of St Paul’s church a short walk from Jarrow Hall for some companions. The church with its Anglo-Saxon origins was left in use as the parish church for Jarrow when the monastery was dissolved.

We then boarded our coach to travel to our overnight accommodation at the 14th century Lumley Castle. The following day the party departed Lumley Castle, replete after a hearty breakfast, to explore Durham and in particular its 11th century cathedral. Once again some travellers had visited the cathedral before but most hadn’t or hadn’t previously had the benefit of a guided tour. All were impressed by the knowledge of their guides who appeared to know every facet of the great building. The tour took in the tombs of Bede and St Cuthbert and lasted around 1 hour,

after which travellers got the chance to take in the recently launched Treasures exhibition which houses the coffin and artefacts of St Cuthbert including his famous pectoral cross. We were also



St Cuthbert's pectoral cross

able to visit the cathedral undercroft which houses a first rate refectory, bookshop and the Lego model of the cathedral which raised £300,000 for its renovation from the sale of the Lego bricks! There was so much to see that some of the party never found time to explore the wide environs of the cathedral before our coach departed for home!

George Roe



During lunch on the Yorkshire Companions recent visit to Ellerburn and Dalby, George Roe presented Carol Robinson with an award made by the Witan in recognition of her sterling work on behalf of The English Companions. As local coordinator for the Yorkshire Coast, Carol has forged strong links with national parks and heritage organisations to enable the Companions to engage with the public at numerous events. In so doing she has successfully raised the profile of the Companions across East Yorkshire. Carol was delighted and thanked the Witan for the award which she dedicated to all those who had helped her organise events over the years.

George Roe

Carol Robinson receives her award!



MIDDEL ENGLE GROUP REPORT 2017

THIS GROUP HAS REMAINED STABLE IN NUMBER, with potentially ten people from Leicester, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire meeting once a month for ten meetings in the year. We usually meet in Alison Skinner the Scirgerefan's house in Leicester. At least once a year, or at any other times when Alison is away, Sue Davidson our Secretary / Treasurer offers us hospitality at her home in Leicester.

For seven of our ten meetings a year we have one speaker, either from within our group or outside. For our May meeting we now have a general meeting with all those attending contributing 10 - 15 minutes on a topic of interest to them. We have two socials a year with food: one in December and one in June. Our December meeting is usually Anglo-Saxon themed, while our June one is modern day, as we now have an annual Midlands Anglo-Saxon feast at the home of the Witan Hordere Ian and Kath Geary in Rothley during August or September. These are very enjoyable occasions and we are grateful for their hospitality. We discuss the issues of the day, current TV programmes of relevance, and up and coming Anglo-Saxon conferences and talks. We allow people a holiday period when we don't meet so that they can visit somewhere interesting which can be turned into a talk at a later date! We circulate minutes of our meetings with a record of the talks.

We have had an excellent and varied programme of talks this year. In January, the Witan Gerefa Geoff Littlejohns gave us a talk about his voluntary work at Thynghowe – a recently identified Anglo-Scandinavian Thing site in Nottinghamshire. In February, Tony Clarke gave us a talk on the Origins and Development of the English Language – his talks are always original and well researched, and much anticipated. In March, Gillian Butcher gave us a wide-ranging talk on Anglo-Saxon glass – where it is found and how it was made. In April Jill Bourne, our place-name specialist, gave us a talk on “The Ætheling - can history be derived from place names?” This included a review of the definition of the role of the ætheling and who was eligible, and place names using that root.

Our talk programme resumed in September when Bob Trubshaw from the Heart of Albion publishing company gave us a talk based on his original research on the Anglo-Saxon boundary shrines of the Leicestershire Wolds with full powerpoint presentation and screen that we just about fitted into the room. Most of our talk visual aids are much more low key! Alison Skinner followed in September with a talk on the history and mythology of St Edmund and Bury St Edmunds – a place she was spending much time in, supporting an elderly relative. Geoff Littlejohns gave us a report of his travels along Offa's Dyke and a review of academic opinion concerning its actual length and purpose, in November. The year has turned and we are now looking forward to our Winter feast.

Alison Skinner



A PERFECT GIFT: The English Companions Calendar!

We have had printed A3 calendars for 2018. The attached photo shows what they are like. They are printed by the same people who print Wiðowinde and are of the same quality.
Price: £6, plus postage & packaging





SPEARCUNG

What sparked your interest in
the Anglo-Saxons?

Why not share the story of how you
became interested in the Anglo-Saxons?
Just contact the Editor at the address
inside the front cover.

FOR ME AS A BOY IT WAS ALL ABOUT THE ROMANS: the 'PAF' as Asterix dislodged a legionary's tooth; Marlon Brando borrowing ears off friends, Romans and countrymen; the nubile flesh draped across the set of 'One, Clavdivs'... I even amused myself devising an historically pedantic but unplayably complicated board game based upon the Empire's decline and fall. My elder brother had joined 'The Ancient and Medieval Bookclub', and I lapped up 'The Grandeur That Was Rome' and 'The Twelve Caesars', but I also found a slim volume by Ralph Whitlock, perhaps most fondly remembered for his Country Diary column in The Guardian. This boasted the stirring title 'Warrior Kings of Anglo-Saxon England'. My eyes opened. Here was my own people's deep history, as thrilling as anything the classical world had to offer (and in the Godwinesons, a family whose machinations held a candle to the Julio-Claudians). I found myself taking a pride in what had been accomplished in the teeth of the Viking onslaught and I burned with injustice at all that had been taken from us by the Norman conquest. I still do.

My youthful imagination had been stirred by myth as much as history. I had buried myself in 'The Iliad' and the 'Morte d'Arthur', while in the final year of primary school our hirsute Canadian form master had read us 'The Hobbit'. For Christmas I asked for 'The Lord of the Rings'. As my knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon world grew I began to understand that Tolkien had gifted us more than just a ripping yarn, a work of mere imagination. Rather his Middle Earth was deeply-rooted myth-making, an attempt to restore to the English a mythic past that had been lost when the Normans robbed us of our country - to give us a Matter of England to compare with the Matters of Rome or Britain.

And so a passion for Anglo-Saxon history and culture replaced my callow love of all things Roman. In time I came to feel a deep sense of Englishness: a fascination with our natural and cultural heritage which ran deeper than boorish flag-waving.

Life happens with all its hard realities and spurned opportunities, and my specific interest in things Anglo-Saxon receded into the background. But a while ago it occurred to me that there might be a way of solving a genealogical riddle that had long intrigued me, and in pursuing this esoteric obsession I immersed myself in the wealth of resources now available online: the Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, the Electronic Sawyer, the Online Bosworth-Toller, the Old English Translator.

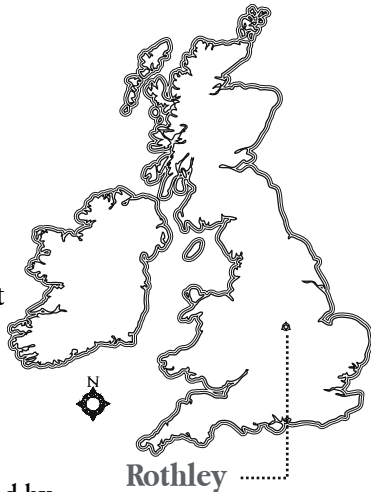
And in doing so I stumbled upon Gegaderung and the like-minded folk of Ða Engliscan Gesiðas.

Tim Smith

· news items from the popular and academic press ·

Barrow burials

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) excavating at Rothley before a new housing development, have uncovered the largest Anglo-Saxon cemetery associated with a Bronze Age barrow yet found in Leicestershire. The focus of the project was the remains of a Bronze Age barrow dating from ca. 2000 - 700 BC and largely destroyed by modern ploughing, but whose ring ditch, measuring over 30 m in diameter had survived. A number of cremations were found within it, close to the edge of the ditch; ULAS hopes the investigation will provide more precise dates, and reveal whether the cremations were primary or secondary burials. Twelve Anglo-Saxon graves were identified, one in the ditch, six cut into the mound itself, and five more close to the monument, lying in both north-south and east-west alignments. Only a small number of teeth and tiny bone fragments had survived in the acidic soil, but spear-heads, knives, brooches, and the boss and studs of a shield, and one complete pottery vessel were among the grave goods recovered.



Madeline Leonard
reporting on an article in *Current Archaeology* 319

Glastonbury Abbey into the Anglo-Saxon age

Between 1904 and 1979 the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society funded 36 seasons of excavations at Glastonbury Abbey. The eight different directors who carried them out had varying agendas; some sought

evidence for the burial of Arthur, some the mythical Holy Grail, some the establishment of Christianity there in the 1st century AD by Joseph of Arimathea, who traditionally visited Glastonbury accompanied by Christ, but others uncovered evidence for Anglo-Saxon and medieval monastic buildings and material culture.

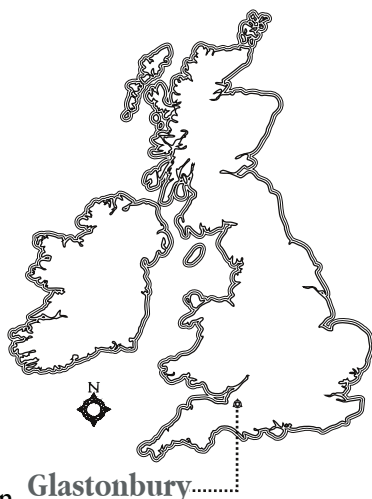
The Glastonbury Abbey Archaeological Archive Project, led for the last decade by Roberta Gilchrist, is a major project in collaboration with Glastonbury Abbey and the University of Reading, chiefly funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, to separate fact from the mythology attached to the medieval Glastonbury Abbey, and is dedicated to analysing and publishing the archive of all 36 seasons. Unfortunately the interpretation of these findings is difficult, as the digs took place before analysis and publication of the results of excavations was a requirement.

Courtney Arthur Raleigh Radford (1900 - 1999) who excavated from 1951 to 1964, was interested in sites concerned with Arthurian legends, but he was also noted for his ecclesiastical scholarship and his interest in Celtic monasticism. Descriptions in monastic sources led him to search for the grave of Arthur and Guinevere, and in 1963 he announced to the press that he had discovered the site, said to have been exhumed by monks in 1191. In 1981 he released the interim findings for the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman phases of his excavation, and after his death in 1999 his archive passed to the Historic England Archive, making a fresh analysis possible.

