**DNA’s the hi-tech way of digging up history of Vikings**

By CLIFFORD BIRCHALL

**FORENSIC tools have taken the place of spades and axes and unearthed the North West’s Viking past.**

History has come alive thanks to a project based on volunteers’ DNA, which will appeal to towns like Formby with a Viking heritage.

Guided by myth and a maze of Viking place-names, they sought out men whose families had lived in West Lancashire or Wirral for generations — men with surnames dating back to the area before the 17th century.

A unique DNA marker — a Y-chromosomal haplotype to be precise — plots male family history as it hardly ever alters, even over hundreds of years.

Professor Stephen Harding, from the University of Nottingham, and Professor Mark Jobling, of the University of Leicester, will reveal the results of their team’s years of research at a special evening on Tuesday, November 27th, in Knowesley, for the West Lancashire Heritage Association, which has surnames from both West Lancashire and Wirral.

Happy 40th Wedding Anniversary to our Mum and Dad

Thank you for everything you do for us

Love Trevor, Ali and Paul

To our special Nainy and Oma on their special day

Love Robert and Megan XXX

**PEOPLE NOTE**

**Engagements and Marriage Notices**

**MUST be accompanied by the signature of BOTH parties concerned**

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**In the third installment of his memories of working at Formby Point, former National Trust officer Dave Wilkinson recalls the arrival of the first vehicle and his boss ‘hands on’ style of policing the reserve...**

Some time after the Trust bought operations at the head warden, Arthur Brown was provided with a small, wheel-based Land Rover.

It was second-hand and had been originally in use with the NT in the Lake District. Some other basic equipment was provided, a chain saw, wheelbarrow, spades, axes and perhaps a particularly “high tech”.

The accommodation did not improve or indeed change. All the equipment (such as it was) was kept at Golf Cottages before work by Arthur each day, as required.

In accordance with NT policy, volunteer wardens began to be appointed for the Trust for many years.

However, Arthur’s informant had told them that they were deliberately “barking” a number of young trees.

On our arrival there were several tents in situ, plus a number of badly damaged

**We didn’t call the police in those days — we took the problem to them**

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Years of research are about to be unveiled

**In the North West of England, Scandinavian major place-names are most concentrated around the Wirral peninsula and West Lancashire.**

These two regions possess the only definite examples of the Danish place-name ‘Thingwall’ (from Old Norse ‘þing-völlr meaning, Assembly Field’) in England, indicating settlements of sufficient density and autonomy to warrant their own parliaments, ” Prof Harding says.

Moreover, the intensity and distribution of minor place-name elements attest to the persistence of a Viking Indigenous-influenced dialect throughout the centuries that may reflect the intensity of the original settlement.

This onomastic evidence is supported by archaeology and DNA's the hi-tech way of digging up history of Vikings

The philosophy seemed to be that if the public were kept to the well-trodden paths and roads, there would be less likelihood of fires, damage and other unauthorised acts. The end result would be less work for Arthur and his wardens.

Not only that, the approach of the police to the public was at that time very different. The police used to be seen as a public service. They were allowed to do ordinary things and were not considered special.

Without further ado the result was less work for Arthur and his wardens.

We didn’t call the police in those days — we took the problem to them.