

A CHRONICLE OF CRAYKE

This narrative started when I wrote out in chronological order the events recorded in deeds and documents belonging to Crayke Hall, and then gathered momentum and has ended as a story of events in Crayke.

At the end is a long list of Histories, reference books and documents from which information on Crayke has been gleaned. Many of these were the discoveries of Dr. Ron Hester of Crayke, particularly those from sources in Durham and in the Minster Library, York and the Borthwick Institute, York.

Mr. G.C. Cowling of Easingwold had collected information on Crayke at the time that he had written his History of Easingwold. His notes gave valuable comments on the fields and closes in the 1688 and 1754 Surveys of Crayke, and he had researched into the records of the North Riding Quarter Sessions. Mr. Cowling had got details of these two early surveys and their maps from Mr. A.D. Cliff of the Manor, Crayke. Mr. T.M. Highams notes on his Castle at Crayke have been of great help. Others who have contributed have been the Rector, Rev. Kenneth Nelson, Miss Gilleard, Mrs. Parkin, Miss Ena Johnson and the Misses Knowles. I am grateful for their help and kindness, and in particular thank Dr. Hester for his encouragement.

I am certain that there is a lot more about Crayke of the past hidden in deeds, documents and records in the village that I have not found. This narrative is written in a chronological order of happenings. I have been asked if I was writing a History of Crayke but this would have been too grand a title for this rambling narrative of mixed events. A Dictionary describes a "Chronicle" as telling or writing a story of things in order of time, this seems nearer to what I have produced, so I have called it "A Chronicle of Crayke."

Harry Spence

Crayke Hall 1974

An Introduction to Crayke

Crayke lies approximately twelve miles north of York, the highest point in the parish being the hill on which the Castle stands, 379 feet above sea level. Its lowest point is 123 feet being where the Brandsby road passes over the Foss. The parish is situated on the upper, middle and lower lias.

From the top of the hill the view to the North is to the Hambleton Hills with the White Horse on Sutton Bank, and Hood Hill. This far high ground sweeps round towards the East to the Howardian Hills and in between lies some nearer high ground around Newburgh Park, to Yearsley Bank, Brandsby and Terrington Banks.

To the East are the East Riding Wolds. to the south stretches the flat plain of York on where in clear days can be seen York Minster standing up above the city. unfortunately it has been joined in these modern times by the great chimneys and cooling towers of the power stations of Drax, Eggborough and Ferrybridge.

The view to the West is towards the pennines, though it needs an exceptional day to see clearly some of the features in this direction

The name - Crayke

It has been put forward that the name of the village comes from a Celtic word meaning rock or crag. In the Welsh tongue today "Craig" is a rock and a stone is "careg."

The spelling of the name of Crayke has varied over the years, and amongst the spellings have been:-

Creca	-	Saxon AD 685
Cric	-	Saxon AD 767
Creic	-	Saxon - post Danish Invasion c AD 990 and Norman c AD 1086
Crec	-	13th and 14th Century
Crayk	-	c AD 1487
Crek	-	c AD 1520
Crake	-	c AD 1560
Craik	-	AD 1662
Craike	-	post AD 1663
Crake	-	AD 1716
Craikshire	-	Early 19th Century, called so because of its detached nature from Durham to which it belonged.
Craik	-	Early 19th Century
Crayke	-	c AD 1850

The last spelling was favoured by Archdeacon Churton of Crayke who wrote the Chapter on Crayke in Gills "Wallis Eboracensis". He said that this spelling had the best authority in its favour as it was used in the Ecclesiastical Records of the Cathedral Church of Durham upon which the Manor, Church and Rectory had been dependant from very remote times.

The beginnings of Crayke

One great influence in the creation of Crayke was an ancient trackway, dating from the Bronze age which ran north and south. This route is described in detail in the History of Helmsley, Riveaulx and District, which says that of all the ancient trackways running north and south across the high moors near Helmsley, the most notable, and for long the most dominant road in the area was the Hambleton Street referred to as a "regalis via" in a document in the Riveaulx Chartulary. Hambleton Street on this royal way was part of a major trade artery of prehistoric times, crossing the Tees at Yarm, it climbed up to the

moor top at Scarth Nick, skirted Osmotherley and followed the western escarpment of the Hambleton Hills to Sutton Bank Top. Here the track forked, and the branch which concerns us descended via Oldstead to Coxwold, Crayke and York. The other, and probably more ancient branch went from Sutton Bank via Tom Smiths Cross to Oswald Bank Top, Stonegrave, Hovingham, Malton, and then off south again along the East Riding Wolds to cross the Humber at Brough and on south via the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Our branch of this ancient bronze age thoroughfare was in use for many years, the Bishop of Durham used it travelling to and from York, it was possibly St. Aelred's route from Scotland to York. offered an inconspicuous route to Scottish marauders, and from its title, the Royal way, had been used by various monarchs on their campaigns or journeyings.

Crayke Hill being a convenient distance for a march to or from York, and offering a refuge up out of swamps and a place that could be defended, attracted a settlement on this ancient trackway.

Early relics of man at Crayke

The earliest relics of man in the Crayke area are a broken flint leaf head and a polished stone axe being identified as of Neolithic Man c. 3000 BC. The flint was found in 1957 when Mr. Trenholme of Hutton-le-Hole was digging a hole for an electrical pole at Mount Pleasant Farm, N.W. of Crayke, and in the field to the west of this site a boy from Bulmer found the stone axe head. Neolithic man was advanced enough to cultivate cereals as well as hunt, and used pottery.

From a slightly later date, a fine little tanged and barbed flint arrowhead of the Bronze Age period (1700-1400 BC) was found by Mrs. R. Knowles of Crayke in the field known as the Hurns on the south side of Toad Close. This could have come from someone using the ancient trackway or from a settler at Crayke. Hundreds of late Bronze Age Relics (900-600 BC) have been found in Yorkshire. These people could use a stick plough.

The Crayke relics were identified by the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

The Brigantes - 4 BC to 74 AD

In 4 BC more invaders came to the North of England from Germany and introduced the Iron Age, and in 3 BC further invaders came from around the shores of Lake Constance and mingled with their predecessors and began the amalgam of Northern folk known as the Brigantes (named after Brigenz near L. Constance).

Crayke Hill lay in Brigantium which embraced Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmorland and perhaps its Celtic name was given to the site in this time, to some settlement be it a farm or village. The Brigantes began to use a plough of a heavier type by AD 70 called the Celtic or Belgian type.

The Brigantes used the ancient north and south trackway as did their predecessors.

The Romans arrive in the North 74 AD

Yorkshire, and the Brigantes showed considerable resistance to the Romans. It is however likely that trade with the Romans had preceded their entry into Yorkshire. Over the next hundred of years the Romanisation of Yorkshire was a gradual process, and for the Celtic farmers it was a period of prosperity when they supplied the Roman Garrisons with grain and wheat.

Historians up to the 19th Century could only speculate about the Roman presence at Crayke, but in the 20th Century Archaeological finds revealed Romano-British occupation in the late 4th Century circa AD 370-395.

Crayke as a place of defence

ancient system of fortification, standing detached from other hills, and with a space on top which might easily be enclosed with a ditch and a rampart, and marking it out for a camp or a castle at a very early period. He says. "It has been the opinion of some antiquaries, and many others, we believe of Drake, the able Historian of York, that the Romans had here a "castellum exploratum" or watch tower, whence they might look out and detect any hostile incursion from the neighbouring country. but we can find no trace of any such post in the Roman Itinaries or Geographers."