All the artefacts from the excavations were reassessed and a framework of independent dating was established based on chemical and compositional analysis of glass, metal residues, pottery and tiles, and radiocarbon dating of organic material from the 1950s excavations. The date of the earliest settlement on the site was a key research question. In 1130, William of Malmesbury suggested that it was founded by missionaries in AD 166 or even earlier in

the time of Christ's apostles.

Glastonbury's Anglo-Saxon charters suggest a late 7th century date for the earliest monastic foundation. The medieval monks of Glastonbury considered their 'old church' to be the oldest in the land, descended from an earlier Celtic community, with which Radford agreed although nothing earlier than



the 8th century was recorded in his excavations. New evidence for earlier occupation from the new archive and associated finds includes sherds of Late Roman amphorae from the eastern Mediterranean used for wine and oil, radiocarbon dated to around 450 - 500; fourteen of these were associated with a roughly-trodden floor and post pits of timber structures within an early cemetery site, possibly associated with other timber halls; a radiocarbon date from a post pit suggests its destruction in the 8th or 9th century, so it may have been in use for several centuries. This confirms high status occupation in the 5th or 6th centuries, long before the documentation of the first monastic foundation, which agrees with recent research at other early monasteries.

The occupation of the site of Glastonbury Abbey in the 5th or 6th century is confirmed by deposits of Late Roman pottery associated with a timber structure, but whether it was a 'Celtic' monastery or a secular trading settlement may be difficult to ascertain.

A second phase of work funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council is being completed so that the new findings can be shared with many interested audiences, which include 100,000 annual visitors to the site.

Roberta Gilchrist is Professor of Archaeology and Research Dean at the University of Reading.

Further information: Roberta Gilchrist and Cheryl Green, Glastonbury Abbey: archaeological investigations 1904-79, Society of Antiquaries of London, £45.00, ISBN 978-0854313006

The full data and archive reports are freely accessible through the Archaeological Data Service at http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/glastonbury_ahrc_2014

The Glastonbury Abbey Archaeological Archive Project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Madeline Leonard,
reporting on an article by Roberta Gilchrist
in *Current Archaeology* 320



Hræfneshwisprung

Raven's whisper

25 November 2017 - 4 March 2018
Vikings: Rediscover the Legend

The Djanogly Gallery on Nottingham University Park Campus is hosting this major touring exhibition, put together by the British Museum and the York Museums Trust.

Admission is free to the exhibition which will be open from Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm and on Sunday 12 noon

to 4pm. The exhibition is supplemented by talks which are free but need to be booked in advance. They include:

'Exhibition Tour'; Tues 23 Jan 1 - 2.30pm
'Touring the Vikings' by Natalie Buy, Curator of Archaeology, York Museums Trust and Curator of 'Vikings: Rediscover the Legend'; Wed 31 Jan 1pm,
'The Gleam of Silver: Vikings, Coins and Hoards' Andrew Woods, Senior Curator, Yorkshire Museum; Wed 14 Feb

15 December 2017 - 12 March 2018

Danelaw Saga: Bringing Vikings back to the East Midlands

A second exhibition opens in the Weston Gallery on Nottingham University Park Campus and has free admission. This exhibition will be supplemented by the following talks:

'Vikings in your Vocabulary' Wed 10 Jan 1pm Richard Dance, Cambridge University

'Pagans and Christians' Wed 24 Jan 1pm Lesley Abrams, Oxford University

'Rediscovering Viking Age Stone Sculpture in the East Midlands' Wed 7 Feb 1pm Paul Everson, Keele University

'The Gold-Trimmed Sword in the Bedale Hoard' Wed 21 Feb 1pm Sue Brunning, British Museum

20 January 2018

A showing of the Icelandic film, 'When the Raven Flies' - a Viking adventure film.

June 2018

Æthelflæd Festival

Next year will mark the 1100th anniversary of Æthelflæd's death. Gloucester will mark this occasion by looking back at the strong-willed, educated and independent woman who played a pivotal role in resisting the Vikings and protecting her father King Alfred's kingdom of Wessex. For further details as they become available, visit <http://www.thecityofgloucester.co.uk/whats-on/aethelflaed-celebrations-p2165003>

19 October 2018 Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms exhibition

Ranging from the 5th to the 11th centuries, this exhibition at the British Library will explore the long, dynamic period when the English language was used and written down for the first time, and a kingdom of England was first created....



EVENT REPORT

The Story of Things and Anglian York

Phyllis Wicks



EVERY YEAR IN YORK THERE IS A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS, comprising lectures, events and exhibitions which

“showcases the innovation and creativity of York, gives a glimpse into the future, and brings ideas into conversation with the full heritage of the city - social, artistic, technological and scientific - to reveal new and exciting stories about York, Britain and the world.”

The events are almost all free of charge, although booking is strongly recommended.

This year the overall theme was “The Story of Things” and one of the threads was “Anglian York”. I was fortunate enough to attend a number of the events and have come away educated, enriched and exhausted (and arguably almost alliterative).

Editor's Note: you can find the second trio of Phyllis's pieces on the York Festival of Ideas in this issue: just look for the event logo, kindly provided by Sue Abson of York University. The first three can be found in issue 183.



An Anglo-Saxon helmet reconstruction featuring 7th & 8th century Northumbrian designs

JARROW HALL

James Barton

Director, 2B Communications Limited

Jarrow Hall secures £100,000 from the Museums Association to safeguard the legacy of Bede and change the way museums interact with their communities.

JARROW HALL — ANGLO-SAXON FARM, VILLAGE and Bede Museum has secured £99,863 from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund delivered by national membership organisation the Museums Association, for a project which may become the basis for a pioneering new model of engagement for museums.

The Esmée Fairbairn fund is targeted at those who develop collections for social impact and in this case the money will be used to run a project called 'A New Sun'. Jarrow Hall's owner, the community charity Groundwork South Tyneside

and Newcastle (STAN), is convinced this project will not only safeguard the historic archaeological collection showcased on the eleven-acre site, but could also become a new model of engagement for the museum sector, with the project pioneering new ways for other museums to reach out and truly enrich the lives of their local communities.

Leigh Venus, Culture and Heritage Manager for Groundwork STAN and responsible for the direction of Jarrow Hall said: "We've said from the start that we would make our site - and the beautiful Bede Museum within - a place of international significance, and our 'New Sun' project is a hugely powerful step towards that goal.

"We're committed to enriching lives through culture and heritage, securing the future of our collection and bringing the fascinating story of Bede and Anglo-Saxon Northumbria to whole new audiences for years to come."

He added: "The project name 'A New Sun' was chosen as it comes from a quote late in the 9th century from influential monk Nokter the Stammerer, highlighting the high esteem Bede was held in then. It also represents a new dawn at Jarrow Hall - the beginning of a new era for the collection and how it is used to tell the incredible story of the history of our area and its continued impact on the world today."

The project will see Jarrow Hall using its historic collection to fulfill the mission of Groundwork STAN: to change places and change lives through its communities work.

"We've secured this funding, so it's early days, but I can tell you that we are delighted as the Esmée Fairburn Collection Fund is very competitive, and only those with exciting and genuinely ambitious projects with a demonstrable social impact are successful," said Leigh.

An eleven-acre historical and environmental oasis in the heart of South Tyneside, Jarrow Hall features at its heart a



Anglo-Saxon artefacts at Bede Museum

museum dedicated to exploring the fascinating life and legacy of Bede, an extensive Anglo-Saxon demonstration farm and reconstructed Anglo-Saxon dwellings. The site is managed and operated by Groundwork STAN in partnership with South Tyneside Council and supported by Port of Tyne.

“The ‘A New Sun’ project is scheduled to start in 2018 and run for 18 months and will work through the entirety of the unique historical collection held at the site, protecting the work of archaeological digs led by Dame Professor Rosemary Cramp begun in the 1950s.”

Dame Professor Rosemary Cramp said: “The fact that all this is now being supported in such a wonderful way through grants such as the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund is testament to the hard work put in by Groundwork, and it will really make a difference for all those who benefit from having such a culturally significant site here in the heart of the region.

“Bede’s life at Jarrow and Wearmouth was entirely spent in the north-east of England far away from the great Christian centres of the world. Yet here he had the resources of a great library and wide-ranging contacts which made him the master of the major subjects of his age, and indeed, as has been claimed, ‘the teacher of the whole Middle Ages’.

“Today his works are still a matter of debate and research throughout Britain, Europe and the USA. In his lifetime,

this area of Tyne and Wear was one of the great cultural centres of Europe, and, in the site buildings and the displays in the museum here we can catch a unique glimpse of that world.”

Well-known BBC broadcaster, bestselling author and respected academic Dr Janina Ramirez said: “This award is incredibly welcome news to everyone who has been concerned about preserving the wonderful resources at Bede’s home. As England’s first historian, and one of the greatest minds of the Early Medieval period, it is vital to provide visitors with a rich and immersive experience when they visit Jarrow.

“We help people improve their lives and this project will help us to use our unique culture and heritage assets to improve community and individual wellbeing.”

Leigh Venus

“This funding will help preserve the unique heritage of Jarrow, a site that was a vibrant cultural hub in a time people often called a ‘Dark Age’.”

The project will see a comprehensive and thorough cataloguing and archiving of the Jarrow-Wearmouth collection - including new ways to access the collection digitally, physically safeguarding the many valuable artefacts and documents for future generations.

Engagement with the community is the other significant element, enabling schools, community groups and the general public to truly understand the historical context of such an important site and the contribution of the works of Bede to the cultural fabric of the North East and the world beyond.

“Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle’s ethos is to enrich the lives of the local community in a sustainable way cutting across economics, social issues and the environment. Jarrow Hall and the special collection we are privileged to protect is an amazingly powerful asset to achieve these goals - and this new project represents a key element of our broader strategy,” said Leigh.

Groundwork STAN plans to undertake a research development programme in early 2018 to develop and inform the project. This will include public engagement and educational work which draw on Groundwork’s understanding and experience of community engagement.

L-R Emily Jeffers: Museum Supervisor, Leigh Venus: Operations Manager for Culture and Heritage and Hannah Mather: Museum Supervisor.





Anglo-Saxon Bread: Making and Meaning

APPROPRIATELY ENOUGH AFTER A BRIEF break for lunch we returned to hear Debby Banham (University of Cambridge) and Martha Bayless (University of Oregon) talk to us about early English bread as part of a project which is supported by a Collaborative Research Grant from the American Council of Learned Societies.

