

THE LOST PALACE

This is a pupils' shared text for the Literacy Hour with four chapters:

What the Goats Saw – the generations of goats which have lived on the hill of Yeavinger Bell have seen thousands of years come and go. They've also been watching as the royal palace was built, burnt, forgotten and finally found.

Bede and Beowulf – real reports of what it was like at Yeavinger in the millennium before last.

How the Lost Palace was Found – a non-fiction description of how the remains of the palace were uncovered.

Glossary – the place to go to decipher those tricky archaeological words.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bede

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Beowulf

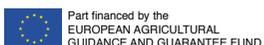
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Part financed by the
EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL
GUIDANCE AND GUARANTEE FUND



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

ISBN 0 907632 36 X

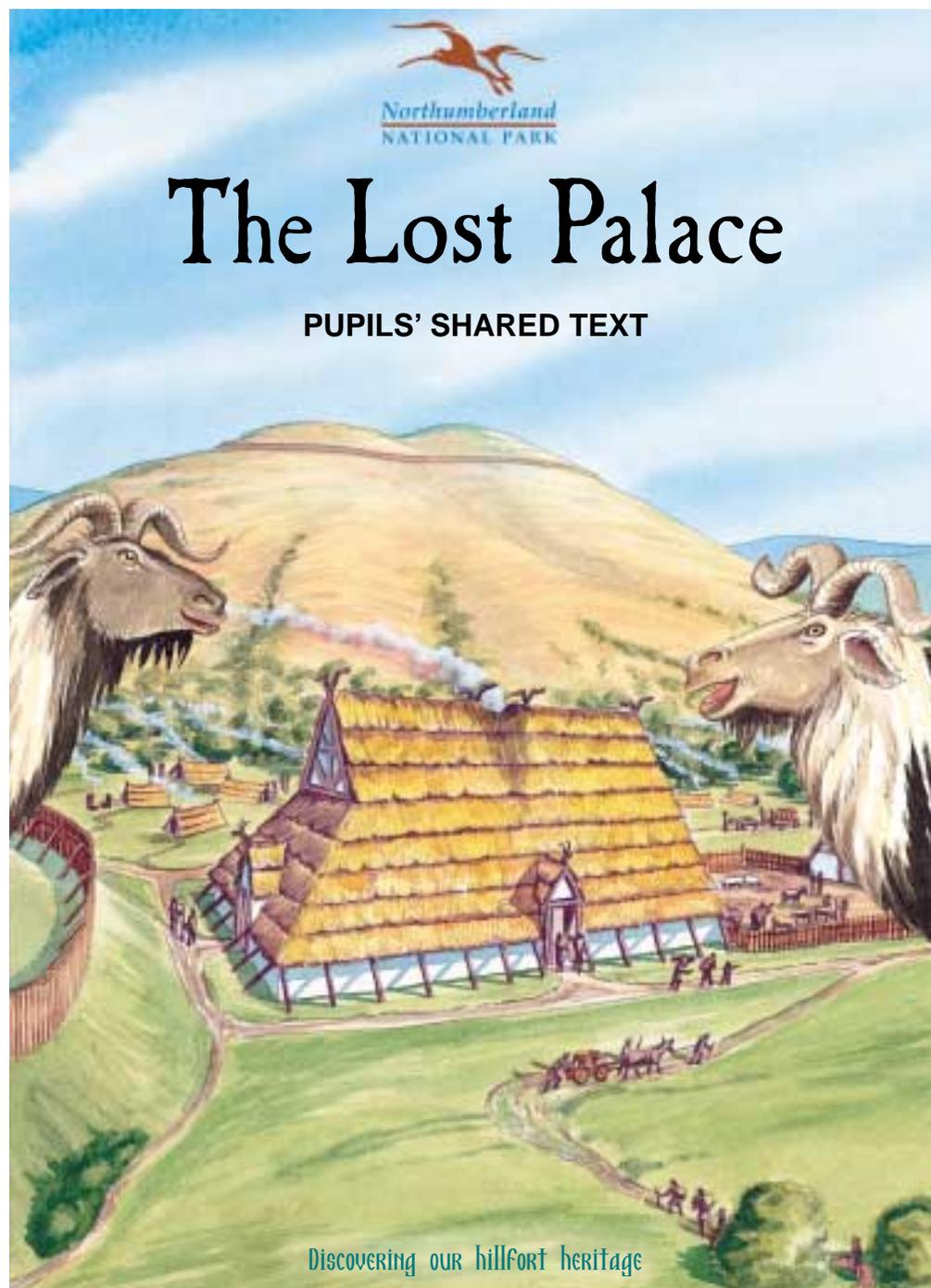
The Lost Palace was written by Yvonne Beardsley, Education Officer. More information, Teachers' Notes and further copies of this book can be obtained from the address below, or downloaded from the internet on: www.nnpa.org.uk