Many years had elapsed from the Claudian invasion of Britain in 43 AD, before Petilius Cerealis advanced into

Gill points out in his book the advantageous situation of Crayke hill as a place of defence in times of the

Roman Roads

Tees apparently following the ancient Bronze age trackway. Two other Roman roads also ran northwards from York, one via Easingwold to Thirsk and Northallerton, and the other to Beningbrough, Newton and over the river at the Aldwark ferry.

A Royal Society of Antiquaries map of Roman roads shows one from York via Crayke to the Hambleton Hills to the

Two Roman roads or British tradeways ran westward from Walton, one via Hovingham, Gilling Castle to Thirsk, and the other via Appleton and Barton-le-Street, and then via Crayke or nearby it to Aldborough via Easingwold.

In modern excavations traces of the Roman road north through Crayke have been discovered near Coxwold and on the road past Newburgh to Crayke.

Relics of Roman occupation at Crayke

identified by the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

Discoveries between 1937 and 1958 have indicated the areas in Crayke and its surrounds that were in Romano-British occupation. All finds have been

The first finds were at the Hall in 1937 when the site of the new tennis court was being prepared on the hillside towards the Brandsby road. Amongst relics of several eras were three types of Roman pottery sherds. One type were from cooking pots of the sort found in quantities at Roman coastal signal stations, the other two types were of barrel shaped jars, also of the type used in Roman signal stations. Experts deduced from them that people were living on Crayke hill at the end of the 4th Century.

Next signs of occupation on Crayke hill came when the reservoir was being dug on top of the hill in 1948 between the Church and the Castle. Mrs. R. Knowles found on the site a piece of Roman flue tile near the south side of the reservoir, and Mrs. Knowles and Dr. Thomas of the Castle noticed large areas of black material thought to have been connected with a hypocaust furnace. This evidence received further support of Roman occupation on top of the hill when trial digs were made in 1956 on the edges of the reservoir and churchyard sites, when to the north of the churchyard a piece of Roman box flue tile with crossed diagonal striations was found, being 30 yards away from the earlier discovery. The deduction was that there had existed a considerable Roman building on top of the hill not far away from its hypocaust furnace.

The Romans also lived in the areas around Crayke Hill, at Woodhouse Farm in 1956. Mr. Nelson ploughed up large quantities of stone in Toad Close, south of Daffy lane. in an area where elsewhere the field was stoneless. Excavations were then made by Mrs. Knowles and Mr. S.V. Morris and revealed extensive patches of rough paving or cobbles. and roofing slabs and flue tiles implied rectangular buildings of Romano-British type and some pottery of 4th Century AD. In 1958 a drainage trench just north of this site on the other side of Daffy lane produced more Roman Sherds of the same period.

Pieces of querns were ploughed up by Olaf Slater south west of Park House in 1956, and in the same year, Mr. Jackson found pieces of querns at Zion Hill Farm, north of Crayke.

Further Roman finds were made in 1957 at Mount Pleasant Farm, also on a footpath running north from Crayke Castle and on a site south east of Broad Dyke on the south side of Crayke hill.

Thus the Historians assumptions of Roman occupation at Crayke are confirmed by all these finds, and whether it had a watch tower on top of the hill or not, it certainly had at one period a large Roman building.

The Romans Depart from England - AD 410

The Roman Legions began to withdraw from Britain in AD 410 and Roman Yorkshire began to come to an end and with their departure began the period

of the Dark Ages which lasted to around AD 600, which left no written record, in contrast to the Roman period.

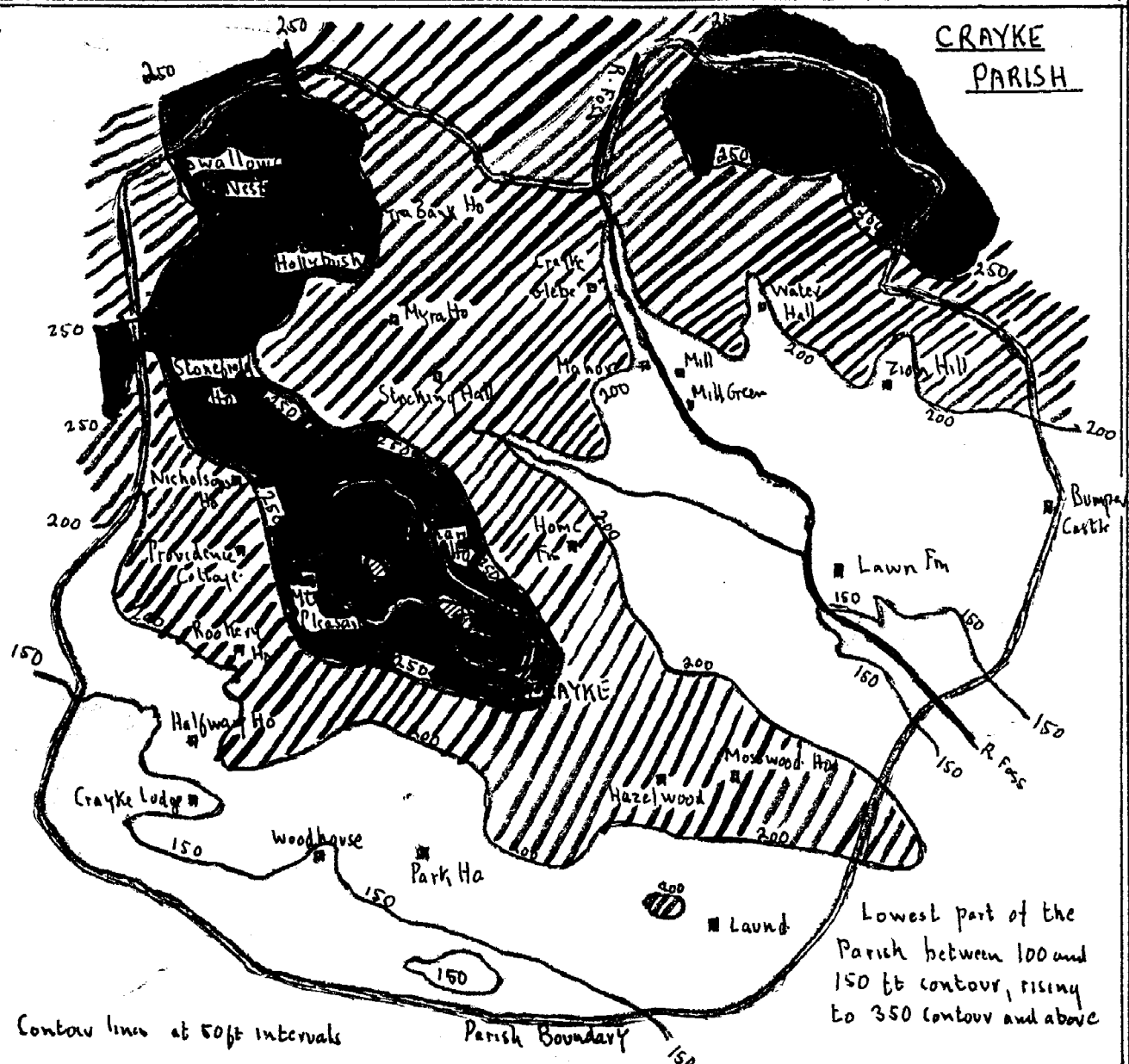
The houses in England left by the Romans were not kept up and disappeared soon after they had gone, and so they left no influence on buildings in England.

The Saxons settle in Yorkshire - AD 560

The Saxons came from North West Europe driven out of their old lands by the North Sea invasions over their low lying ground. According to Raistrick.

the first Saxon settlements were made in Yorkshire around AD 560, and Saxon Kings were established in Northumbria (which included Yorkshire) about AD 600. Saxon villages were established between the 7th and 10th Centuries, but Crayke kept its Celtic name as "Creca" or "Cric" amongst the Saxon Villages surrounding it with their names ending in "...ton" (as it did later amongst the Danish settlements with their names ending in ".....by").