Debby described the carbonised loaves which have survived from Ipswich and date to the 11th century. The carbonisation is the result of a house fire, and not the faulty attention of any passing king. They are about 4 inches in diameter and were made from wheat and / or rye flour. The Anglo-Saxons had access to bread wheat (introduced by the Romans), rye (possibly brought with the Anglo-Saxons themselves), spelt (Roman again) and emmer (prehistoric). However, the most common flour was barley with bread wheat and oats increasing in use over the period as a whole.

Barley was also used for brewing and it is believed that barley bread was the “poor man’s” loaf, as St Guthlac is described as humbling himself by eating it. It is elsewhere described as a fasting food, or as horse medicine, so does not appear to have been popular.

Although there are some water mills uncovered from the 8th century onwards, and becoming common by the 11th century, these are mainly in the south and east. Elsewhere, grinding would have been done on a quern stone, and was probably a social activity.

There are references to white bread as a more luxurious product in Bede (EH Bk 2 ch 5 for example) and it seems to have been used by the church. It is known that in the later Middle Ages flour was sifted through fine cloth, so this may have been the method

used in Anglo-Saxon times too although there is no direct evidence, given the longevity of cloth. Unsurprisingly, medical texts recommend white bread as being healthier.

The Exeter riddle 45 (those riddles again!) uses a double entendre about bread rising, so this was clearly familiar. It could have been achieved by using sourdough from a previous batch or skimming yeast from a brewing vat.

Baking may have been done in ovens in some cases, as there are references in the literature to monastery ovens or in guidance on running an estate. However, most people probably baked unleavened bread on the fire, either in ashes or on a hearthstone. Ovens may be associated with raised bread in particular and there is some evidence for a linguistic connection.

Martha then discussed some more practicalities. Unleavened bread would have been more common; it was simpler and cheaper to produce. Experimentation with kneading the dough emphasised that without a table either a hand to hand method might have been used or it could have been done directly on the floor. Being simply flour and water, it would probably have been eaten with salty food such as cheese, bacon, butter or with a pottage to provide flavour.

The loaves have been shown to bake in hot ashes after which the ashes wipe away easily. Over time there was a tendency to want to make bread fluffier and sweeter until it evolved into cake and then people went back to making bread again.

It was inevitable that King Alfred would make an appearance at some point in the talk, and this is where he arrived. The earliest reference to the story of the burnt cakes is in the 10th century Life of St Neot. Alfred is depicted as being a very humble king by allowing himself to be scolded by a woman about simple unleavened hearth cakes, the food of the poor.

Martha then talked about some of the symbolic uses of bread in various European cultures. It is known that pagans often burned grain at funerals, and in eastern Europe grain scattered on a grave prevents the dead from rising by distracting them into counting them all. In Scandinavia small loaves were suspended over graves. In the Christian church there was significant

debate over whether Eucharist bread should be unleavened (representing the Last Supper which occurred during Passover) or leavened (representing Christ rising).

There certainly seems to be a theme around small loaves being symbolically more powerful and important. Small pagan loaves are later reflected in communion discs and medieval soul cakes (which in turn have become trick or treat sweets). Marriages were celebrated with bride cakes and god children were given gifts of small loaves called god-kichells.

In the 11th century the association of women with grinding flour resulted in some fairly ripe fantasies about magic

spells for women to use if they were dissatisfied with their husbands (it involved covering oneself in honey, rolling in wheat grains then picking them off and grinding them widdershins to make bread). Fortunately the men of the later medieval period realised their peril in time and banned women from grinding flour at home.

I left the talk in thoughtful mood with a note to check up on the suppliers of honey – just in case.

Anyone interested in more information about the project can read more at <https://earlybread.wordpress.com/>

Phyllis Wicks



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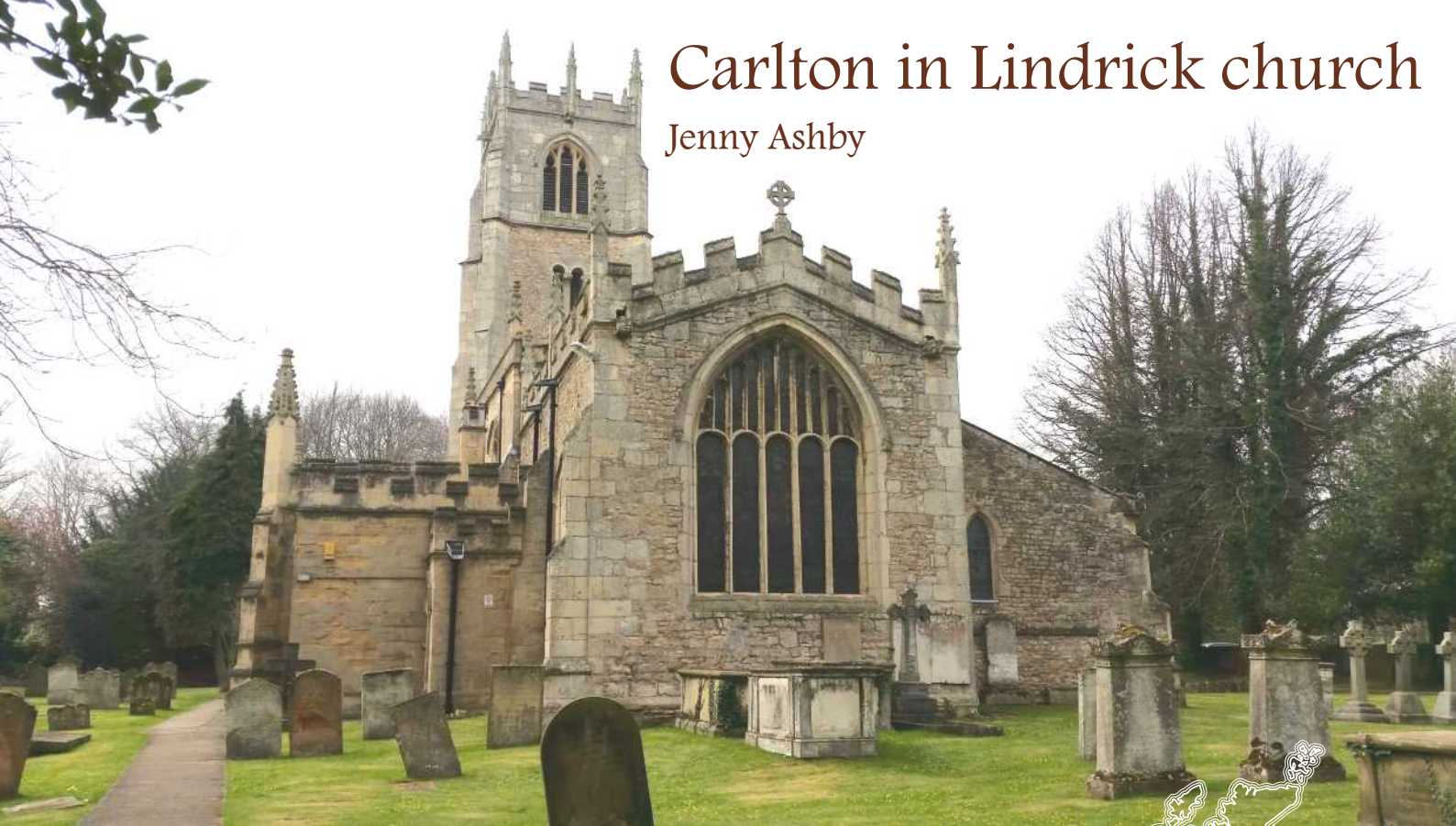
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Carlton in Lindrick church

Jenny Ashby



THE NAME CARLTON IN LINDRICK PROBABLY does not usually feature in most people's lists of top Anglo-Saxon churches, but, billed by Pevsner and Williamson (1979, quoted in Wikipedia) as Nottinghamshire's most important surviving Anglo-Saxon building, I thought I'd check it out. Besides, it lies only 5 miles off my regular route from Yorkshire to Surrey: the A1.

Mentioned in Domesday, the settlement of Carleton, as it was then known, is about 3 miles north of Worksop. Its name means village / estate (tun) of the free peasants (OE ceorl or ON karl - take your pick) by the strip of land where the lime trees grow (lindrick). The Lindrick affix was added to the original Carleton by 1212. In Anglo-Saxon times, Carleton had 6 thegns, each with a hall; but after the

Conquest these smaller estates were united into one manor held by Roger de Busli and, below him, Turald de Chevrelcourt.

The church is now dedicated to St John the Evangelist, but this has not always been the case. At times in its past, it has been dedicated to St James, St Mary and All Hallows. It became St John's in 1646 and seems to have had a few brushes with authority.

In Elizabeth I's reign, it was in trouble for burning its service books (as directed to do in the previous reign) and its churchwardens have on two occasions been up before the Archdeacon's Court for ringing the bells too loudly!

It is very likely that a Roman building occupied the site of the church, but the history of the church itself begins in the 7th century. The original plan was a simple 2 cell structure of a nave and chancel. A tower was added in the 11th century; it is not bonded into the nave, which proves its later date.



The mysterious tympanum

The church was enlarged in 1070 and the north aisle built. Major changes to the fabric were made between 1425 and 1453 when the nave walls were heightened and the clerestory windows inserted, the tower was heightened and buttressed, the Anglo-Saxon windows were blocked and a new west window inserted into the tower. In the 19th century, the south aisle was built and the north aisle enlarged. Major restorations took place in 1831, when the 12th century doorway was moved from the south to the west end; 1936, when the roof of the nave was raised and 1967. Even so, today the tower, the nave and parts of the chancel are Pre-Conquest.

I visited on a damp day in March, but my spirits soared as soon as I saw the tower of St John's. I love a good tower and this one is just beautiful! Classically Anglo-Saxon, it is constructed of a hard local Triassic sandstone called skerry, which gives it a warm ochre colour and resistance to erosion. Four stages of construction can be



The tower

seen: starting from the bottom, there is coursed rubble (irregular shaped stones laid in lines), then roughly dressed rectangular blocks, a string course separates this from a stage of herringbone work and finally there is a mix of coursed rubble and herringbone. The top stage of the tower, starting at the second string course, is 15th century. On the west and east sides of the tower, in the uppermost section of the Anglo-Saxon work, sit two double-headed belfry windows. They each have megalithic jambs (large dressed stones, rather than rubble, forming the sides), rounded lintel heads and straight-sided imposts between the arches.

The later aisles obscure the Anglo-Saxon stonework in the nave outside but the north west and south west corners have large and random side-alternate stones which strengthen the building.

