

'Hungry Wolves take big Bites': Mercia and the Vikings



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In a letter penned in the late eighth century by the celebrated Northumbrian scholar and churchman, Alcuin, he turned to the *Book of Jeremiah* and declared, 'From the North evil breaks forth'. The Viking outburst between the eighth and early eleventh centuries shook the established order in early medieval Europe, a part of which was the formidable Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. Already beset in the early ninth century by the problems of dynastic rivalries and resurgent neighbours, the arrival of the Vikings transformed the fortunes of the Mercian kingdom.

This study day will examine the impact of the Vikings upon Mercia and midland England, including the demise of the Mercian kingdom; the establishment of the Danelaw; Æthelflæd, 'Lady of the Mercians' and the 'Saxon Reconquest'; and the return of the Vikings in the later tenth century.

These events will be discussed within the context of four broad themes –

- The 'fury of the Northmen', introducing the nature of the Viking expansion from the eighth century onwards, and the condition of Mercia before the arrival in England of the *micel here*, the 'great army', in 865.
- The assault upon Mercia and its consequences; Mercia partitioned and Danelaw established.
- The 'Saxon Reconquest' and Æthelflæd, 'Lady of the Mercians', the last independent ruler of the Mercians.
- The 'St Brice's Day Massacre'; its context and aftermath.

10.00am till 2.30pm

FEES: £30.00 (Payable in advance)

Inclusive of light lunch & morning coffee or tea