CRAYKE PARISH



Contour lines at 50ft intervals

Parish Boundary

Lowest part of the Parish between 100 and 150 ft contour, rising to 350 contour and above

Evidence of early Saxon occupation of Crayke was found during excavations on the tennis court site at the Hall in 1937, when a beautiful bronze ring was found. This was identified by the British Museum as belonging to the Dark Ages, and they said that it was typical of rings found in Gall-Roman and Frankish Cemeteries from the period of late 4th Century to early in the 7th Century. To quote from the Archaeological report - "Thus the Crayke fragments could perhaps be referred to an early phase of the Anglian Settlement in Yorkshire, it could be of late Roman age, but more likely belongs to the first half of the 7th Century in the period of the conversion of Edwin of Northumbria, and Paulinus's foundation of the Church at York (AD 627).

According to some writers there is said to have been a Church at Crayke in AD 660.

The Gift of Crayke to St. Cuthbert AD 685

Oswald, King of Northumbria created the Bishopric of Lindisfarne in AD 635, and Cuthbert was appointed Bishop. The Bishops of Lindisfarne were the fore runners of the Bishops of Durham. It was in AD 685 that Crayke was given by Egfrid, King of Northumbria to Cuthbert. A history records this as follows:- "So great was King Egfrid's respect and reverence for St. Cuthbert that he added greatly to the possessions of the Church over which Cuthbert presided. His chief donation was the vill of Craik near Easingwold and all the country within a circuit of three miles, Carlisle with a fifteen mile circuit and a mansion at York, with its grounds extending from the Church of St. Peter (The Minster) to the City Wall."

Thus on the ancient trackway from the North, the Bishops of Lindisfarne and their Successors of Durham had a resting place before their last stage of their travels to York. This gift of Crayke to the Bishop was to shape its history for many years up to the 19th Century.

* History from the Invasion of the Romans to the Reign of Henry VIII commissioned by the Master of the Rolls, 1873 (Vol I).

The story of a Monastery at Crayke

Symeon the early Historian of Durham also records the gift of Crayke to St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne - "the Manor of Creca (the vill together with the country around three miles in circuit), to be the site of a house in which to rest on the journey to and from York." Symeon then adds that Cuthbert founded "a monastery" there and advanced an Abbot (and tradition has it that this lasted until 883).

There is much doubt about there being a proper monastery at Crayke and some think that the story of the monastery originated only in the application of the word "monasterium" to the Episcopal household at Crayke. Bede mentions however that a feature of Anglican christianity at this time was the establishment of Monasteries, and it is possible that St. Cuthbert did establish a dwelling house for a Society of monks.

Gill in his history states "Here they say St. Cuthbert shortly afterwards founded a dwelling for a society of monks which appears to have remained until the time of the Danish invasion. These society of monks were not as those found in the religious orders preceeding the Reformation. These primitive monks spread Christianity to the pagans and also instructed them in the arts of husbandry and pasturage. Cuthbert, when Abbot of Melrose journied wide on horseback and foot, doing this according to Bede, and it is presumed that his disciples imitated the practice of their master."

The foundation of an early Church at Crayke

St. Cuthbert died in AD 687, just two years after being granted the vill of Creca, so his direct influence on Crayke was for a very short time, but after his death his body was brought years later to rest for a while at Crayke during the Danish invasion. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle says of AD 740 - "this year York was on fire."

It is a supposition that when Cuthbert established his "monasterium", that if a church was not already in existence that he would have likely founded one.

Etha the Anchorite dies at Crayke, AD 767

"In this year," says Symeon. "Etha the anchorite died happily at Cric. a place which is distanced ten miles from York." Etha had been settled in

Crayke for some time and because of this Crayke was regarded as a holy place apart from its association with St. Cuthbert. It is stated that a group of clergy gathered around Etha in the 8th Century, thus making Crayke an important church centre.

Alcuin of York mentions Etha in his "Poem of the Bishops and Saints of York," and according to Alcuin, Etha of Crayke dwelt on a lonely hill surrounded with a deep forest, so thick that according to old tradition a squirrel could hop from thence to York from bough to bough. "Here in the depth" said Alcuin, "he had an angelical life."

Alcuin's poem:-

Claruit his etiam venerabilis Etha diebus

"While Egbert held the see of Ancient York
Then flourish'd Etha. venerable man,
A holy anchorite in wilderness:
A secret life he sought. and in chaste zeal
Fled from all earthly honours that. with God
His King, he might find honours at heav'ns court:
Devoutly led on earth an angels life,
And seem'd as with prophetic pow'r inspired.

Danish and Viking Raids
AD 787 to AD 793 and
their presence at Crayke

Danish and Viking raids on the Kingdom of Northumbria including Yorkshire took place in the 8th Century beginning around AD 787. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle records the ill omens that

occurred before the Danish raid on Northumbria in AD 793 - "Dread prodigies appeared over Northumbria, and miserably terrified the people; that is, whirlwinds beyond measure, and lightnings, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the sky. Upon these tokens soon followed great famine, and a little after that, in the same year, on the 6th day of the Ides of January, the harrying of the heathen men miserably destroyed God's church at Lindisfarne."

So on top of a famine the Christians of the north suffered the calamity of the sack of Lindisfarne, but later after attacks on Tynemouth and Jarrow the Danes were repulsed and public calm was restored, and St. Cuthbert's burial place at Lindisfarne was again surrounded by its sacred buildings and its monks.

Sometime in the 8th Century, the Viking raiders had reached Crayke - and relics of this were found in 1937 in the excavations at the Hall. On the bank above the tennis court was found a layer of burnt material an inch thick and twenty feet long, the remains of a building that had been burnt down. In the burnt material were Viking relics. a sword, pieces of broken swords, a horses bit and

ring, a fastener for a gate or hook, a socketed gouge, six chisels, knives, hooks, portions of iron hoops, a portion of a horseshoe, and a solid iron ingot for manufacturing items. Mr. Mortimer Wheeler and the Newcastle Museum confirmed that these items were Viking relics of the 8th Century, all the specimens are in the Mortimer Wheeler Museum Hall.

Aethelwulf's Poem and
a monastery at Crayke
AD 802-820

"a thegn" forced into monasticism by the King. The monastery is described as being near a city, at that time the only City in Northumbria was York.

Around AD 802-820 a poem was written by Aethelwulf and dedicated to Egbert (Egberht), Bishop of Lindisfarne. It tells the story of the founding of a monastery by a certain Eamund,

Writers have thought that the site could have been Crayke. Symeon the Historian of Durham thought that a monastery or cell existed at Crayke in the early 9th Century in which one Aethelwulf lived and wrote.

Evidence of a more solid sort came to light in 1937 with the finding at the Hall in the excavations of a Saxon Cross of the period 800-850 AD. Though it was broken it had not been exposed to the weather and was in good condition. Presumably it was connected with a church or holy establishment at Crayke, and it is now preserved in St. Cuthbert's Church, Crayke. (Sent to Yorkshire Museum later)

The decline of the Kingdom
of Northumbria and the
seizure of Crayke by Ella

Northumbria at this time was the prize in a contest between two native princes, Osbert of the Royal family who had treacherously slain the rightful possessor of the throne, and Ella, a stranger to their blood, but raised up by a party in revenge for his opponents crime.

At the beginning of the 9th Century, the prosperity of the Kingdom of Northumbria began to decline, and by AD 827 it was subordinate to the Kingdom of Wessex under Egbert.