Northumberland
NATIONAL PARK

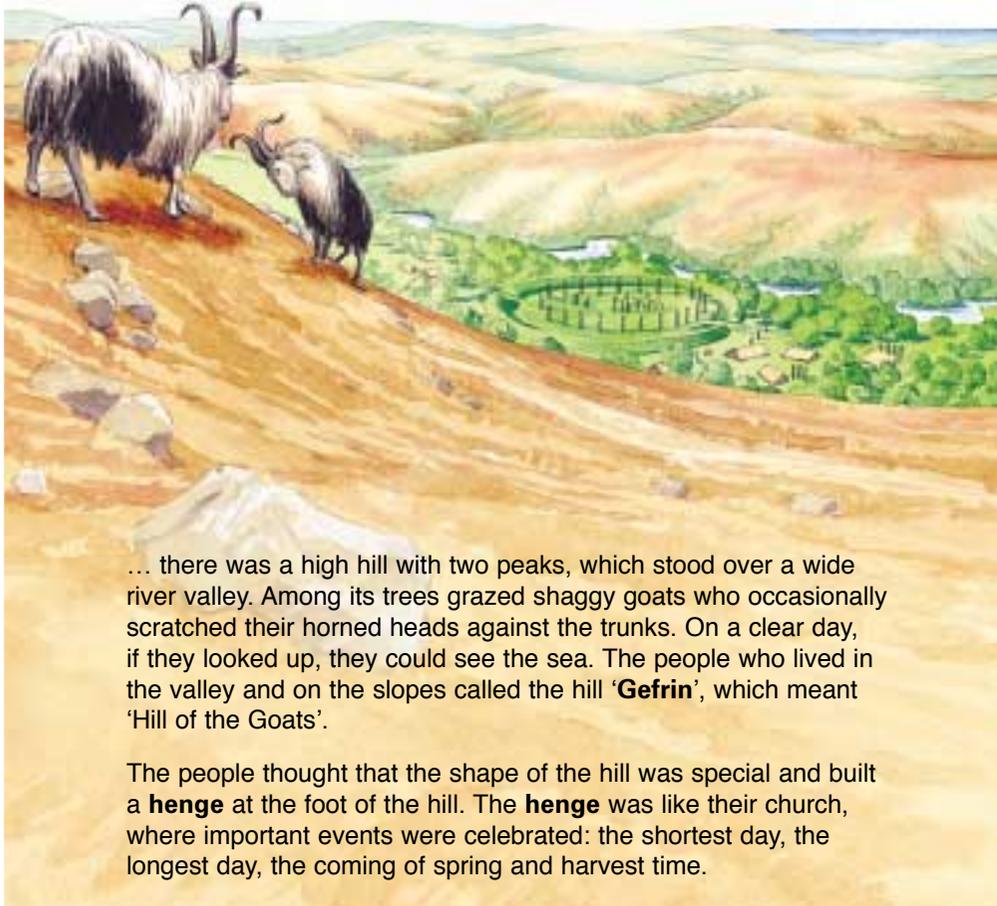
Published by © Northumberland National Park Authority
Eastburn, South Park, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 1BS
Illustration and design by MR2
Printed on environmentally-friendly paper.

March 2000



What the Goats Saw

Once...
forty five or more centuries ago...
in the north of what is now Northumberland...



... there was a high hill with two peaks, which stood over a wide river valley. Among its trees grazed shaggy goats who occasionally scratched their horned heads against the trunks. On a clear day, if they looked up, they could see the sea. The people who lived in the valley and on the slopes called the hill 'Gefrin', which meant 'Hill of the Goats'.

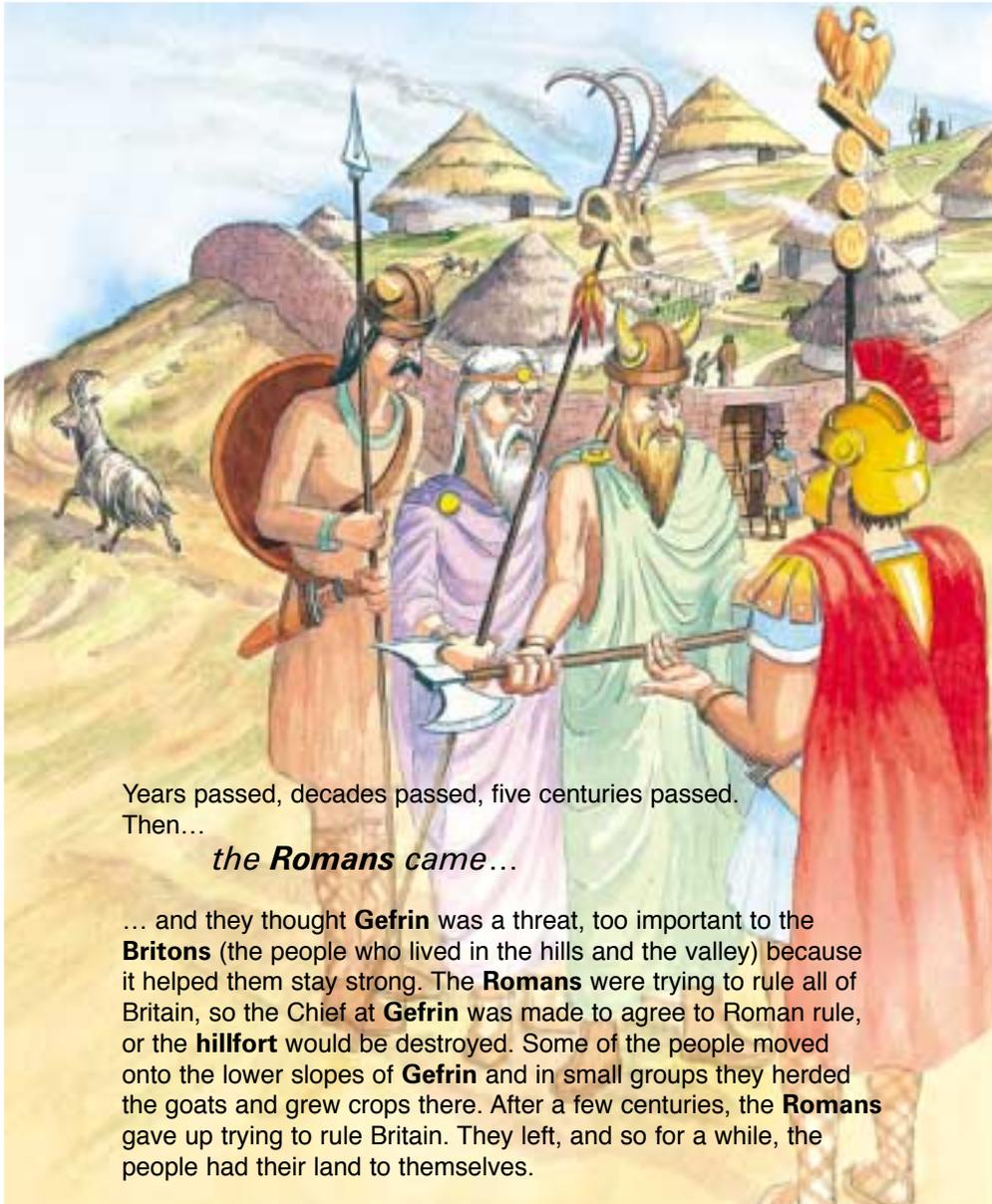
The people thought that the shape of the hill was special and built a **henge** at the foot of the hill. The **henge** was like their church, where important events were celebrated: the shortest day, the longest day, the coming of spring and harvest time.

