**Vikings – Vicious or Victorious?**

Around 1,200 years ago the Vikings emerged from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark to settle around Europe. But they were not just sailors or settlers; they were warriors and their name itself stroke fear into the hearts of those who heard it whispered on the winds. The name "Vikings" comes from the Old Norse word "vikingr," meaning "pirate raid."

Between the years 793 AD and 1066 AD, the Vikings descended upon the shores of Britain like a storm unleashed, their sleek longboats sliced through the waves with a deadly grace. These vessels, on average 17 meters in length and manned by crews of up to 28 warriors. Propelled by sweat and effort of their rowers, they could reach speeds up to 10 knots and so they brought Vikings to the shores of Britain swiftly and without warning, leaving destruction in their wake.

Vikings first arrived in Britain between 793 and 795 AD when they attacked the monasteries in Lindisfarne, Jarrow and Iona. However, it wasn’t until 865 AD, when a Great Army led by Halfdan and Ivar the Boneless (two Vikings) attacked East Anglia that the Vikings really took any power in Britain from the Anglo-Saxons. After this battle, the Vikings took control of East Anglia in 869 AD and Viking settlers began to arrive in Britain so that by 872 AD Vikings had gained control of Northumbira, Mercia and East Anglia with only Wessex under Anglo-Saxon control still. However, things started to change for the Viking powers in 878 AD when they attacked King Alfred, the king of Wessex and he and his Anglo-Saxon armies won. At this point, the Vikings began to lose their powerful hold of Britain so that, after many battles between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings, by 1037 the Viking reign in Britain had ended. However, despite all this talk of battles, Vikings were not always vicious and blood-thirsty, as we might believe, they were settlers who made their home in Britain and brought a lot of their Viking lifestyle to Britain.

Viking place names still exist in Britain, bearing witness to their enduring legacy. Place names using "thorpe" to "holm," still exist today and teach us that the Vikings settled here and lived happily amongst the British at the time for a long while. Viking farmhouse remains show us that when living in Britain they created a society of farmers and craftsmen, who cared for their lands and built impressive homes amidst the chaos of their raids.

Runes etched into stone and wood also tell us they were an intelligent and educated civilization and artifacts such as coins and scales show us they were not just raiders but also traders and merchants. Viking brooches, combs, and helmets without horns found buried from that time show us their craftsmanship and ingenuity, while maps of Viking place names reveal a deep connection and loyalty to the lands they inhabited, such as Britain.

So in in conclusion, were Vikings vicious or Victorious? Well they were both victorious and vicious in equal measure. They were settlers and raiders, traders and warriors, leaving an unforgettable mark upon the lands they touched. Even though their longboats may have faded into legend, the spirit of the Vikings lives on in the stories of their viciousness and fearsome longboats.