

The Battle of Assandún (18th October 1016) - A 1000th Anniversary Special

Date 9th October 2016 **Time** 10:00 – 16:45

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor: Sam Newton **Course code** 1617NDX003

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact Clare Kerr, Public Programmes Coordinator
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography



Sam Newton was awarded his Ph.D in 1991 and is the author of *The Origins of Beowulf and the pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (1993) and *The Reckoning of King Rædwald* (2003). He has lectured widely as an independent scholar and has contributed to many radio and television programmes, especially *Time Team*. He is a Director of Wuffing Education at Sutton Hoo, NADFAS lecturer, and tutor for Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education.

Day school content:

The Battle of Assandún (18th October 1016)
A 1000th Anniversary Special

The Battle of *Assandún* was one of the great battles of English history. It was the bloody climax of over 20 years of Anglo-Danish warfare and the victory through which the Danish king Cnút finally defeated the line of Alfred and so conquered all of England. As the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Ms.E, 1016) put it,

Þær hæfde Cnút sige. & gefeht him eall Englaland.
There Cnut had the victory & fought [against] him all England;
þær wearð ofslagen ... eall se dugoð on Angel cinne.
there was slain ... all the flower in [the] Angle kin.

It was a heroic but disastrous defeat for the English, and arguably more historically significant than the Battle of Hastings, which took place almost exactly 50 years later on 14th October 1066. Yet *Assandún* is far less well-known than Hastings. Even the location of the battle is a matter of controversy – the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* states that it was in Essex, but was it Ashingdon in the south-east or near Ashdon in the north-west of the county?

We shall reconsider the background and particular drama of the year 1016 (the year of five battles) using the evidence of the near contemporary entries in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Old Norse skaldic poetry, as well as the question of the site of the battle in the Essex landscape.

Programme:

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/ coffee	
10:00 – 11:15	Session 1	Denmark and England in the late 10th Century
11:15	Coffee	
11:45 – 13:00	Session 2	The Danish Conquest of England
13:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3	1016: The Year of Five Battles
15:15	Tea	
15:30 – 16:45	Session 4	The Battle of Assandún
16:45	Day school ends	

Aims:

This course aims to provide participants with the documentary, artistic, and archaeological sources that enable us to understand

1. the history and culture of the early 11th century;
2. the significance of the Battle of Assandún; and
3. the evidence for its location in the Essex landscape.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be illustrated with digital images and with my editions and translations of selected passage from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for study, as well as a map and genealogies.

Outcomes:

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

[a] become acquainted with the primary sources for the period, especially the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*;

[b] recognise the importance of the battle and its outcome in English history, especially in relation to the events of fifty years later with the coming of the Normans

[c] appreciate the usefulness of the comparative approach to the study of Anglo-Danish history and culture.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

- Alexander, M., *The First Poems in English* (Penguin Classics 2008).
Ashdown, M., *English and Norse Documents Relating to the Reign of Ethelred the Unready* (Cambridge 1972)
Backhouse, J. (ed.), *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art* (British Museum 1984).
Campbell, J., *The Anglo-Saxons* (Phaidon 1982)
Cooper, J., *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* (Hambledon 1993).
Garmonsway, G., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Dent 1953, 1975).
Hart, C., *The Danelaw* (Hambledon 1992), pp.533-551.
Howard, I., *Swein Forkbeard's Invasions and the Danish Conquest of England, 991-1017* (Boydell & Brewer 2003)
Jones, G., *A History of the Vikings* (2nd ed., Oxford 1984).
Lawson, M. K., *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, The Medieval World Series (Longman 1994)
Lawson, M.K., *Cnut: England's Viking King* (Tempus 2004)
Magnusson, Magnus, *The Vikings* (rev.ed. Tempus 2000).
Mitchell, B., & F.Robinson (eds), *A Guide to Old English* (Blackwell 1986, etc.).
Page, R.I., *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (British Museum Press, 2000)
Rumble, A. (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway*, Studies in the Early History of Britain Series, 10-26 (Leicester 1994)
Stenton, F., *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford 1971)
Swanton, M. (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Dent 1996; Phoenix 2000).
Townend, M., *English Place-Names in Skaldic Verse* (English Place-Name Society, Nottingham 1998)
Turville-Petre, G., *The Heroic Age of Scandinavia* (London 1951, 1976)
Wilson, R., *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (Methuen 1952, 1970)

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute*

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 27 July 2016