

VIKING EXPANSION (c.750 – c.1050)



OCR History B SHP – Period Study – J411/33 – 40% – 1hr 45mins – 80 marks
Viking Expansion (40 mrks) with Living under Nazi rule, 1933-1945 (40 mrks)

Viking Homelands – Life in Scandinavia

Lords (Jarls) & Warriors

- Important **landowners**
- Chief of the bondi in their area
- In return for the bondis' loyalty the Jarl looked after their needs
- **Led warriors in raids** and was **expected to reward them**
- Protected towns
- Subject to the rule of the **Thing**
 - **Thing** was the governing assembly
 - **All free** men could attend and participate in decisions

Bondi & Thralls

- **Bondi** were **freemen** who owned their own land
- Attended the **Thing** as freemen
- Varied in wealth but **often had 3 or 4 thralls**
- Expected to turn out to fight when called upon
- **Thralls were slaves** – captured in battle or forced by debt
- Could be bought and sold
- Did all the heavy work on the farm
- Could buy their freedom or be freed by their master

Women & Children

- **Viking women were independent** – they **ran the house** and farms while the men were away (wore key on belt)
- Women could **choose** their **husbands** and **sue for divorce**
- Viking **children did not go to school** – they worked in the fields & workshops & helped at home
- Viking **children played with wooden toys** & played board games
- Viking boys played with toy weapons made of wood

Beliefs & Rituals

- Polytheistic – **believed in many gods** and goddesses
 - **Odin** – god of wisdom & war
 - **Thor** – storm weather god of sky & also fertility – strong, carried a hammer
 - **Frey** – god of fertility – generous
 - **Loki** – mischief – half god/devil
- **Valhalla** – Viking 'heaven' – brave warriors who fell in battle were taken there by **Valkyries** to battle all day with heroes and feast all night
- Vikings were buried with **grave goods** (**Oseberg ship** – animals, clothing, utensils, buckets, lamps, chests, 5 looms, food, 3 sleighs, ornate cart)

Homes & Farming

- Wooden longhouses with turf/thatch roof with a central hall
- Floor of stamped earth
- People sat and slept on raised benches along the side
- **Most Vikings were farmers**
- Cows, pigs, goats, horses, poultry and geese kept and reindeer herded
- Grew rye (bread), oats (porridge), barley (broth or beer) and vegetables and herbs
- On the coast people lived by **fishing**
- In the north (forests) they **hunted**
- Settled other places for more land to farm and raise animals

Crafts, Jewellery & Trade

- Vikings were **skilled craftspeople who traded goods across Scandinavia**
 - **Detailed carvings** on boats
 - **Carved brooches**
 - **Antler or bone combs**
 - **Silver cups & coins**
 - Cloth making
 - Decorated **rune stones**
 - Silver & gold **jewellery** - with glass beads, jet or amber
- Trading town finds in **Hedeby, Denmark; Birka, Sweden** and **Kaupang, Norway** date from **8th C.**

Longships – Perfect for raiding, invading and trading!

- **DRAG** over land, like a sled, if necessary (*portage*) – its shape, strength and lightness made this possible.
- **ROOMY** – Longships varied greatly in size – crews could be anywhere between 12 and 100 men. There was plenty of room for cargo. All the rowers sat on sea chests.
- **AGILE** – narrow enough to sail far inland up narrow rivers.
- **GO FAST** – maximum speed of about 15 knots – could use sail and oars for power, depending on the conditions.
- **OCEAN-GOING** – capable of withstanding storms on the high seas of the Atlantic Ocean!
- **NAVIGATE** – could float in just a metre of water – could navigate rivers and land on beaches.
- **SCARY** – ‘**DRAGON SHIPS**’ – meant to strike fear into the hearts of the Vikings’ enemies when they were seen approaching: Bow was the head, stern was the tail; oars were the legs and the sail was the wings of the dragon.
- **FAMOUS LONGSHIPS:** The **Gokstad Ship** and **Oseberg Ship**.



Oseberg Ship

Viking Warfare: Weapons & Tactics

The Vikings were **no better equipped than their enemies** and **usually did not outnumber them**. They had to rely on other things to give them the advantage in battle:

Viking Tactics:

1. **SURPRISE** – the Vikings knew that **tricking their enemies was the best way to beat them** – leaders proved themselves by showing their cunning in war. Many Viking legends about their gods, such as Odin and Thor, included some kind of trickery. The most obvious example of this was **catching their enemies by surprise**. Their **AGILE LONGSHIPS** allowed them to turn up unexpectedly, e.g. raid on **Lindisfarne Abbey (AD793)** & the greatest Viking successes were usually surprise attacks, e.g. **Guthrum's attack on King Alfred at Chippenham** in the middle of winter (**AD878**); **Eric Bloodaxe's ambush** of King Eadred at **Castleford (AD948)**.
2. **TERROR** – the Vikings liked their **fearsome reputation** – it made it more likely that **enemy armies would give up in a battle** before them. Viking warriors showed their individual, wild **COURAGE** in battle when they fought as a **'BERSERK'** ('bear-skin') and their **warrior code** meant they were not supposed to abandon their lord even if they were losing the battle. Their **brutal killings of King Edmund of East Anglia (AD869)** and **Saint Alphege (AD1012)** only made the English who faced them more fearful.
3. **SHIELD WALL** – In most battles **warriors formed a 'shield wall'** with their round shields overlapping. This was **very hard to break**. When a weakness was found in the enemy's wall, warriors would break it and the battle would end soon after either with **slaughter, surrender or a panicked retreat**.

