EARLY SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT IN DERBYSHIRE

By F. T. WAINWRIGHT.

A RECENT report describes the excavation of six pagan burial mounds in Heath Wood, Ingleby.[1] These mounds contained clear evidence of cremation, and in one of them were found the fragments of a sword which Mr. E. T. Leeds regards as Scandinavian work of the late ninth century. He discusses possible Scandinavian parallels and concludes that there is a close resemblance between the mounds at Ingleby and the cemeteries of north Jutland. Historical evidence definitely supports the attribution of this archaeological material to the late ninth century, for pagan Danish burial in this area is not to be expected before *circa* 875 and is not likely to have occurred much later than *circa* 900. But it would be unwise to try to forge too close a link between the Ingleby site and the known historical fact that the Danish Army spent the winter of 873-4 about three miles away at Repton.

It is seldom safe to explain particular archaeological finds by reference to a single historical incident. Geographical and chronological proximity is not sufficient to establish proof of direct relationship; it raises but one of many possibilities. Secondly, it is not altogether easy to see how the Ingleby cemetery—it covers several acres, and some sixty mounds have so far been counted—could have arisen from the sojourn of a Danish army for no more than three or four months during the winter of 873-4. It seems rather to represent fairly intensive

[1] *Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal*, Vol. LXVI (1946), pp. 1-23.

Scandinavian settlement over a number of years. As a pagan Danish site it clearly belongs to the early years of the Danish settlement, to the time when the Danes were still heathen. It is not known how long the Danes clung to their heathen practices in this area, but there are scraps of evidence[2] which suggest that they adopted Christianity eagerly and early and that heathenism had ceased to be a powerful force among them by *circa* 900 or at least by the end of the reign of Edward the Elder (899-924). The date suggested by E. T. Leeds seems, from the historical point of view, to be exactly right. Apparently we have at Ingleby archaeological traces of the very first phase of Danish settlement in England.

If this is so—and there is no obvious reason to doubt the conclusions of Leeds on the date and nature of the site —then the Ingleby cemetery is of great importance. Archaeologists and historians have long bewailed the scarcity of burials that can be attributed with certainty to pagan Scandinavian settlers in England. Such burials are surprisingly rare,[3] a fact which may be explained partly by the Danes' early conversion to Christianity and partly by their practice while still pagan of interring their dead in Christian burial grounds.[4] Here at last is a pagan Danish cemetery of some size. It is the first of its kind to be found in England, and in its own way it is as important as the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial. From the mounds still unexcavated we may expect to learn many new details of the earliest phase of Danish settlement in England. Since the site is apparently associated with Danish settlement rather than with the 873-4 wintering of the Danish Army at Repton, it may be useful to bring

[2] Miss Dorothy Whitelock has collected and discussed this evidence in *The Conversion of the Eastern Danelaw* (*Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, Vol. XII, Part III (1941), pp. 159-176).

[3] See *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. Haakon Shetelig (Oslo, 1940), Part IV, pp. 11-22.

[4] *Ibid.*, *passim*, for examples of this practice.

together what little is known about Danish activity, including settlement, in this part of the country.

The Scandinavian attacks upon Britain changed their character in the autumn of 865 when a great Danish army landed in East Anglia and spent the winter there. For fifteen years this army, or parts of it, ravaged the country from the south coast to beyond the Tyne. It destroyed the ancient kingdoms of Northumbria (866-7), East Anglia (869-70) and Mercia (873-4), it brought Wessex to the point of disaster, and finally (876-80) it settled in force on the lands it had conquered. Its movements are clearly brought out by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but we need not follow them in detail. The Danes crossed and re-crossed Mercian territory at will, and late in 867 they moved from York to Nottingham in Mercia where they took up their winter-quarters for 867-8. In response to an appeal from Burgred, King of the Mercians, the West Saxons sent a force under Æthelred and Alfred to assist the Mercians against the Danes. The West Saxon chronicler of these events seems somewhat contemptuous of Mercian resistance for he notes that "there was no serious battle and the Mercians made peace with the Army". In 871-2 the Danes spent the winter in the Mercian city of London, and the West Saxon chronicler again records that "the Mercians made peace with the Army". The nature of the peace is revealed by a charter which shows the Bishop of Worcester granting land in Nuthurst, Warwickshire, to raise money *pro inmenso tributo barbarorum eodem anno quo pagani sedebant in Lundonia*.[5] In 872-3 the Danes again wintered in Mercia, this time at Torksey in the province of Lindsey, and again the West Saxon chronicler records that "the Mercians made peace with the Army". The following winter (873-4) they spent at Repton, in the heart of Mercia and in what is now south Derbyshire.

[5] Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, No. 533.

Here was played out the final dramatic scene in the long story of Mercia's failing effectiveness. Burgred, driven from his kingdom, fled to Rome, and the Danes set up a puppet English ruler, Ceolwulf II, whom the West Saxon chronicler describes as " an unwise King's thegn ". Ceolwulf was bound by oaths and hostages to hold himself, his followers and the kingdom at the disposal of the Army, and to act in the interests of his alien masters. He seems to have been faithful to them.

