

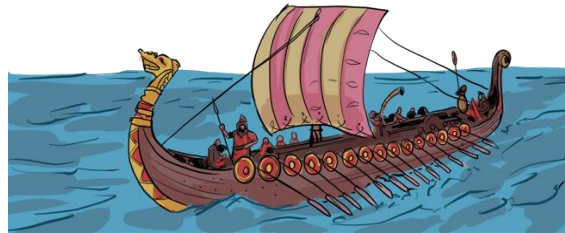


## What do we know about the Vikings?

The **Vikings** were famous for being ruthless warriors and astute traders. They set sail in **longboats** from their homes in **Norway, Sweden and Denmark**, and raided and traded across Europe. Their raids were sudden and daring, often using surprise to overcome their victims. For Viking warriors, honour and glory in battle lasted forever. Warriors who died bravely were believed to go to **Valhalla**, the **Viking heaven**. This belief made them extremely tough, fearless opponents.

**Viking raids** on the coastline of Britain were **very common in the 700s** and it would have been common for the people who lived near the coast to be worried about impending attacks from **Vikings from Scandinavia**.

There were many theories (ideas) as to why these men left Scandinavia to raid and eventually settle in England.

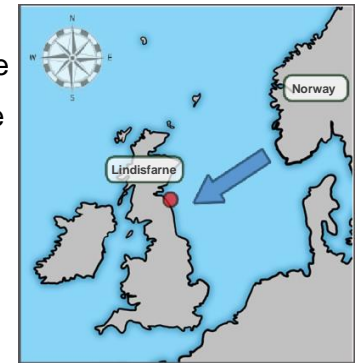


## Lindisfarne Priory

In **793 CE**, a small island (known as Holy Island) off the coast of **Northumbria** was home to **Lindisfarne priory** – a **Christian settlement of monks**. The priory held many great treasures like **gold goblets, silver crosses** and **jewel-encrusted bibles**.

It became the target of a **Viking raid** (possibly originating from Norway) because it was protected by soldiers as only monks and villagers lived there.

Even if the monks had been able to defend themselves, they were no match for the strength of the Viking invaders – the Vikings were skilled in battle – using **shields, swords, spears, battle axes** and **arrows**.



## Did the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings live peacefully together?

The Vikings' overwhelming strength and power controlled most of Britain by the **end of the 9th century**, even though kings like **Alfred the Great** tried to defeat them.

The land they controlled was named the **Danelaw** because the rules of these lands came from the **Danish** (Danes) and **Norse** overlords who had settled from **Scandinavia**. Living as an Anglo-Saxon under the Danelaw was very difficult because the lives of Anglo-Saxons were considered less than that of the Dane/Norse people. This all changed after King Alfred the Great made a treaty with invaders saying that the lives of both the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavians would be treated as equal. It also clearly marked out the territories of **Wessex and the Danelaw**.

## The first king of England

Over the next hundred years, the Anglo-Saxons in Wessex and Mercia fought together to drive back the Danelaw regions and by **927 CE**, **King Aethelstan** had conquered the city of **York** and all of **Northumbria**, finally uniting all of England. This makes Aethelstan the **first king of England**.

