

Who were the Riccall Skeletons?



Historians are like detectives because they use EVIDENCE and SOURCES to find out about the past. There are many pieces of EVIDENCE that Historians can use. Can you think of 10? Fill in the boxes below.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
6)	7)	8)	9)	10)

Today you are going to use EVIDENCE to find out what happened to the Riccall Skeletons. Let's begin with our first source! Look at Clue A.



What can you learn from Clue A about the Riccall Skeletons?

Write down 5 questions you have about this Clue

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Lets make a hypothesis! A hypothesis is a **prediction** about what YOU think happened. Think about WHO these people were, WHERE they died, WHY they died?

I think that.....

So how are we going to test whether your hypothesis is correct?

We need to look are more EVIDENCE!


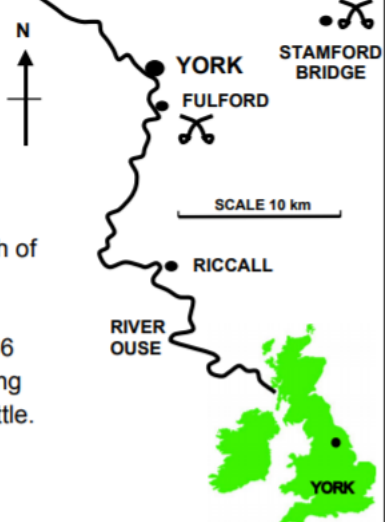
Read Clue B and C below.

Clue B

Riccall was near the site of two famous battles that were fought in 1066.

Battle of Fulford - 20 Sept 1066
A large Norwegian army invaded the north of England and defeated an English army.

Battle of Stamford Bridge - 25 Sept 1066
The Norwegian army was beaten by King Harold of England after a long, bloody battle.



What does Clue B and C tell us about what happened to the Riccall Skeletons?

Does this evidence prove your HYPOTHESIS right or wrong?

Clue C



Historians checked whether there had been a church near the field where the bones had been found.

There had not!



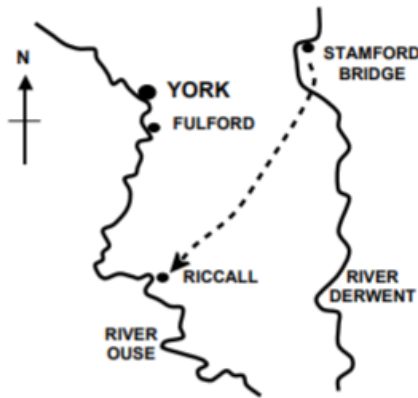
Do you want to create a NEW HYPOTHESIS to predict what happened to the skeletons?

We have now looked at 3 pieces of EVIDENCE surrounding the Riccall Skeletons; however we still do not have a FULL picture of what happened.

Below is a page of MORE evidence. As you look through each piece of evidence, you are going to complete the table on the following page, writing what each tells you about what happened to the Riccall Skeletons.

Clue E

This is the probable route of the Norwegian soldiers as they tried to get back to their ships after the battle of Stamford Bridge.



Clue H

Scientists examined the teeth from 6 of the skeletons

Scientists can tell which region people grew up in from their teeth. This is because traces of the water that children drink stay in their teeth for ever.

The tests on the teeth of the skeletons showed that the people grew up in the dark blue areas on the map.



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Clue G

An extract from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1066. This was a record of the main events of each year written by English monks. This account of the Battle of Stamford Bridge had been written by the 1080s.



King Harald of Norway sailed up the River Ouse towards York with 300 ships. King Harold of England was in the south but went northwards day and night as quickly as he could.

Before Harold could get there, Earl Edwin and Earl Morcar fought the invading Norwegians but many of their army fled or were killed. The Norwegians won the battle.

Then King Harold of England and a large force of English soldiers took the Norwegians by surprise at Stamford Bridge. They fought strenuously until late in the day. One of the Norwegians stood on the narrow bridge and held off the English army so that they could not cross the bridge or win victory. An Englishman shot an arrow but missed. Then another Englishman crept under the bridge and stabbed the Norwegian from beneath.

Then Harold and his army went over the bridge and killed King Harald Hardrada and large numbers of Norwegians.

The surviving Norwegians fled. The English pursued them and attacked them fiercely until they reached their ships. Some were drowned and some burned and some killed in various ways so that few survived. The King let the survivors go home in 24 ships.

Clue D

Scientists examined the bones of the skeletons very carefully.



They found cut marks on many of the bones that looked as if they had been made by swords or axes.

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Clue F

Saxon and Viking weapons.

These were the kinds of weapons used at the battles of Fulford and Stamford Bridge.



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Source	What does this tell me about what happened to the Riccall Skeletons
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	

Now that you have looked at all of the pieces of EVIDENCE, lets create a final HYPOTHESIS. In the box below, write down WHAT you think happened to the Riccall Skeletons. Remember to include as much detail as possible!

Discuss with 2 other people in the class; what was their hypothesis? Was it similar to yours?

So what ACTUALLY happened? (Teachers eyes only!)

The probable answer is that the skeletons belonged to members of Hardrada's Viking army, defeated at Stamford Bridge, killed during the flight back to their ships at Riccall. However we can't be completely certain. Doubts might be based on the fact that only a few of the skeletons were examined by scientists or on the female skeletons. Archaeologists suggest that the female skeletons belong to family members of the warriors who came to settle in England (Hardrada was claiming the crown, not simply raiding).