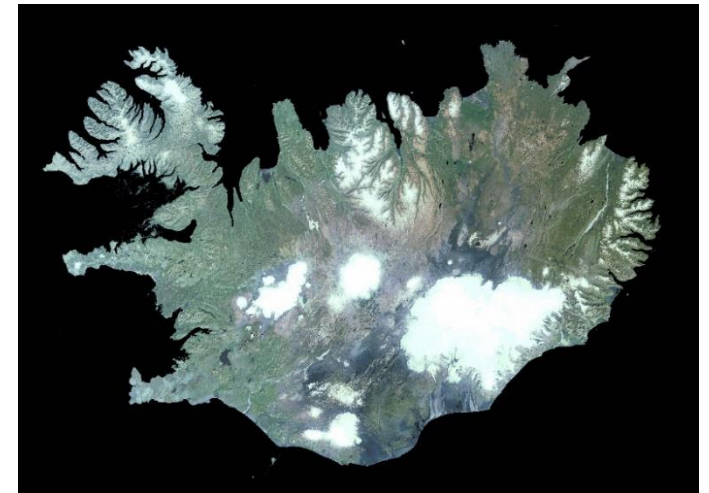
Viking Weapons:

Warriors used a **variety of weapons** according to their **wealth and status**:

- The **most prized weapon** was a **SWORD**, but **AXES** (used by the **Varangian Guard & Cnut's Housecarls**), **spears** and **bows and arrows** were also widely used.
- **All warriors** had a large round, **WOODEN SHIELD**.
- **Armour** again varied a great deal: some had **helmets** with eye or nose guards; **chain mail**; while others had no more than **cloth or leather tunics**.

Atlantic Exploration - Iceland **9th Century**

- It was **settled by the Vikings in the 9th Century**. The first permanent settler was **INGOLF** founded Reykjavik, which later became the capital of the island. **By the early 10th Century more than 10,000 Vikings had moved to Iceland.**
- The **land was good for sheep farming** and the **seas around the island were rich with fish.**
- Minerals on the island, such as **soapstone and iron** could be used to make tools, pots and weapons.
- The island was **ruled over by local chieftains**, but once a year the **Althing**, the assembly of all the free men of the island **met to agree new laws and settle disputes.**



Atlantic Exploration – Greenland 10th Century



- First **discovered by accident** when a Viking, **Gunnbjorn**, was **blown off course in a storm**.
- It was **explored and settled by ERIK THE RED** in the **10th Century**. He had been **accused of murder on Iceland and exiled** from the island. He set sail to find somewhere else to live to the west. He **named it Greenland to encourage other Icelanders to move there**.
- The Vikings had **2 settlements** on Greenland – **Western Settlement** and **Eastern Settlement**. They were in the only places on the island where there was enough land to raise sheep and cattle. **They never grew into large or rich communities**.
- **The Vikings survived on Greenland for over 400 years by farming, hunting seals and reindeer and trading with Iceland**. They made tools and weapons out of materials they could obtain from the land and sea: reindeer antler; whalebone and wood.

Atlantic Exploration - Vinland (North America)

11th Century

- **LEIF THE LUCKY**, Erik the Red's son, **discovered a new land** that he called **Vinland** at the beginning of the **11th Century**, when he had been **blown off course in a storm**. This was probably Newfoundland in what is now Canada.
- The name might mean **'land of meadows'** or **'land of wine'** (it is possible that Leif mistook the local huckleberries for grapes).
- The remains of a **small Viking settlement** have been discovered at **L'Anse aux Meadows** (see picture) on Newfoundland which includes **long houses with thick turf walls**.
- The **Vikings did not permanently settle North America**: **only a few ever made it so far west** and later **encounters with Native Americans were sometimes violent** with the Vikings having to retreat. Greenlanders probably continued to visit **Markland ('land of woods' - Labrador)**, to the north of Vinland for resources from time to time.



Vikings of the East: 'Varangians', 'Kievan Rus'

9th – 11th Centuries

Life for the Vikings in the East

- Vikings, mainly from **Sweden**, **crossed the Baltic Sea** and **attacked lands in the east** in the modern countries of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Poland.
- They came first as **mercenaries and raiders**, but later made themselves the **rulers** of these lands and settled as **farmers and traders**.
- The **Kingdom of Kievan Rus** was the largest in Europe by the **10th Century**.
- Going east was one of the Vikings' greatest successes as it **brought them into contact with the rich and powerful Byzantine and Arab Empires**.



FARMERS



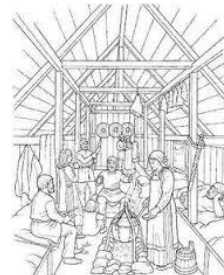
RAIDERS & MERCENARIES



TRADERS

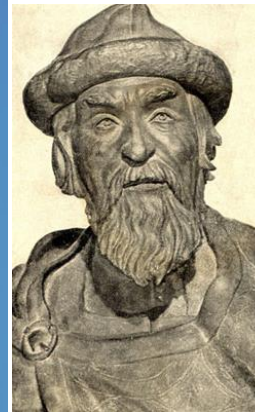


Riverside settlements of longhouses, built of wood, stone or turf, survived on farming and trade.