Years passed, decades passed, centuries passed.
Two thousand years passed.

The many-times-great grandchildren of those early people still lived beneath, and on the slopes of **Gefrin**. There were many of them now. They built a broad wall of pink stones around the top of the hill. Inside they built one hundred and thirty roundhouses, spread over the hill's two peaks.

This **hillfort** became an important place for the people who lived in the hills and for the people who farmed in the valley. Every season they would meet together there, trade goods they had made, worship their gods and celebrate with feasts, singing and storytelling for days on end. Sometimes they would kill a few goats for the feasts.

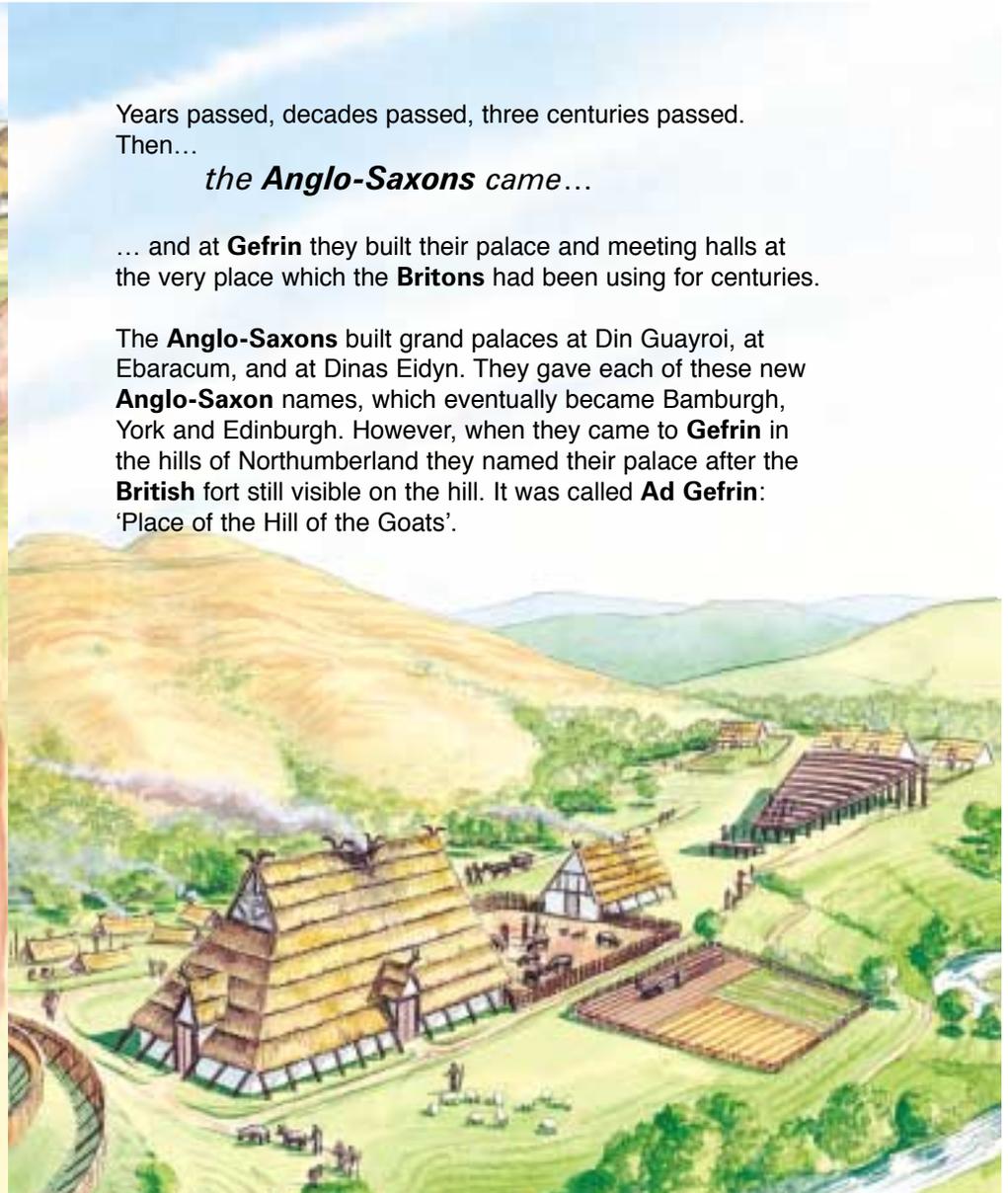




Years passed, decades passed, five centuries passed.
Then...

the Romans came...

... and they thought **Gefrin** was a threat, too important to the **Britons** (the people who lived in the hills and the valley) because it helped them stay strong. The **Romans** were trying to rule all of Britain, so the Chief at **Gefrin** was made to agree to Roman rule, or the **hillfort** would be destroyed. Some of the people moved onto the lower slopes of **Gefrin** and in small groups they herded the goats and grew crops there. After a few centuries, the **Romans** gave up trying to rule Britain. They left, and so for a while, the people had their land to themselves.



Years passed, decades passed, three centuries passed.
Then...

the Anglo-Saxons came...

... and at **Gefrin** they built their palace and meeting halls at the very place which the **Britons** had been using for centuries.

The **Anglo-Saxons** built grand palaces at Din Guayroi, at Ebaracum, and at Dinas Eidyn. They gave each of these new **Anglo-Saxon** names, which eventually became Bamburgh, York and Edinburgh. However, when they came to **Gefrin** in the hills of Northumberland they named their palace after the **British** fort still visible on the hill. It was called **Ad Gefrin**: 'Place of the Hill of the Goats'.