On the outside north wall of the chancel, a blocked Anglo-Saxon window can easily be seen. I was just retreating back through the graveyard having

photoed this, when I noticed a retired couple on the path looking at me oddly - but in that trying-not-to-be-obvious way that English people have. I glanced down and realised how strange I must seem tiptoeing through a graveyard in stilettos (as I said, it was a wet day and they were the only waterproof shoes I had with me, and I was tiptoeing to avoid getting my heels stuck in the grass!). Worse, I was wearing an impractical long skirt, now damp. I reacted like a true Englishwoman - bade them a cheery “hello” and pretended I was perfectly normal. I slowed my pace to let them get ahead, then shot into the church, only to find that they were in there! Along with several ladies who were doing the flowers. They all looked at me. I smiled ingratiatingly then just blurted out that I was keen on Anglo-Saxon history and I had come to have a look round their lovely church. The ice thawed immediately. One lady gave me the church leaflet to look at and, as I was sitting reading it, she came up with a massive file on the history of the church for me to peruse. Then the retired gentleman of the couple I’d seen outside appeared next to me and said, “Come on, I’ll show you something that is rarely seen, not even on official guided tours of the church”. Now, I’m sure my mother would have something to say about me following strange men into locked rooms, but he seemed nice and there were other people about including his wife! Carefully unlocking the door, he led me into the tiny choir vestry porch off the south aisle. Above the porch side of the door into the church was a tympanum, beautifully carved and probably dating to the 12th century. Its origins and

according to britishlistedbuildings.co.uk . The eastern (nave) side of the arch consists of two pairs of shafts supporting a double arch. The capitals (the top part of the shafts that support the arches) are decorated with “palmette” leaves and cable moulding. A hood mould of strip-work curves over the top of the arches; it is purely decorative, although had it been outside it could have served to throw rainwater clear of the building. Hood moulding is common in Anglo-Saxon churches but absent from Pre-Conquest buildings on the Continent, so Taylor (1978) concludes that it is an Anglo-Saxon invention.



Blocked round-headed Anglo-Saxon windows in the nave (left) and chancel

Blocked Anglo-Saxon window in the outside north wall of the chancel



meaning are unclear but I was flattered that he thought me worthy of seeing it!

Free now to tour the church, I started at the tower arch, which is 12ft (3.66m) high and 6ft (1.83m) wide. It is 11th century, although its western side contains parts of an earlier 7th century arch,

The nave walls, pierced by later arches, are Anglo-Saxon and are 30in (76.2cm) thick. You can see the line, which goes through the level of the clerestory windows, where the Pre-Conquest walls stop and the 15th century additions begin. On the north wall there is a blocked, round-headed, single-splayed 11th century Anglo-Saxon window. There are two more such windows in the north wall of the chancel.

Finally, lying against the east wall of the chancel is an 11th century high altar, or “mensa slab”. During the Reformation, mensa slabs of church altars were often buried; Carlton’s was rediscovered in 1935 two feet below the present altar in the chapel of St Thomas a Becket in the north aisle.



Close up of Anglo-Saxon belfry windows, showing herringbone work and coursed rubble in the walling



Close up of palmette leaf decoration on tower arch capital, with part of 7th century arch to the right

Carlton in Lindrick deserves to be more well-known than it is, containing as it does a surprising number of Anglo-Saxon features. It is open every day and, judging by the people I met on my visit, is clearly a much-loved church.

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Church Guide leaflet



Nave looking west to tower arch. On right (north) side, the line of the scar where the Anglo-Saxon walls stop and the 15th century ones start can be seen cutting through the clerestory windows

museum review

Museum of London

Open daily 10am to 6pm

Admission by donation

Fiona Dowson

LONDON. FOUNDED BY THE Romans, dominated by the Norman-built Tower, not a place we associate with the Anglo-Saxons, except for a few lines in The Chronicle of 886: 'In the same year Alfred the king founded Lundenburh.' With the ever-present threat of Danish raids, Alfred built burhs to defend the peasantry. No doubt, in the words of "1066 And All That", this was a 'good thing.' Building is expensive in terms both of materials and time. It made sense to utilise the old Roman walls, hence Lundenwic became the burgh of Lundenburh. For years the existence of Lundenburh owed its authenticity to The Chronicle. It simply seemed to exist only on paper.

In 1985, pleasingly (almost) 1100 years after its founding, Lundenburh appeared from beneath the pavements of Covent Garden. An image appears in the mind's eye of historians and archaeologists nodding in agreement over a nice cup of Earl Grey.

The Museum of London has an excellent area about the Early Medieval Period. The website boasts a graphic picture of the Danish / Viking battle axes which were unearthed from beneath a bridge. Fearsome weapons, they give the impression of being hammered out by a village blacksmith rather than a skilled craftsman who could make a weapon which was also an item of beauty. It is to the Museum's credit that they've avoided the temptation to go down the populist route and recycle the image of fearsome Viking raiders.

Emphasis is given to daily life. The Anglo-Saxons, we are told, farmed the land around Londinium

alongside native British farmers. An open-sided timber house has been built, complete with thatch roof. It's always a good benchmark of how effective a museum is to see how children react. The house was a big hit. Children seemed genuinely intrigued and content to sit on the benches for whole minutes! A talking post with buttons to press has recordings of people speaking in Old English, Old Norse, medieval Latin, etc, etc.

An excellent balance has been struck between valuable items enclosed behind glass and child-friendly space which captures the imagination.

To get to the Early Medieval you walk through Roman Britain. What is actually more interesting is comparing the Anglo-Saxons to the Iron Age and Bronze Age exhibitions. It's incredible how some things simply didn't change for millennia. Spindle whorls are pretty much the same whenever they were made. Weaving combs give us evidence that cloth was tightly woven. It would have been nice to see a warp-weighted loom, or at least a picture of one, to explain what those clay doughnuts are really all about, but that's just my textile bias.

The Museum of London really does do what it says on the tin. The story of our capital city is told in a fun and family-friendly way.

The Museum of London publishes some weighty tomes, including one of the Lundenwic excavation, which is for sale, £35, in the museum shop.

Café: excellent pot of tea and lovely scones served with cream and Tiptree jam by helpful staff.

Have you been to a museum or similar attraction of Anglo-Saxon interest? Why not send a review to the Editor? (Contact details inside the front cover)

TWO RIDDLES

FROM THE EXETER BOOK

Ian Holt

PEOPLE, BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN, HAVE enjoyed riddles, or at least been frustrated in their attempts to solve them. The Anglo-Saxons were no exception. In fact there is a collection of riddles in the

Exeter Book. The following riddles are marked as D and G in Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader.[1] I present here the originala followed by my translations and an attempt to make sense of them.

RIDDLE D

Mec feonda sum feore besnyðede,
woruldstrenga binom; waette sippan,
dyfde on waetre; dyde eft þonan,
sette on sunnan, þaer ic swiþe beleas
herum þam þe ic haefde. Heard mec sippan
snaþ seaxes ecg sindrum begrunden,
fingras feoldan, and mec fugles wyn
geondsprengde speddrom, spyrede geneahhe
ofer brunne brerd, beamtlege swealg,
streames daele, stop eft on mec,
sipade sweartlast. Mec sippan wraþ
haeleþ hleobordum, hyde beþenede,
gierede mec mid golde; for þon me gliwedon
wraetlic weorc smiþa wire bifongen.
Nu þa gereno and se reada telg
and þa wuldorgesteald wide maeren
dryhtfolca Helm, nales dol wite.
Gif min bearn wera brucan willaþ,
hy beoþ þy gesundran and þy sigefaestran,
heortum þy hwaetran and þy hygebliþran,
ferþe þy frodran; habbaþ freonda þy ma,
swaesra and gesibbra, sopra and godra,
tilra and getrowra, þa hyra tyr and ead
estum ycaþ, and hy arstafum,
lissum bilecgap, and he lufan faeþmum
faeste clyppaþ. Frige hwaet ic hatte
niþum to nytte. Nama min is maere,
haeleþjum gifre, and halig sylf.

Some enemy deprived me from afar,
Took away my bodily strength; after he wet me,
Dipped me in water; he did it again,
Laid me in the sun where I quickly lost
What hair I had. Then with hard knife
Edge he cut me and scraped off the dross,
Folded me in his fingers, and with a quill
Sprinkled useful drops, made many a track
Over the brown rim, swallowed the ink,
Which parted in streams, stepped on me again,
Leaving a black track. Afterwards a man
Covered me with a cover made of hide,
Prepared me with gold; thereon he adorned me
With wondrous work of smiths ringed with gold wire.
Now the ornament and the red dye
And the glorious possession are famed far and wide
To the nation's protector, let none find fault with it.
If men wish to enjoy my child,
May they be unharmed and victorious,
Bold in heart and glad in heart,
Wise in spirit; may they have more friends,
And kin of their own, good and true kin,
Good and true friends, to bring them glory and happiness,
To increase their grace, and their honour,
May favour encircle them, and love embrace them
Fast in its bosom. As what I am called
To man's profit. My name is greater,
Useful to men and holy in itself.

So what are we to make of this? The riddle, as is so often the case, presents an animation of an inanimate object which speaks in the first person singular. The riddle tells us that an enemy deprived him of his bodily strength, dipped him in water and laid him in the sun to dry out. He was then cut and impurities cut away. This indicates that this was a piece of leather or some other hide. The riddler goes on to say that a quill dropped ink on the hide. Nobody would have dropped ink on a piece of leather. It is now obvious that this is parchment. Parchment was made from the skin of a sheep. The first lines, therefore, describe the curing and cutting of a piece of parchment.

Yet the next few lines tell us that it was covered with hide and adorned with gold and the wondrous work of smiths. This is unlikely to have been done for any piece of parchment. This was very special and it seems that the solution to this riddle is that it was some sort of high status writing. This could mean something like a codex, as suggested by Sweet and Whitelock. They suggest a sacred codex. It could just as easily be an official document. It would be nice to think that it was something like the Chronicle or one of Alfred's translations. In any event it is an important document that may bring favour, grace and other benefits to man. This again suggests something sacred or official.

RIDDLE G

Peos lyft berap lytle wihte
ofer beorghleopa, þa sind blace swiþe,
swearte, salopade. Sanges rope
heapum ferap, hlude cirmap,
tredap bearnaæssas, hwilum burgsalo
niþþa bearna. Nemnap hy sylfe.

This air carries over the hill slopes
Little creatures that are very black,
Dark-coated. They go in bands singing
Their bold songs, they cry out loudly,
They tread wooded headlands and sometimes
The halls of the sons of men. They name themselves.

