

Bridgham – One Thousand Years of Village Life has taken over ten years to compile. It tells the story of the village from its earliest recorded history to the present day.

Landmark events are highlighted over the last ten centuries, including the Domesday Book, the two World Wars, and Coronation & Jubilee celebrations. It focuses on village life in the 20th & 21st centuries through reminiscence, anecdote and photographic record.

The book will be printed in full colour throughout, although many early photographs only exist in black & white or sepia, and is expected to be over 300 pages.

Publication date and book launch details will be publicised in local media, *Contact* magazine and on www.bridgham.org.uk

To open this lovely book is to draw very close to the pulse of England. Bridgham has been a village since the time when our country became a land of little villages, centuries before Anglo-Saxons and Vikings fought at Thetford and Ringmere, and the overriding strength of these pages is that they so mix fact, description, specific instance, story, anecdote and a wide range of illustration as to give a wonderful sense of life – of individual lives, of work, hard work, fleeting happiness.

Kevin Crossley-Holland

Prize-winning children's author, poet and master storyteller

1,000th ANNIVERSARY **BRIDGHAM**
 OF THE BATTLE OF RINGMERE - MAY 1010
 The end of an era...

RETURN OF THE VIKINGS!

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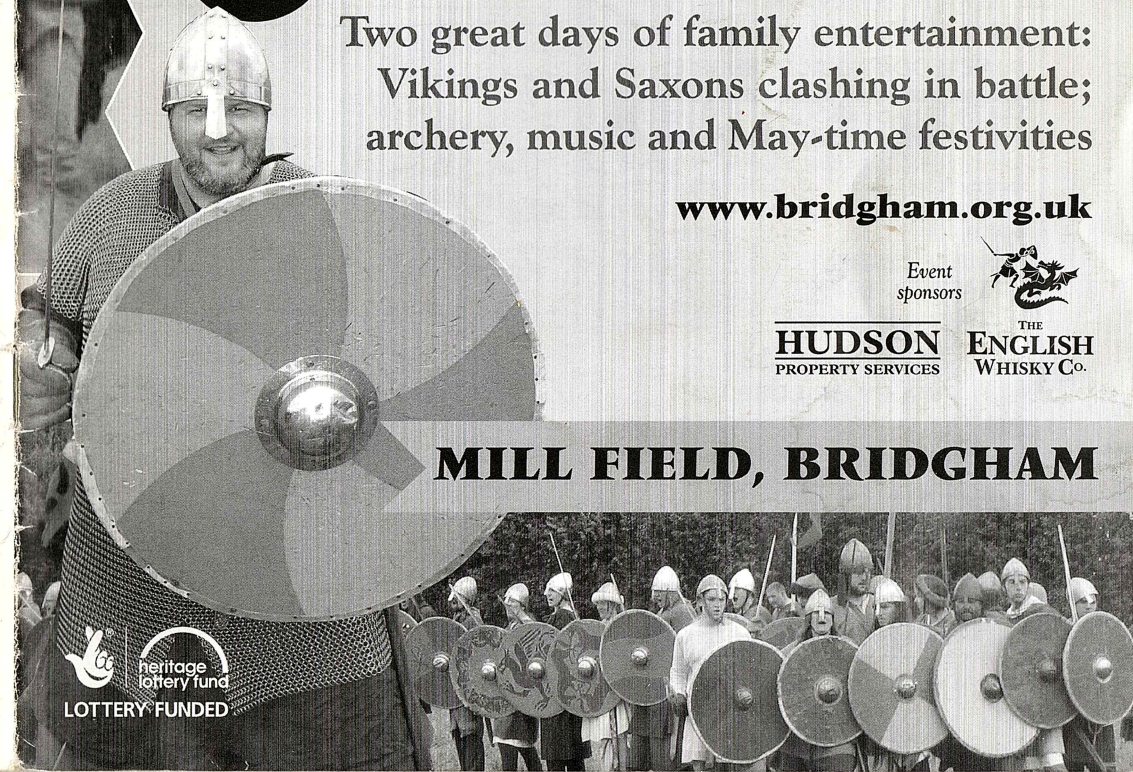
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WELCOME TO BRIDGHAM!

The people of Bridgham extend a warm welcome to all their visitors over our Viking re-enactment weekend as we commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of the Battle of Ringmere.