The Army now (874) split into two parts. Halfdan led one part to ravage the far north and to carry through, in 876, the first large-scale Danish settlement in England. The other part went with Guthrum to Cambridge and in 876 made a second attempt to subdue Wessex. Alfred had the better of a complicated encounter and " in the harvest " of 877 (i.e. after 7 August) he compelled the Danes to leave Wessex. They went to Mercia, and " part of it they divided and part of it they gave to Ceolwulf ". The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* thus simply records the creation of a Danish Mercia and an English Mercia side by side, and the settlement of the former by members of the Danish Army. This is the second great Scandinavian settlement in England. The whole operation was carried through quickly within about four months at the end of 877; early in January 878 some of the Danes returned to deliver a surprise attack on Wessex which drove Alfred into the Somerset marshes and almost broke the last English resistance. We need not follow the story further. Derbyshire fell within Danish Mercia, and to the settlement of 877 should be attributed such traces as remain of early Scandinavian settlement in this area.

Archaeological traces are few and ambiguous, but place-names provide a mass of evidence. All Scandinavian and Scandinavianized place-names testify to Scandinavian influence where they are found, and, since no Danish settlement is known to have occurred in this

area after the reign of Alfred, they carry us back to the settlements of 877. But some of these names may have arisen in later centuries, and the use of place-name evidence for the delimitation of areas of early settlement must not degenerate into the haphazard application of vague general rules to irrelevant material. An investigation, the details and results of which have not yet been published, has shown that in Danish England place-names in *-by* (ON. *býr*) belong as a class to the first phase of Scandinavian settlement. Most of them arose in an age which cannot be far removed from the turn of the ninth century. Another type of place-name, also common in areas of Scandinavian settlement, is that which contains a Scandinavian personal name in combination with *tūn*, e.g. Grimston (ON. *Grímr*), Thrussington (ON. *Þorsteinn*), Thurcaston (ON. *Þorkell, Þorketill*), Thurmaston (ON. *Þormóðr*). For convenience these curious Anglo-Scandinavian place-names may be called "Grimston Hybrids", though as a definition the name leaves much to be desired. It can be shown that "Grimston Hybrids" are not quite so ancient as place-names in *-by* but that they too go back as a class—it is seldom wise or possible to single out individual names—to a date not far removed from 900. Other Scandinavian place-names may well be as ancient, and many undoubtedly are, but at present there is no safe way of distinguishing those that arose in the ninth century from those that may have arisen at a later date. Some of the Scandinavian *thorpes*, for example, no doubt go back to the ninth century and some of them preserve Scandinavian personal names that had apparently fallen out of use in England before the Norman Conquest, but there is no doubt that, as a class, Scandinavian *thorpes* belong to a later stratum of place-nomenclature than that which includes *bys* and "Grimston Hybrids". Therefore in attempting to indicate the areas of earliest Scandinavian settlement we should

confine our attention to *bys* and "Grimston Hybrids". It is a fairly safe assumption that *bys* indicate the areas of earliest and most intensive Danish settlement in eastern England.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* implies that eastern Mercia was settled by Danes in 877, but it gives no clue to the variations in the intensity of that settlement. Place-names preserve important evidence on this point. The settlement probably covered the whole area but traces of it in place-nomenclature are much fainter south of the Welland than in the shires of Lincoln, Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, where the greatest strength of the midland Danes apparently lay. The impressive concentrations of *bys* around Spilsby in Lincolnshire and in the Wreak Valley in Leicestershire indicate with some precision the areas of most intensive Danish settlement. Here the English population must have been overwhelmed by the political and numerical superiority of the Danes. The new settlers were apparently less powerful in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, though each area was able to support its own "army". The place-name evidence for Scandinavian settlement in Nottinghamshire has been worked out; the number of pure Scandinavian formations and the significant Scandinavianization of English place-names prove that Danish settlement was considerably more intensive than a modern map would suggest.[6] In Derbyshire traces of Scandinavian settlement are fewer and, though minute investigation will add to the evidence now available, the area cannot be compared with Lincolnshire or Leicestershire. In Lincolnshire there are about 250 place-names in *-by*, and in the comparatively small shire of Leicester there are 67.[7] In Nottinghamshire there are 23,[8] and in Derbyshire there are only 8.

[6] *The Place-names of Nottinghamshire*, pp. xvi-xxi (*English Place-name Society*, Vol. XVII, 1940).

[7] Of these 60 appear in Domesday Book. Two of them, *Nevlebi* and *Trangesbi*, no longer survive as *bys*. See below, p. 108.

[8] i.e. 21 plus a "lost" *Thuresby* and Scofton (DB. *Scotebi*).

The eight Derbyshire place-names in *-by* are: Blingsby, Bretby, Denby, Derby, "Herdebi,"[9] Ingleby, Smisby and Stainsby. Future investigation may add others to this list, but until early forms are found we should not regard names like Robey Field[10] and Derby Hills[11] as ancient and genuine *bys*. Of the eight listed above it may be noted that all occur in Domesday Book, that Derby appears as *Deoraby* in the reign of Edward the Elder, and that Blingsby apparently contains a Scandinavian personal name (ON. *Blæingr*) which is not found again in England. Blingsby, Denby, Derby, "Herdebi" and Stainsby lie north of the Trent. They do not fall into a well defined group, and it cannot be said that their distribution suggests any single area of exceptionally intensive early Danish settlement, though it is significant that they all lie along or not far from the line of the Roman road which ran northwards from Little Chester. Blingsby and Stainsby, together with three Nottinghamshire *bys* (Skegby, Kirkby in Ashfield, and Linby), seem to indicate an area of early Danish settlement astride the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire boundary. Derby itself was the military headquarters of a Danish army, and the fact that its English name was replaced by a Scandinavian name implies a considerable Scandinavian element in the surrounding population. But in Derbyshire, as also in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, it appears that the heaviest Scandinavian settlements were some distance from the military centre of the district.