2500 BC

100 AD

600 AD

2000 AD

ROMANS

ANGLO-SAXONS

Years passed, decades passed, a century passed.
Then...

the Christians came...

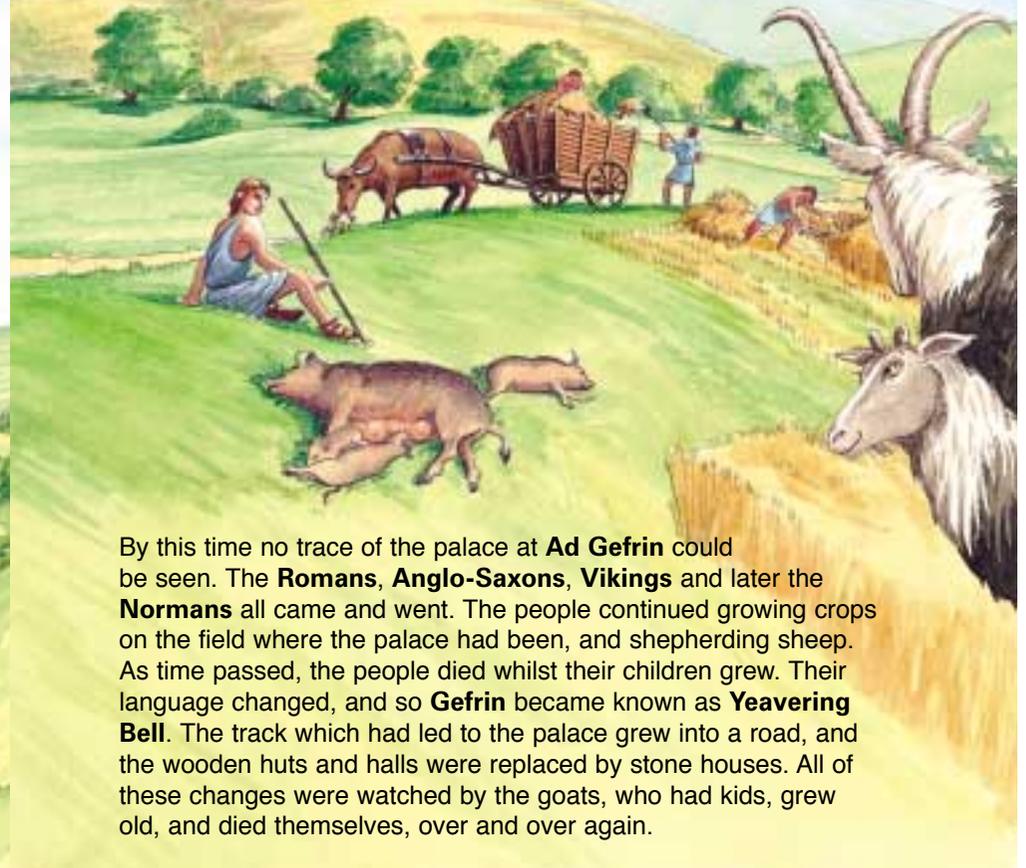
... and in 627 AD Edwin the Christian King of Northumbria invited the **missionary Paulinus** to preach to the local people at the palace of **Ad Gefrin**. **Paulinus** spent thirty six days instructing the people in **Christianity**, and then baptised them in the nearby River Glen (which means 'clean, holy, beautiful').

The many kings of Britain were at war with each other, and **Ad Gefrin** was burnt to the ground, rebuilt, destroyed again and eventually abandoned. A century later a monk named **Bede** described these glories and defeats in his book about the history of the English people. He never mentioned the goats, but they were still there, just as they had always been.



Years passed, decades passed, two centuries passed since the **Anglo-Saxons** first arrived, and then the **Vikings** came to the coast of Northumbria but didn't come to **Gefrin** as no-one lived there.

Years passed, decades passed, three centuries passed and the **Normans** came and built castles at York, Edinburgh and Bamburgh, but still nothing was built at **Gefrin**.



By this time no trace of the palace at **Ad Gefrin** could be seen. The **Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings** and later the **Normans** all came and went. The people continued growing crops on the field where the palace had been, and shepherding sheep. As time passed, the people died whilst their children grew. Their language changed, and so **Gefrin** became known as **Yeavinger Bell**. The track which had led to the palace grew into a road, and the wooden huts and halls were replaced by stone houses. All of these changes were watched by the goats, who had kids, grew old, and died themselves, over and over again.