Clearly this short riddle refers to some dark creatures that fly through the air. That much is patently obvious. They are black and it would be natural to think of them as flies, at least if they were a swarm. But even a swarm of flies does not make that much noise. It is more likely to be some kind of bird. The variety of bird can only be guessed at. It could be a jackdaw. It could be a simple blackbird. However, it is possible that the birds in the mind of the riddler were ravens. These birds, as well as fitting the requirements of the riddle, also play an important part in English and wider Germanic mythology. We are told in Icelandic sources that Odin has two ravens, Huginn and Muninn; that is, Thought and Memory. It is just as likely that Woden had two ravens of his own.

At the end of the day, these riddles are what the reader can make of them. They are in the eye of the beholder. Riddle D is at the very least a parchment and, more likely, a very special document, perhaps a sacred text of some sort. Riddle G refers to small black creatures. Whether those creatures are as small as gnats or flies or as large as ravens or rooks is a matter of interpretation. I rather like the idea of the raven, but I cannot prove that that was what was intended.

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The Archaeology of Eoferwic

IAN MILSTED OF THE YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL Trust presented a talk which covered the issues surrounding the limited evidence for Anglian York in the archaeological record. In summary (because there is more detail in Wipowinde 182) the 5th and 6th century are very limited in evidence, and it is believed the population dropped dramatically following the retreat of the Roman Legion stationed in York under Roman occupation. The Basilica has been located beneath the current Minster with an Anglian cemetery on top of it, and may have been standing until as late as the 8th century.

The so-called Anglian Tower is probably actually late Roman, but there are numerous cemeteries from the period. It is however possible that the people buried there lived a little further away in more rural settlements and brought their dead in. Certainly there were rural settlements to the east and north in the 6th - 7th centuries.

The 7th - 8th century saw York emerge as a cultural icon, with Edwin establishing the first Minster in 627 AD, Alcuin building on the reputation of the Library and becoming a leading light of learning throughout Europe under Charlemagne, and with Wilfrid, for better or worse, investing in the church's power and wealth. The Archbishopric was finally created during this period, in 735 AD. Stele fragments found under the Minster dating to the 7th century are completely unweathered so may have been inside some kind of structure.

The 9th century introduced the Viking period and is generally referred to as Anglo-Scandinavian.

During this eventful history the main site for the city seems to have moved around. Initially based in or by

the Roman Principia and Colonia, later it travelled south as these areas became religious sites and the trading wic grew up on the confluence of the Ouse and the Foss. Principal Roman routes across the city survived although under agricultural debris, linking the main gates. Later on new roads start to break through the walls as structures decayed and as needs changed with a new focus further south in the wic.

The wic is still not fully understood. There does not seem to be evidence of the usual royal control associated with these trading settlements, and to date no royal palace has been found in York despite Edwin's fondness for the city and its continuing strategic value. This does not mean there is no palace; it simply reflects the complexity of continuing occupation. Nevertheless there are other difficulties such as a lack of historical reference to royal control, a lack of royal burials after 678 AD and a lack of formal settlement design. Despite its other similarities to wics it is possible that Eoferwic was in fact a portus, which was run by merchants and less formal than a wic.

Ian also described the extensive minting operation in Eoferwic on the 9th century when it appears both a royal and an ecclesiastical mint had been operating. There is a coin for Eanbald c. 800 AD which has never been used and is so clean it is thought to have been dropped near its mint. It has a very high silver content and the coinage later became more debased.

In the 9th century there are a number of coin hoards discovered, which indicates stress in the population. Equally as they were not retrieved this stress seems to be well-placed. The Great Heathen Army arrived in 866 AD and Eoferwic becomes Jorvik at the heart of the Danelaw.

We had to leave the discussion early as we had a date at the University with Michael Wood less than an hour later. Anyone familiar with York traffic will understand the challenge. The bus then broke down and so stress levels were high when we reached the lecture hall, fortunately still in time to join an immense queue for the auditorium.

Phyllis Wicks



What did the Normans do for us?

(A HISTORY OF "1066 AND ALL THAT")

Arthur Wright

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I WAS TOLD THAT THE most important date in English history was (is) 1066. Now it seems few can quote any other date and some not even this one, so it is still really important. Since then I have also been told that English history began in 1066 - well, well! In our end is our beginning. As Douglas Adams said, "where there is a difference between the 'Guide' and reality, reality's got it wrong!" There are always those who like to fall back onto "ah, but recent thinking has changed, you're behind the times". Well, I have always found such assertions to be spurious. Historians are not scientists, and in my experience usually hate logic and maths, so in order to continue publishing they repeat what was said even a century ago, or otherwise they create some unsubstantiated assertion and these things are taken as recent additions to knowledge. Sometimes archaeology intervenes, but archaeology cannot reach into every aspect, especially into our major documents, and all too often it only finds what it is looking for. I have always advocated the scientific approach of returning to first principles; that is how I deciphered Domesday Book. I will now demonstrate how many historians care very little for "first principles".

In 1066 the Normans won the Battle of Hastings, conquered England, and created feudalism ("1066 and all that"). Are those facts? If so, were the Normans then a race of supermen who deserved to win because of their all-round superiority? As evidence for this we can say firstly that they created the Bayeux Tapestry, a permanent record of their achievement and self-justification; next, that they

constructed a nationwide system of motte-and-bailey castles to hold-down the inferior Saxons; then, and finally, that they gave demonstration of their administrative superiority by accomplishing a massive survey of all they had won, the ultimate act of gloating. These things are proof of Norman superiority, doing what the English had always failed to achieve - except that not one of these claims is true. All they did was win the battle, but they were dead lucky.

The "Battle of Hastings" is itself a misonomer, that's a fact for a start. The battle was nine miles away from Hastings and actually Hastings probably didn't exist, even as a village, in 1066. It wasn't recorded in Domesday Book as a vill, town or port, whatever recent writers (quoting much older speculations of course) have claimed. Neither was it a purely Norman army that won the battle; it was a joint expedition of Normans, French, Bretons, Flemings, Boulonnais and rag-bag mercenaries from across Europe, all joined for plunder. Neither did they land at Hastings. The Bayeux Tapestry and other sources clearly state that they landed at Pevensey. Here they found, still largely intact, a stone-built Roman fortress, big enough to accommodate a small army, along with a harbour and a mint with a large number of traders. What sort of fool throws all that away? Nevertheless, the Normans decided to go on to Hastings and build a little dirt "castle" (a burgh is all the Tapestry shows). According to at least one historian [1], after landing at Pevensey they galloped twelve miles along the beach to Hastings. Can you imagine what at least

1,000 tons of horse-flesh would do to a beach on a soggy autumn morning? About half of this distance was, at this time, open water as in 1066 there was no continuous beach from Pevensey eastwards, not even at low water.

Next it is claimed, by English Heritage among others, that they marched to Battle where the Saxons had parked themselves on a not very serious hill. The truth is that English Heritage have the wrong hill, the wrong site. Instead of Battle Hill it was Caldbec Hill, [2] a much more serious proposition. The parallels with Waterloo are remarkable.

The Bayeux Tapestry makes it very difficult to distinguish Normans from Saxons, so to clarify matters at least one historian [3] and many re-enactors have decided that the Tapestry is wrong and regularly depict Saxons without armour or, at best, a wearing a very short and inferior mail shirt and carrying round shields, not like the ones shown on the Tapestry. This makes it easier to understand their defeat: too many cuts in the defence budget. Anyway, as they say, “King ‘arold was ‘it in the eye with an arrow, on ‘is ‘orse, with ‘is ‘awk in ‘is ‘and” and that was that. Game, set and match to the Normans.

Well, to cut a very long story short and to return to our evidence for the Norman Superiority theory, the Normans next built motte-and-bailey castles all over the under-embellished landscape. In fact, most of these mottes are now known to be either prehistoric tumuli, later garden ornaments and follies or (commonly) “adulterines” erected in the 12th century. Dr Jim Leary of Reading University is working on “The Round Motte Project” which can be accessed on-line

(<https://roundmoundsproject.wordpress.com/>) to document them. There is no hard evidence for mottes in Normandy or France before 1066, though we appear to have had them in England before then. [4] Nevertheless, these mottes have become Norman identifying objects, even though we know that a number of proven early Norman “castles” were no more than burghs (ringworks, baileys). Other Norman identifying objects are Romanesque churches, a distinctive style which was, in fact, adopted some time before the Conquest and which was quite different from the traditional Saxon style of masonry building, although this latter style still continued (in places) after the Conquest.[5]

Historians such as N J G Pounds and Marc Morris [6] tell us that the conclusive evidence for Norman motte-and-bailey

castles is shown on the Bayeux Tapestry. Rowley even tells us of the fabulous motte and tower of Arnulf II, Lord of Ardres, which he dates to 1060, yet Arnulf II was not born until 1070. Curiously, the people who embroidered this Tapestry probably never went to Normandy, yet the castles shown are not symbols; each is individual and convincing.

“The most important factor is that the viewer should recognise what is being portrayed, without being too concerned about the detailed accuracy of the design”. (Rowley, 2016:21) [7]

If this is true, then why is Bayeux shown on top of a motte when it never had one? You would think any Norman designer would know that! It is no use, like Woodman, saying instead that none of these places ever looked remotely like their depictions. [8] How can the viewer recognise what is being portrayed otherwise? Why then not just use a single “castle” symbol, why are they all shown so individually? The conclusion can only be that all these castles were seen in England and within a year or two of the Conquest, or maybe even before.

The Bayeux Tapestry, of course, is not a tapestry, it is an embroidery. It was found, centuries after it was created, at Bayeux Cathedral but it was embroidered in England by English workers, so it isn’t and wasn’t made by Normans. [9] It is the pictorial version of the victor’s interpretation of history (with a smattering of Latin thrown-in). The story that King Edward of England offered the throne (which was not his to offer) to Duke William of Normandy is not made anywhere in the Tapestry. It does however seem to tell us that Harold Godwinson welched on a promise to help William claim the throne, taking it himself instead. As a result, all of France and half of Europe’s mercenaries helped William, out of sheer friendship and philanthropy. The reality, of course, was a joint stock enterprise to invade England and share the loot, and the Tapestry itself doesn’t say anywhere that William was going to be the King. The history books also tell us that Norman monks and clerics decided to make an inventory of everyone and everything, everywhere in England. No such survey had ever been attempted before on the Continent; in fact, nowhere else except England, where such surveys had been made for several centuries [10]. It wasn’t Norman monks, priests and bishops who created the Domesday Surveys (Domesday Book) at all, but a requisitioned (Saxon) court department working from Saxon records. [11] Normans, Vikings and Danes had no concept of comprehensive surveying (they didn’t have the necessary

units) and the best administration they ever achieved were lists of other people's treasures. The Saxons had been surveying since before Alfred, possibly even before Offa [12]. As for Norman clerics, monks, priests and bishops, not only did they have no idea how to run such surveys or an audit, they included some of the biggest tax-cheats who were baffled to know how the statistics of Domesday Book had uncovered their financial frauds [13].