[9] See *Victoria County History*, Vol. I, pp. 326, 342.

[10] Robey is listed by B. Walker (*Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 137) and by E. Ekwall (*Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*), but the fourteenth century spelling which they quote does not seem to refer to this place. Mr. F. N. Fisher tells me that a family named Robey is known to have settled in Denby and to have become landowners there. He makes the plausible suggestion that Robey Field took its name from this family, a suggestion which, if earlier forms are not found, ought to be accepted. Local research could probably settle this point.

[11] Derby Hills lies south of the Trent, near Melbourne.

In the remote and hilly north-western parts of the county the place-nomenclature preserves many words of Scandinavian origin such as *booth* (ON. *búð*, ODan. *bōþ*), *carr* (ON. *kiarr*), *grain* (ON. *grein*), *hagg* (ON. *hǫgg*), *holme* (ON. *holmr*), *seat* (ON. *sætr*), *slack* (ON. *slakki*), *thorpe* (ODan. *thorp*), etc.[12] It has been tentatively suggested that some of these districts were settled by the Scandinavian "invaders", that is during the first phase of the settlement, rather than by their descendants in a later age. There is little doubt that north Derbyshire fell within the area dominated by the Army of Derby, and we happen to know that in the first half of the reign of Edward the Elder the Danes were in effective control of the upper reaches of the Derwent and its tributaries.[13] Some Danes of the first generation apparently penetrated north-west Derbyshire, but we should not assume that many settled here before the end of the ninth century. The absence of place-names in *-by* is significant. And equally significant perhaps is it that the Scandinavian elements found in this region (see the examples quoted above) rarely denote habitation. Names of the kind that are found here are characteristic of areas of gradual secondary settlement, and it is probable that most of them are of comparatively late origin. They indicate clearly enough that much of the hilly ground was occupied by men who spoke a language that contained many words of Scandinavian origin, by men, that is to say, who no doubt had much Scandinavian blood in their veins, but the process probably continued throughout the Middle Ages and into modern times. That is the safer conclusion from tne evidence at present available, and incidentally, since some of the colonists may have entered the area

[12] For examples of names which contain these and similar elements see G. E. Morris, *The Place-names and Settlement of part of North Derbyshire* (*Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Literary and Historical Section*, Vol. VI, pp. 142-146).

[13] See below, p. 113-114.

from the north, it more easily accounts for the occasional traces of Norwegian, as distinct from Danish, influence.

It would seem that few Scandinavians settled in north-west Derbyshire during the ninth century. A considerable number were probably scattered over the more attractive areas marked by names like Derby, "Herdebi", Denby, Blingsby and Stainsby. But the clearest evidence of intensive and early Scandinavian settlement is found south of the Trent in the neighbourhood of Repton. Here, within a comparatively small area, we have Smisby, Bretby and Ingleby. The fact that Bretby and Ingleby appear to commemorate groups of Britons and Angles respectively is less significant in the present connexion that the fact that, as place-names in *-by*, they are evidence of a Scandinavian-speaking population in the neighbourhood. Indeed, if Ingleby means "the *by* of the Angles" it would seem to suggest that a group of Englishmen was an unusual and distinctive feature of the area, though this argument should not be pressed too far. Here, if anywhere in Derbyshire, we should expect to find archaeological traces of pagan Danish burial—not because a Danish army spent a few months at Repton but because this is an area of early Danish settlement. There is no reason why we should not assume—so long as we recognize it as an assumption—that many Danes may have chosen to settle in this district in 877 because they had become familiar with it four years earlier. Some may well have formed attachments —what little we know of Anglo-Danish relations does not preclude this possibility—but at this point an assumption turns into a speculation.

This area of Danish settlement extends across the modern county boundary into Leicestershire where we find Ashby de la Zouch, Blackfordby, Kilwardby and, further south, Appleby Magna and Appleby Parva. These *bys*, together with those on the Derbyshire side of

the boundary, give an impression of early and fairly intensive Danish settlement. Names like Boothorpe, Donisthorpe, Oakthorpe, Prestop[14] and Osgathorpe (in Leicestershire), and Foremark and Derby Hills (in Derbyshire), strengthen this impression even though they may not all belong to the late ninth century.[15] A cursory examination reveals numerous elements of Scandinavian origin (e.g. *flǫt, gata, holmr, kiarr, skógr, vangr*) in the minor names of this area, and a systematic search through the sources would reveal many more. But though such minor names emphasize the strength and vitality of Scandinavian influence they cannot be used as evidence of early Scandinavian settlement.