Both these princes are said to have seized lands which had been consecrated to the Church, and according to Symeon and others, amongst the places that Ella had taken, Crayke is especially mentioned.

There presumably existed on Crayke hill at this time some large building such as a Saxon "Hall" in which Ella lived when he used it as a hunting seat. A Saxon Hall was usually a large wooden rectangular building, protected from hostilities by a fence or by banks and ditches

The Legend of Ella and
Ragnar Lodbrog the Sea King

by the words of the "Death Song of Lodbrog." Tradition has it that this occurred at Crayke which Ella had seized for himself but there is no proof for this.

A legend told of the death of Ragnar Lodbrog at the hands of Ella, King of Beirnicea, and the story is given some substance in Scandinavian antiquities

The story, as told by "Legends and Traditions of Yorkshire" by the Rev. Thos. Parkinson (published Elliot Stock, London 1888) is as follows.

So far back as the days of the Saxon and the Dane there stood, on the well known prominent hill beyond Easingwold, the Castle of Crake - or Crec, as it was then called. Though situated in the Saxon

Kingdom of Deira, it belonged, at the time of our story, to Ella, King of Bernicia, the more northern division of Northumbria. It had previously been given to St. Cuthbert the well known northern saint, as a resting place on his long journey from Lindisfarne to the south; but Ella who had little respect either for religion or for right, had seized upon it, and converted it into a fortress in his neighbours domains, and its underground dungeons into a prison for those whom he wished to hide from the world.

About the same period there was reigning in the Danish islands a noted King named Ragnor Lodbrog. None of their ancient Kings is more celebrated in Scandinavian poetry than Ragnor. His Queen was a shepherdess, celebrated for beauty and song whom he found on the Norwegian mountains. Troubles however arose, and Ragnor was driven from his Kingdom. As was usual in those times, he fitted up a warship and, with a number of followers such as himself started off to find another home, and establish another Kingdom, wherever the fates should lead him.

He landed on the coasts of Bernicia near Bamborough and before Ella the King could collect his forces to oppose him, he desolated, with the usual ferocity and cruelty of the Danes, the farmsteads and villages in the vicinity. Still according to the notions of the time a grand and noble old Dane was he. But at length Ella came upon his small band with a larger force and nearly annihilated it. Ragnor however had not the fortune to fall in the fight. He was taken prisoner. Ella spared none that offended him; and his royal prisoner he sent off to his remote inland stronghold at Crake, that he might there wreak his revenge on the invader of Bernicia, and set an example of his vengeance which other northern Vikings might expect if they set foot in Ella's domains.

The dungeon beneath the old castle at Crake was furnished with snakes and vipers, and venomous and loathsome reptiles of every kind for the purpose of torture and death. The entrance was a round hole in its roof. To this the unfortunate Ragnor was brought. He was divested of his clothing, and then by means of a rope, lowered into the horrible pit, then drawn up again for the gratification of his tormentor, and taunted, and bid to beg for mercy. Instead of which, he cursed the Saxon King, and rejoiced in the assurance that those would come from Denmark who would avenge their Vinsmen's cruel death, and slay his oppressor, and that his own greatest gratification in the great hereafter would be to drink out of the skull of Ella at the banqueting tables of Odin in the halls of Valhalla. With these words on his lips, he was lowered again into the place of death. And so died the old Scandinavian heathen warrior and King in the Castle of Crake. Lodbrog's death song, ascribed to Austega his widowed queen is among the best and most popular of the Scandinavian sagas, or ancient poetry.

Hinga, Hubba and Bruen, his three sons as the old warrior had foreseen, avenged his death. They came with their hordes up the Humber, laid siege to York, and first defeated Ella's ally Osbert, and then Ella himself. One account says they took Ella captive and ordered him to be flayed alive. The complete conquest of the country followed, the sceptre of the whole of Northumbria passed from Saxon to Danish hands.

In this story we have no doubt legend, tradition and historic truth mingled together and it requires the knowledge of a Freeman or a Stubbs to disentangle them. (This legend is of the descent of the Danes on Northumbria between 862 AD and 880 AD alleged in revenge for Lodbrog's death).

In Gills "Vallis Eboracensis", Archdeacon Churton mentions the same legend, saying that among other places on which Ella had laid his sacrilegious hands, Crayke is specially mentioned according to Simeon of Durham.

Archdeacon Churton writes:- "There is a wild story told of this Ella by some later chroniclers, of which we find no traces in Anglo-Saxon history, that the Danish invasion was provoked by his cruel treatment of Rayner Lodbrog, a sea-King who was wrecked on the coast of Northumbria. Rayner is said to have saved himself and some of his companions from the wreck and to have marched into the interior, plundering the country, when he was encountered with a far superior force by Ella, taken prisoner and thrown into a dungeon filled with serpents and venomous reptiles where he died after enduring dreadful torments. They were the sons of this chief, it is said who led the great Danish invasion: Hinguar and Ubba and the rest whose names fill the annals of the time of Alfred."

Archdeacon Churton then mentions another version - "The account given by some early English historians is that Ragnar Lodbrog was wrecked on the shores of East Anglia or Norfolk, entertained hospitably by King Edmund, the saint of Bury, but afterwards treacherously slain by Bern the Kings huntsman. It may be that both accounts are equally fabulous, but the former is more famous in Scandinavian antiquities because it agrees with the words of the famous Lodbrokar Quida - or Death Song of Lodbrog, one of the most warlike of the old Norse martial ditties, with which it seems that the ancient warriors of the North, like the North American Indians, could beguile the pains of death.

The Death Song of Lodbrog

Hiuggom ver midi hiaurvi

"With our swords we hew'd our way:
Mortal men to fate must bow
Little dreamt I of the day
Of this bitter overthrow
Little dreamt, that Ella's hand
Should my life's last hours confine.
When with dead I strew'd his land.
When I made his havens mine:
When I gorged the birds of prey
In each northern forth and bay.

With our swords we hew'd our way:
Still my heart with joy can laugh.
Still my inmost soul is gay.
Soon my weary lips shall quaff
Beverage bright at Odin's board,
Bright and mantling to the full,
Meet for those that wield the sword,
And cup a foeman's skull.
Glad I wait my summons near:
Who, when Odin calls, should fear?

With our swords we hew'd our way:
Soon Aslauga's sons and mine
Shall avenge my fateful day,
And the bonds in which I pine
Arm'd with flaming battle-brands:-
Vipers, venom-swoln, around
Tear my body, feet and hands:-
Yet amidst this deadly stound
My strong heart its treasures owns,
Noble mother, noble sons.

With our swords we hew'd our way:
 Soon an heir my state shall know,
 Though within grim adders prey,
 Though they rend my heart-strings now
 Soon, I ween, shall Odin's lance
 Deep in vengeful Ella stand:
 Vengeance for their sire's mischance
 Waits from many a youthful hand.
 Peace their souls will never know,
 Till my slayer's corpse lies low."

Archdeacon Churton comments - "Such is a portion of this wild song, which chiefly relates to Ella the usurper of the Church's land at Crayke. But we believe the story to be fabulous, and that no such tragedy was perpetrated in the dungeons of Crayke Castle, or elsewhere. What is certain is that the Danish host under Hinguar and his confederates having gained possession of York, Osbert and Ella had composed their differences and marched against the common enemy, but after bursting open the city gates which terminated in defeat and death of both Kings. and Northumbria became entirely subject to the invaders.