We hope you enjoy your visit. Please make life easy for all of us by:

- placing all litter in the bins provided or by taking it home
- using the Village Hall toilets when open, to avoid over-use of the portable ones
- by not taking dogs (apart from guide dogs) onto Playing Field Car Park or Viking Field; and by keeping them on a lead elsewhere and clearing up any mess they make

St John Ambulance will be on duty
in one of the marquees

RETURN OF THE VIKINGS

is funded by



Supported by

The National Lottery®

through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Norfolk Community
foundation



SHADWELL

Shadwell Community Foundation

WHY IS BRIDGHAM COMMEMORATING 1010-2010?

This weekend is a commemoration rather than a celebration. It is reckoned that a thousand years ago, up to 14,000 men fought in the Battle of Ringmere. Many thousands were slaughtered as a few telling phrases in the Viking sagas make clear (see page 11).

RETURN OF THE VIKINGS

Organiser: Gesithas Herred of The Vikings!

Groups attending include:

Gesithas	Royston	Hrafnsdale	Rochdale	Ormswold	Gt Yarmouth
Saebert's Folc	Colchester	Gardarsvich	St Helens	Draum Broedr	Leicester
Ouskejarr	Cambridge	Dharg de Belne	Birmingham	Wryngwyrn	Bedford



Viking Veterans Association

1st Battalion (The Vikings), The Royal Anglian Regiment

We are grateful to Tom Smith for co-ordinating the display of the Viking Veterans Association. A thousand years ago, Ulfcytel's army was mainly drawn from the levies of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire to fight the Viking invaders. Today, the four companies (A-D) of 1st Battalion (The Vikings), The Royal Anglian Regiment are named after the same four counties in order to perpetuate their lineage from the former County regiments.

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Bridgham Millennium Group and the Community

It would not be possible to consider staging this re-enactment weekend without the support of the community. BMG is most grateful for all the help it has received since coming up with the rather extraordinary idea of celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of a long-forgotten battle.

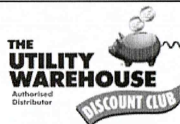
There are too many names to mention, but we must acknowledge residents' acts of generosity: access to and use of private land; camping and parking space for Vikings Anglo-Saxons; provision of maypole, marquee, tables, chairs, posts, rope, & bins; signage; poster/flyer distribution and sponsorship; mowing mill field; running the children's workshop; produce for medieval fayre; stall holders; costume provision; fayre & field preparation; car parking; programme selling; general all-round assistance in setting up (the 'salt of the earth' brigade) and, hopefully, clearing everything up afterwards! We must also thank Bridgham and Harling Band, Hockham Clodhoppers, Thunder Mental, St John Ambulance and Viking Veterans Association for their appearances, and Heritage Lottery Fund, Norfolk Community Foundation and Shadwell Community Fund for their financial support. And, of course, there is Sharon McCann of Gesithas Herred who has brought so many Vikings to the village – in fact, more than the population of Bridgham at the time of Domesday Book!

The Bridgham Millennium Group was formed in 1998 to prepare for the 2000 millennial celebrations. A number of projects were completed including beating the bounds communal walk, improved play equipment for the 'rec', boundary markers and village cross-stitch (now on display in the church). Two projects have taken a decade to complete: a) The Bridgham Tapestry, which will be framed and hung in the Village Hall in the near future; and b) the book *Bridgham – one thousand years of village life* to be published later this year (see back cover).

The BMG was revived in 2005 to plan for the 2007 millennial celebrations of known Bridgham history. An Elizabethan banquet followed in 2008 – the 550th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth I and of the Crown's acquisition of Bridgham. In 2009, the celebrations were of local importance rather than national: a reunion of competitors in a Bridgham fancy dress parade of 1949. With this year's commemoration of another millennial event (the Battle of Ringmere) and the near completion of the tapestry and book of Bridgham, the work of BMG appears to be drawing to a close unless a project to improve the village in some other way rears its head. The next millennial celebrations are likely to be in 2066 for the Battle of Hastings – but the present committee may no longer be serving the community by then!

Finally, a big 'thank you' to all those in Bridgham and the surrounding villages who make this such a wonderful place and community in which to live.

Mark Dickenson (*Chairman*) and David O'Neale (*Treasurer*)
of Bridgham Millennium Group



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Bridgham & Harling Band



Sunday 2 May

2.00–2.45pm & 3.30–4.15pm

Conductor: Mark Sharp

The band was founded in 2001 for a Christmas concert at the suggestion of Bridgham resident, Mrs Pat Wright, who is now its patron. Its first major outing was at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of 2002. Since then, the band has gone from strength to strength playing at many venues in Norfolk, with players so keen to play with the band that they travel from North Norfolk, Suffolk and even Essex on occasions! Bridgham & Harling Band is master-minded by another Bridgham resident, percussionist George Lawn, greatly supported by his wife Cherrie.