Important Vikings of the East (The Varangians)

- **Rurik** – **9th Century (860)**: **first Viking (Varangian) Prince of Novgorod** (port in northern Russia)
- **Oleg** – **9th Century (882)**: **moved capital to Kiev on the River Dneiper** – centre of powerful & rich Viking kingdom of '**KIEVAN RUS**'.
- **Princess Olga (Regent & Saint)** – **10th Century (945-964)** : visited Constantinople and was the first Varangian to **convert to Orthodox Christianity**. Ruled Kievan Rus for her son until he came of age.
- **Sviatoslav the Brave** – **10th Century (964-972)**: son of Olga; Kievan Rus largest kingdom in Europe following his many military campaigns. Pagan in spite of Olga's influence.
- **Vladimir the Great (Prince & Saint)** – **10th Century (978-1015)**: son of Sviatoslav; **converted to Orthodox Christianity** after marriage to a Byzantine princess and **made Kievan Rus a Christian kingdom**. The 'Varangian Guard' in Constantinople grew from his alliance with the Byzantines.
- **Yaroslav the Wise** – **11th Century (1019-1045)**: **Kievan Rus had reached the peak of its power & culture**. He had the title '**Grand Prince of Kiev**' and began the writing of Russia's law codes ('**The Justice of the Rus**').



Top Row: Rurik; Oleg; Olga
Bottom Row: Sviatoslav; Vladimir; Yaroslav

The Vikings and the Byzantine Empire: Trade with Constantinople & The Varangian Guard



- The **Byzantine Empire** was the Roman Empire which had survived in the east.
- The capital city was **Constantinople** – a huge city (the Vikings called it **Miklagard** – ‘the great city’). It had the **largest church in the world & trading links across Europe and Asia** – the **Kievan Rus** Vikings used this to their advantage to get rich, linking Russia’s river systems with the Byzantine’s trade network. They also **converted to Orthodox Christianity**, the Byzantines’ religion.
- **Jewellery, slaves & spices** were all traded in the **prosperous markets** of Constantinople.
- The Byzantine Empire was **too powerful for the Vikings to defeat**, but they benefited from **fighting for them**:
The Varangian Guard became the Emperor’s **personal bodyguard**. It started in the **10th Century** when **Vladimir the Great** made an alliance with the **Emperor Basil II** and sent him **6000 warriors** – the Vikings had a reputation as ferocious fighters and the Varangian Guard fought for emperors across the empire.



Trade with the Arabs

- The Viking raids across Europe brought them into contact with other cultures, including Muslim Arabs. Although there were **no Viking settlements in Arab lands**, both cultures interacted with each other through their respective exploration of Europe.
- Seizing upon the opportunity to enrich themselves, the **Vikings came into contact with Arabic wealth and treasure** through trade along the Volga, and soon realised what could be gained from increased **TRADING** of silver (especially *dirhams*), gold, slaves and spices. Evidence of this is in the form of **thousands of coins and jewellery found in Gotland and Birka**.
- Contact between Vikings and the Arabs occurred mainly in the area of what would become Russia.
- The Vikings used the **DNIEPER and VOLGA River systems** to reach the **Black Sea and Caspian Sea** and so trade with the **vast, powerful and wealthy Arab Empire** of the east going as far as **Baghdad** (5000 kilometres from Scandinavia). The city of **KIEV** especially grew rich on this trade.
- It is because of contact with the Arabs that we know much about the lifestyle of the Volga Vikings: in the **10th Century**, **IBN FADLAN**, a representative of the Caliph of Baghdad (capital of the Arab Empire), was sent on a mission to Russia. He wrote an account of what he saw there which has survived. It includes **a description of a pagan ship burial**.

The Vikings in France: The Normans

9th – 11th Centuries

The Sieges of Paris (AD 845 & AD 885)



AD 845 – **SUCCESS** - Led by the legendary chieftain **Ragnar Lodbrok**, Vikings sailed up the River Seine to attack Paris. They **plundered the city** & the King of France **paid them to leave with 7000 livres** of silver and gold.

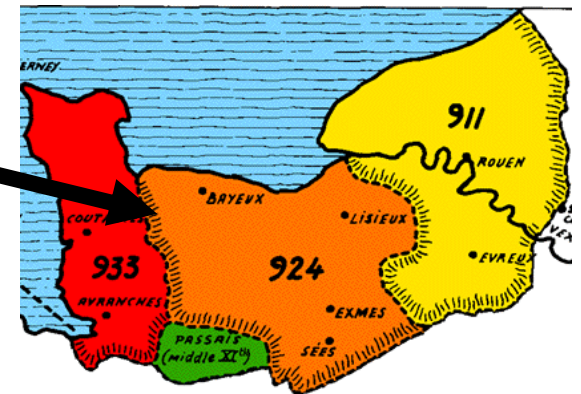
AD 885 – **FAILURE (BUT STILL GOT SOMETHING OUT OF IT!)** - Led by **Sigfrid and Sinric** – this time Paris was **defended by Odo, Count of Paris**. The King of France **persuaded them to abandon the siege** by offering them **treasure** & the chance to **raid Burgundy** instead, which had rebelled against him.

The Foundation of the Duchy of Normandy AD 911 & expansion

- **Rollo the Ganger** was the **first ruler** of the **Duchy of Normandy**.
- Rollo was among the Norsemen who secured a permanent foothold in France in the valley of the lower River Seine.
- The French King, **Charles III**, gave the Vikings Normandy in **AD 911** in exchange for peace & protection from other Vikings (**Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte**).
 - The **River Seine** flows through Paris, so by giving Rollo this land, the King of France was making his **capital safe from future Viking raids**.
- Rollo and his Vikings also had **convert to Christianity** and became known as the **NORMANS**.



The Vikings (Normans) continued to gain land over the next century and as newly converted Christians built monasteries eg. Mt St Michel.