At this point it seems possible to extract much information from those interesting Anglo-Scandinavian place-names which consist of *tūn* in combination with a Scandinavian personal name and which, for ease of expression, have been called "Grimston Hybrids". The difficulty, of course, is to interpret them correctly in terms of history. It should be noted that the great majority of "Grimston Hybrids", like the great majority of *bys*, appear in Domesday Book, a fact which at once places their origin within less than two centuries of 877. Secondly, it can be shown that "Grimston Hybrids", as a class, are characteristic of an early phase of Scandinavian

[14] The following place-name forms, hitherto unidentified, are represented by the modern Prestop Park in Ashby de la Zouch:

Brastorp 1286, *Bracethorp* 1286 — *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous preserved in the Public Record Office.*
Brasthorp 1344 — *Cal. of the Charter Rolls in the P.R.O.*
Brasthorp 1347 — *Cal. of Inquisitions Post Mortem in the P.R.O.*

In 1344 (*Records of the Borough of Leicester*, Vol. II, p. 58) appears the surname *Presthorpe* which, if the identification is permissible, provides an interesting link with the modern form.

[15] For Derby Hills I have no early forms, but Foremark and four of the five *thorpes* are ancient enough to appear in Domesday Book. Scandinavian *thorp* ("a daughter settlement"), however, is not the most satisfactory indication of primary settlement; no doubt many *thorpes* arose in the late ninth century, but it is safer to regard the majority of them as representing expansion from older and larger villages.

settlement but that, as a class, they are not quite so ancient as the *bys*. There is no rigid chronological division between the two groups. Both were being formed at substantially the same time, but if from a study of personal names we were to compile a list of the earliest Scandinavian place-names in England it would contain a greater percentage of the *bys* than of the "Grimston Hybrids". This presumably means that "Grimston Hybrids" are less characteristic than *bys* of the very first phase of Scandinavian settlement.[16] Thirdly, one should note the curious distribution of "Grimston Hybrids". They are remarkably rare in areas where, as in Lindsey, Kesteven and the Wreak Valley, impressive concentrations of *bys* exist as evidence of early and intensive Scandinavian settlement. On the other hand they are remarkably common in areas which lie on the fringes of the great concentration of *bys*. "Grimston Hybrids" are rare where *bys* are numerous; *bys* are few and scattered where "Grimston Hybrids" are numerous. Finally, it is significant that "Grimston Hybrids" are usually the names of large and important villages, as is proved by the high frequency of their occurrence in Domesday Book.

What do these names mean in terms of history? It is not impossible that they were created by Scandinavians who had adopted *tūn* into their vocabulary, but it is more

[16] It may be partly explained by the assumption that the period during which "Grimston Hybrids" commonly arose was longer than the period during which *bys* commonly arose. But there is no evidence at present that such an assumption has a basis in fact, and in any case we know that most "Grimston Hybrids", as well as most *bys*, had arisen before the Norman Conquest. The evidence of personal names suggests that *bys* and "Grimston Hybrids" were to a great extent contemporaneous in creation, the former containing more comparatively older formations and the latter containing more comparatively later creations. Or, to express the same point simply but less accurately, if we were to put the *bys* and the "Grimston Hybrids" on a chronological scale we should find that the former projected beyond the latter at the earlier end of the scale and that the latter projected beyond the former at the later end of the scale. But this represents a simplification of a complicated question which cannot be discussed further here.

likely that they are English formations, each commemorating some Scandinavian settler of local importance. One thing is certain; they could have arisen only from racial contact between Scandinavians and English. Their geographical relation to the *bys*, here indicated in outline only, suggests that they are characteristic of areas outside the districts where Scandinavian influence was most potent, of areas where, though there may have been many Danes, there was also a powerful English element in the population. Their chronological relation to the *bys*, added to this, perhaps entitles us to assume that they represent the movement of Danes from their initial settlements, where as in the Wreak Valley they were the dominant racial element, into areas where they met and mingled with a considerable English population.