The music in Sunday's programme has two themes: a celebration of England; and action music with a sense of warfare. Composer Rodney Newton links these themes in **Bridgham Salute**. This piece was commissioned in 2007 to celebrate Bridgham's millennial year.

Bridgham & Harling Band

Forthcoming Events in 2010

Saturday 12 June, 2.00pm
Bridgham Village Fete

Saturday 10 July, 2.00pm
East Wretham Fair

Sunday 31 October 7.00pm
Royal British Legion Concert,
Town Hall, Downham Market

Friday 12 November 7.30pm
Festival of Remembrance,
Carnegie Rooms, Thetford

Friday 17 December 7.30pm
10th Annual Christmas Concert,
Bridgham Church

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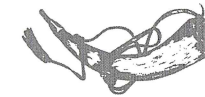


FRIDAY 2 JULY 7.30pm

Tickets: £6
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Bridgham & Harling Band



SUNDAY PROGRAMME

2.00 pm – 2.45pm

Heart of Oak

William Boyce

Bridgham Salute

Rodney S. Newton

Barwick Green (*The Archers*)

Arthur Wood

March –

Seventeen come Sunday

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams

Floral Dance

arr. Katie Moss

March –

Folk songs from Somerset

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams

Pirates of the Caribbean

Klaus Badlet

Interval for the
Battle of Ringmere, 1010 A.D.

3.30 pm

The Last of the Mohicans

Trevor Jones

Nibelungen March

Richard Wagner

The Magnificent Seven

Elmer Bernstein

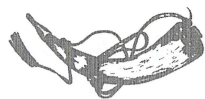
When the saints go marching in

arr. Harold L. Walters

Queen in concert

arr. Jay Bocook

SUNDAY 2 MAY

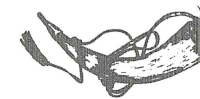


All day:

Viking Living History Exhibition
Viking Veterans Association
Thunder Mental Entertainers

- 10.00 am Have-a-go Archery
- 11.30 am Skirmish/Weapons Demonstration
- 12 noon Maypole Dancing
- 1.00 pm Kiddie Vike
- 2.00 pm Bridgham & Harling Band (until 2.45 pm)
Children's workshop activities in village hall
(a donation towards *Jelly Tots* is appreciated)
Have-a-go Archery
- 3.00 pm Battle of Ringmere, May 5th 1010
- 3.30 pm Bridgham & Harling Band (until 4.15 pm)
- 4.30 pm Maypole Dancing
- 5.00 pm Show closes

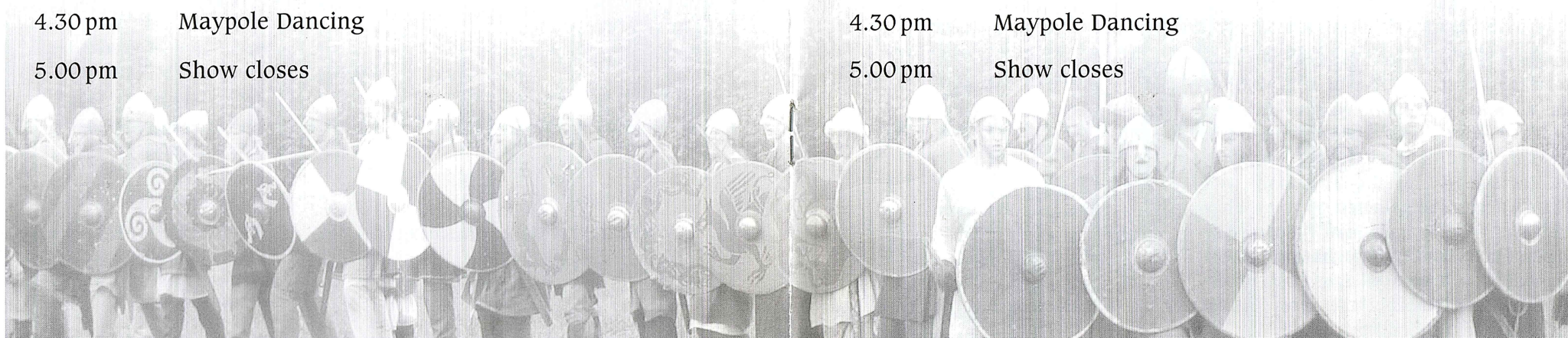
MONDAY 3 MAY



All day:

