

Appleby Archaeology Group welcomed Dr Linda Corrigan of the English Place Name Society to their February Meeting. Dr Corrigan has a special interest in the Anglo Saxon languages and her research has concentrated on the place names of South Cumbria before 1100.

The geographical areas she referred to are the districts that existed before the boundary changes of 1974. The study covered the early place names in what was then the Copeland district of Cumberland, the North Lonsdale ward of Lancashire, South Westmorland and North Westmorland.

Dr Corrigan confined her research to names that had been mentioned in documents before 1100. Her main source was the 1086 Yorkshire Domesday Book, which includes parts of present day Lancashire and Cumbria. In 1086 the English Scottish border was further south than it is today and as a result the northern part of present day Cumbria is not recorded in Domesday.

Seventy pre 1100 documented place names were found and the majority, sixty, were in the south with only seven in Copeland and three in North Westmorland. Thirty three of the names contain an element derived from Old English (OE) and fourteen have elements of Old Norse (ON). Other languages that appear are Old French, Gaelic and Brittonic an example of the latter being *Derwä* meaning oak and found in the modern name Derwent.

Place names may include personal names for example, in Old English *Alda* and *Lēofa* found in Aldingham and Levens, and in Old Norse, *Kilvert* found in Killerwick. The name may also show how the land was used. For example *stīrc* meaning young cattle in Old English gives us Stricland in South Westmorland.

Some elements in the name are generic and occur frequently. The most common is *tūn* which appears in Old English and in Old Norse as *tún* and means a farmstead or village. Other examples are *hām* (OE) hamlet or homestead and *bý* (ON) farmstead or village.

Many of the names include a component that indicates the topography of the place and these names are thought to be early ones. Thirty-five of the documented names have such a component and the majority of these derive from Old English though many are found in both Old English

and Old Norse. Examples include *stän* (OE) or *stein* (ON) meaning stone as found in Stainton in North Lonsdale; *dael* (OE) or *dair* (ON) meaning valley and found in Dalton and Lonsdale. The Old English derivations *graef* meaning grave or pit and *öra* meaning iron occur in the name Orgrave in North Lonsdale.

The research identifies that elements of Old English appear more frequently than elements of Old Norse in place names mentioned in the documents before 1100 and that only a few of these names were in the two northern districts. From the study a picture of the local landscape can be built up, as one with farmsteads, valleys, stony areas, clearings (*lëah* OE) and steep slopes (*brekka* ON) with all these features and many others being recorded in the names.

Dr Corrigan concluded by saying that in the 11th century Norsemen moved into the area from Galloway and Ireland and this influx coincides with an increase in Viking names appearing in the 12th and 13th centuries. It is in this period that familiar elements such as *thwaite* and *thorpe* appear.

Dr Corrigan was thanked for her informed and interesting talk before being warmly applauded.

The next talk will be on Tuesday 11th March at 7.30pm, in the Supper Room, Market Hall, in the Appleby, when Jaqui Huntley from Durham University will talk about Recent Developments at the cutting edge of Environmental Archaeology

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