The English also had literary traditions and these stretched back at least to Rædwald's time in the 7th century. The French didn't have a similar tradition and only produced the "Chanson du Roland" after the Conquest [14]. England, in 1066, was the most cultured, academic and affluent place in Europe, moreover the only one with a sound specie-only taxation (geld) and that came in handy for any monarch.

Having displaced the old system of landholding, the Normans created a new one – but note that the feudal ("feutile" [15]) system was only finally, fully developed in England after the Conquest [16]. This new, Norman, aristocracy was modified down the centuries but their descendants were careful to characterise the defeated Saxons as idle, drunken, [17] unlettered and puny, whilst they, the ruling classes, were clever, brave, brutal, aggressive go-getters whose hold on the land and on power and wealth was therefore quite natural, in fact ordained by God. Indeed, the English defeat was redefined as the Will of God, for some (unspecified) sins on the part of the English. So our history books all tell of the Conquest as "a good thing". The National Curriculum may now be moving towards redressing the balance (no complaints), especially the literary heritage, but the real issues are still carefully swept under the carpet. I think this is because historians don't want their previous mistakes to be revealed. We need to question the things that supposedly made the Normans great, such as the creation of the Bayeux Tapestry (art with "accurate reportage"), motte-and-bailey castles and superior church styling (architecture), Domesday Book (administration) and the feudal system (law), not forgetting the battle that wasn't fought at Hastings.

How is it that the "most important date in our history" is a travesty of the truth? The answer is simple: the victors always get to write history. Every account we have was written by an author who had benefitted from the Conquest and / or who hoped to benefit even more by praising the victors and (circumspectly) "the man who would be King". That is why they sometimes conflict with

one another. Even our Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, though written in Old English (and later M.E.), were careful to toe the official line. They depended on royal patronage and Abbots weren't fools. Moreover the scriptoria of such houses relied on chance and unverified information, for there was no Reuters, no BBC, no corroborative agency. The only witnesses (even to the weather) were purely local and witnesses to battles knew only the action they had seen on their own narrow front. If there was an outbreak of sickness in two nearby villages there was "sickness throughout the land"; a bad harvest in northern England was a good one in southern England; it was all a matter of hearsay. Yet all the propaganda presented, the purely local viewpoints, the personal recollections, the traveller's tales, the gratuitous moral judgements and bribed opinions, even the censored texts distorting the truth, [18] all these have been handed on to us by so many historians as facts.

As a result it has not been difficult for succeeding generations to build on sensation and on factoids. If the Normans built motte-and-bailey castles, then every hillock in the countryside must be a Norman castle, one built to "hold-down" a truly precocious English nationalism. Here we have the shades of Thierry and Robin Hood fantasies. If Normans could (in Domesday Book) categorise and calculate the real-estate they had acquired and set it all down on record so that Saxons could never argue about the obligations they owed to their betters, or about dispossession by them, then governance and the enduring social system had finally and beneficially been established.

The difficulty with this view is that there weren't any nationalists anywhere in 1066, for the nation-state reality and mentality is something that only emerged in the late 18th and 19th centuries, along with motte-hunting as a field sport. In the medieval world it was language and the monarch that gave identity to peoples, and in 1066 the peoples of England spoke Old English, Old Norse, Danish and Latin (at times), all with regional variations, while the invaders spoke Latin (at times), Norman, Old French, various Patois, some sort of Flemish and Old High German and Dutch as well. With such melting-pots and polyglot associations it was impossible to nationalise and the best approximation in law was "English" or "French" legal entities, "us" or "them". It was mainly a case of "might is right". William had more to fear from his coterie than from peasant resistance in any language and both feared the "Viking" pirates and outlaws. As the Afghan proverb says: "me and my clan against the tribe, me and my family against the clan, me and my brothers against the family, me

against my brothers". That is how all military aristocracies have worked and still work.

So what are we left with? Not very much as a realistic construct. Our historical factoids of the Norman invasion and the Conquest, our "one truly memorable date" are inventions designed to support the class system and wealth distribution of Victorian and Edwardian Britain. They, of course, provided the university scholars and professors. Today we pride ourselves on a more democratic concept of government and governance, yet we cannot shake ourselves and our heritage free of this outdated establishment which still subliminally promotes ruthless power-grabbing, the perfect model for modern business.

So what did the Normans do for "us", if we are the English? Well, they won a battle and stole a set of 34 shires called England, a place no longer Anglo-Saxon but an enormously wealthy and cultured racial mix. They set up a small and elite aristocracy to control all the real-estate and this then evolved from genealogy alone to heritability, thence to property qualification and capitalism, until finally both the old and the nouveau-riche turned to Norman genealogical connections (however tenuous) to justify the class-structure of the early 20th century. We are still living with this vindication of the class / wealth structure. How did they really effect this Conquest? Was the full-blown feudal system that then evolved (in England, and spread to Western Europe) superior to anything that had preceded it? Was the establishment of a carefully defined social system (based on privilege) of lasting social and economic value? These are the truths which historians should be seeking, these are the matters we should be debating. A lot of questions have never been asked and so the truth (I maintain) has never been told. That is why I am currently working on the evidence contained in the Bayeux Tapestry and why I decided to decipher Domesday Book. It is of great assistance if you really want to analyse the Tapestry's evidence – and I do. I think other historians should stop guessing and repeating old guesses, sit down, read Domesday Book and knuckle-down to the hard work involved. Then we will have something more than a "game of thrones" to offer our children and a decidedly more ethical example for posterity to follow.

Footnotes

1. Marc Morris, "The Norman Conquest" (2012 and 2013) p.171
2. John Grehan and Martin Mace "The Battle of Hastings 1066, The Uncomfortable Truth" (2012)
3. Lt. Col. C.H. Lemmon, "The Field of Hastings" (1957 & 1977), p.15
4. Arthur Wright, "The Mottes of Old England", *Wiðowinde* 180 and 181
5. John Blair, "Local Churches in Domesday Book and Before" (in J.C. Holt (ed.) "Domesday Studies", 1987), especially pps.272-273
6. e.g. N. J. G. Pounds, "The Medieval Castle in England and Wales" (1990) and Marc Morris (2012 and 2013) op.cit.
7. Trevor Rowley "An Archaeological Study of the Bayeux Tapestry, the Landscapes, Buildings and Places" (2016) p.21. Also see pages 75-97 for a fuller discussion.
8. Woodman in Rodwell (et. al.) "Edward the Confessor's Church at Westminster: an Alternative View" (2015) p.63
9. Nicholas Higham, "The Anglo Saxon World" (2013) p.428; Trevor Rowley "The Bayeux Tapestry" (2016) p.viii. Even the official guide (Bertrand and Lemagnen, 1996) seems to make tacit acknowledgement
10. Q.v. Arthur Wright, "Fools or Charlatans, The Reading of Domesday Book" (2014) pps.113-130; also H Vierk and W Davies, "The Contents of the Tribal Hidage" in *Frü mittelalterlich Studien*, 8 (1974)
11. Wright (op. cit. 2014) in particular pps.271-275 discussing the information provided by Henry II's "DIALOGUS DE SCACCARIO" and T.F. Tout's "Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England" (1920 and 1967) Vol.1
12. Ibidem and Wright "Domesday Book Beyond the Censors" (2017) pps.87-103
13. Wright (2014) pps.156-198 discussing the so-called "Satellite Surveys" and also the audit use of "scribal apothegms" pps.150-155
14. Q.v. Andrew Bridgeford, "1066 The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry", pps.233-244; also D.D.R. Owen "The Epic and History" in *Medium Ævum* 11 (1982) pps.18-34. Also mentioned in Trevor Rowley, "The Man Behind the Bayeux Tapestry, Odo, William the Conqueror's Half-Brother" (2013) pps.105-106
15. Sellars and Yeatman's "1066 and All That" (1930)
16. D.C. Douglas, "William the Conqueror" (1964) pps.95-98; also Wright (2017) p.187 and (2014) pps.304-307
17. Even Maitland fell into this trap in "Domesday Book and Beyond" (1897) which is still a required text though over a century old. Otherwise he is generally an exemplary historian with little other evidence of social prejudice.
18. Eadner's "istoriaHistoriHistoria Novorum in Anglia" is an excellent example for he actually tells us of Anselm's constant censorship of his text, his persistent "kind corrections"!

Coin corner

Anglo-Saxon coins from the Airedale Collection

David A Mosley

UNDER THE YEAR 798 THE ANGLO-SAXON Chronicle tells of trouble in Kent. It seems that the local King Eadberht Præn had rebelled against his Mercian overlord. This proved to be the worst decision he would ever make. The Mercian King and his armies 'harried Kent and seized Eadberht Præn... [and] ... led him bound into Mercia'. Once there Eadberht Præn's eyes were put out and his hands cut off. The Mercian King was Coenwulf and for the rest of his long reign Kent gave no more trouble. Today's rather battered silver penny (about 65% left) was issued by Coenwulf (796 – 821). Damage like this is usually caused by agricultural implements.

Strike Date: 810 / 820

Spink Ref: S 916

Find Site: Isle of Wight (unusual)

Condition: Very fine but incomplete

Readers might remember a Coenwulf coin hitting the news in 2004 when a gold Coenwulf mancuse was sold by Spinks. It appears in the 2017 catalogue and is valued at £225,000. It had been found by a chap taking his dog for a walk on a riverbank in Bedfordshire. Why can't something like that happen to me once in a while?

The coin was struck at the Canterbury mint. This was a favourite with the Mercian Kings since they controlled Kent. My Offa penny was struck at Canterbury. Coenwulf shared the Canterbury mint with Archbishop Wulfred and King Cuthred of Kent, who was Coenwulf's appointee and brother. Unfortunately Wulfred started to get independent

Obverse

(+ CO) ENWULF Rex Y.
The King's shoulders are preserved but the body which interrupted the legend have gone.