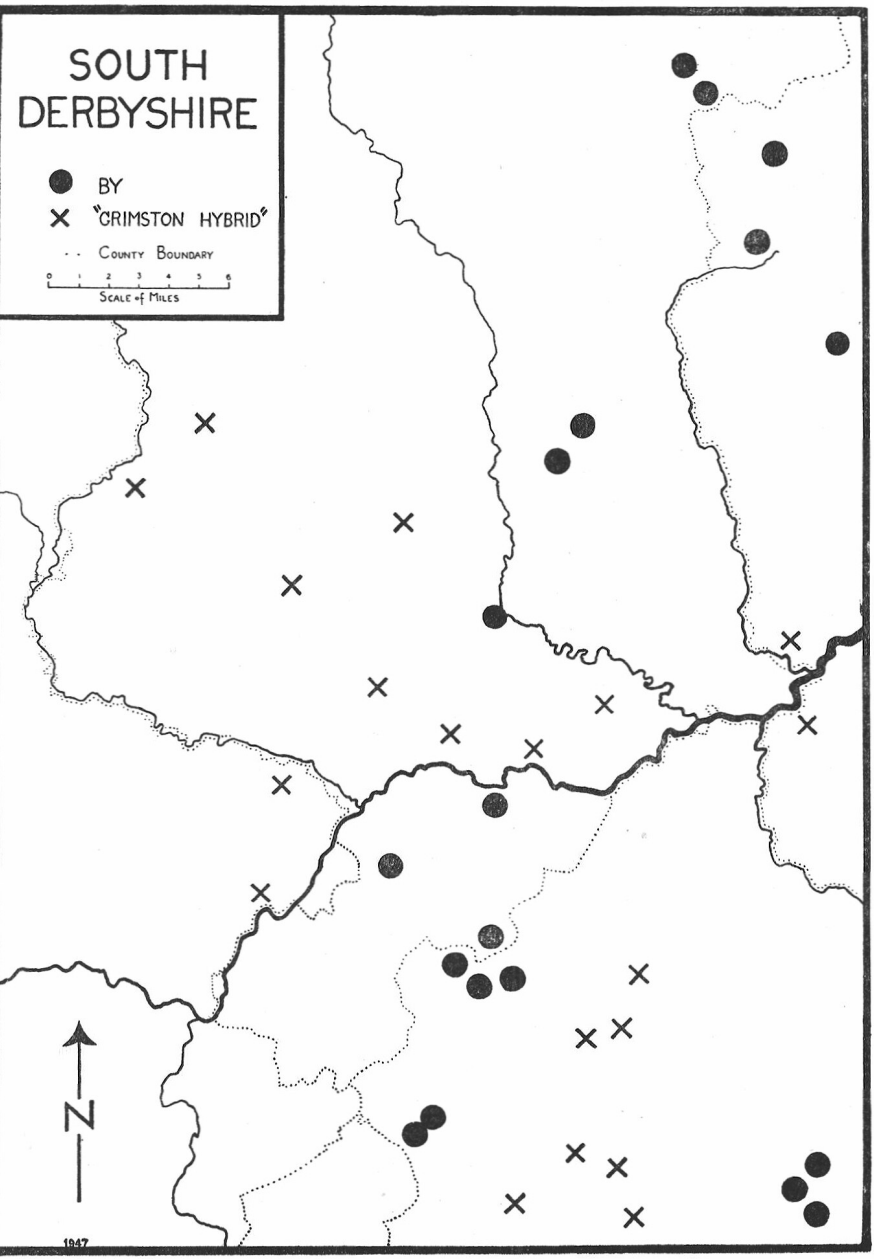
In parts of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, where "Grimston Hybrids" outnumber *bys*, there seems to have been a thick layer of English settlement before the Danes arrived. The accompanying map of south Derbyshire (see page 109) shows clearly enough how "Grimston Hybrids" surround but do not fall within that group of *bys* which marks an area of intensive Danish settlement across the boundary of Leicestershire and Derbyshire. From it we get the general impression of an area dominated by Danes surrounded by an area where Angles were numerous enough to withstand Danish influence of the kind that produces great concentrations of *bys*. To the west, in Staffordshire, names like Branston (ON. *Brandr*), Rolleston (probably ON. *Hróðólfr* > *Hrólfr*), Croxall (ON. *Krókr*) and Drointon (ON. *drengr* or *Drengr*) seem to show the Danes near the western limits of their settlements.[17] To the east, in Leicestershire, are Thringstone (ON.* *Þræingr*), Snibston (ON. *Snípr*), Ravenstone (probably ON. *Hrafn*), Odstone (ON. *Oddr*), Nailstone (ON. *Nagli*), Bilstone (ON. *Bildr*) and Osbaston (ON.

[17] See below, pp. 113-114.

Ásbiǫrn). These Leicestershire hybrids lie between the small group of *bys* near Ashby de la Zouch and the Charnwood region where the grits and shales which partly cover the ancient volcanic rocks repelled English and Scandinavian settlers alike. They suggest that here the Danes had moved out of their main centres of settlement into an area where, linguistically, they were strong enough to influence but not strong enough to dominate the English population with which they mingled. The linguistic balance is strikingly illustrated by the names Thringstone and Nailstone, which appear in Domesday Book as *bys* (*Trangesbi* and *Nevlebi*).[18] The later forms represent a victory for the native tongue, but against these examples of successful English influence in this area should be set Carlton and Congerstone which seem to be Scandinavianized forms of OE. *Ceorlatūn* and OE. *Cyningestūn* respectively. In theory a name like Snibston or Bilstone could commemorate a single Scandinavian settler in a thoroughly English neighbourhood, but we know that this was not in fact what happened in Leicestershire. Nailstone and Thringstone could never have appeared as *bys*, and Carlton and Congerstone could never have assumed their present forms, if there had not been a considerable Scandinavian element in the local population. There are other Scandinavian and Scandinavianized names in this area, but the outlines of the picture are clear enough without introducing them into the discussion.

Turning from the east to the north of the group of *bys* between Repton and Ashby de la Zouch, we find a broad sweep of country of which Derby is the natural centre. This is the part of Derbyshire that lies between the Trent and the rising ground to the north-west. Though

[18] Similar examples are Scofton (Notts.) which appears in Domesday Book as *Scotebi*, and Holdenby (Northants.) with its Domesday forms of *Aldenestone* and *Aldenesbi*. Bleasby (Notts.) appears in 958 as *Blisetune*, and Badby (Northants.) in 944 as *Baddanbyrig*.


