

# *SPRINGTHORPE*

## *in a New Millennium*

by Michael Anyan (in progress)

### PREHISTORY

- Just one more new millennium! Springthorpe people have probably seen tens of them, probably as many as 120. We do know that the parish has been occupied for at least 6,000 years as Neolithic axe and arrow heads have been found here. About that time, but obviously over a period of several centuries, occupiers of Springthorpe changed from being hunter-gatherers to food producers. Cattle and pigs were native, but sheep and goats were not, but were probably introduced before 6,000 B.C. Production of food for own consumption and for sale to outside agencies would have sustained the majority of Springthorpites for some 6 millennia until about 1950.

### THE ROMANS

- Springthorpites have seen many invasions and will have suffered greatly in turbulent times as we are positioned near the important invasion routes along the rivers Humber and Trent. The Belgics came in about 150 B.C. and the Romans in A.D. 43. By A.D. 47 the Romans had settled the area to the Humber. Lincoln was an important Roman camp and became a *Colonia*, which was a settlement for retired soldiers. There are many remains from the Roman period in Springthorpe's fields. Retired soldiers and Roman civil servants would almost certainly have intermarried with the natives, and food produced here would be required to feed the soldiers and citizen of Lincoln.

### THE SAXONS

- We witnessed the invasions of the Picts, Scots and Saxons in the 4th century A.D. which led to the withdrawal of the Romans. Not much is known about this period but a glass bead of the pagan Saxon era has been found in this Parish.

### THE VIKINGS

- The next invasion was, perhaps, the most devastating we had to endure: the Great Danish Viking Army sailed up the River Trent in A.D. 865 and over the following four years conquered East Anglia and Northumbria. Property was looted, crops destroyed and farms

burnt. The Great Army wintered at Torksey in 872-73 and would, without doubt, have required Springthorpe-grown wheat and barley and livestock to sustain it.

- The second great Danish invasion would see the naming of Springthorpe. (I wonder what the collection of mean huts and farms was called before A.D. 1000?) This invasion would involve us much more than the one in 865-69, as King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark sailed up the Trent in A.D. 1013 and made Gainsborough his main base. Here he was accepted as King of Northumbria and Eastern England. Ethelred the Unready, King of England, was not pleased by this and fled to Normandy. Sweyn died at Gainsborough on February 2nd or 3rd, 1014 and the Danish Army at Gainsborough accepted his son, Canute, as their leader. Ethelred returned from Normandy with a large army and devastated Springthorpe and Lindsey during the subsequent war against Canute. Canute eventually won and became King of England in 1016.
- Springthorpe, along with 41 other villages stretching from Scunthorpe to Waddingham to Gainsborough, made an enormous estate called the Soke [or Manor] of Kirton. The estate was owned by the Earls of Mercia and possibly passed to Earl Leofric when he married Lady Godiva in 1023. They had three children, Edwin Earl of Mercia who inherited the estate, Morcar Earl of Northumbria, and Edith who married Harold Godwinson who became King of England.

## THE NORMANS

The next, and last, invasion of these islands would probably have affected the owners of Springthorpe more than the villagers. When William the Conqueror landed in Sussex, King Harold was helping his brothers-in-law, Edwin and Morcar, to defeat Tostig and Harold Hadrada, King of Norway, at Stamford Bridge near York. After this great victory, Edwin and Morcar refused to go with Harold to fight William at Hastings. Morcar joined Hereward the Wake at Ely, and Edwin was killed by his own followers in 1071. William confiscated Springthorpe and the rest of the Soke of Kirton and for the next 700 years the area was owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, one of the owners being the famous Black Prince