The Danes capture York, and Ella dies attempting to recapture it - AD 867

The main Danish invasion swept over Yorkshire in AD 867 in which year the Danes captured York. They had landed in East Anglia a year before and had come to York with a force of 200,000

and made spoil of the surrounding countryside. The rival Saxon Kings each mounted separate expeditions against the Danes. and first Osbert was defeated and slain. Next Ella, who is said to have lodged at Crayke the night before, attacked the Danes at York, and as mentioned in the legend of Ragnar Lodbrog he met his death. The Saxons had burst into York but had been defeated in a counter attack, and Ella slain, and Rayner Lodbrogs sons Hinga, Hubba and Bruen were said to be present with the Danes at York.

Archdeacon Churton said that it is recorded that the deaths of Osbert and Ella were "as a mark of divine anger for their impiety." (in siezing Church lands.)

The Danes passed the year of AD 869 in York, and then they came again upon the North and in AD 875 Halfdene the Dane had completed the conquest of Northumbria. In AD 876 he made peace with King Alfred of the South, and Halfdene then parcelled out the land of Northumbria (including Yorkshire) to his soldiers.

The Monks driven from Lindisfarne wander with the bones of St. Cuthbert and reach Crayke in AD 882

The monks fled from Lindisfarne with their sacred books, church records and coffers, and the bones of St. Cuthbert and began their wanderings after the overthrow of the Saxon Kingdom, to avoid capture by the Danes. They went

to Cumberland and Galloway and then around AD 882-883 came some relief when the Danes themselves expelled their cruel Commander, the Sea King Halfdene (or Haldene) and the Monks of Lindisfarne came to Crayke with the bones of St. Cuthbert and rested there for four months in AD 882 or 883. It is said that they were kindly received there at "Crayke Monastery" by Abbott Geve. This is strange for wild Ella and his successors the Danes are not likely to have allowed a monastery to exist here. Raistrick in his history of the Danish Invasion says, "The Danes themselves were heathen and destroyed the monasteries at Whitby, Lastingham, Hackness and Crake. What is probable is that when the Danish pressure subsided, Abbot Geve came back to Crayke and erected or reoccupied some buildings.

It is said that in their four months at Crayke, Bishop Earlduf, Abbot Eadred and the Monks of Lindisfarne had a most friendly reception from Abbot Geve and were as well off as if they had been at home. This would account for a later historians comment that - "the monastery founded by St. Cuthbert was in being 200 years later (AD 885). Symeon says that wherever the Saints body rested, a church or chapel was built. Perhaps this was the proper beginning of a Church at Crayke.

Abbot Eadred's dream at Crayke leads to Guthred being made King of Northumbria

The expulsion by the Danes of the cruel Sea King Halfdene, left their forces without a commander. The remnants of the Saxons made some attempts to set up a King of their

own. By now probably both Saxon and Dane were willing to listen to a plan to mitigate the sufferings of the country.

Gill in his history relates that whilst at Crayke, Abbot Eadred of Lindisfarne saw in a dream the venerable form of St. Cuthbert who delivered a remarkable message - "Go to the Army of the Danes, and tell them from me, that they are to point out to you the place where the boy Guthred, son of Hardacnute is now to be found, whom they sold to a widow woman whose name they will know. When they have found him, and paid the widow the price of his ransom, let him be brought forward publicly in front of the whole Army and when they are assembled at Oswy's Down, according to my will and order, let him be elected and confirmed as King, with the Royal bracelet placed on his right arm."

We are told that as soon as the Abbot awoke, he told his dream to his companions, and set out on his mission; and that both Danes and Saxons received with all reverence the commands of St. Cuthbert. Guthred was found at Whittingham near Alnwick. He was a Dane and probably of noble descent and probably had been sold as a slave by Haldene to remove a possible claimant to his Kingship, and whilst Guthred was in bondage he could have been instructed in Christianity. However, he was accepted by both sides and reigned the province south of the Tyne with his seat at York from AD 883-894.

Archdeacon Churton posed the question in the History - "Was Abbot Eadred's dream a fraud?" He could have known of Guthred and his background, and used the dream as a way of getting Guthred accepted by both sides.

When Bishop Earlduf and Abbot Eadred left Crayke in 883 they first fixed the See at Chester-le-Street, where it remained for 100 years before going to Durham.

All did not remain calm in the province after Guthred's death in 894. Trouble came and was settled in 907 when the Danes made peace only to break it again in 911, but then were defeated.

The end of Danish Kings in Northumbria AD 952

More turbulent times came when the Norsemen invaded England by the West Coast and crossed over into Yorkshire between AD 915 and 954. The Danish

Princes had also been hard pressed by warlike forces from the Saxon south, but held on until their final overthrow in AD 948 when King Eric Bloodaxe was driven out of York and defeated at Castleford by King Eadred. In AD 952 the Kings of Northumbria came to an end and in AD 954 Edgar became King of all England. The province of Northumbria was governed by Earls who had the authority of a Viceroy.

With Northumbria again under firm Saxon control came a change in fortune for Crayke. The Danes had divided Yorkshire into its Ridings and Wapentakes, many forests had been made Royal forests and ruled by forest law.

Earl Thured returns
lands in Crayke to
the Church - AD 966-990

Since Ella had siezed Crayke the See of St. Cuthbert had lost its lands there, though it did not prevent in later years after Ella's death and during Danish rule, the return of

Abbot Geve to Crayke and the visit of the Lindisfarne Monks. Historical records state that around the time of King Edgar or Ethelread the Unready, the Earl Thured possessed lands in Crayke, he has no other place in history other than this record. This places him somewhere between AD 966 and AD 990, and it was probably at the latter date when he made his grant of lands to the See of Durham. The Liber Vitae of the Church of Durham records the terms:-

"Here is set down how many hides of land Earl Thured has given over to St. Cuthbert's See, first at Smeaton, two hides of land, and at Creic two hides, and at Sutton one hide. These he has given the holy men for their praise and honour, to be theirs forever. And if anyone take away this gift, let him account for it with God, and with the holy men there, sooner or later."

The grant of two hides at Creic was probably not less than 200 acres. From the old Anglo Saxon version of Bede, a hide of land was a quantity large enough to support a family. It varied, in East Anglia it was around 120 acres and in Wessex about 64 acres.

It would appear that after Earl Thured's grant and before the death of Bishop Alwin (Egelwin) of Durham in 1018 that the Church had recovered more land at Crayke as the Bishop held it as one Manor.

The Saxon Bishop's estate
at Crayke before the
Norman Conquest

In the last years before the Normans came the peace that the Earls of Northumbria had brought to the North was broken by the last Norse Conquest (AD 993-1013), plundering and

extortion of taxes to buy off the invaders. It ended with Svein's conquest of all England in 1013, and on his death in 1014 Cnut (Canute) became King.

No description of Saxon Crayke is known, but it would probably be similar to the typical Saxon village described in the book "The English Heritage" by Balford. It would have a Saxon timbered hall placed amongst barns and sheds, in a courtyard surrounded by a ditch. There would be a Saxon Chapel. Adjoining the Hall and the Chapel would be the village, probably a collection of one storey hovels built of mud, but each with its toft or small patch of fenced or hedged garden. The way between the huts would be thick with mud and offal. The peat smoke would curl up out of the hole in each roof. A small mill might exist by a stream (perhaps by the Foss in our case) and perhaps there would be a communal bakehouse. A hut with a pole might signify an ale house.

Of the people, William of Malmesbury said of the English pre the Norman Conquest, that they wore short garments reaching to mid knee, had their hair cropped, beards shaven arms laden with gold bracelets and their skins adorned with punctured designs.

Because of the primitive constuction of the houses of impermanent materials, timber, thatch, wattle and daub little in domestic remains were left in England.

The last Saxon Bishops
who held Crayke

supply of the Bishops board, whilst the rest was let out to his villanes or land servants, who paid rent or did service for the portion they occupied.