Viking Living History Exhibition
Viking Veterans Association
Hockham Clodhoppers (Molly Dancers)

- 10.00 am Have-a-go Archery
- 11.30 am Skirmish/Weapons Demonstration
- 12 noon Maypole Dancing
- 1.00 pm Kiddie Vike
- 2.00 pm Medieval Fayre (to 4.00 pm)
Have-a-go Archery
- 3.00 pm Battle of Ringmere, May 5th 1010
- 3.30 pm Children's Fancy Dress Competition in
Viking, Saxon, Norman or Medieval style
- 4.00 pm Tug-o-war – Village v. Vikings
- 4.30 pm Maypole Dancing
- 5.00 pm Show closes



BATTLE OF RINGMERE, 1010 A.D.

described by the English

'In this year the Danish army sailed to East Anglia. Leaving their ships near Ipswich, they made for Ringmere where they knew that Ulfcytel was encamped with his army and they fought a fierce battle with him. This was on the first day after Our Lord's Ascension (May 5th). But when the battle reached its climax, the East Anglians fled.

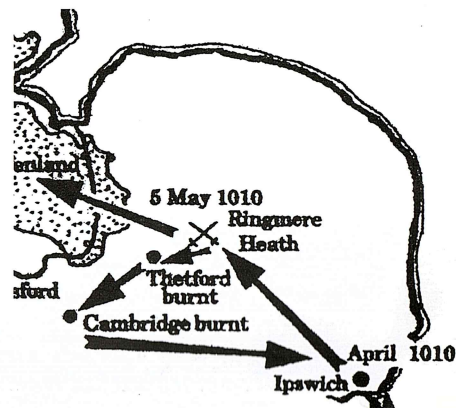
And a certain Danish thegn, Thurcytel 'Mare's or Ant Head' was the first to take flight; but fighting manfully, the men of Cambridge stood firm. But at the end they were defeated and fled. And there was slain Æthelstan, the king's son-in-law, and Oswig and his son; and Wulfric, the son of Leofwine, and Eadwig, Aelfic's brother, and many other good thegns and countless other folk. It was Thurcytel 'Mare's Head' who started the flight and the Danes held the place of slaughter.

And they gained control of East Anglia; and, taking horses, for three months they harried and burnt that land, even penetrating into the uninhabited fens, slaying men and cattle, and burning wherever they went. Afterwards they pillaged and destroyed Thetford and Cambridge by fire and turned south again into the Thames Valley, those on foot taking ship but the riders going by horseback....

...Then they made their way back to the ships with their plunder. And while they were travelling to their ships, then the (English) army should have come out again, in case the Vikings wanted to go inland. Then, our army went home. ... In the end there was no leader who was willing to raise a force, but each fled as quickly as he could, nor even in the end would one shire help another.

* an Anglicized descendant of an earlier Viking settler

Ringmere is on the left of the A1075 road from Thetford to Watton, at a lay-by just before East Wretham Nature Reserve. Bridgham, along with five other parishes, has a 'finger' of land reaching to Ringmere Pit. The Vikings travelled from Ipswich to where Ulfcytel had gathered his army. They are most likely to have used Peddars Way which forms part of Bridgham's western boundary, so the village had direct experience of probably the most bloody battle to take place on Norfolk soil.



BATTLE OF RINGMERE, 1010 A.D.

described by the Vikings

SAGA OF SIGHVAT THORDASON

[Ella=English, Haarfarer's heir=Olaf]

To Ulfcytel's land came Olaf bold,	Hringmara heath
A seventh sword-fight he would hold;	Was a bed of death;
The race of Ella filled the plain,	Haarfager's heir
Few of them slept at home again.	Dealt slaughter there.

By OTTAR the BLACK, Sighvat's nephew:

From Hringmar field	The living fly,
The chime of war,	The dead piled high,
Sword striking shield	The moor enrich,
Rings from afar;	Red runs the ditch

The Viking ERIC HAKONARSON did so well in the battle he was singled out in the saga of THORD KOLBEINSSON:

The brave warrior	The bold Eric often diminished
Who frequently gave	The host of the English
Swollen flesh to the raven	And brought about their death.
Marked men with the print	The army reddened Ringmere
Of the sword's edge.	Heath.

And what of Ulfcytel the Valiant? Thord tells that Jarl Eirik claimed the killing of the East Anglian leader at the Battle of Assandun in 1016.