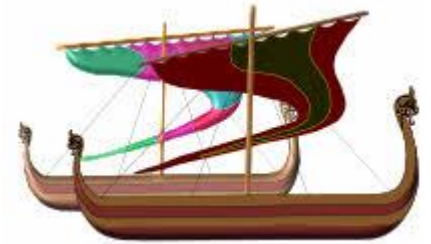


Viking Attacks (793 – 879): Raids and Invasions of the British Isles



Viking Raids 793 - 864

Began with attacks on monasteries in north; over time raids spread to whole of British Isles, getting larger & longer



Viking raids started in **793** when the monastery at **Lindisfarne** was attacked. The nearby monastery of **Jarrow** was attacked the following year (**794**).

Churches were an easy target for the Vikings as they were built in remote locations (often on the coast or islands) and were poorly protected. Most importantly they contained ornaments made of **silver and gold**. The Vikings killed or captured the monks (to sell as **slaves**) and burnt the buildings. The monastery of **Iona** on the west coast of Scotland was attacked in **802, 806 and 825**.

The number of attacks steadily grew and soon happened every year. At first, the Vikings attacked in the summer and returned home for the winter. Soon however they began to set up permanent camps and stayed over the winter.



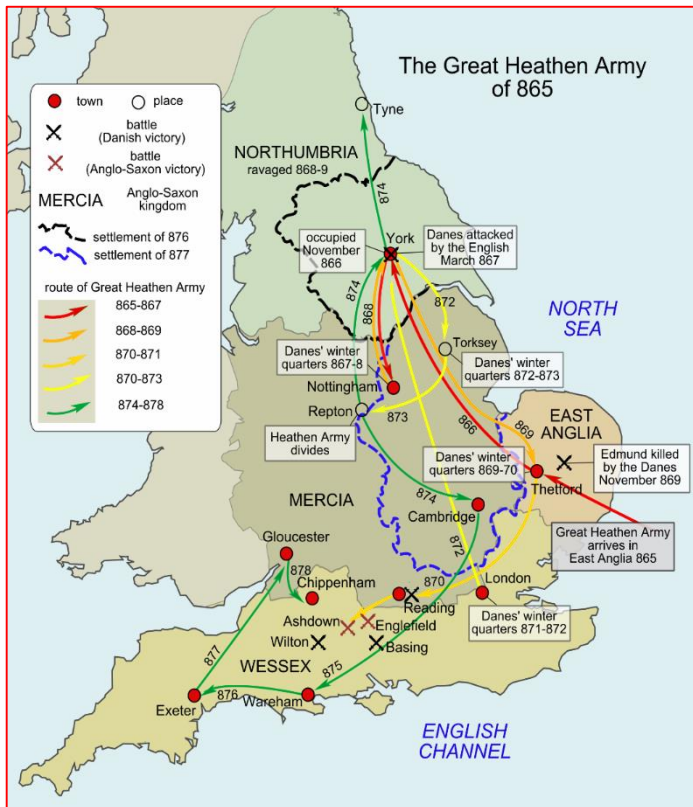
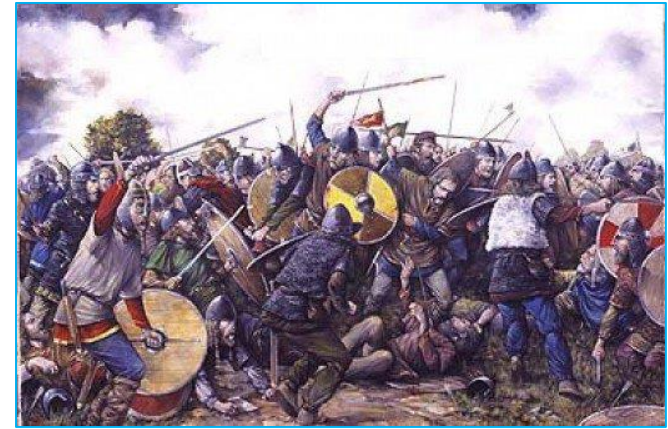
Viking Invasions

865 – 879

Creation of 'The Danelaw', including the Viking Kingdom of York

Arrival of the Danes

The main Viking attacks on the south and centre of the country started in the reign of Egbert (802-839) with a raid on the Isle of Sheppey in 835. Some of the Vikings joined forces with the Cornish against Wessex, but were defeated by Egbert, the King of Wessex, in 837 at the Battle of Hingston Down. But this defeat was only a temporary setback for the raiders.



Movements of 'The Great Heathen Army' in England 865 – 879

(Half of Northumbria (Viking Kingdom of York); East Anglia & half of Mercia conquered; Wessex invaded twice, but not conquered)

'The Great Heathen Army' (865 – 879) - The Viking Kingdom of York

Egbert died in 839 and was succeeded by his son Aethelwulf and by several of his sons. Viking raids continued during the reigns of these Saxon rulers. During the reign of Aethelred, in 865, a mighty Viking army, known as 'The Great Heathen Army', led by the Viking chieftain Ivar the Boneless, and marched north to take control of the city of York (a successful port) and conquered half of Northumbria (866).

The Danes conquer East Anglia and defeat Mercia

In 870 East Anglia was conquered by the Vikings after they defeated King Edmund and killed him. In 874 they also conquered half of Mercia. Many Danes travelled from their home countries to settle in their newly acquired lands.