SOUTH
DERBYSHIRE
BY
"GRIMSTON HYBRID"
County Boundary
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Derby itself was the headquarters of a Danish army, the "Grimston Hybrid" is the characteristic indication of Scandinavian settlement in this area. We have Sturston (ON. *Styrr*), Thurvaston (ON. *Þorrøðr*), Kedleston (ON. *Ketill*), Stenson (ON. *Steinn*), Thulston (ON. *Þórólfr*), etc. The series is continued into Nottinghamshire, e.g. Toton (ON. *Tófi*), Thrumpton (ON. *Þormóðr*). Again it would be unwise to underestimate the force of Scandinavian settlement. All we can be sure of is that there were already many Anglian settlers in occupation of the area, and that their presence would greatly modify Danish influence on place-nomenclature. There were no doubt fewer Danes here than in parts of Lincolnshire and Leicestershire, but there were enough to change the English name *Norðworðig* to the Scandinavian *Derby*, and they have left their mark on other place-names, apart from "Grimston Hybrids", in the area. A close investigation of Derbyshire place-names, especially of the names of fields and other local features, will provide a more reliable basis for estimating the strength of Scandinavian influence. It may be that the lack of *bys* around Derby itself, as also around Lincoln, Leicester and Nottingham, should be attributed to a strong English population in the neighbourhood of these natural centres rather than to lack of Danish settlement.

Even south of the Trent, where evidence of early Danish settlement is least ambiguous, there is no reason to believe that the Angles were either few or overwhelmed. Many English names, some of which are ancient, survive: Repton, Newton, Stanton, Ticknall, Hartshorne, Gresley, etc. The place-nomenclature of this area cannot be compared to that of the Wreak Valley, for example, where the native element was buried beneath a thick layer of Scandinavian influence. Even the *bys* are not all typical of the purest of Scandinavian formations. Blackfordby apparently represents OE. *blæcford* in combination with

ON. *býr*, and Kilwardby may well not belong to the earliest phase of Scandinavian settlement—it seems to preserve an Anglo-Scandinavian or an Anglicized Scandinavian personal name[19] and, as a place, it was not large or important enough to warrant inclusion in Domesday Book. Appleby appears in Domesday Book as *Apleberie* (also *Aplebi*), and it is not impossible that the name existed before the Danish invasions as OE. *Æppelburh* or OE. *Æppeltūn*.[20] Ashby, apparently an Anglicized version of ON. *Askabýr*, may perhaps have originated as an English name such as *Æsctūn*. And though Smisby presumably contains ON. *smiðr* we cannot be sure that it did not begin its career as an English name incorporating OE. *smiþ*. The above are only possibilities, but as possibilities they are significant for they show that the names concerned are not Scandinavian formations of the strictest kind. They do not preserve distinctively Scandinavian elements or clear traces of Scandinavian genitival inflexions. They are not, as a group, the kind of *bys* that we should expect to have arisen if the Scandinavians had arrived in numbers sufficient to render the Anglian population insignificant.

But, though it is clear that an Anglian population existed and survived among the most intensive Danish settlements in Derbyshire, its presence should not be emphasized by underestimating the strength of the Danish population. The creation of the *bys* listed above, whatever their precise nature and significance may be, makes it certain that Scandinavians formed more than a small fraction of the local population. Outside this area, it is suggested, the proportion of Scandinavians in the population seems to diminish, though in no part of the area under review was it negligible. Without discussing

[19] The first element of Kilwardby is perhaps an Anglicized form (**Cylferð*) of ON. **Ketilfrøðr*.

[20] Or perhaps ON. *Epli-býr* has been Anglicized.

numbers—place-name evidence has its limitations—we may imagine the Danes moving out of the Repton-Ingleby-Ashby area, where they had settled in some force, into areas where, though they themselves may have been numerous, they formed a smaller proportion of the Anglo-Scandinavian population. To the north they spread across the Trent Valley and into the rising ground beyond Derby. To the east they pushed forward until they reached the inhospitable region of Charnwood.

What do we know of the nature of this settlement? How was it carried through? And what were the relations between the Danes and the English? It has become increasingly clear, mainly through the work of Professor F. M. Stenton, that the settlement of 877 was a military settlement by an army or armies. During the reign of Edward the Elder the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions the "armies" of Northampton, Leicester, Bedford, Huntingdon and Cambridge, as well as the "Army of the East Angles" and the "Army of the Northumbrians". Derby, Stamford and Nottingham, normally described as "burhs" to which the surrounding settlers "owed obedience", and also Lincoln, no doubt all functioned as bases of Danish armies. Each controlled the area of which it was the centre, and the modern shires of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, etc. owe their origin to this fact. Each army had its own headquarters and, from a study of conditions in Leicestershire, there is good reason to believe that each occupied the surrounding country in organized military units, the rank and file settling down under their leaders to cultivate the ground much as they fought under the same leaders in battle. It was a military settlement in the full sense of the term. The army remained an organized fighting force, and it was often summoned to action in the forty years that followed 877. Therefore it was imperative that communication should be maintained between the warrior-farmers in

their settlements and the military centre to which they owed allegiance. It has been noticed that the earliest Danish settlements are closely related to the Roman roads in the midlands.