Gave the gladsome arm-ring giver	Awful blows got Ulfkel;
Battle west of London;	Over heads of thingmen
For the land fought	Bluish blades fished out there
Lordly steerer of sea-steeds;	Bothn's-dear-flood I mastered.

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1010: The Battle of Ringmere

Ulfcytel, the leader of the East Anglian armies survived the great battle at Thetford in 1004 and continued to defend the region. But in 1010 the Vikings returned. This time, Thorkell the Tall and Olaf the Stout led the invaders. They landed near Ipswich and marched to confront Ulfcytel's army at Hringmara Heath. For many years it was assumed to be at Ringmere, where the Western tip of Bridgham meets the parishes of Roudham, East Wretham, and Kilverstone. Although more recent research points to another possible site of Rymer Point, four miles south of Thetford, most academics and historians believe it was at Ringmere. One of these, Cyril Hart, in his book *The Danelaw* stated that:

'Ulfcytel appears to have made no effort to defend Thetford directly, but assembled his forces at the centre of a wide expanse of open heath five-miles northeast of the town. The site is of the greatest interest because it was an established meeting-place long before the 11th century. The bounds of the heathland belonging to no less than six vills (parishes) meet at Ringmere, the settlements themselves lying on a two-mile radius on the periphery of the heath, which was evidently pasture grazed in common by all of the vills. Where three or more vill boundaries come together, we may conclude that Ringmere was probably the meeting-place of the two hundreds of Grimshoe and Shropham, though each hundred would have had in addition its own assembly point.'

Over a century before Hart's description, the English Historical Review of 1896 conjectured how the Vikings travelled from Ipswich:



'The Roman Road from Colchester to near Brancaster, part of which still exists under the name of the Peddars Road, lies a few miles to the west of Ipswich. A little more to the west of this road, as it crosses Roudham Heath, near Thetford is a Ringmere Pit, in the parish of East Wretham. It lies between Croxton Heath, Roudham Heath and Bridgeham Heath. We have here, I think, the heath of the Norse Hringmaraheior.'

If this conjecture is true, then all the Vikings, upwards of 7,000 Danes travelled through Bridgham on their way to the battle, and some of them probably came back the same way ransacking the region.

At the battle, there were thousands fighting on each side. Two thousand men was the most an eastern shire could hope to raise, but with four to six shires involved, they may have equalled the Vikings in number if not in fighting skill. If the battle did take place at Ringmere, then the north-western tip of Bridgham must have echoed to the sounds of war.

Although Ulfcytel and Thurcettel were leaders of the English forces, their Scandinavian names indicate that they were the descendants of earlier Danish settlers. The Battle of Ringmere moved away from the siege warfare in England of the previous century – the defences of East Anglian towns had been disastrously neglected prior to 1010. Another new feature of 11th century warfare was the greatly increased mobility achieved by the use of horses. The Vikings took horses from their defeated enemy and harried the region for three months.

A thousand years after the battle, some of the area around Ringmere and within the parish of Bridgham still echoes to the sounds of warfare but of a very different kind, as it is the all-arms battle training area owned by the Ministry of Defence!

In 1940, in the early days of World War II, Arthur Mee in the King's England series for Norfolk, records:

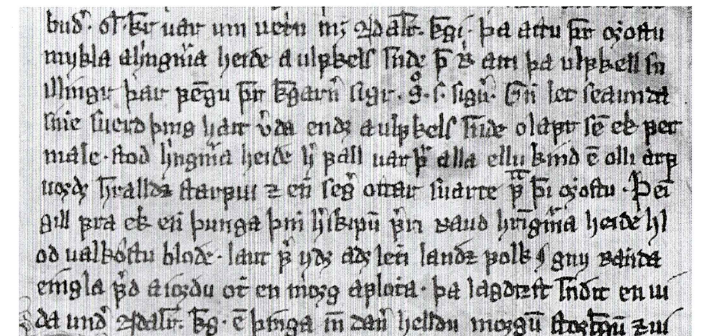
Bridgham. A battlefield at peace.

It is said that on the heath nearby, the Danes were victorious in a battle with the Saxons; but all is peaceful now in Bridgham, where houses and farms straggle along the road, with the old church at one end among the trees, and the River Thet running through the meadows.

Long may it continue!

From the Saga of St Olaf in the 14th century manuscript Flatexjarbók (The Book of Flat Island):

By courtesy of the Arni Magnusson Institute for Icelandic Studies.