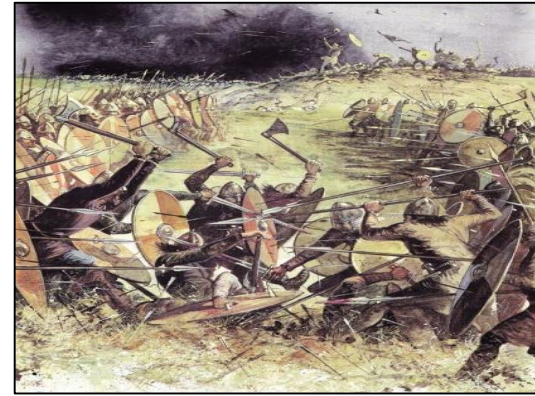
Alfred the Great – Wessex fights back!

When **Alfred** became **King of Wessex in 871** much of England was under the control of the Danes. Wessex itself was still under threat and if it fell to the invaders most of the island would have probably fallen into Viking hands. Although Alfred was in his early twenties and was interested in studies and learning, he had plenty of experience fighting the Danes with his elder brother, who had defeated them at the **Battle of Ashdown (871)** following the **first Viking invasion of Wessex (870)**.

Guthrum was one of the leaders, alongside **Halfdan**, of the large Viking army that invaded Britain in 865. In **875** the **army split in two**. Half, led by Halfdan, went north into **Scotland** and briefly into **Ireland** while the other half, led by Guthrum, went into East Anglia and set up base there before **invading Wessex a second time**. By **876** the Vikings had advanced deep into Wessex, **raiding as far west as Devon**.

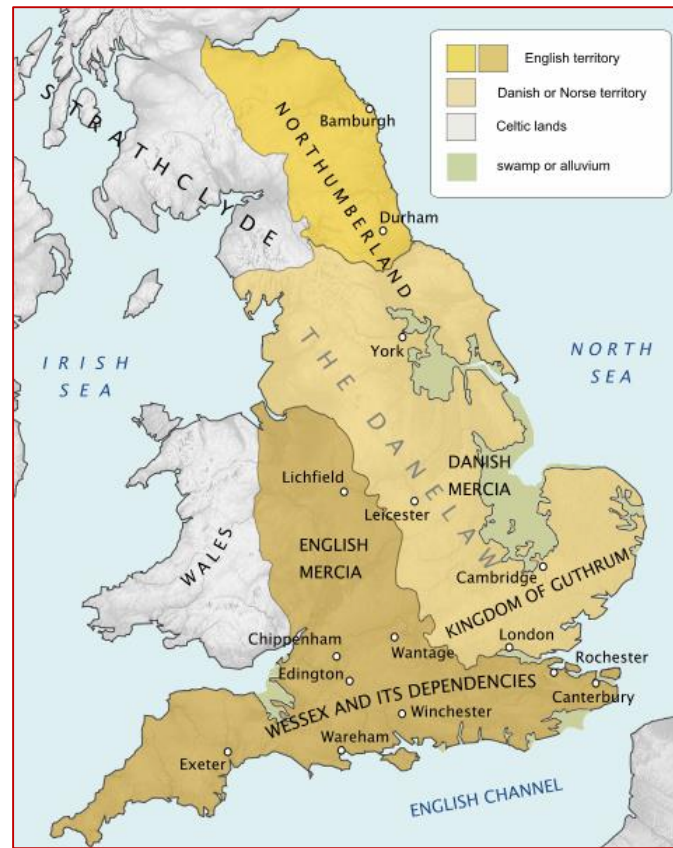
In **878**, the Danes launched a **surprise attack on Chippenham**, Wiltshire, where Alfred was spending Christmas. Alfred was forced to go into **hiding in the Somerset marshes**, building a fortress on an island at **Athelney**. This was the high point of Viking success. Rather than giving up hope, Alfred now gathered an army, drawing men from 3 counties, and defeated the Vikings at the **Battle of Ethandun (May 878)**.

This major battle forced the Vikings to retreat out of Wessex and the following year Alfred and Guthrum made peace, **Guthrum converted to Christianity** and Alfred set the borders of their lands, with the Vikings still **controlling much of the east of the island**. This area now became known as **'The Danelaw'**. (By this time, the Vikings had also settled the **Shetland and Orkney Islands**, the **Isle of Man** and set up **trading settlements in Ireland, including Dublin**.)



English lands (the south & the west & the far north) **and Viking lands** (the north (*aka* Viking Kingdom of York) & the east) **in 879**

(By 954 all had been come under the Kings of Wessex to make the Kingdom of England)



Death of Eric Bloodaxe (954)

last Viking King of York

– the end of Viking rule in England

After Alfred – The Vikings lose the Danelaw

The wars between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons continued for generations (865 – 954). After Alfred, his son, King Edward of Wessex, and his daughter, Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians conquered all the lands of the Danelaw apart from the Viking Kingdom of York in the north. This was conquered in 927 by Alfred's grandson, Athelstan, but after he died, the Vikings regained control of York between 939 and 954, when Eric Bloodaxe, the last Viking King of York, was killed.

As the Kings of Wessex gradually drove the Vikings out of the lands of the old four kingdoms of Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria, they joined them together to form the new Kingdom of England.



The Viking Kingdom of York Jorvik (866 – 954)

Viking Age York: rich and repulsive!



Evidence from Coppergate dig (1976-1981)

- Large, inland port on the River Ouse with access to the North Sea
- Surrounded by good farmland for crops and animals
- Easy access to rich minerals, e.g. Whitby jet
- At least 10,000+ people lived there
 - Few lived more than 60 years
 - A quarter died in childhood
 - Half of all women died by 35

Houses and Streets:

- **single-storey, thatched** structures of similar size
- packed tightly together
- added to older Roman layout
- most new streets were close to the River Ouse.



