

Spies in Britain

1. Who was Alfred ?

- Alfred the Great acted as his own spy, visiting Danish Camps disguised as a minstrel.

2. What did Alfred or the king learn ?

- He learned many of their ballads in his youth, and could vary his programme with acrobatic tricks and simple conjuring.

3. Who was Guthrum ?

- He was the commander of the Danish invaders.

4. What did Alfred or the king notice ?

- He noticed that discipline was slack: the Danes had the self confidence of conquerors, and their security precautions were casual.

5. How did the Danish live?

- They lived on the proceeds of raids on neighboring regions, they collected women, food and drink, and a life of ease had made them soft.

6. What did Alfred or the king deduce?

- He deduced that the Danes were no longer fit for prolonged battle :and that their commissariat had no organization, but depended on irregular raids.

7. Explain briefly how Alfred defeated the Danes.

- Alfred did not risk open battle but harried the enemy. He was constantly on the move, drawing the Danes after him. His patrols halted the raiding parties: hunger assailed the Danish army. Now Alfred began a long series of skirmishes and within a month the Danes had surrendered.