

## Great Meols Primary School - History

**Topic: Anglo-Saxons and Vikings**

**Year 5**

**Strand: British History**



**Location**

The **ANGLO SAXONS** were made up of people who rowed across the North Sea from an area that is now Northern Germany and Southern Denmark. They were from three tribes: the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. The land they settled in became known as 'Angle-land', or England. Over time, the Anglo-Saxons took control of most of Britain. Wirral became part of the kingdom of Mercia. Many of Wirral's villages, such as Eastham and Willaston, were given their names at this time. One of the most important archaeological sites from the Anglo-Saxon era is the burial site at Sutton-Hoo in East Anglia.

The **VIKINGS** originated from what is now modern-day Scandinavia. They travelled the seas on longboats raiding and plundering and had a reputation as pirates—their Old Norse name 'vikingr' translates as 'pirate' - but they were great traders and skilled seafarers and fishermen.



**Beliefs**

The Anglo-Saxon people were initially **pagans** and were very superstitious; over time, they were converted to Christianity. In 597, Saint Augustine of Canterbury arrived from Rome and started to convert the Anglo-Saxon kings and their people. Most Vikings followed pagan religions, but some converted to Christianity as they settled in England. Churches and monasteries were prime targets for Viking raids. They had lots of gold and silver ornaments and little in the way of defences.



**Conflict**

The Vikings drove the Saxons out of parts of Britain and claimed it for themselves. King Alfred of Wessex initially fought the Vikings but soon a peace treaty was made, which gave the Vikings a large area of land known as the Danelaw. The Vikings settled along the Dee side of the Wirral peninsula. In 927, the Anglo Saxon kingdoms were united into a single country under King Athelstan, at the Battle of Brunanburh on the Wirral Peninsula, where they won an important victory against the Vikings and their allies. Later, England was ruled by both Anglo-Saxon and Danish kings. The Viking and Anglo-Saxon rule came to an end in 1066, following the Battle of Hastings.



**Travel and exploration**

The Vikings raided and invaded Britain repeatedly, forming bases and taking land and riches as they went, particularly from the wealthy monasteries which had been established by the now Christian Anglo-Saxons. In time, the Vikings made their home in Britain and as they spread so did their farming, law and language. The Vikings were excellent sailors and very good at navigation. They found their way by using visual landmarks, including wildlife, and looking at the colour of the sea. They also sailed as close to the coastline as possible. It is also possible the Vikings invented a type of sunstone compass that helped them find their way in open water. The longship was an essential part of the Vikings' ability to travel and explore.

The invasion of Jutes, Angles and Saxons following the departure of the Roman army, marked the beginning of centuries of significant upheaval in Britain. Large numbers of tribes fought for control of the land before facing the consequences of Viking invasion. What started as small raiding parties soon became an almost total conquest of the Anglo-Saxons by the Vikings. By the ninth century, when three of the four main kingdoms had fallen into the hands of the Vikings, only the kingdom of Wessex remained to resist them. In 878, Alfred the Great, the king of Wessex won a famous battle at Edington. He became the king of much of England, though the first true king of England is thought by many historians to be Athelstan, Alfred's grandson.

### Topic related vocabulary:

Danelaw	the area of Britain granted to the Vikings by King Alfred in return for peace
mercenary	a soldier paid to fight for a group of people other than his/her own
cyning	Anglo Saxon word for king; a ruler of one of the Anglo Saxon kingdoms
pagan	someone who worships a number of gods.
saga	a Viking story or poem, telling stories of their gods, and the achievements of their warriors. They are <b>oral testimony</b> and are not reliable evidence.

### Historical vocabulary:

primary source	evidence that was created at time of the event
secondary source	information based on the primary source (e.g. text books and websites)
bias	when historical evidence is one-sided or only shows a single point of view, we say that it shows bias

**AD 410:** Romans leave Britain and the Angles, Saxons and Jutes make their way from Germany and South Denmark

**AD 500:** By this time the seven kingdoms had been created

**AD 789:** The Vikings begin to raid Britain

**AD 1066:** The Battle of Hastings—William the Conqueror becomes king

**AD 450:** The Anglo—Saxons begin to settle alongside the Britons

**AD 700:** The Vikings begin to venture out of Scandinavia

**AD 876:** Vikings settle permanently in Britain

**AD 1100:** The end of the Viking Age