



Arrival and Settlement

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* first records contact with the ships *Deniscra monna* ('of Danish men') in England in AD 787. A series of Viking raids in England in the following decades led to the first overwintering of a Scandinavian force in AD 854/5 on the Isle of Sheppey (Kent).

The *micel hæðen here* ('Great Heathen Army') arrived in England in AD 865. This force attacked Mercia and camped for successive winters in the East Midlands in places such as Repton (Derbyshire) and Torksey (Lincolnshire).

The Vikings arrived on Anglo-Saxon shores by ship and were able to sail up rivers due to the shallow draught of their vessels. The River Trent was thereafter a major route for Scandinavian travel and trade. The *Chronicle* tells us that the Vikings also acquired horses to move across the land. This is supported by the discovery of Scandinavian stirrups, a technology unknown to the Anglo-Saxons prior to this time. The *Chronicle* first records Vikings camping in Nottingham in AD 868. The city later became one of the Five Boroughs of the East Midlands, an area which followed Scandinavian customs to such an

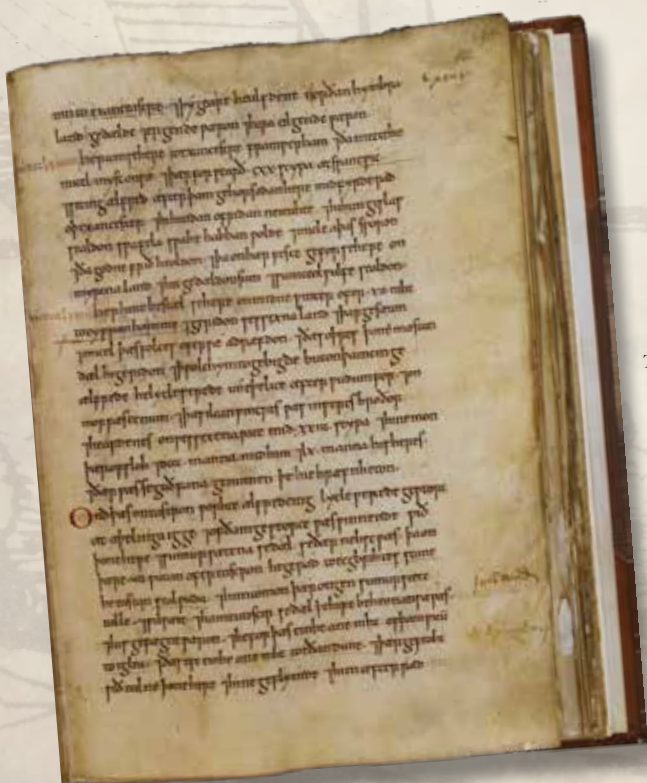


The extent of the Danelaw drawn on the map of England and Wales. Charles Smith, *Smith's New English Atlas* (London 1804). Special Collection Oversize. X G1815 SMI

extent that it became known as the 'Danelaw'.

The settlement and integration of Scandinavians in the East Midlands is best evidenced by the impact Old Norse had upon the place-names of the area. The most common Scandinavian place-name element is the suffix *-by* (meaning 'farm' or 'homestead'), often combined with an Old Norse personal name such as in Scrooby: '*Skropi's farm/homestead*'. Nottingham city's multiple *-gate* street-names provide urban evidence of Scandinavian influence: these are derived from the Old Norse word *gata* ('street' or 'road'). To stroll down Fletcher Gate means to follow in the footsteps of Vikings.

This exhibition has been jointly curated by Dr Roderick Dale and Professor Judith Jesch (School of English) and Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham with support from the University of Nottingham Museum.



Chronicle entry of King Alfred the Great's victory over the Danes in 878 and their subsequent conversion to Christianity. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* © The British Library Board. Cotton MS Tiberius B1, Folio 132 r