Whatever existed at Crayke it would appear that the Saxon bishops had a Hall or country house at Crayke, and kept a portion of the domain for the supply of the Bishops board, whilst the rest was let out to his villanes or land servants, who paid rent or did service for the portion they occupied.

Gill says that if a plough land was about 60 acres there could not have been more than 240 acres under cultivation, or somewhat less than a 12th part of the Manor. In the years 1042 and 1044 the crops failed in England and in this period the land tax at Crayke was forty shillings.

The last two Saxon Bishops of Durham who held Crayke were brothers, Aylric (Egileric) and Alywin (Egelwin). The first of these two had been Bishop of York, but had the See taken from him and then was given Durham. In 1060 he resigned and retired to Peterborough. Alywin succeeded him at Durham and was the last Saxon bishop.

The Norman Conquest 1066

William of Normandy invaded the south of England in 1066, and overthrew Harold and became King William I (1066-1087). In 1068 Edgar Etheling came to York from Scotland and the townsmen made treaty with him, but William moved up quickly and caught them unawares and slew on the spot all who could not escape and according to the Anglo Saxon Chronicle "St Peters Minster be made a profanation, and all other places he also despoiled and trampled upon." In this same year 1068 Alywin the last Saxon Bishop of Durham was outlawed by the Normans, and his predecessor, his brother Aylric was arrested by the Normans. (Alywin died in 1071 and Aylric in 1072).

The first Norman Bishop
of Durham 1068

The first Norman Bishop of Durham appointed in 1068 was Walclerc (Walker) who had been born in Lorraine. Twelve years later (1080) he was slain in council at Durham. The 2nd Norman Bishop was William de St. Calez.

The Danes sail up the
Humber and attack York
1069 - and consequently
Yorkshire suffers the
Norman Revenge

In 1069 the Danes sailed up the Humber, and slew the Frenchmen (the Normans) at York. Again King William came north, and this time he layed waste and despoiled the whole shire. All opposition was put down with great ferocity. His campaign ended around Teesmouth, and William returned to York in severe winter weather, probably by the ancient Hambledon track past Crayke.

Human remains found at Crayke in 1956 may have some connection with this period. To the east of the present churchyard in the Castle field, lying below some 14 Century items, in a layer of what appeared to be undisturbed clay, were found the bones of 16 persons. All except one appeared to be male. The Archaeologists found it difficult to date them, there being no coffins or shrouds, but as they were all buried in an East-West orientation, and in an extended position they belonged to Christian times. Their date of burial was considered to be of a very considerable period before the 14th Century relics found above. Some thought that they may have been in part of the cemetery of St. Cuthbert's alleged monastery, but the presence of a female would rule this out, also there were no coffins. The burials appeared to be hasty and in some disorder such as might occur after sudden disaster, plague or massacre, but there were no signs of injuries to bones. The conclusion was that possibly they were victims of the Danes or Normans.

A Norman Motte and
Bailey Castle

It has been thought, but without any proof, that a Norman Motte and Bailey Castle was built at Crayke during the subduro of the North, and the site possibly as on the north west corner of the present Castle site. Obviously the Normans on their way north to Teeside would use the ancient highway past Crayke to the Hambleton Hills, and Crayke Hill would be a good site to have a defensive post. The Normans in their campaigns used to build very rapidly earth castles called "mottes" all over the country as bases for their mobile bands of cavalry and archers which were the Norman military units. Crayke's natural hill would have saved them having to make a large mound of earth upon which to place a stout palisade with which would be a wooden tower. The whole being surrounded by a bailey, a banked and palisaded enclosure for horses and food storage.

If they did build a motte and Bailey castle, what happened to the Bishops "Hall" of Saxon days? Perhaps it was enclosed in the bailey or sacked by the Normans in their revenge upon the north.

Crayke in the Domesday
Survey of 1086 at the
beginning of the
Mediaeval period

The Domesday Survey says "In Creic there are to be taxed land for six ploughs there may be now four ploughs there. Bishop Alywin (the last Saxon Bishop) held this as one Manor.

Bishop William (the second Norman Bishop) has now in his domain one plough, and nine villanes with three ploughs. There is a church and a priest here. There is a moderate quantity of wood pasture. The whole two miles long and two broad. The value of the land tax in King Edwards time (1042-66) was forty shillings, and now it is twenty shillings.

What can one read into this survey? It confirms the existence of a Church and a priest, but no mention of other properties. Perhaps the Hall had been swept away or absorbed into the military earth castle system and as such not recorded being a military temporary post.

The halving of the value of the land tax since the Saxon time probably reflects both the Normans revenge upon the North and the succession of famines, and around this very time in 1087 there was heavy pestilence on the land in England, which with bad weather caused famine. The Saxon Chronicle records that hundreds died of hunger.

The Second and Third
Norman Bishops at Crayke

William de St. Calez, the second Norman Bishop of Durham set down the lands and possessions of the See. He said that there were five ploughlands in

Creic, a slight increase on the Domesday survey, he does not mention any buildings at Crayke.

In Gills history, Archdeacon Churton comments that Bishop William appears to have had trouble in recovering the Church lands after the disorders in the north following upon the Conquest, and that he had little time or wealth to bestow on improving the property.

In 1088, Bishop William, together with Bishop Odo and Bishop Gosforth, rebelled against the King, William Rufus, who had come to the throne in 1087 and ruled to 1100. According to the Saxon Chronicle Bishop William plundered the King's farms and - "did all the harm he could all over the north."

The King sent an army north, quelled the rebellion and seized the Bishop of Durham's possessions including the Manor of Crayke.

William de St. Callez relinquished the Bishopric and went to Normandy, but returned to England where he died at Windsor on New Years day 1096.

William Rufus appointed his chaplain, Ranulf (Randolph) Passeflambad as the 3rd Norman Bishop of Durham, but the King held on to Crayke. However, misfortune befell the 3rd Bishop - in 1100 he was imprisoned in the Tower but escaped to Normandy a year later (he died in 1128).

Henry I, the youngest son of William the Conqueror came to the throne in 1100 and reigned to 1135. He restored the Manor of Crayke to the Bishop of Durham in his first year on the throne.

Famine in the Land 1098-1137

These were hard times in England with constant famines. The crops failed in 1095, 1097, 1098, 1103, 1105, 1110, 1116, 1117, 1124, 1125, and in 1131 all over England cattle, pigs and fowls were decimated by disease and there was a great shortage of food, and then followed crop failure in 1137. Presumably Crayke had its share of these years of hardship.

Bishop Hugh Pudsey 1153-1195 and Crayke

After Ranulf Passeflambad there were two more Bishops of Durham (4th and 5th) before the appointment of Bishop Hugh Pudsey in 1153, the last bishop to be appointed in the House of Normandy. King Stephen who reigned 1135-1154, was Hugh Pudsey's uncle. This Prince Bishop spent his wealth abundantly in building churches, bridges and castles within his See. The Durham Archives say that Pudsey - "in raising stately buildings, thinking it the most honourable course to leave to his successors no ground or complaint against his memory." His object was, it appears, to have on all his detached estates, a house fit for entertainment of a Norman Bishop and Baron. As Crayke was one of his detached estates, and as he stayed there, he must have had a dwelling suitable to his needs as a Prince Bishop and Baron, at least by the end of his 41 years as Bishop. The situation in England for many years after the Conquest had given rise to castles which combined the functions of a dwelling house for a lord and his retainers with that of a fortress. It has been said without any historical evidence to support it that Hugh Pudsey had fortified Crayke Castle against Henry II, who had succeeded his uncle in 1154, in the border wars. Pudsey did not take an active part in the wars, but as he was suspect ~~as~~ as a Kinsman of King Stephen, he thought it best to accompany Roger de Mowbray in the surrendering of his Castles at Durham, Northam and Northallerton to Henry II at the end of 1174, but Crayke Castle was not listed. Either Crayke had not been fortified, or it had not been built in 1174, however, the Castle or dwelling must have been built by 1194.

