

Wirral Vikings have made a significant contribution to events and educational activities in Merseyside.

I have benefited from the group's collaboration with the University of Liverpool, sharing their expertise and enthusiasm at events.

The group also provided images for the 'Viking Age in the North West' iPhone app which made a big contribution to its visual effectiveness.

Clare Downham,
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About us

Wirral Vikings is Merseyside's leading early medieval Living History group.

Wirral Vikings focus on providing Viking & Saxon Reenactment & Living History displays of the Hiberno Norse who settled the Wirral from 902AD, but we cover all aspects of the Viking period from 793AD to 1066AD.

Wirral Vikings are renowned for their living history displays that bring everyday viking Wirral vividly to life. Learning the skills the people used to survive life 1000 years ago in the harsh Wirral landscape.



Wirral Vikings
www.wirralvikings.org.uk



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE VIKINGS

Anglo-Saxon Overchurch & Upton

*A look at the ancient church of
Overchurch and the parish of Upton.*



Overchurch

The first church in Overchurch is said to date back to 700 - 900AD making it of Anglo Saxon origin.

At the far end of Upton toward the end of Gainsborough road there is a footpath, giving access to an old graveyard and the site of a church that was demolished in 1813.

There is little left of the church now but the prominent bank and ditch of the oval churchyard with graves that are still visible amid the woodland.

Investigations into the decorative stonework shows the fabric of the church could be dated to the Norman period.

The oval shape of the ground is suggestive of a early medieval foundation. This was confirmed by the discovery of part of an Anglo-Saxon slab or shrine cover. This slab was inscribed with runes on one side and carving of an open mouthed beast in an interlace pattern on the other side.

This item was discovered in 1887 during the demolition of the replacement church in Upton. This stonework originally came from Overchurch.

The runes reads 'the people erected this monument: pray for Aethelmund' and it probably dates from the early 9th century preceding the Viking settlement on the Wirral.

The style of the slab seems to follow Anglo-Saxon Mercian and Northumbria reflecting the boundary between the two kingdoms on the river Mersey.

The stone today can be seen in the collection of the Grosvenor Museum in Chester. Pre-conquest churches usually form the basis of medieval settlements but at Overchurch the church became isolated as the village of Upton developed.

Upton was also interesting for its Eel grant. In 1086 Domesday Book Upton had an Eel grant of 1000 Eels per year to King William.

For a landlocked area why did Upton have an Eel grant. The investigation continues...

