

# Pendomer – bloody times

## From the Anglo Saxon Chronicle:

AD 658 *This year Kenwal fought with the Welsh at Penn, and pursued them to the Parret.*

The Welsh (or Britons), driven by the Saxons into the West Country and bent on retaliation for the treatment they had received, invaded Wessex committing the most dreadful outrages as they went. King Kenwal of the West Saxons marched a powerful force to meet them but they were surprised by a furious ambush at Penn<sup>1</sup> and almost overpowered; however, they rallied and mounted a fierce counter-attack that eventually had the Welsh fleeing in retreat.

AD 1001 *This year the [Danish] army came to Exmouth, and then went up to the town, and there continued fighting stoutly; but they were very strenuously resisted. Then went they through the land, and did all as was their wont; destroyed and burnt. Then was collected a vast force of the people of Devon and of the people of Somerset, and they then came together at Penn. And so soon as they joined battle, then the people gave way: and there they made great slaughter, and then they rode over the land, and their last incursion was ever worse than the one before...then it was in every wise a heavy time, because they never ceased from their evil doings.*

The Vikings, led by the Danes, had a vicious but effective way of extracting ransom from the English and between 991 and 1016 they took home over 100 tonnes of silver. In 1001 their target was the South of England which they terrorised from Devon to Hampshire. An attempt to overcome them by armed force at Penn<sup>1</sup> was spectacularly unsuccessful.

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<sup>1</sup> There is of course no conclusive proof that “Penn” in the Chronicles is the “Penne” of the Domesday Book.