It is likely that the Saxon Chapel at Crayke which had been listed in the Domesday book had been replaced by a Norman Church built of stone as was done elsewhere. The Normans usually added a stone dovecote to their villages, otherwise the village dwellings remained much as in Saxon times, primitive huts of wattle and daub or rough timber cruck construction cottages with thatched roofs.

Bishop Hugh Pudsey was gratified by the title of Duke of Northumberland bestowed upon him by Richard I who reigned 1189-99.

According to Gills History Hugh Pudsey lodged at his dwelling or Castle at Crayke whilst on his way to London in the spring of 1194, in his 41st year as Bishop. He fell ill after supper at Crayke, but the elderly Bishop proceeded to ride on to London the next day, but only reached Howden where he died on 3rd March 1194. The See of Durham remained vacant after his death for some years. In 1197 the vill of Crayke rendered £4-3-4 to the See.

Kings visit Crayke

Several monarchs visited Crayke on their journeyings, probably the most convincing proof that Bishop Pudsey had indeed a comfortable dwelling fit for a Prince Bishop and Baron. At the beginning of each reign, proof had to be made to the King of all holdings of land. King John (1199-1216), conferred Crayke to the Bishop of Durham in 1200 and King John came to Crayke and stayed in the Bishop's residence three times, in 1209, in 1210-11, and yet again in 1211.

The next monarch, King Henry III (1216-72) stayed at Crayke in December 1227.

Crayke in the early 13th Century

Somewhere in the 13th Century there was a Rector at "Crec" called Nicholas, whose existence is recorded by some ancient wording on an old stone used in the mullion window of the East End of the present Church. In the year 1228, Walter de Cray, Archbishop of York granted an indulgence of 20 days pardon for the support of the Hospital of Mary de Prates at "Crake", and evidence of such a hospital is noted in various records. There is mention of Crayke Park from the early 13th Century. In 1229, Henry III granted Bishop Richard Poor of Durham, a deer leap (or Saltery) 140 feet long. The park was well stocked with deer and timber.

From the 13th to the 16th Centuries there are frequent references in records to grouts of trees in the park, to poaching and to the appointment of Keepers in Crayke Park.

In 1237, King Henry III gave orders for the Bishop of Durham to have - "four live bucks and ten live does from the Galtres for his park at Creck" - this is recorded in the Close rolls.

Bishop Bek (1283-1310) and his estate at Crayke

Bishop Antony Bek (Beck) was appointed by Edward I in 1283. It is stated that he built a Castle at Crayke, by then Bishop Pudsey's Castle or Manor.

House built some time after 1153 would have been around 120 to 130 years old. Bishop Bek was often in residence in Crayke and held court, so his dwelling must have suited him. The Court Palatine of Durham was supposed to keep the Scots in check, and it was unkindly suggested that Bishop Bek preferred the peace of Crayke as being further from his Scots thorn in the flesh, Robert de Brus.

It was between 1240 and 1290 that fortified manor houses were built in England which began to be less exclusively military in style, and provided primitive comforts such as sanitation, fire-places, and glass in the windows. They were more of a dwelling than a habitable Castle Keep.

Canon Raine in a paper to the Yorkshire Architectural Society in 1869 said - "The history of the fabric may be assumed as follows. In the beginning of the 15th Century there was at Crayke a Castle probably built by Bishop Bek (1283-1310) or Bishop Kellaw (1311-1316)"

He added that in the lower part of the later New Tower (now the ruin) there is work that can be ascribed to be between 1280 and 1320.

In 1290 Bishop Bek had helped to negotiate the marriage of the King's son to Margaret, infant Queen of Scotland. In August 1292 King Edward I stayed at Crayke, and Bishop Bek pleaded that he held the Manor of Crayke in virtue of Eigfrith's grant to St. Cuthbert in AD 685, so freely that neither King nor his Ministers had ever exercised any rights within it, and that Crake's territories were marked by ditches and other certain metes and bounds.

Bishop Bek was one of those who was alleged to have seen "the Great Hunter", the legendary ghost of the forest, whilst hunting in the Forest of Galtres. Around this time, in 1291, the Rectory at Crayke (the house, glebe, tithes and oblations) annual value was £10. The peasants houses in the village were likely to have been the same as those elsewhere in England, much the same as their ancestors and made of equally impermanent materials.

In 1296 Bishop Bek had to leave his Crayke as he took part in Edward I expedition against Scotland, but afterwards seemed to lose favour with the King. In 1302 he set off to Rome to lodge an appeal against Richard de Hoton, the Prior of Durham, but without the King's leave, and consequently the temporalities of his See were confiscated, but later were returned to him. In 1305 Bishop Bek was made a Patriarch of Jerusalem and in 1307, Edward II granted him the sovereignty of the Isle of Man.

The King's Rolls state in 1309 that Bishop Bek had complained about persons breaking into his Park at Crayke and an investigation was ordered. A year later the Bishop died.

In the year before his death, the papal provision of the Rectory, valued at 30 marks per year was made to Robert Donnelbruge, a pluralist, who was Rector until 1317. By 1315 he held in addition to Crayke the Prebendry of Churches at Werplesdene (Warpelsdon) by Windsor, Bydyndonue (Biddendon) Kent, and of Letcheworthe, Herts.

Bishop Kellaw 1311-1316

Bishop Kellaw held the Bishopric of Durham for a few years (1311-16) but he is recorded as having held council at Crayke in 1314 and that King Edward II stayed in the Bishop's residence at Crayke in October 1316. It was in the year 1316 that it was said that part of Crayke Park was included in the Forest of Galtres and was outside the Bishop's jurisdiction. The boundary by a perambulation was said to be the hedge of the park as far as the place where the latter entered the River Foss, and thence down the stream through the middle of the park.

Place names mentioned in grants of land held of Bishop Kellaw in Crayke were "Langthwayt" (a name that continued) and "Ketelsgat".

A relic found at Crayke of this period (in a dig in 1956 near the churchyard) was a jetton identified as of the time of Edward II (1307-27) and also in 1956 sherds of mediaeval pottery were found both near the churchyard and on the site at Woodhouse farm (which had also had signs of Roman occupation). When Bishop Kellaw died in 1316 the See then remained vacant for a few years. During this voidance, the King, as his gift, appointed Adam of Colne as Rector of Crayke on 23rd September 1318. In 1322, Edward II failed in an invasion of Scotland and retreating before the Scottish Army of Bruce and Black Douglas was defeated at Byland and fled back into York, perhaps Crayke suffered a Scottish invasion at this time being on the route to York.

Bishop Richard de Bury
1333-1345

Richard Aungerville (1281-1345), born at Bury St. Edmunds was known as Richard de Bury. He had been tutor to Prince Edward and when the Prince became

King Edward III (1327-1377) Richard obtained rapid advancement, went on embassies to Rome and Paris, was made Bishop of Durham in 1333, and later added to his appointments that of treasurer of the realm. He was a noted owner and lover of books and had libraries in his various palaces, and was said to own more than all the other Bishops together.

In 1333, the year of his appointment to Durham Edward III visited Crayke and in 1340 Richard de Bury raised the old complaint of the Bishops of Durham that persons were breaking into his park, and again an investigation was ordered.