Kings and coins:

- 866-927 - 11 Viking rulers
- 927-39 back under Anglo-Saxon control
- 939 – Olaf Guthfrithsson, King of Dublin regained town (coins found with a cross and a raven companion of Odin)
- 947-948 – Jorvik ruled by Eric Bloodaxe
- 952-954 – Eric Bloodaxe ruled until he was driven out of Jorvik – became York and ruled by an English earl.

Trade and Wealth and the last Viking King

- The Vikings were **great traders** and had established links from the Caspian Sea and Black Sea in the east, across Russia to Iceland and Greenland (**9th – 10th Centuries**).
- A range of exotic goods arrived in York: **walrus ivory, silk for headscarves, amber and jet for jewellery, glass, wool, leather, furs, honey, tin, wheat and Rhineland wine. Spices, oils and perfumes** were imported too. Jorvik was a cosmopolitan, bustling marketplace with a **population of no less than 10,000**, making it one of the biggest cities in the British Isles at the time.
- Materials travelled many miles to reach the Jorvik craftsmen: **gold and silver came from Europe; copper and lead from the Pennines; and tin from Cornwall**. Beads and rings were fashioned from **amber** and **Whitby jet**. Specialists could carve out **combs, pins** and even **ice skates from bones and antlers**. **Shoes, clothes** and **textiles** were **made out of leather**.
- Everywhere they went the Vikings bought and sold slaves.

JORVIK stayed in Viking hands longer than any other part of the Danelaw. The English conquered it in **927**, but the Vikings won it back and the last Viking King of York, **Eric Bloodaxe**, was only defeated in **954**:

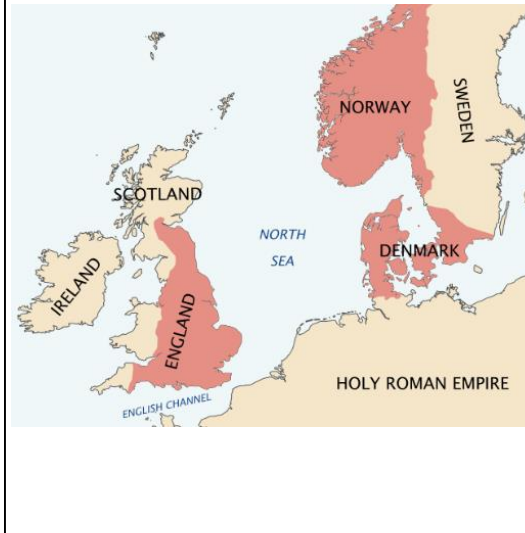
- He was King of York TWICE – In **947** and then again in **952**
- PAGAN PROTECTOR OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH of Northumbria – **trusted by the Archbishop of York, Wulfstan.**

Why had Cnut the Great conquered England by 1016?

1. THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK

- The first attacks on England in the 9th Century were groups of warriors who joined together to form an army.
- In the 10th Century Denmark became a kingdom ruled by one man.
- Cnut's grandfather, **KING HARALD BLUETOOTH**, made Denmark into a rich & powerful country: he minted coins to support trade; built 4 large circular forts (e.g. Trelleborg Fort) to show his power to impress local lords (*jarls*); built a long wooden bridge at Raving Enge to improve communications and repaired the *Danevirke* border defence to keep the country safe. He even ruled part of Norway as well.
- His son, **KING SWEIN FORKBEARD** conquered more of Norway making him even more powerful and welcomed foreign traders to add to Denmark's wealth. Swein increased his wealth with raids on England.
- Kings of Denmark had the power to order their warriors to build longships and sail across the sea to attack England.
- **LARGE VIKING ARMIES** attacked England year after year between 980 and 1016, mostly led by **KING SWEIN FORKBEARD** between 1002 and 1013 and his son, **KING CNUT THE GREAT** between 1014 and 1016.

THE VIKING EMPIRE OF CNUT THE GREAT (1016 – 1035)



2. THE VIKINGS WERE NOW CHRISTIANS

- In the 10th Century the Vikings of Norway and Denmark gave up their old beliefs (gods like Odin and Thor) and **BECAME CHRISTIANS**.
- The first Christian King of Denmark was Cnut's grandfather, Harald Bluetooth.
- Viking Kings knew that doing this would gain the respect of other rulers in Europe.
- English people knew that the Viking Kings would not force them to change their religion if they were in charge of England.

3. CNUT MARRIED AELFGIFU

- Cnut married the English noble woman **AELFGIFU** of Northampton in 1013.
- The marriage was arranged by his father, King Swein Forkbeard of Denmark, who attacked England to avenge a massacre of Danish settlers in 1002 and then for plunder. He had the military power to make himself King of England.
- This marriage showed that Cnut had already been accepted by many English lords as fit to be their king.

4. SOME ENGLISH LORDS DID NOT SUPPORT THEIR KING

- In 1013, some English lords turned against their king, **ETHELRED UNRAED ('THE CLUELESS')**, and sided with King Swein Forkbeard of Denmark, Cnut's father, who was briefly king (1013 - 1014). Ethelred left the country.
- Both Swein and Ethelred died soon after (1014 & 1015). Some lords chose his son, **EDMUND IRONSIDE**, as king. Others, like **EARL EADRIC**, wanted Cnut as king.
- In 1016, soon after the Battle of Assandun began, Eadric led his men away, which helped Cnut to win the battle.