2500 BC

627 AD
PAULINUS

731 AD
BEDE

800 AD
VIKINGS

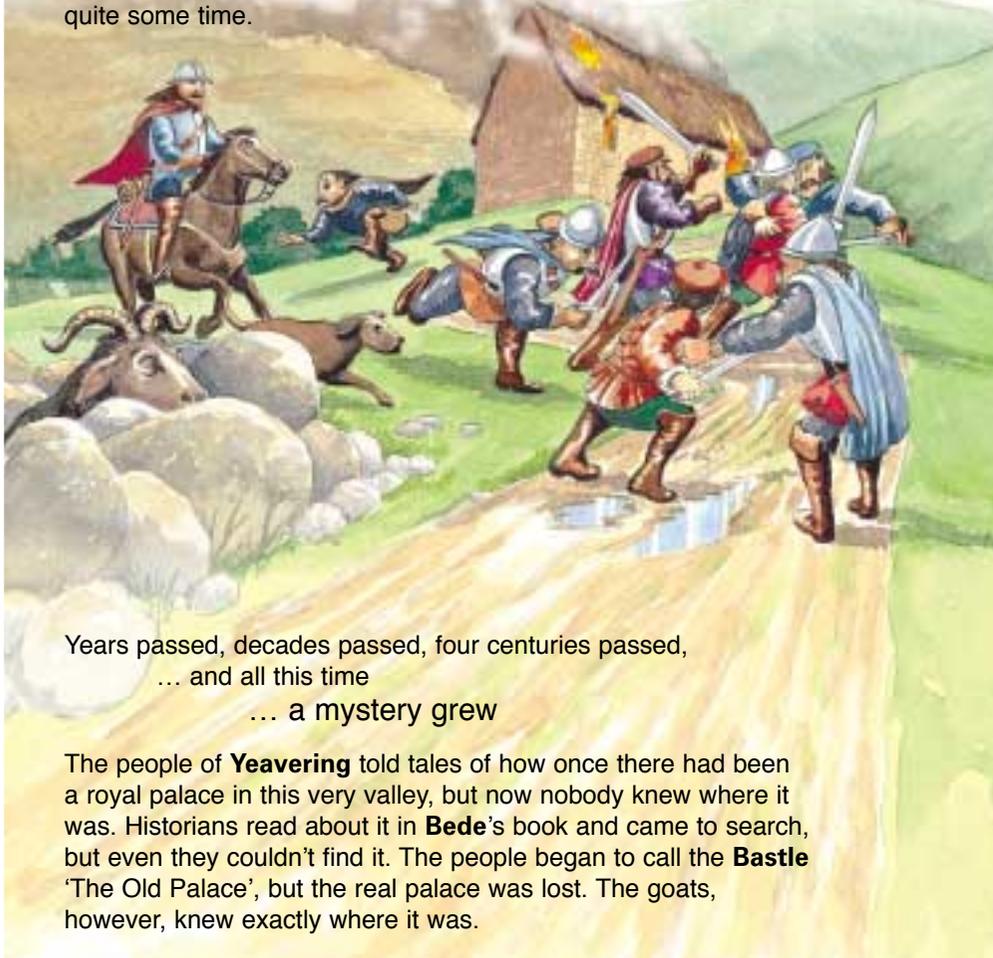
1100 AD
NORMANS

2000 AD

Years passed, decades passed, five centuries passed.
Then...

the Border Reivers came ...

... and raided the farms in the valley. So the farmers built a strong walled **Bastle** house to keep themselves and their animals safe. The goats spotted the **Reivers** coming and hid. This went on for quite some time.



Years passed, decades passed, four centuries passed,
... and all this time
... a mystery grew

The people of **Yeavering** told tales of how once there had been a royal palace in this very valley, but now nobody knew where it was. Historians read about it in **Bede's** book and came to search, but even they couldn't find it. The people began to call the **Bastle** 'The Old Palace', but the real palace was lost. The goats, however, knew exactly where it was.



Then...

aeroplanes and cameras came...

... and in the long, dry summer of 1949 an **archaeologist** hired an aeroplane and went looking for Roman forts in north Northumberland. He took photographs of fields which had rectangular marks showing in the crops. One field he photographed had a strange pattern of very strong markings. He knew they weren't Roman, but he was sure they were something important. He decided to show the photos to his friend, another **archaeologist**, to see if he could work out what they were. The goats looked up from their munching and chewed as they watched the plane circling overhead.