Reverse

(+ WA) ERHEARD MO (NETA). This is Wærheard the moneyer; the man who made the coin. A four line voided cross pattern follows (not unlike the hash key on a phone). Set over a St Andrews style cross with two pellets.



ideas of his own which did not please Coenwulf, but he was eventually forced back into line. Coenwulf had a difficult job following a King like Offa and both Kent and East Anglia tried unsuccessfully to break away.

Spink lists ten coin types for Coenwulf but some of the reverses are described as 'varied' which means that more than ten coin styles exist. My old edition of North – written before the mancuse was discovered – lists 38 Coenwulf coins. The 'varied' are listed as types in their own right. Apart from Canterbury, Coenwulf struck in London, Rochester and East Anglia. In addition to attempted breakaways by Mercian provinces, Coenwulf also had to contend with the rise of Egberht of Wessex – who struck no coins at all in his early years. They paced round each other like caged lions but Coenwulf died before the inevitable battle with Wessex came about. I believe a good case can be made for seeing Coenwulf as the last great Mercian King.





Harold is crowned: detail from the Bayeux Tapestry

CHARTER S1426

Land at Tidenham, Gloucestershire

Harry Ball

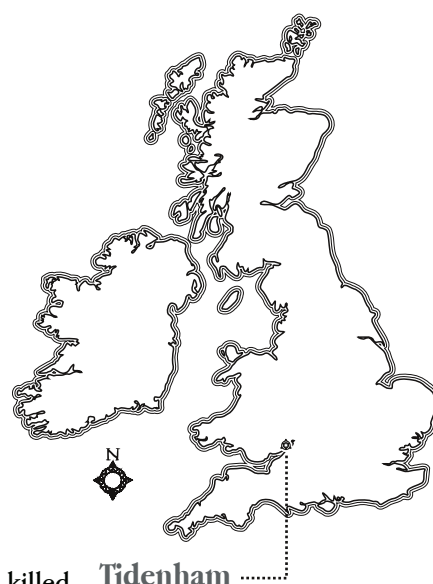
CHARTER S1426 IS AN ORDINARY EVERYDAY charter. It records the lease of land at Tidenham in Gloucestershire to Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, by the monastery at Bath. At 30 hides, or about 3600 acres, it is a large piece of land and of considerable value. For this, Stigand had to pay 10 marks of gold and 20 pounds of silver as a lump sum and 1 mark of gold, 6 porpoises and 30,000 herrings annually. The estate occupies a triangular peninsular of land formed by the river Wye as it joins the river Severn. Domesday Book records several fisheries on the banks of both rivers, which explains the annual renders of fish to the monastery. For these payments Stigand was to hold the estate and receive its income until his death when the estate would revert to the monastery complete with all its men and possessions.

The charter as we have it now is a copy that was written into the 12th century cartulary of the Abbey at Bath. It does not record the date of the original charter but as the witness Ealdred did not become the Archbishop of York until December 1060 and another witness, Tostig, lost his earldom in late August 1065, the charter must have been

issued between these two dates. Nor does the charter record the location of the meeting where it was agreed, but like other meetings it was probably at Gloucester, or possibly at Worcester.

This, then, is the essence of the charter. However, of greater interest to historians is the charter's list of witnesses. The first named witness is Edward the Confessor who had been king since 1042 and was now elderly. He is followed by his wife Queen Edith who married Edward in 1045. The marriage was a political one, for she was the daughter of Earl Godwin of Wessex, the most powerful of Edward's subjects at that time. The next witness is Ealdred who, as the Archbishop of York was the second most powerful man in the church after Stigand; then follows Hereman the Bishop of Ramsbury who had been born in Flanders, and Gisa Bishop of Wells who was also a native of Flanders. Next in rank is Harold Earl of Wessex. He was the son of Earl Godwin and brother to Edith the queen and to Tostig. He is followed by Tostig Earl of Northumbria also a son of Godwin and so brother to Edith and Harold. These are then followed by Æthelnoth the Abbot of Glastonbury, Æthelwig Abbot of Evesham, Æthelsige Abbot of St Augustine's and Ordric Abbot of Abingdon, along with three senior thegns and 'many other good men'.

The principal witnesses to the charter seem to be a list of the great and the good from just before the conquest of England by William of Normandy. They had gathered together to attend to the administrative affairs of the state, including the witnessing of this charter, unaware of the doom that awaited them. Within just a few years, Tostig had lost his earldom and left the country, old King Edward had died and Earl Harold had been crowned as king by Archbishop Stigand, the recipient of the charter. However, Tostig soon returned to England and allied himself with King Harald Hardrada of Norway in an invasion of England. After an initial success against Northumbrian forces at Fulford near York, both Hardradra and Tostig were killed at Stamford Bridge in a vigorous attack by King Harold and the English army. However some three weeks later Harold himself and his other brothers were killed



HER sprutelad on þisum zeprize þ ælfriz abbud and eall seo zeferræden on badan.
 hæfð zelæten to stizande archeb. xxx. hyda landes æt dyddanhamme his dæz. pīð
 .x. marcan zoldef. and pīð. xx. pundon seolfes. 7 æfter his dæze zahyt eft mco þam
 halezan mynstre. mid mete. 7 mid mannum. sra full 7 sra forð sra hyt þænne byð. 7. i.
 marc zoldef to eacan. 7. vi. merssun. 7. xxx. þusenda hærinzys ælce eare.

Þisys ys to zepitnyffe.

+ eadweard ciningc	+ zisa	þ	+ æzylriz	abb	+ roulf sceallene
+ eadzyð seo hlæfdize	+ harold eorl		+ æzylsige	abb	+ bondiz sceallene
+ eadryd archeb	+ toffiz eorl		+ orðric	abb	+
+ hereman. þ.	+ æpelnod abb		+ eferar	sceallene	

7 maneza oþre zode menn þe heora naman her appitene ne syndon

7 zys æniz mann si sra dypiz þ pille þys apendan si he amansumod fram criste. 7 fram
 sēa marian 7 fram sēe petre. þam halezan arte. 7 fram eallum criste halezum æfre
 on æcnysse. buton he hyt eft þe rafor zebete.

Reproduction of Charter S1426

at Hastings by William of Normandy. William then had himself crowned by Ealdred Archbishop of York, also a witness of the charter.

William received a sum. Yet again this illustrates the Normans' lack of respect for property rights and the rule of law in their newly-conquered land.

Following William's coronation Archbishop Stigand was kept in close custody at William's court until he was formally deposed in 1070 and all his properties confiscated. Edith survived the horrors of the Norman Conquest as William allowed her to maintain her position in society to placate his conquered English subjects. The continental Hereman and Gisa also retained their bishoprics but Abbot Æthelnoth was taken to Normandy by William and remained in enforced exile there while Abbot Æthelsige fled to Denmark.

References

Agnes J. Robertson. "Anglo Saxon Charters" (Cambridge University Press. 1939)

P.H. Sawyer. "Anglo Saxon Charters. An Annotated List" (Royal Historical Society. 1968)

"The Electronic Sawyer" for online editions of all Anglo Saxon charters.

So the old order changed. As for the manor of Tidenham, and Bath Abbey's lease of it to Stigand; the property was not returned to the Abbey in 1070 when Stigand was deposed, nor indeed after his death two years later. In 1086 the manor was in the hands of William, Earl of Hereford, one of King William's henchmen. It is not recorded that he paid anything to Bath Abbey for it, but no doubt King





The Story of a Book

WE HAD LEFT OUR PREVIOUS TALK ON York's Anglian archaeology somewhat early to reach the location for the final talk of the Anglian Theme at the Festival. It proved a fortunate decision, as the bus broke down and deposited a large number of lecture-goers on the back streets of York. The next bus arrived after a fraught 10 minutes however, but still stress levels were high when we reached the lecture hall, fortunately still in time to join an immense queue for the auditorium.

Michael Wood promised a talk on his chosen object, an Anglo-Saxon Psalter, would cover its contents, travels, owners and adventures. The book in question was created in Liege and brought to England where it is known as the Æpelstan Psalter.

We were reminded of the remark made by Sir Frank Stenton in "Anglo-Saxon England" that Æpelstan was the greatest ruler of whom no biography exists; fortunately that fault has been remedied since the remark was made, but he does still remain a relatively unknown figure in the history of the founding of England.

The psalter measures 5" by 3 ½" (12.7 cm x 8.9 cm for anyone not using old money) and was a portable, personal object for private prayer and reflection. It has been scorched by the fire of 1731 when so many precious manuscripts were lost, and so many miraculously saved. It had paintings added to it in the 10th century but is itself of 9th century date. The vellum on which it is written is supple, we were told, indicating that it was well-used, which was a pleasing detail.

It opens with part of a poem about the months of the year, then in a Tudor hand beneath it the "owner" is identified as Thomas Dakcombe in 1542 who saved it

from Winchester during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Sadly, although he noted the price, this is now illegible so we will never know what he paid for it. He also noted that it was believed to have been the Psalter of King Æpelstan. The final indignity, worse even than that Tudor hand, is the British Library red stamp which adorns the page.

Æpelstan, as I am sure readers are aware, was the grandson of Alfred the Great. He was the first king depicted wearing a crown and the first generally recognised and styled as the King of All England. He introduced national assemblies and many English laws date from the period around his reign (924 - 939 AD). It is also possible that he was the one who commissioned the translation of the gospels into Old English. William of Malmesbury said that there was never a more just or literate king. In the later medieval and Tudor periods he was remembered as the Founder of England, and in the 19th century William Morris even designed a stained glass window to commemorate him.

However, the problems surrounding unambiguous evidence for the period has seen Æpelstan decline from the public consciousness.

In 927, following his establishment as King of the Anglo-Saxons, he had coins struck with the title "Rex Totius Britanniae" as his influence and strength increased. As soon as he became king he started to receive gifts from other nations, countries and rulers, including the Irish, the Germans and the Franks. His sister, Eadgyth, married Otto of Germany and was after buried at Magdeburg in 946. In 2010 a small lead coffin was discovered in her final resting place containing the remains of a young woman who (according to the isotopes in her teeth) probably grew up in South-west England, whose skeleton evidences a strong interest in horse riding and who existed on a diet comprising large amounts of fish.

Michael Wood then returned to Æpelstan and his court to see if there were any links between it and the Psalter. The text was written around Rheims in the early 800s and a calendar added during the reign of Æpelstan, containing a saint for everyday – with 2 exceptions. These were 26 October, which was dedicated to Æpelstan's grandfather King Alfred and 5th December which was dedicated to Ealhswið,

“true lady of the English”, his grandmother and the wife of Alfred. If nothing else, it shows that the calendar was added after 902 AD when Ealhswið died.

