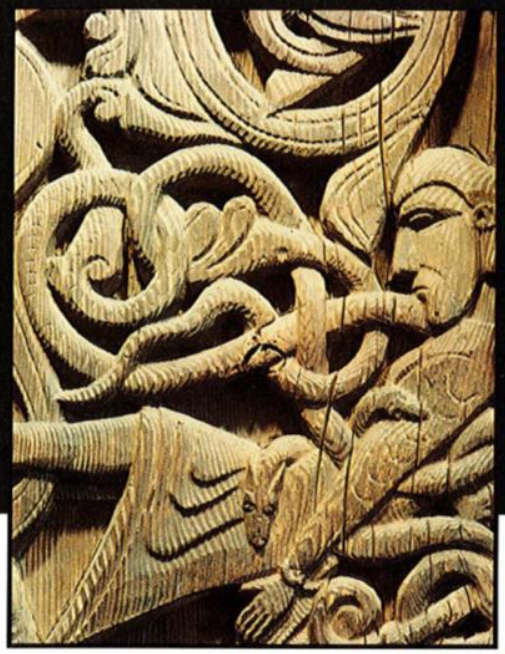
Wednesday 10th February

LO: Comprehension

SNAKE PIT DATE FOR HAIRY-BREEKS



Hairy-Breeks bites the dust — or rather a slithery, slimy thing bites Hairy-Breeks.

860

Ragnar Hairy-Breeks has been flung into a snake-pit by Ella, King of Northumbria. The Danish legend met his death with a smile and a cheery wink. "My sons will open your rib-cage and let your lungs flap in the wind while you die a slow and horrible death," he foretold.

Rattled

Ella was unavailable for comment when our reporter rattled one of the 200 padlocks on his oak door guarded by ten squadrons of trained axemen inside a fort manned by some of the hardest soldiers in Northumbria.

"His Majesty is treating the threat with utter indifference," a palace aide announced through the keyhole.

ELLA NOT A WELLA FELLA

SONS OF SNAKE-PIT HERO GET NASTY

"Heard any good sagas recently?" King Ella fails to break the ice with the sons of Hairy-Breeks.

867

King Ella of Northumbria got his come-uppance when the three sons of Ragnar Hairy-Breeks came looking for revenge.

Bleuughhh!

Ivar the Boneless, and his two brothers Halfdan and Ubbi, did just what their dad said they would. They landed in England with a huge army called the Great Heathen Horde, marched right up to York, cut open Ella's ribcage and pulled out his lungs.

"We call it the blood-eagle," Ivar told our reporter. "It's one of our more impressive party-pieces. But you can relax. We only do it when we're really, really angry."

However, Ivar did admit that it helped their reputation. "If people think we're out-and-out savages it makes life that little bit easier. When they hear we're coming they just run away. There are all kinds of silly stories – that we drink out of enemy skulls, for example. Sheer exaggeration! But don't tell anyone I told you so."

Pressed

On being pressed, Ivar admitted that his Great Heathen Horde was another exaggeration: "It's not great and it's not a horde. Only a few thousand men at most. But we ARE heathens. That bit's true."

Whatever its size, the Great Heathen Horde has done pretty well. It's conquered the two Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia and Northumbria and looks set to take over half of Mercia.*

Scrap

"New tactics," explained Ivar. "We're through with raiding. This time we're here to stay. But I have to say I'm very disappointed with these Anglo-Saxons. They spend so much time fighting each other that they've got no strength left for us.

"It's too easy. If you can't have a good scrap now and again, what's the point?"

*That's in the middle of England, Geography fans!

Retrieval:

1) When did Ragnar Breeches die? The Year 860
2) Where was Ella killed? He died in York.

Words in context:

3) Find a word that means to '*predict the future or a future event*'. foretold
4) Find a word that means to '*represent (something) as being larger, better, or worse than it really is*' exaggeration

Text structure:

5) How do you know that this is a newspaper report? Give 2 features
   Any 2 from the following:
   Headline
   Direct quotes and reported speech
   Past tense
   Third person –he she they
   Photos with caption
   5 w's - who, what where , when, why
   Paragraphs organized in columns

Inference:

6) In the first article, how do we know that Ella was worried? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
   I know Ella was worried because even though it says he was 'indifferent' he actually had 200 padlocks and 10 squadrons of trained axemen guarding his door. This shows that he was scared of a Viking attack.