2500BC

1600AD

1949AD

2000AD

REIVERS

AEROPLANES
& CAMERAS

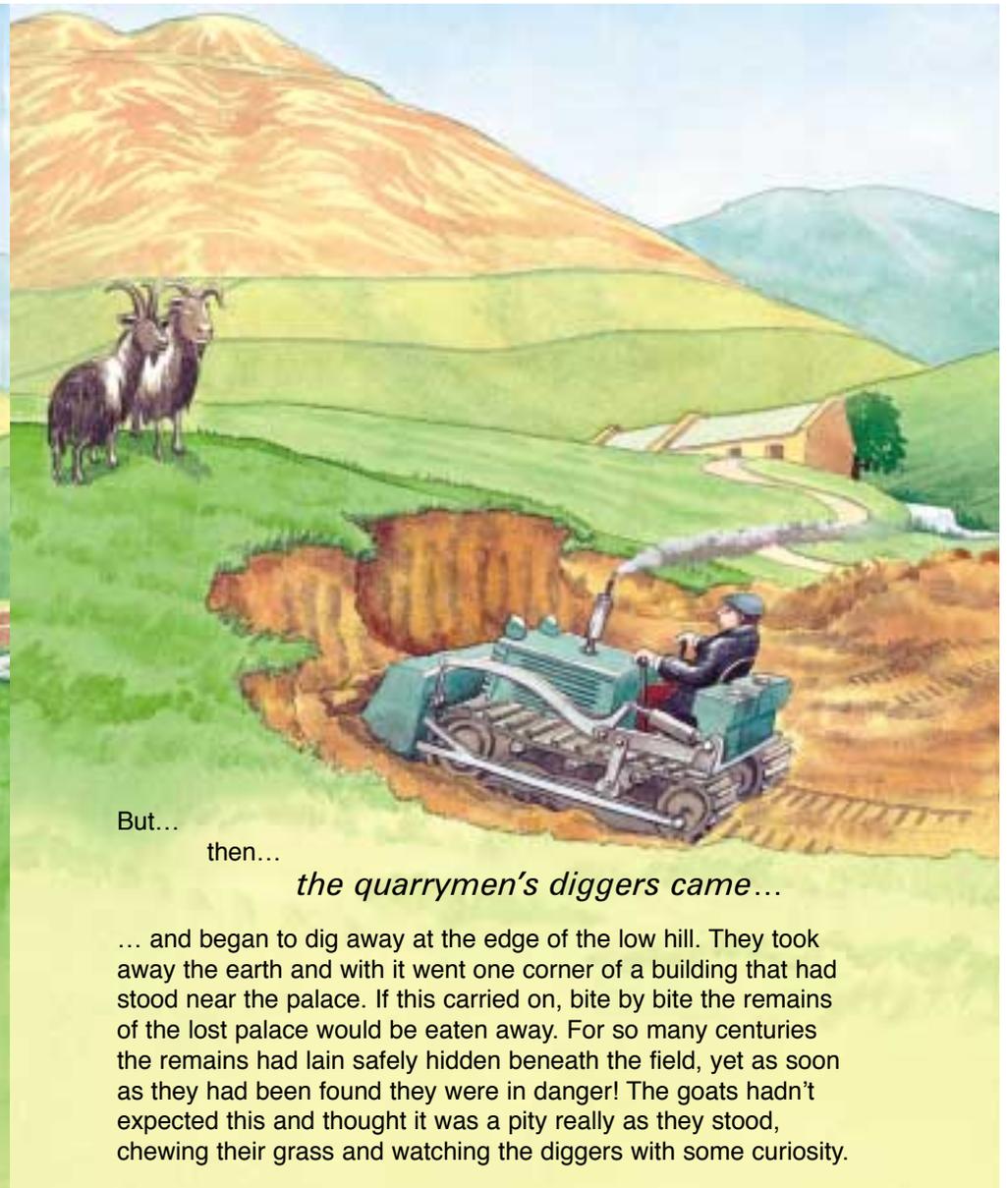
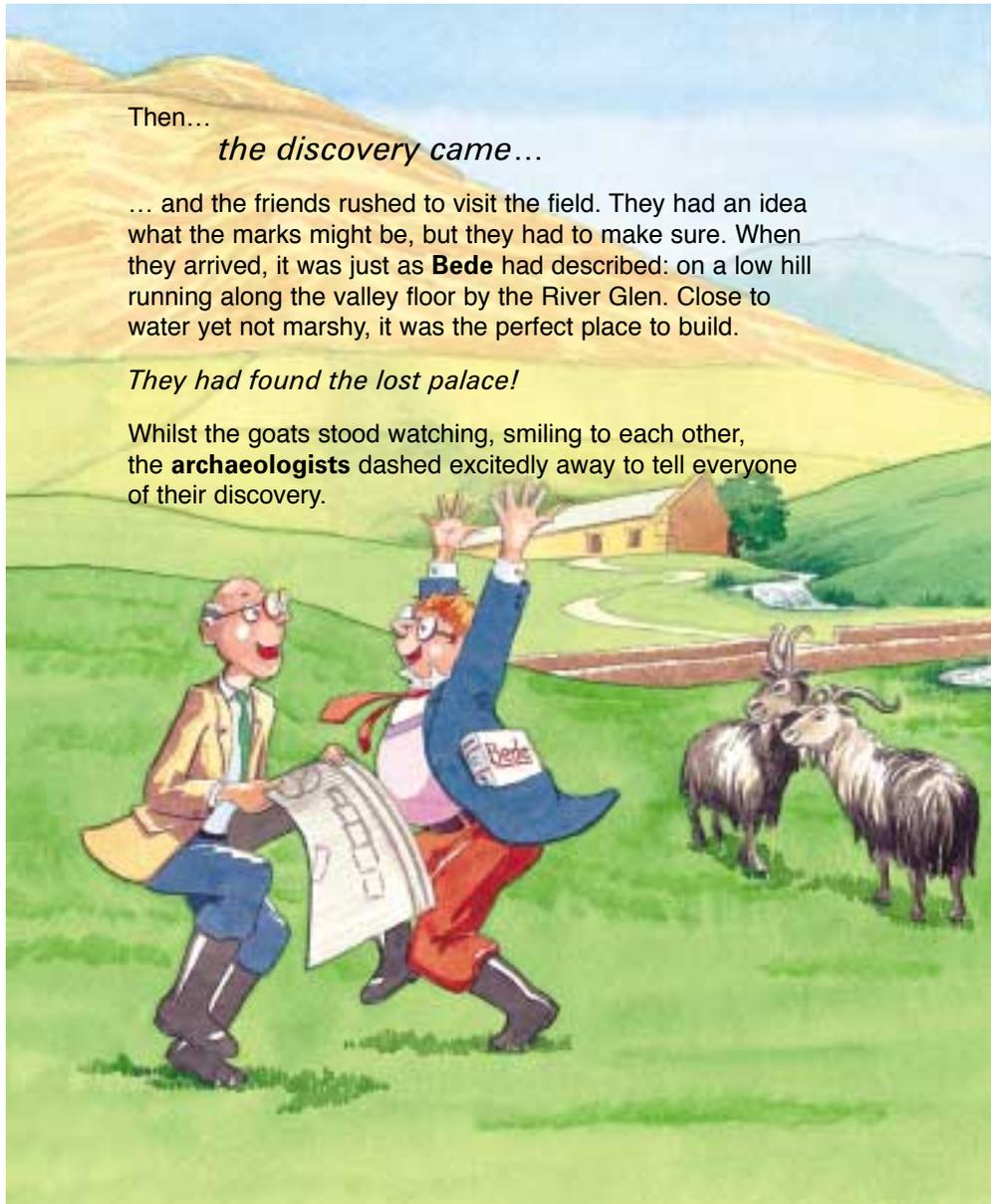
Then...

the discovery came...

... and the friends rushed to visit the field. They had an idea what the marks might be, but they had to make sure. When they arrived, it was just as **Bede** had described: on a low hill running along the valley floor by the River Glen. Close to water yet not marshy, it was the perfect place to build.

They had found the lost palace!

Whilst the goats stood watching, smiling to each other, the **archaeologists** dashed excitedly away to tell everyone of their discovery.



But...

then...

the quarrymen's diggers came...

... and began to dig away at the edge of the low hill. They took away the earth and with it went one corner of a building that had stood near the palace. If this carried on, bite by bite the remains of the lost palace would be eaten away. For so many centuries the remains had lain safely hidden beneath the field, yet as soon as they had been found they were in danger! The goats hadn't expected this and thought it was a pity really as they stood, chewing their grass and watching the diggers with some curiosity.



Then...
the rescue came...

