

Decapitated skeletons were Vikings: scientists

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The Weymouth burial pit of skulls and bones. Dozens of decapitated skeletons which were uncovered during an excavation in Dorset were those of 1,000-year-old Vikings, scientist said.

Dozens of decapitated skeletons have been unearthed in southern England believed to be those of 1,000-year-old Vikings, scientists said Friday.

The macabre discovery in June of a neatly stacked pile of skulls next to a mass of male bones in a burial pit near Weymouth, on the southern English coast, sparked speculation about who the victims were.

Scientists from NERC Isotope Geosciences Laboratory analysed food and drink [isotopes](#) from the teeth of 10 of the 51 skulls and found it highly likely that the unfortunate men came from [Scandinavia](#).

It is believed that the raiding Vikings were slaughtered in public by local Anglo-Saxons between AD 910 and AD 1030.

"The isotope data we obtained from the burial pit teeth strongly indicate that the men executed on the Ridgeway originated from a variety of places within the Scandinavian countries," said NERC scientist Jane Evans.

"These results are fantastic. This is the best example we have ever seen of a group of individuals that clearly have their origins outside Britain," she added.

Oxford Archaeology members have been painstakingly uncovered the pit, which was found during investigative excavation work for an £87 million relief road.

"The find of the burial pit on Ridgeway was remarkable and got everyone working on site really excited," Oxford [Archaeology](#) project manager David Score said.

"To find out that the young men executed were [Vikings](#) is a thrilling development," he added.

"Any mass grave is a relatively rare find, but to find one on this scale, from this period of history, is extremely unusual and presents an incredible opportunity."

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