5. BATTLE OF ASSANDUN (OCTOBER 1016)

- Cnut won the Battle of Assandun in October 1016 and forced King Edmund Ironside of England to give up most of the country and make Cnut heir to the lands he still ruled.
- Edmund Ironside died suddenly in December 1016.
- Cnut immediately made himself King of England. Edmund's family left the country.

King Cnut the Great (1016 - 1035)

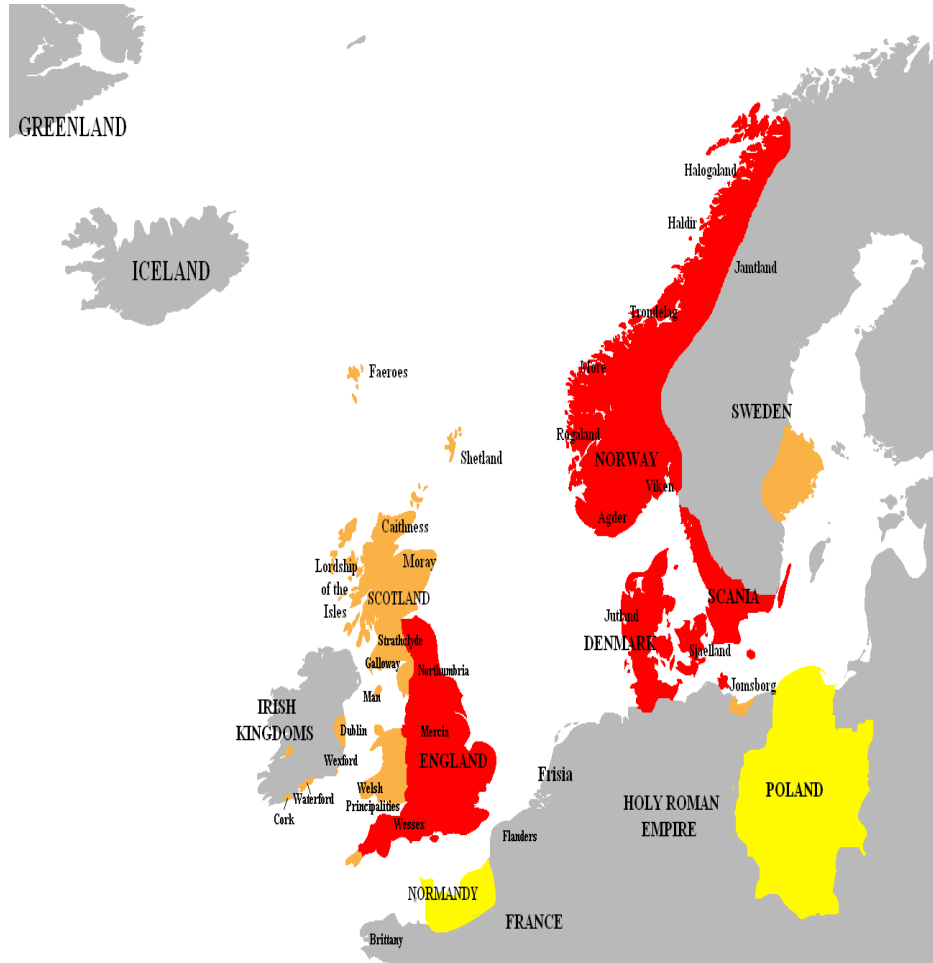
- Lived **c.985/995 – 1035**.
- Married **(1) AELGIFU** of Northampton (1013/14) **(2) EMMA OF NORMANDY** (1017): Aelfgifu was from a noble family of the midlands – Cnut married her to win English support. Emma had been married to the deposed English King Ethelred, who had married her to ally with the Duchy of Normandy, so also marrying Emma connected Cnut to 2 royal families and strengthened his claim to the throne of England
- Following the death of Edmund Ironside (1016) he **SEIZED ALL OF ENGLAND** with the help of powerful lords
- **RULED OVER ENGLAND, DENMARK & NORWAY (& PART OF SOUTHERN SWEDEN)** –forming an **'EMPIRE OF THE NORTH SEA'**, making him the **MOST POWERFUL VIKING RULER THERE HAD EVER BEEN**. He **appointed regents** to rule for him in his absence, e.g. Aelfgifu and her son Swein ruled Norway for him 1030 – 1035.
- Divided England into **FOUR EARLDOMS** (Wessex; Northumbria; Mercia and East Anglia) and used trusted Viking and English supporters, e.g. Godwin, Siward & Leofric. Raised an **ANNUAL TAX (heregeld)** to pay for defence.
- Used military force to keep control of every part of his empire: conquest of **ENGLAND (1014-16)**; **DENMARK (1018)** after the death of his elder brother; **BATTLE OF HELGEA (1026)** defeated combined force of Swedes & Norwegians which left him the most powerful ruler in Scandinavia; supported the overthrow of Olaf, King of **NORWAY (1028 – 1030)** by rebel lords, reunited kingdoms of Denmark & Norway. Created **ROYAL BODYGUARD of HOUSECARLS**.
- **GENEROUS PATRON OF THE CHURCH** – many monasteries benefited. Went on **PILGRIMAGE TO ROME (1027)** to improve relationship with the Pope. He had **2 WIVES** which was against Church law. It suggested he had some devotion to old Viking pagan customs.
- Strengthened ties with powerful noble families through political marriages and patronage, but **ACTED RUTHLESSLY** against any earl in England or *jarl* in Denmark who got too powerful, e.g. **EARL EADRIC STREONA OF MERCIA** and Danish regent **JARL ULF** were **BOTH MURDERED**. **FORMED ALLIANCES** with powerful neighbouring rulers – **DUKE BOLESLAV** of Poland and the Holy Roman **EMPEROR CONRAD II** – to secure his borders.
- **DIED** in England in **1035** aged 40/50 & was buried in Winchester Old Minster – a traditional burial site of Kings of Wessex & England. On his death, there were **POWER STRUGGLES BETWEEN RIVALS** to be Kings of Denmark, Norway & England with the result that his **EMPIRE DISINTEGRATED IMMEDIATELY**.