Derby is a site of great strategic importance. It controls the valleys of the Trent and the Derwent, and it stands near Little Chester upon which converge Roman roads from every corner of the shire. Thus it was well situated for attacks on English territory, for the maintenance of communication with other Danish armies, and for the control of what is now the shire of Derby. The army of Derby could assemble easily; equally easily it could co-operate with the armies of other Danish centres, though in point of fact common action was rare except in a crisis.

The western limit of Danish settlement—not necessarily the same as the limit of effective military control—has been traced in place-names.[21] It stretched southwards from the neighbourhood of Manchester, through east Cheshire and Staffordshire, and then along Watling Street. The military boundary in the northern midlands is more clearly indicated by charters, and it is very probable that it followed a line not far removed from that which to-day separates Danish Derbyshire from Mercian Staffordshire. We know[22] that at the turn of the ninth century Æthelred and Æthelflæd were in possession of Stanton near Burton-on-Trent, a place lying almost on the Staffordshire boundary but within Derbyshire and, it should be noted, on the edge of that group of *bys* (Bretby, Smisby, Ashby, etc.) which marks Derbyshire's most intensive Danish settlement. In 926 a charter of Athelstan[23] confirmed to a certain Uhtred lands at Hope and Ashford which " he

[21] F. T. Wainwright, *North-west Mercia*, pp. 49-52 (*Hist. Soc. of Lancs. and Ches.* Vol. XCIV, 1942).

[22] See *Cartularium Saxonicum*, Nos. 583, 587.

[23] *Ibid.*, No. 658. See F. M. Stenton (*Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw*, pp. 74-75) for the significance of this and the following charter (No. 659).

had bought from the pagans on the orders of King Edward and Ealdorman Æthelred". Thus we know that between 899 (when Edward became king) and 911 (when Æthelred died) Englishmen were being encouraged to recover territory from the Danes by peaceful purchase. We also know by implication that the Danes were in effective control of north Derbyshire within ten miles of the Staffordshire boundary. From these facts we get a fairly clear idea of the limit of Danish settlement and of the limit of effective Danish control. It is obvious that the area of early Danish settlement south of the Trent was in a real sense an outpost on the frontier of Danish territory.

The deliberate and systematic occupation of east Mercia in 877, the military character of the settlement, and above all the long record of violence preserved in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* lead us to imagine racial hostility in an extreme form. But scraps of evidence survive to show that mutual antagonism was not unrelieved. The treaty between Guthrum and Alfred suggests that Guthrum's English subjects were treated as the social equals of the Danes and, moreover, it attempted to regulate trading activity between English and Danish territory. A Mercian annalist records that in 909 St. Oswald's body was removed from Bardney in Lincolnshire —it was taken to Gloucester. This implies a peaceful interlude and, on the part of the Danes, a certain amount of forbearance. And in Derbyshire the charter mentioned above shows an Englishman buying land from the Danes, a peaceful negotiation exactly paralleled in Bedfordshire.[24] A view of Anglo-Danish relations which ignores these indications of mutual tolerance would greatly exaggerate the violence of the times and the social dislocation that resulted from the Danish settlement.[25]

[24] *Ibid.*, No. 659.

[25] Another probable example of land-purchase from the heathen belongs to Lancashire, though here the Scandinavians were Norwegians not Danes.

(*Cont.*)

It would be interesting to know whether or not the Danes took possession of English villages, but it is difficult to find unambiguous evidence on this point. Even if we could prove that a place has been re-named by the Danes we could not be sure that the Danes took over the place from the English. We may safely believe that the Danes assumed control of Derby, their military centre, and we happen to know that it had earlier been the English *Norðworðig*, but no comparable example is known. It is possible that some of the *bys* south of the Trent had earlier English names,[26] and some of them may have been English sites seized by the Danes. We do not know. Dalbury, near Derby, appears in Domesday Book as *Dellingeberie* and *Delbebi*; the latter form may be due to a scribal error or it may perhaps reflect an influence which failed to convert an OE. *burh* into an ON. *býr*. Interest in this problem brings us back to the "Grimston Hybrids". Their size, their inclusion in Domesday Book, their permanent local importance, their sites and their geographical distribution all suggest strongly that as villages most of them arose before the Danish invasions. And perhaps the simplest explanation of many of these names is that they preserve references to the Danish leaders who in the late ninth century supplanted Englishmen in some communities. We might argue that, though places like Alvaston, Elvaston and Edlaston retained their English names, the local prominence of a Danish *Ketil* or *Sten* or *Þurulf* caused other places to be re-named Kedleston or Stenson or Thulston. At least it is a possible line of explanation, but there is no definite evidence that this is what happened and, without a fuller investigation, it would be rash to explain all "Grimston Hybrids" in this way.

For this and for a discussion of the nature of the Norse settlement of Lancashire and Cheshire see F. T. Wainwright, *The Scandinavians in Lancashire*, pp. 82-85 (*Antiquarian Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. LVIII, 1945).

[26] See above, p. 111.