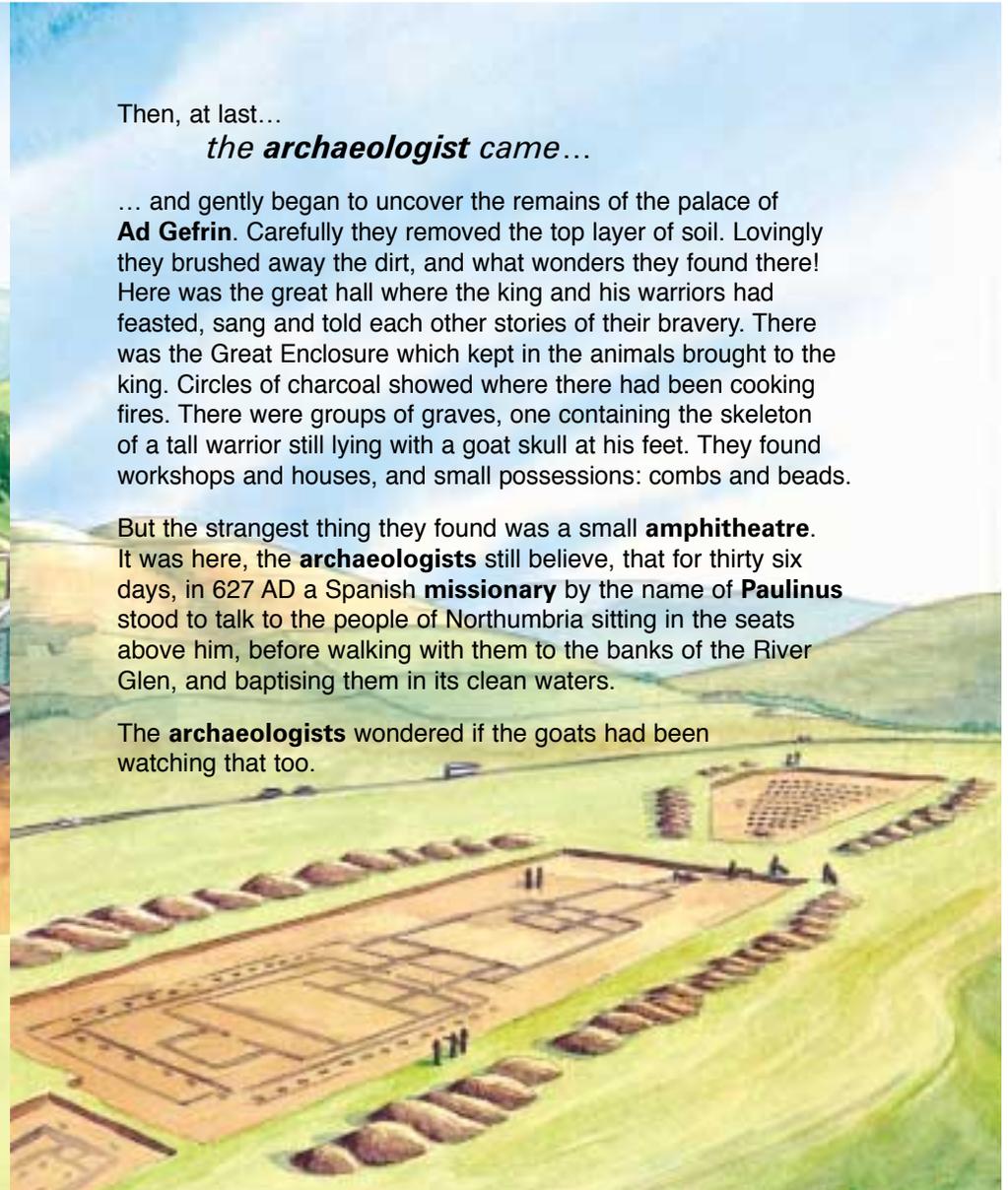
... the **archaeologists** wrote to the Chief Inspector of **Ancient Monuments** in London. When he had read the message he immediately realised that only he could save the palace. He telephoned the police to stop the diggers at once, and wrote an order which made sure that the only people who would ever be able to dig in the field would be **archaeologists**. The goats sighed and went back to chewing their grass.

Then, at last...
the archaeologist came...

... and gently began to uncover the remains of the palace of **Ad Gefrin**. Carefully they removed the top layer of soil. Lovingly they brushed away the dirt, and what wonders they found there! Here was the great hall where the king and his warriors had feasted, sang and told each other stories of their bravery. There was the Great Enclosure which kept in the animals brought to the king. Circles of charcoal showed where there had been cooking fires. There were groups of graves, one containing the skeleton of a tall warrior still lying with a goat skull at his feet. They found workshops and houses, and small possessions: combs and beads.

But the strangest thing they found was a small **amphitheatre**. It was here, the **archaeologists** still believe, that for thirty six days, in 627 AD a Spanish **missionary** by the name of **Paulinus** stood to talk to the people of Northumbria sitting in the seats above him, before walking with them to the banks of the River Glen, and baptising them in its clean waters.

The **archaeologists** wondered if the goats had been watching that too.



1949 AD RESCUE

1953 AD

ARCHAEOLOGISTS

12

2500 BC

11

2000 AD

Beowulf

This is a poem which describes an Anglo-Saxon Palace, similar to **Ad Gefrin**, which was probably written in the Eighth Century AD by an unknown writer. It is in the original Old English with literal (word for word) Modern English translation beneath.

Da ic wide gefrægn Then I widely heard	weorc gebannan work ordered
manigre mægþe from many a tribe	geond þisne middangeard, through this middle-earth,
folcstede frætwan. folk-hall to furnish.	Him on fyrste gelomp, For him in time it came,
ædre mid yldum, quick among men,	þæt hit wearð ealgearo, that it was all-ready,
healærna mæst; of hall-rooms' hugest;	scop him Heort naman gave it Heorot name
se þe his wordes geweald he who his word's wield	wide hæfde. widely had.
He beot ne aleh, He boasted not belied,	beagas dælde, rings dealt out,
sinc æt symle. treasure at feast.	Sele hlifade Hall towered
heah ond horngeap; high and horn-gabled;	heaðowylma bad, war surges it awaited
laðen liges; of loathed fire;	ne wæs hit lenge þa gen, nor was it for long yet
þæt se ecghte that the sword-hate	aþumsweoran of oath swearers
æfter wælniðe after deadly feud	wæcnan scolde. awaken should.

