



WIRRAL ARCHAEOLOGY

EARLY ANGLO SAXON TRIBES

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Early Anglo Saxon Times

Introduction

Three groups of Germanic tribes people settled in Britain in the immediate years after the Roman army departed from the Island.

The Anglii or Angles hailed from Friesland and what is now the German Baltic coast.

The Jutes came from Jutland in what is now Denmark.

The Saxons came from what is now the eastern Netherlands and northern Germany.

The Tribes

These tribes had all been known to the Romans and the historian, Tacitus, recorded their names.

Once they had established control over what is now England, they established seven Kingdoms known as the Heptarchy.

The Kingdoms

These Kingdoms were Northumbria, Kent, Mercia, Wessex, Sussex, Essex. and East Anglia.

Four major dialects were spoken. The Jutes spoke Kentish, the Saxons spoke West Saxon, whilst the Angles spoke two dialects, Northumbrian and Mercian.

By the end of the 9th century, West Saxon had become the dominant language and was called Englisc. (English).

These peoples who would eventually refer to themselves, collectively, as Anglii, originally lived within tribal units.

The below is a list of the tribal names and the areas which they inhabited.

- The Meonwara of Hampshire.
- The Andredes Leag of Berkshire
- The Defnas of Devon
- The Somersaetas of Somerset
- The Dorsaetas of Dorset
- The Wilsaetas of Wiltshire
- The Suther-ge of Surrey
- The Wihtwara of the Isle of Wight.
- The Wrocencet of Staffordshire and Shropshire
- The Magonset of Warwickshire.
- The Pecset of Cheshire and Derbyshire.
(This tribe is remembered in today's name pertaining to the 'Peak District' which has nothing to do with the hills).
- The Chiltern Saetans of Gloucestershire.
- The Herstingas of Bedfordshire.

- The Elge of Cambridgeshire.
- The Lindisware of Lincolnshire
- The Rodingas and the Geginga of Buckinghamshire.
- The Middle seax of Middlesex
- The Hwicce of Worcestershire
- The Gainas of an unidentifiable area of Mercia.
- The Wuffingas (wolf people) of East Anglia
- The Cantwara of Kent
- The Haemele of the area around Hemel Hempstead.

Other tribes who lived in what is now Essex were the Bercingas, the Haeferingas, the Ginges and the Rodings, the Vange and Denge

- The Elmesaete of Yorkshire
- The Bernician tribe occupied Lancashire and County Durham.
- The Al Clunt peoples occupied what is now the Scottish Borders and areas up to the Firth of Forth. Edinburgh or Eden's burh was founded the Al Clunt people.

It can be seen from the above list as to where many of England's counties obtained their current names.

There were undoubtedly smaller and less known sub tribal groups but it is a sad fact, that the majority of people today, do not know the names of the early English tribes.