

# Legacy

The Vikings left a lasting mark on the East Midlands that extends well beyond the place-names of the area or archaeological remains.

Elements of the Old Norse language of the Vikings were incorporated into local dialects and they became a part of East Midlands' culture. Stories about Vikings



Cover illustration on Charles Whistler, *Havelok the Dane: a Legend of Old Grimsby and Lincoln* (London 1900).  
Eiríkur Benedikz Icelandic Collection  
Juvenile DA152.5.H2



are often origin stories for local places. Grimsby is said to have been founded by a Viking called Grim, a story that is recounted in the tale of Havelok the Dane. In the story both the Danish and English heirs to the throne, Havelok, and Goldborow, are deprived of their inheritances. Havelok is raised as the foster son of a fisherman, Grim, before eventually meeting and marrying Goldborow and claiming the thrones of both kingdoms. This story is memorialised in the Great Seal of Grimsby which names Grim, Havelok and Goldborow, and remained popular enough to capture the imagination of the Victorian writer Charles Whistler. The story draws together Anglo-Saxon, British, Danish and Norman influences in a manner that reflects the complex origins and identity of the East Midlands more generally.

Nationwide interest in Vikings was revived in the nineteenth century and endures to the present day. In the 1930s Hilda Lewis drew upon her interest in Vikings to create the novel *The Ship that Flew* in which a young boy meets the Viking god Odin in disguise and is given the magical ship Skidbladnir (Old Norse *Skíðbladnir*).

Eiríkur Benedikz (1907-1988) marked his library with this bookplate showing the medieval Icelandic scholar Sæmundur the Wise riding a seal home to Iceland.  
Eiríkur Benedikz Icelandic Collection



Presently Viking Studies at the University of Nottingham are supported by a substantial donation of Icelandic and related publications, including several rare books which belonged to the scholar, diplomat and bibliophile Eiríkur Benedikz (1907-1988). The donation ensued from a friendship formed at University College London between Eiríkur Benedikz and Christine Fell, a lecturer at The University of Nottingham from 1971 and Chair of Early English Studies from 1981.



Book jacket illustrated by Nora Lavrin of Hilda Lewis, *The Ship that Flew* (London 1939). Special Collection PR6023.E955