King Cnut and Queen Emma from *The New Minster Liber Vitae* (1031)

He is giving a golden cross to a monastery in Winchester, England.

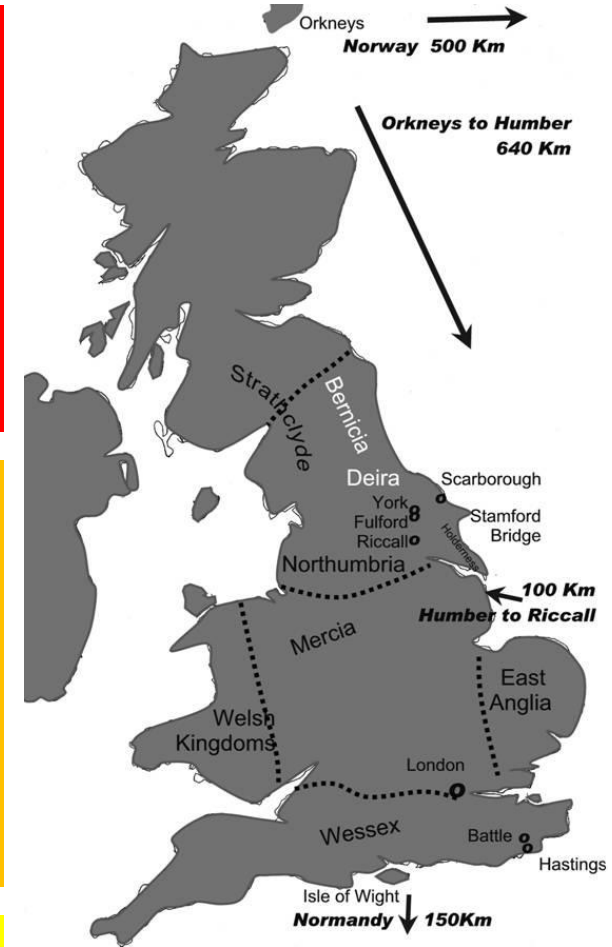
Cnut's Anglo-Scandinavian Empire (c.1035)



**EMPIRE:
ENGLAND;
DENMARK ;
NORWAY & PART
OF SWEDEN
(LANDS RULED
OVER BY CNUT)**

**CLIENT STATES
(RULERS OF
THESE LANDS
HAD SOME KIND
OF AUTHORITY
OVER THEM)**

ALLIES OF CNUT



Viking Conversion to Christianity

Kings

- Scandinavia was surrounded by Christian countries
- Viking kings used Christianity to strengthen their power
- **Harald Bluetooth** converted **Denmark** in the 960s (10th Century)
- **Olaf Haraldson** converted **Norway** in around 1024 (11th Century)
- **Sweden** was last to convert – **end of 11th Century**

Trade

- By the 12th Century raiding had ended and the Vikings were known more for their great trading prowess
- Converting to Christianity made it easier for the Vikings to form trading alliances with the rest of Christian Europe

Stave Churches

- Built all over Scandinavia as soon as Christianity was adopted
- Built like Viking houses with wooden staves (planks) set upright in ground
- Started as simple one-story buildings but by 12th Century they were grand with many levels of roof and elaborate and beautiful carvings (crosses and dragons)

Mixture of Christian & Pagan beliefs & practices

- Beliefs in the old gods did not die out overnight
- Stone moulds from Denmark show both Thor's hammer and Christian crosses were made at the same time
- Carvings of the Crucifixion (in Denmark and elsewhere) show Christ as a triumphant king with a proper crown and not the suffering image we're used to

THE JELLING STONE: THE VIKING HOMELANDS' CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY (10th CENTURY)

2 of the 3 sides of a copy of the massive Jelling Stone which has been painted to show what it was like in the 10th Century:



What does the left hand side show?
What does this suggest about Viking beliefs?

Christ is shown crucified, wearing the robes of a Viking lord. He does not appear to be in pain: no nails in his hands and not on a cross, but instead wrapped in Viking interlace, which symbolises how all parts of the universe are connected.

Why was the Jelling Stone made? By whom? When?

- Massive memorial to Gorm and Thyre, parents of King Harold Bluetooth - weighs over 10 tons and stands over 2.5m high.
- Shows King Harald Bluetooth's power: son of the previous king, Gorm; ruled the whole of Denmark as king; had also conquered Norway; loyal to Christian God.
- Shows Denmark was now a Christian country: King's religion is the country's religion; new religion presented as similar to pagan Viking beliefs – nothing for Danes to fear.
- King Harald Bluetooth of Denmark & Norway (10th Century) (grandfather of Cnut the Great)

What does the right hand side show? What does this suggest about Viking beliefs?

Two creatures – a serpent coiling itself around a great beast (probably a lion?) - are shown locked in an eternal battle between good (the beast) and evil (the serpent). This idea would have appealed to both Christians & Pagans.

What do the Runes on the stone say?

“King Harald commanded this memorial to be made in memory of Gorm, his father, and in memory of Thyre, his mother – that Harald won the whole of Denmark for himself and Norway and made the Danes Christian.”