It is clear that Derby was the military centre of the area now represented by Derbyshire, and we may take it that Danish settlers in this area formed part of and owed allegiance to the Army of Derby. But we cannot be quite sure that this applies to the district south of the Trent where we have noticed the clearest traces of early Scandinavian settlement. Here Danes settled on both sides of what is now the county boundary. Perhaps they all looked to Derby as their military centre; perhaps they all looked to Leicester; perhaps some looked to Derby and some to Leicester. Derby was no doubt easily accessible, but so was Leicester—there is evidence that a Roman road ran from Leicester right through Ashby de la Zouch and the centre of this group of Danish settlements.[27] If the area was divided in allegiance between Derby and Leicester then presumably settlers from the Army of Derby and settlers from the Army of Leicester met and mingled here. But we cannot decide which of these three possibilities comes nearest to the situation as it existed in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. We must leave them as possibilities. It may be that the situation was as obscure in the tenth century as it appears to us to-day. When Domesday Book was compiled some places in this area were listed both under Derbyshire and under Leicestershire (e.g. Appleby, Donisthorpe, Linton, Ravenstone, Stretton-en-le-Field). It might be suggested that this represents some uncertainty about the line of the shire boundary, an uncertainty which perhaps reflects conditions in the late ninth century. But other explanations are possible, and we must leave the question open.

Throughout this article it has been assumed that the Scandinavians in Derbyshire were Danes, not Norwegians. We do not require the evidence of place-names to give its support to what is firmly written across the history of

[27] See *Victoria County History* (*Leicestershire*), Vol. I, p. 209.

England. The heathen armies which afflicted eastern England during the late ninth century were Danish armies, though they had attracted Norwegians and other northern adventurers into their ranks. It is possible that these non-Danish Vikings retained their own identity in war and in settlement, and it has been suggested that names like Normanby (*Norðmannabýr*, "the Norwegians' village") and Frisby (*Frisabýr*, "the Frisians' village") commemorate the settlements of Norwegian and Frisian units of the Danish armies. Irby or Ireby may also indicate the settlement of Norsemen (*Írabýr*, "the village of the men from Ireland") but some of these names probably contain the personal name *Íri* which, though it reflects an association with Ireland, by no means proves the existence of an Irish-Norse settlement. In Derbyshire we have only *Normantons* and *Iretons*, i.e. Normanton by Derby, South Normanton, Temple Normanton, Kirk Ireton and Little Ireton (now Ireton Farm, four miles north-west of Derby). These names all appear in Domesday Book, but *Normantons* and *Iretons* are perhaps less reliable than *Normanbys* and *Irebys* as evidence of Norse or Irish-Norse settlement. In any case such names, even if they do refer to Norsemen as distinct from Danes, imply that groups of Norsemen were not common in the neighbourhood. There are other and perhaps clearer signs of Norwegian influence in Derbyshire, but at present it is not possible to bring them into close relation with the earliest phase of Scandinavian settlement.[28]

Against these faint traces of Norwegian influence may be set less ambiguous evidence that the Derbyshire Scandinavians were Danes. *Thorp*, when not OE. *þorp*, *þrop*, may be regarded as Danish not Norwegian, and the group of *thorps* near Ashby de la Zouch (Boothorpe, Donisthorpe, Oakthorpe, Prestop and Osgathorpe)[29] is a

[28] See above, pp. 103-104.

[29] See above, p. 105.

significant indication that the Scandinavian settlers on the Leicestershire boundary were Danes. In central and north Derbyshire are Thorpe, Oakerthorpe, etc., and among the early spellings of Holme, Holmesfield, and Holme near Bakewell, we find *hulm*, the distinctively Danish side-form of *holmr*. And it may be that future research will show that some of the personal names embedded in Derbyshire place-names are Danish in form or in origin.[30] But such instances need not be accumulated to prove the point, for historical evidence leaves no room for doubt that the great majority of the Scandinavians who settled in Derbyshire were Danes.

This is not the place for an account of the Anglo-Danish wars and of the reconquest of Danish England. Eastern Mercia was occupied and settled by Danish armies in 877. Edward the Elder and his sister, Æthelflæd Lady of the Mercians, carefully prepared an attack on the Danish strongholds. In July 917, while Edward was fighting a complicated campaign in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, Æthelflæd captured Derby. It was an excellent piece of deliberate and well-timed collaboration; Æthelflæd at once diverted pressure from Edward's front and took advantage of the absence of the Army of Derby from its stronghold.[31] For forty years (877-917) the Danes had been the dominant political force in what is now Derbyshire. In 917 the area was restored to English rule but the Danes, though defeated, were not expelled. They remained to modify the development of Derbyshire through the centuries that followed. Place-names, personal names, dialect, art-forms, customs and institutions all emphasize the

[30] e.g. the personal names *Thurulf* and *Thurferth*, in Thulston and Thurvaston respectively, seem to be Danish rather than Norwegian in form.

[31] We may assume that the Army was absent from Derby because it was a rare thing for either an English or a Danish fortress to be taken by storm. It is probable that Derby had only a skeleton defence in July, 917.

importance of the Danish element in the population of Derbyshire.

To return to the Ingleby cemetery. If it is indeed a pagan Danish site of the late ninth century, it is the first of its kind to be recognized in England. And it is another link, more spectacular than the place-names quoted above, with the Danish settlement of 877. There is no doubt that it should be set against the settlement of 877 rather than against the wintering of 873-4. To the latter we may perhaps attribute a Viking axe-head of the same period found in Repton churchyard.[32]

[32] *Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal*, New Series, Vol. I (1924-25), pp. 118-119.