So far in this narrative, names have mainly been those of Kings, Bishops, Sea Kings, but in 1345 it was recorded in a muster roll of the King's Forces guarding Perth in Scotland, that there were several Yorkshiresmen including John of Crayk, a horse archer who was paid 4d a day for himself and his horse. Usually horse archers had a steel cap and leather jerkin as personal protection, and his main difference was his skill with his bow.

Bishop Hatfield 1345, and
the Kings check on Crayke's
status

After the death of Richard de Bury in 1345, Edward III made another visit to Crayke on 19th October, and from here gave to the Prior and Convent of Durham a Charter to elect a new Bishop

for the vacant See, and Thomas Hatfield was elected. In 1346, King Edward III ordered the Treasurer and Barons of the exchequer to inspect the rolls and memoranda in their charge, and to supersede a demand for a ninth made on the men, and the tenant of Crayke, if they found that the town and its inhabitants were of the liberty of the Bishop of Durham and had always been quit of all aids granted by the realm.

In the year 1349, the Black Death hit Yorkshire very heavily, some villages such as Alne suffered a lot, but Crayke is not mentioned as having suffered.

The Crimes of Robert
del Wood, Forester
of Crayke, 1361

Robert del Wood, a Forester of Crayke, was charged in 1361 with five offences, two woundings, a rape, forcible entry into a Priory, intimidation of its tenants, and holding up an Abbot on

the Kings highway. Details of the charges were:-

- (i) Wounding Hugh, son of Henry Gardener, of Stillington in that year.
- (ii) In the same year, with a number of others, holding up the Abbot of Byland on the Kings Highway, between the gate of Crayke Park and Oulston, in the wood of the same town, and wounding Adam, the Abbot's servant so that his life was despaired of.
- (iii) In the same year, forcibly entering Newburgh Priory, insulting the monks and servants there, and beating William Trotter so that his life was despaired of.
- (iv) In the same year, beating all the tenants of Newburgh from the vill of Langlythorpe, and compelling them to go to Newburgh, asserting that they should not stay unless the Prior should present Roger Moyses to the liveing of Cokewald (Coxwold).

- (v) In the 34th year of the reign, on the Monday after Christmas raping Johanna (Joan) de Warlullay, formerly the servant to Thomas the Forester of Oulston, at Oulston.

Robert del Wood did not appear to answer the charges, and he was outlawed, and was still being sought in 1362.

Happenings in The Manor of Crayke 1363 to 1438

In 1363, John of Bridelyngton, Parson of Crayke was a party to a fine relating to property in York. John Son of Gregory, William del Bank,

William Fleccher and Thomas Scot, all of Crayke, with William Day of Brandsby, were in November 1370 in the Kings prison of Davy for trespasses in the Forest of Galtres, and they were bailed on 12th November. The site of this prison was where the old Davy Hall stood in Davygate in York. In 1379, a grant of land held by the Bishop of Durham at Crayke was named as "Dowcot Place" being the site of a Dovecote. In many villages the manorial dovecote had the monopoly of supply.

King Henry IV (reigned 1399-1413) in confirming a former grant by King Richard II confirmed the rights of the Bishop of Durham at Crayke. Walter Skirlaw was Bishop of Durham 1385-1406.

Brother William de Creyk, a Monk at Marten Priory, was Vicar of Sutton on Forest from 1401 until he died in 1409.

On 16 April 1406, Henry IV granted to John de Manfeld the office of "parker of Crayke" so long as the temporalities of Durham were in the Kings hands (presumably the See being vacant after Walter Skirlaw).

Manfeld had been a forester since 1404 in Ingolthwaite in the Forest of Galtres. Later in Bishop Nevills time (1438-57) there appear to have been three "parkers" at Crayke, John Brown, Eli Botelar and Robert Ingeland (or Ingleard).

The Church at Crayke rebuilt - 1436

Whatever had remained of the Church at Crayke must have fallen into ruins by the 15th Century as it was rebuilt in 1436 through the goodness of one John

Falman who had left a sum of money for this purpose. This Church is our present St. Cuthberts, but less of course the north aisle built 200 years later.

The new building in 1436 was of stone in the late perpendicular style and consisted of a chancel, nave, south porch and an embattled tower with pinnacles. The church roof was also embattled.

The nave is low and wide with a low pitch roof with beams. It has two light windows with depressed heads. The screen is perpendicular of one light divisions, which has been described as not a formidable example of 15th Century woodwork. Most of the church furniture in existence now is of a later period than the 15th Century. The East window is a three light window with cusped heads under a depressed arch. On the outside running up one of the mullions of the window is an inscription "(PIE MEM) ORIE NICOLAI RECTOR ECCE DE CREC (To The Pious memory of Nicholas, Rector of the Church of Crec).

It appears to be part of the stonework of the tomb of an ancient rector, - Archdeacon Churton estimated that the lettering was of the age of Henry III or Edward I (between 1216 and 1307). (The font now in the church is of a later period being 16th Century plain octagonal bowl on a plain shaft and base with a 17th Century cover).

The Castle at Crayke in
the 15th Century - Canon
Raine's explanation of
the buildings

Robert Nevill was Bishop of Durham 1438-57 and contributed to the buildings of the Castle which has been described as one of those slightly fortified buildings constructed by mediaeval Bishops which present few features of the ordinary Castle. Crayke Castle was unusual as it had around this period two distinct and self contained buildings 70 feet apart. That to the west contained the Great Hall, the Great Tower, the Kitchen and the Great Chamber (this latter being the present castle in the 1970s). To the North East was the New Tower with its own hall, great chamber and offices (the remains of this building are the ruins in the castle grounds in the 1970s).

Canon Raine presented a paper to the Yorkshire Architectural Society in 1809 saying - "When the 15 Century began, the Great Chamber (present Castle) was built, which from the shape and battlement might fairly be regarded as a Tower. After this a New Tower containing a hall and parlour was erected towards the North East, and then there were appended to the Great Chamber, towards the North by Bishop Neville, a kitchen and a larder. At this time the Hall (the old Hall or Great Hall) of the older Castle was in existence on a crest of the hill towards the North East, and at the survey of 1560-70, its ruins were above ground."

Canon Raine thus stated that the old Hall, the Great Chamber and the New Tower were in existence before Bishop Neville's time (1438) and that in his nineteen years as Bishop, only the Kitchen was built taking the eight years between 1441 and 1449. His reasoning is that the fabric roll of 1441 only three years after Neville became Bishop recorded the building begun in that year of a new kitchen and larder between the Great Chamber (present Castle) and the Old Hall to the North which established the existence of these two buildings before 1441.

He goes on to say that the mention of the Old Hall in 1441 presupposes the existence of a new one at that time, and that this was the New Tower.

Canon Raine asserts that if it took eight years to build the new Kitchen, it is not likely that Nevill could have built the much larger sized building of the New Tower in the first few years of his bishopric (1438-1441), unless a vast number of additional workmen had been called in to assist.

He disagrees with Leland the Tudor antiquary who ascribed the "great square Tower" which is "in the toppe of the hill" altogether to Bishop Neville. He thinks that Leland refers to the New Tower.

A description of the
building of the Castle
Kitchen 1441-1449

The Kitchen was built between the Great Hall to the north and the Great Chamber to the South, and the Great Tower on its West. The Kitchen was begun in 1441 or 1442 in the 4th and

5th years of the Episcopate of Robert Neville, Bishop of Durham and it was not completed until 1449-50. A description of its building was obtained by T. Higham Esq. from the document Church Commissioners Bishopric Estates No. 189881 - Crayke Castle:- 1080 free stones were quarried at Brandsby and Yearsley and carted by the tenants at Crayke. The wages of two masons for 32 weeks was £8-10-8. They were served by five labourers. Lime cost £9-3-7½ and sand £2-9-6. The total cost was just over £40.