

VIKING YORK

The Vikings have left their imprint on York in colorful street names and Kings with bizarre names and habits.

ST. OLAVE'S CHURCH

1055 Earl Siward of Northumbria buried in this church which he had founded - present church 14th/15thC on same site. Tower damaged in Civil War siege 1644. Chancel (19thC) has two representations of St. Olaf. One in East window - fourth figure from left in blue robe and with crown.

Also a 19thC window high up to right of altar shows Olaf with long handled battle axe.

St. Olaf King and Martyr, born Olaf Haraldson c.995AD in Norway. Took to the seas as a Viking Mercenary at age 12! While in England fought for King Etheldred against Danes. Baptised at Rouen in Normandy C.1013. Claimed throne of Norway 1015, and adopted a policy of death or baptism, i.e. forcible conversion which was very successful! But driven out 1027, and nobles sided with King Cnut of Denmark. Olaf made come-back attempt in 1030, but in battle at Stiklestad he was killed by an axe. Made a Saint 1032 by Pope, and buried in Trondheim Cathedral, and is patron saint of Norway.

MULTANGULAR TOWER

Walls c.200AD Roman, but altered c.300AD with range of bastions along river front. Multangular Tower survives of these. Would have been visible in Viking times. Pre-conquest name was Elronding. Notice depth of rubbish inside city inside tower - this has built up since Viking times.

ANGLIAN TOWER

Excavated 1967-72.

Shows layers of York's history and walls.

Roman 'Eburacum'. Earth bank. Replaced with stone walls c.100AD, and repaired c.200 and c.300AD. These decayed after Romans left.

Some time in Dark Ages "Anglian Tower" built to repair walls, but may be any date from c.390 (late Roman) to c.1000 (Viking)!

As Roman walls disappeared under rubbish and rubble, walls replaced by earth banks and wooden walls.

Dark Age Name	-	Caer Ebrauc
Anglo Saxon Name	-	Eorfwic (Wic - Trading Settlement)
Viking Name	-	Jorvik

Normans raised earth bank 11thC. Stone walls built 13thC. Roman walls lost, so new walls built on very poor foundations above and to one side of Roman Walls.

Third wall to South was retaining wall for St. Leonard's Hospital.

BOOTHAM BAR

On site of Porta Principalis Dextra of Roman Fort.

Was probably a gateway here - called Galmanlith - in Anglian and Viking times. Present Bar c.1100, with 13thC upper storeys. Bootham is a West Scandinavian term of c.1000AD referring to stalls or temporary dwellings outside walls, probably a market.

MINSTER

There was a wooden church here in York in 627AD founded by King Edwin, and St. Paulinus Bishop. Many times destroyed by fire, notably in 741, 867, and 1069. No trace ever found of Anglian, Viking and Pre-conquest Minster, though it is presumed to be on present site or near it, as there are fragments of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture and many burials around the site

OGLEFORTH

Ogle - owls; forth (furt) - ford; the 'owl ford'. Possibly refers to a blocked Roman drain, which caused a ford to appear in road. The area had become a backwater in Viking times, and archaeological evidence from nearby Bedern suggests this was an overgrown area in Viking times - the main centre had moved away to the rivers Foss and Ouse; so there would have been owls in the trees.

GOODRAMGATE

Possibly named after King Guthrum, a Viking King defeated by Alfred the Great in 878. The street was originally a short cut diagonally across the Roman fort from the Porta Pincipalis Sinistra (King's Square) to the Porta Decumana. At some stage in early mediaeval times diverted, due to expansion of Minster Precinct, to run out through a new gate or bar at Monk Bar (the gate of the Minster or Monastery of Monks).

ALDWARD

The Old-Work, referring to the ruins of the C.200AD Roman walls, presumably still visible in Viking times.

ST. ANDREW GATE

Follows approximate line of Roman Walls which fell down or were demolished in Viking times, to expand city towards trading centres on rivers. St. Andrew's Church contains re-used sandstone blocks from Roman Walls. Existed in 1086 in Domesday, so presumably a pre-conquest church.

KING'S SQUARE

Formerly King's Court, or Coney Garth (Konungs Gard). Garth = Yard, or courtyard as in Micklegard (Constantinople) or Asgard. Possibly the residence of the Viking Kings of York, re-using the ruined Roman gateway. The first Viking King of York in 867 was the colorfully named Ivor the Boneless, who had a wasting disease in his legs, but superhuman strength in his legs-he was carried into battle on the back of a shield and took mighty swipes with his battleaxe! Another Viking King was called Ragnar Hairy Britches!.

Erik Bloodaxe, the last Viking King of York, was son of Harold Fair Hair, King of Norway. Killed his 5 brothers with battle-axe and became King, hence his name. Driven out of Norway as was unpopular "Cruel and pitiless in battle, delighting in war. A bad-minded, gruff and silent man" according to his contemporaries. He was at one time King of the Viking Kingdom of Dublin. King of York, as Vassal of King Athelstan, in 947, but driven out 948. Returned in 952, and killed in ambush in 954 on Stainmore, where his burial mound is still seen. King's Square, formerly Coney Garth, is probably the site of the residence of the Viking Kings of York.

His enemy Egil shipwrecked and came to York to seek refuge with his noble friend Arinbjorn, not knowing Eric was King of York. He had been outlawed by Eric. Fell at Eric's knees and begged mercy. Eric could not kill him as it was not etiquette to kill by night - had to be daylight as the dead man could not find his way to Valhalla by night! Eric agreed to let him off, if he wrote a poem praising him, Eric, and it pleased him. Egil did and it survives - Egil's Saga.

SHAMBLES

The Flesh-Shamels (the meat benches) mentioned in Domesday, so presumably the street of Meat-sellers in Viking times.

JORVIK VIKING CENTRE, COPPERGATE

Coppergate - street of barrel makers. Excavated in 1970's, revealing narrow alleys off Coppergate filled with workshops and houses.

St. Mary, Castlegate, another pre-conquest church; with Viking age sculpture and a dedication stone in Latin and old English with 3 names of which 2 - Grim and Aese - are old Norse.

OUSE BRIDGE

The Roman Bridge was upstream, opposite the Guildhall, but fell and was replaced in Viking times by a new bridge downstream with a new bridge with a new street curving down from the Roman Gate (Micklegate Bar) to the "Mygla-gata" - the great street.

Note the Viking (now Moat House) hotel, on or near the 'Dymlin Stones' - the Dublin stones where the trade with Ireland was carried on.

ST. MARY, BISHOPHILL JUNIOR

The only complete standing pre-conquest church or building in York. Was already C.100 years old when William the Conqueror landed. Eric Bloodaxe may have seen it. It is in 3 stages, excluding 15thC battlements, all of pre-conquest date. The lowest 20 feet are of re-used Roman 'Saxa-quadrata' (squared stones) C.950. From 20 to 52 feet the tower was raised C.1000 with alternate bands of herringbone and limestone and gritstone bands, again re-used Roman stones. The final stage, with typical Anglo-Saxon bell openings with strip-work and mid-wall baluster shaft, is of C.1050. The body of the church is mediaeval with some Norman work.