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Bede

Description of the **missionary Paulinus** baptising the people of Northumbria at **Ad Gefrin** in 627 AD. Written by **Bede** in 731 AD. Original Latin with Modern English translation.

...Tantus autem fertur tunc fuisse feruor fidei ac desiderium lauacri salutaris genti Nordanhymbrorum, ut quodam tempore Paulinus ueniens cum rege et regina in uillam regiam, auae uocatur Adgefrin, XXXVI diebu ibidem cum eis cathecizandi et baptizandi officio deditus moraretur; quibus diebus cunctis a mane usque ad uesperam nil aliud agret, quam confluentem eo de cunctis uiculis ac locis plebem Christi uerbo salutis instruere, atque instructam in fluuio Gleni, qui proximus eret, lauacro remissionis abluere. Haec uilla tempore sequentium regum deserta, et alia pro illa est facta in loco, qui uocatur Maelmin.

... Indeed, so great was the fervour of faith and desire for baptism among the Northumbrian people that **Paulinus** is said to have accompanied the king and queen to the royal residence at **Ad Gefrin** and remained there thirty six days constantly occupied in instructing and baptising. During this period, he did nothing from dawn to dusk but proclaim Christ's saving message to the people, who gathered from all the surrounding villages and countryside; and when he had instructed them, he washed them in the cleansing waters of Baptism in the nearby River Glen. This residence was abandoned by later kings, who built another at a place called Maelmin (Milfield).

How the Lost Palace was Found

Archaeologists are people who study ancient cultures by using things that have been left behind, such as ruins, stone tools and graves. They also use old writings, folklore and modern science. In fact, they use anything that is available!

The **archaeologists** knew that there had been a palace called **Ad Gefrin**, because of **Bede's** writing. They guessed roughly where it could be because of the 'Old Palace', although they didn't think that building was old enough to be **Ad Gefrin** itself. Most **archaeologists** spent their time **excavating** those archaeological sites that they knew most about or those that were threatened.



The marks in the crops which showed up from the aeroplane followed the outline of the walls of the palace buildings. This is because holes had been made for the posts and walls, and the soil which filled the holes was different to that of the rest of the field. This meant that the crops grew taller, showing the outline of the buildings from the air. When the **archaeologists** saw the crop marks in the photograph, they told the Chief Inspector of **Ancient Monuments**. He protected the site from being quarried and gave the **archaeologists** enough money to **excavate** the remains. This would allow everybody to understand more about **Anglo-Saxon** people and their buildings. At the start of the summer of 1953, they began the **excavations**.

The **archaeologists** began to carefully remove the top layer of soil. For hundreds of years the ground had been ploughed by farmers and the top 20cm was so mixed up that they could learn very little from it. So they gently began to brush away at the layers below, recording the position and depth of each layer.

When they found a change in the soil, from brown to black, they knew they had found charcoal from a fire. This could be from a cooking fire, or evidence that a building had been burnt down. When they found a deep layer of soft soil they knew this was where a wooden wall had been. When they found a grave, they recorded exactly where the grave goods, skeleton or ashes lay. When they found a piece of pottery, a bead or a comb buried in the soil, they recorded its position and very carefully brushed away the soil, put the **artefact** in a labelled bag and took it away to be cleaned, studied and conserved.

At the end of the summer, they covered over the field with a tarpaulin and soil to protect it from the winter weather. In the summer they returned. This continued for several years, and at the end a huge book, 8cm thick with 500 pages, was written to describe their work and ideas. A monument to **Ad Gefrin** was built at the side of the road.



Now **Yeavering Bell** lies within Northumberland National Park. Because it is such a special place, the European Community and the National Lottery have given the National Park money to conserve and investigate **Yeavering** and the surrounding landscape. The National Park believes that everyone should have the chance to learn about the wonderful history of Northumberland. Thank you for reading this book.

GLOSSARY

Ad Gefrin	the name of the Anglo-Saxon palace. It means 'The Place of the Hill of the Goats'.
amphitheatre	building with rows of seats rising above a stage
Ancient Monument	a construction (or its remains) listed by the Government as being of historical interest
Anglo-Saxons	invaders of the east of England from Europe. Eventually became integrated with the Britons.
archaeologist	a person who explores the past by studying ancient remains
artefact	a thing, often found by archaeologists, e.g. comb, arrowhead
Bastle	a defensible farmhouse unique to the English/Scottish borders built by Reivers during the border wars 1550 - 1620 AD
Bede	an historian who lived as a monk in the monastery at Jarrow. He died in 735 AD after writing in Latin some of the first histories of Britain.
Bell	a local name given to bell shaped hills, e.g. Yeavinger Bell
Britons, British	the people who lived on the island of Britain before the Romans invaded
Christians	people who worship Jesus Christ and believe he is the son of the only one true God
excavating, excavation	the slow and careful way that archaeologists study ancient remains of buildings, recording everything that they find

GLOSSARY

Gefrin	the British name for the hill in the story. It means 'The Hill of the Goats'
henge	a large circular bank of earth which some Stone Age people may have used to worship their gods, including the sun. (Stonehenge is the best known example.)
hillfort	a defensible settlement on a hill top
missionary	a Christian priest sent to convert other people to Christianity by preaching to them and baptising them in water
Normans	people from part of France, who conquered England in 1066 AD
Paulinus	Christian missionary sent from Spain to the Anglo-Saxon king of Kent. Accompanied his daughter Queen Ethelburh (wife of Edwin, King of Northumbria 616–633 AD) to Northumberland as part of her marriage contract.
Reivers	warring families of the English and Scottish borders who regularly stole each other's sheep, cattle and horses
Romans	invaders from southern Europe who arrived in Britain in 55 AD and left in 450 AD. Less successful at conquering the north of Britain than the south.
Vikings	Scandinavian raiders who eventually settled in England alongside the Anglo-Saxons
Yeavinger	the modern name for the area in the story. The hill is now known as Yeavinger Bell. The name means 'Hill of the Goats'.