The calendar is followed by a series of prayers for times of trouble, certainly a concern for Æpelstan, as for many in that time, and then a computes for calculating Easter.

Folio 22 then contains obits – prayers for the dead – including for Charlemagne, Pippin (his son, whom we met in the Riddles lecture, who became King of the Lombards in 781 AD) and Bernard (Pippin’s son, King of the Lombards 810 - 818 AD). As well as an Italian Royal Family, the script for this section is Italian, so the Psalter must have travelled to Italy from Rheims prior to its journey to England.

The main Psalter then begins with the life of David and refers to Psalm 17 which was particularly important to Anglo-Saxon Kings, and then is followed by the Pater Noster, Credo and so on. Next come 150 prayers and commentaries on the Psalms, originally written in Italy in the 5th century and copied here in the hand of the court scribe; this has been identified as the scribe to Æpelstan’s court, I believe.

Next comes a series of pictures belonging to the 2nd quarter of the 10th century and based on the style of Syrian art. Especially well-known is the image of Christ in Majesty, which has been copied from the later Roman period of the

500s and translated to England from the Greek world. The last few pages following these are written in Greek and provide a short litany of the saints.

These same Greek prayers are found in the psalters of Paris and Leningrad and are connected to an Irish member of Æpelstan’s court called Israel. It is possible he took the copies from this Psalter when he travelled to Germany and made further copies there.

Michael Wood concluded that he felt convinced the Psalter really had belonged at one time to Æpelstan on the basis of the handwriting evidence (the court scribe and general dates), the specific items added for the owner and the general topics chosen for inclusion. The Psalter stayed in Winchester as part of the Æpelstan collection until the Dissolution and only survived thanks to Thomas Dakcombe seeing it and buying it. It later survived the Cotton fire of 1731, being one of the books thrown from the windows. It is known to have come from the selves next to Otho A18 which were completely lost. Michael then concluded by quoting Bernard Bischoff, who noted that opening a manuscript can open a new world and then the barriers of time and distance fall away.

The full Psalter is available on-line at the British Library - http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_galba_a_xviii_fs001r

Phyllis Wicks



Arendgewritu

Letters

An alternative approach: non-partisan advocacy

Weorð Bocere

There is much to commend in James Simister’s letter in issue 183 of “Wiðowinde”, setting the record straight, though I cannot see that being partisan for a cause is reprehensible? However, I would like to take issue with one thing. He speaks of being “taken seriously” by “specialist

scholars” as though we were seeking accreditation and, if this is so, I would like to enquire “by/with whom”? Who is it who doesn’t like what we have to say unless we say it their way?

Yes, I will put my hand up to being slightly paranoid, not about the Normans as such but about what I see as the perversion of history (for this Conquest period) and the suppression of debate and free speech. Yes, I am prepared

to say why, to those who will listen, and to argue my case openly, are they? No, I am not prepared to be censored by Academic interests who (this is a personal opinion) seem determined to prevent free speech. So I come back to saying, who is it that doesn't like what we say in "Wiðowinde" and *what* don't they like?

As a curator / director of 30 years experience I would be disappointed (if not entirely surprised) to hear that any such censorship came from museums. (I think one can be partisan for but *not* against, by the way.) My opinion is that our magazine is one of the few that *does not* "follow any particular interpretation of history". I agree with James, English society was far from democratic but if Companions want to express such dated (Thierrian) views, then they should be free to do so. My view is not "A/S good, Normans bad", what I ask is why this pernicious and socially destructive cult of the Norman "might is right" master-race is so openly promoted by academics (and thence by diffusion, teachers) when they should be impartially asking "what did the Normans do for us?"

As the first person in 900 years to be able to read what Domesday Book says (read my books James, do the sums) I have come to the conclusion that the pro-Norman claims for it, for motte-and-bailey "castles", for the Bayeux Tapestry and for legislation and administration are almost entirely false. How and why the Conquest came about is the real debate to be had and one that no-one in Academe seems to want to face. How was it that the richest, most cultured and best-educated (read my books) kingdom in Europe, with (I believe) the finest infantry, succumbed to a bunch of mercenary adventurers amongst whom was an exceptional man who founded a dynasty and changed western society to a fully feudal model? This is the debate that should be held, this is the search for truth and this is the fascination of history: not a "game of thrones" fantasy but truly understanding how we came to be what we are today.

Finally, it is not the business of the English Companions to rubbish the pre-Conquest English, though I am sure we would all listen to any Norman achievement that has relevance to the English and with interest. Beware the soft censorship of scholars, it may disguise a hard centre. Who is it that doesn't take us seriously and to what do they object? Could it be the idea that the Conquest was an accident of history? Is that the unpalatable truth?

Arthur Wright, gesith

More thoughts on our name

I have been considering the recent debate concerning the name of our association, and see that the folcgemot voted to "maintain our existing name". But what exactly is "our existing name"? The title "The English Companions" is really only a translation of our Old English name, and like many translations loses something in the process and thereby causes problems. It is not "political correctness" to object to the modern English title, because it suggests something about our organization that is simply inaccurate. The title in Old English reflects the idea of a group which identifies itself with the inhabitants and culture of Anglo-Saxon England, suggesting a combination of academic research and general interest in the life and times of the people. The Old English title is obviously opaque to most people and so requires additional clarification, but that is not unusual. "The Sealed Knot" society for example, has a mysterious title but explains it simply on its web-site : "Re-live history with the Sealed Knot" followed by a further explanation that it is a "re-enactment society".

On the other hand, the modern English translation "The English Companions" can suggest a contemporary and exclusive nationalism whereas the use of "Anglo Saxon" in an additional explanation would not have the same connotation. I am unaware of any significant right-wing groups which utilize "Anglo Saxon" in their name, as most describe themselves as "British". There is however the "English Defence League" and the "League of Saint George".

Geoff Littlejohns is surely correct to point out that our membership "exists within a spectrum of opinion". While some members will have great pride in their Englishness, and see Anglo-Saxon culture as part of their national heritage, others will be more ambivalent about contemporary English society, dislike suggestions of English nationalistic sentiment, and may not even be English. After all, the major work on the Anglo-Saxon written laws was done by the German Felix Liebermann, following in the footsteps of several German colleagues. I would suggest therefore that, as we are retaining the Old English title, we simply drop the modern English translation in favour of a longer but more accurate explanation and clarification of our purpose, such as "the Society for the Study of Anglo-Saxon England". An explanatory note giving the literal translation could even add a few words to the effect that English nationality is not a prerequisite to membership!

Tim Blakemore, gesith

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to read James Simister's letter in the last issue. While I do not agree with everything that James said I felt that he added some balance to the subject. I do get tired of hearing that everyone is against the Anglo-Saxons. I feel that they were far from perfect and were definitely not democratic. Having said that, I think that they were far better than the Vikings and Normans.

David Hinch, wita

Editor's Note: on behalf of the witan, the Editor would like to thank all those members who have written in to Wipowinde regarding our name and the related broader issue of what our approach should be in presenting ourselves as an organisation to various audiences. However, as this subject is not strictly related to the period in which we are all interested, and the issues surrounding our name were resolved at the AGM (folcgemot) in August, the witan feel the topic has been discussed sufficiently, and we will not be printing further letters on this subject in the magazine for the time being.

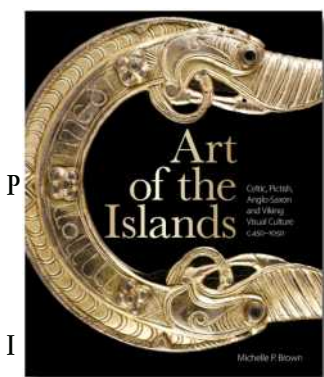


Boca sceawunga

. A . B . C . D . E . F . G . H . I . L . M . N . O . P . R . S . T . U . V . X . Y .

Book reviews

Art of the Islands: Celtic, Pictish, Anglo-Saxon and Viking Visual Culture, c. 450 - 1050



Michelle P Brown

Bodleian Library 2011

aperback rrp £25.00

240 pages

SBN 978 18511 2444 61

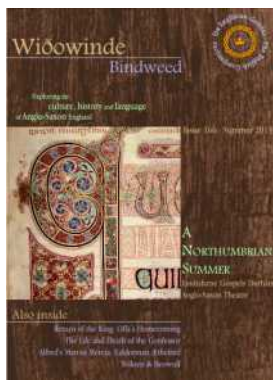
"...this beautifully illustrated book" as described by the reviewer, "takes a cultural and chronological journey through mainland Britain, Ireland, and the Isle of Man from the early fifth century to the Norman Conquest." It explores the historical background, the blending of local styles with exotic ideas, and the development of regional and national identities, from illuminated insular manuscripts to exquisite jewelled artefacts such as were found in the Staffordshire hoard, which include materials

and symbolism from far afield, indicating the wideness of the contacts of the trade involved. Britain's hybrid culture appears in the eclectic imagery of many artefacts; Norse and Roman mythology, and scenes from the Old and New Testaments appear on the 8th century whalebone Franks Casket, and on the 11th century Gosforth Cross, images of the Crucifixion mingle with Norse gods: and in an Old English Hexateuch (the first six books of the Old Testament), Noah's Ark has the dragon prow of a Viking longship. Despite the loss of many of this period's treasures by natural decay as well as those known to have been burnt in the fire in the Cotton Library in 1731, the author stresses their undeniable influence, and ..." the book ends in the modern era, exploring how medieval ideas helped to inspire the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements."

Michelle Brown is Professor Emerita of Medieval Manuscript Studies at the University of London

Madeline Leonard,
from a reviewed by 'CH' for
Current Archaeology 320

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**Copy date for the next issue
25 February 2018**

Please note that the Editor may need to close the issue slightly before or after this date

Runes

Literacy in the Germanic Iron Age



Stephen Pollington

This new survey takes into account recent finds from Britain, Scandinavia and the Continent together with new interpretations of old finds. It investigates the reasons for the creation of the script. The culture which devised the runes must have been familiar with one or more existing alphabet. What combination of factors impelled the script's creation? How was it transmitted from generation to generation? Who used it, when and how?

The author divides the thousand-year history from inception to widespread adoption into phases, each with its own characteristic usages. The study traces the runes' transition from 'hieratic' to 'demotic', from the secret of a closed social class to the common property of entire societies.

Anglo-Saxon Books

See www.asbooks.co.uk for book details