This passage contains the sagas of Sighvat Thordarson and Ottar the Black. The names Ottar, Ulfkell (Ulfcytel) and Hringmara (Ringmere) are easy to distinguish. Via the Danish Embassy, the image was sent to Bridgham Millennium Group by Sigurgeir Steingrímsson of the Icelandic Institute's Manuscript Department, who added, 'You may have complimentary use of this image in connection with your 1,000 year anniversary festivities – but – and notice this well – only if you drink and bring out one big 'skál' to Snorri Sturluson who brought the story down to us! With kind regards to you and all the brave fighting men of Ringmere'.

Ulfcytel the Valiant – Leader of the East Anglians

Ulfcytel was an English nobleman. He was apparently the ealdorman of East Anglia from 1004 to his death at the Battle of Assandun in 1016. Scandinavian sources refer to him as Ulfkell Snillingr, meaning Ulfcytel the bold or valiant.

An English chronicle calls Ulfcytel the *dux* – war leader – of the East Anglians.

Another Viking source suggests that Ulfcytel was married to a daughter of King Æthelred named Wulfhild. Ulfcytel's name is of Scandanavian origin, but no details of his family are known. In Saint Olaf's saga East Anglia is called 'Ulfcytel's land' (see extract from the saga on page 13).

In 1004, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports a bloody battle between the East Anglians and an army led by Danish King Sweyn Forkbeard. The Chronicle states that Ulfcytel and the 'councillors in East Anglia' attempted to buy a truce with Sweyn, but that the Danes broke the truce and marched to Thetford where a part of the East Anglian militia engaged them. The battle seems to have been a draw as the Danes managed to escape. Two of the Chronicle manuscripts state that the Danes later 'admitted that they had never met with harder hand-play [fighting] in England than Ulfcytel gave them'. The Danes suffered heavy losses, and were probably only saved from destruction because Ulfcytel's order to destroy their ships was not carried out. They left England without causing any further devastation which has been recorded.

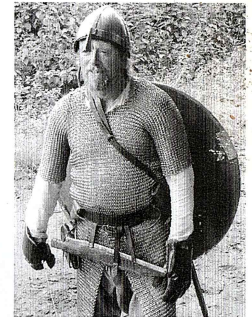
Ulfcytel's next appearance in the Chronicle is as leader of the East Anglian armies at the Battle of Ringmere. Ulfcytel's third and last appearance in the Chronicle is at the battle of Assandun on 18 October 1016 where he fought for King Edmund Ironside. Here he was killed; he is listed among 'the chief men of the nation' by the Chronicle. According to one Scandinavian source he was killed by Thorkell the Tall who married his widow. Thorkell may well have married one of Æthelred's widowed daughters although it is far from certain that he married Wulfhild. Alternatively, and less plausibly, Saint Olaf's saga states that Ulfcytel was killed by Eirik Hakonarson near London.

It is ironic that although Ufkell Road in Thetford is named after Ulfcytel, the town sign depicts Sweyn Forkbeard, his chief enemy.

VIKINGS IN MEMORIAM

Paul Allen

Paul made many friends in the village over just three days in June 2007. He came to Bridgham as leader of our re-enactment weekend celebrating a millennium of known village history. Tragically, Paul died on 20 September of that year following an accident whilst filming a jousting tournament for the Time Team programme. 'He died that same way he lived, doing the thing he loved'. He had suggested the Return of the Vikings for the millennium of the Battle of Ringmere Pit which we are now commemorating.



AFGHANISTAN ROLL OF HONOUR

1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment (Vikings)

Private James Grigg	16 March 2010	Aged 21
Lance Corporal Scott Hardy	16 March 2010	Aged 26
Captain Martin Driver	15 March 2010	Aged 31
Private Robert Hayes	3 January 2010	Aged 19
Lance Corporal Adam Drane	7 December 2009	Aged 23
Private John Thrumble	23 August 2007	Aged 21
Private Aaron McClure	23 August 2007	Aged 19
Private Robert Foster	23 August 2007	Aged 19
Captain David Hicks	11 August 2007	Aged 26
Private Tony Rawson	10 August 2007	Aged 27
Lance Corporal Alex Hawkins	25 July 2007	Aged 22
Corporal Darren Bonner	28 May 2007	Aged 31
Lance Corporal George Davey	20 May 2007	Aged 23
Private Christopher Gray	13 April 2007	Aged 19
Lance Corporal Darren George	9 April 2002	Aged 22

IRAQ ROLL OF HONOUR

2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment (Poachers)

Private Adam Morris	13 May 2006	Aged 19
Private Joseva Lewaicei	13 May 2006	Aged 25