Editorial

Welcome to the new millennium's first issue of Viking Heritage Newsletter, now with a new look! We are happy to present a colour photo on the front page, this time of the remarkable hoard found at Spillings. Weighing around 70 kg, this is the largest viking silver hoard ever found.

This is a unique issue of the newsletter. The appearance has changed, but the contents, we hope, will be as interesting as in previous issues. We hope you readers will enjoy it, and, with your help, we intend to go on making as interesting newsletters as possible presenting many different aspects of the Vikings and the Viking Age.

Furthermore, we have started a collaboration with North Sea Viking Legacy, an international project based in Norway. Read more about them and the activities of some of their participating partners in this issue. In the future we will also extend our collaboration with Foteviken's Museum, Sweden (http://www.foteviken.se).

In this issue you will find a new heading – Viking Viewpoints. Here we will publish letters from you readers and also debate contributions. Welcome to take part!

This is the millennium year with many events commemorating the Vikings and their sea voyages. As you can see from the content, many of the articles deal with this year's Viking theme. In coming issues we will also follow up some of these happenings.

But let's not forget the daily life of the Viking Age and of the people who stayed at home, of the women and children and the elderly. This time we take a closer look at Viking mothers, both 1000 years ago and today.

Enjoy!

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Editor
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Words of Wisdom

"If you find a friend you fully trust
And wish for his good-will,
Exchange thoughts,
Exchange gifts.
Go often to his house.
"

From "Hávamál"
(Words of "The High One")

About the front page:
Part of the Spillings' silver hoard from the Viking Age, found on Gotland 1999. Photo: Göran Ström, Gotlands Fornsal, Sweden.

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"Far and Yet Near: North America and Norse Greenland"

By Kirsten A. Seaver

The Norse reached out from their northern homelands with such vigor that by about the year 1000, they had left their lasting mark on Russia and the British Isles, settled the Faroes, Iceland, and Greenland, and explored parts of North America.

In the following, we shall consider several aspects of the Norse colony in Greenland which relate to that huge island’s proximity to North America and to its own strategic location in the northwestern Atlantic. The story begins with the voyages forming the core of the two "Vinland sagas" and with the reasons why the Norse Greenlanders made that first westward push while the first generation settlers were still busy clearing land in the Western and Eastern settlements, both on Greenland’s southwestern coast.

Radio-carbon datings from Norse Greenland farm sites indicate that the two settlements were formed at about the same time. The Western Settlement, located in the Nuuk region some 400 miles north of the Eastern Settlement, is thus not likely to have been the product of land shortage down south, but of other inducements which led Eirik the Red to urge the formation of a community there right away, and to stake a family claim to the very best farm site in the area. The "Saga of the Greenlanders" notes that Eirik’s youngest son Thorstein owned half of a farm in Lysufjord, and since he is not likely to have settled for second-best, that farm was probably the strategically located Sandnes.

Far more important than the opportunities for stock farming, augmented by a wealth of land and marine game, was this northerly settlement’s location about midway between the main Norse colony and Disko Island, center of the rich marine hunting grounds running north along the coast from the Holsteinsborg region and called Nordrseta. Not having to travel an extra 400 miles before starting the hunting season obviously increased the profit odds from hunts that provided goods for foreign trade and eventually, in 1124, helped obtain a separate bishopric for Greenland. Such non-farm goods had long had a market in Europe, and walrus ivory in particular gave a nice return for the hunter’s trouble.

The urge to maximize that profit would, before long, have driven the Norse Greenlanders westward to Arctic North America. That is because the narrowing of the Davis Strait, between Cape Dyer and Sisimiut, at the beginning of summer traps drift ice from the north to form an elbow of dense ice, which many Renaissance maps depicted as a solid coastline. Walrus use solid and drift ice for their haul-outs, so Norse Greenlanders following this game along the ice edge would have had to steer west, rather than north, to stay in open water. Some would inevitably have gone far enough west to discern Baffin Island, and it would not have taken long to link that distant coast with Bjarni Herjolfsson’s story of the far western regions he had spotted on his first voyage out to Greenland, as told in the "Saga of the Greenlanders".

Map of the North Atlantic, indicating the prevailing wind patterns and ocean currents that affected navigation in these waters. Copyright David O. Seaver. Reproduced with permission.
Bjarni’s tale (even if just a synopsis of several similar experiences) would have given the Greenland Norse every reason to expect forests if they kept going south across the water. And lumber was what they needed most — lumber and bog iron for ship construction. Driftwood could augment native trees in house construction and in the making of household articles and even small boats. But oceangoing West-Norse vessels were constructed from flexible planks, cut with an axe from the center of carefully selected, knot-free tree trunks and fastened into overlapping strakes with iron nails or rivets, traditionally obtained from smelting bog iron.

However, just as there were no forests in Greenland suitable for ships’ planking, there was no bog iron. “The King’s Mirror” (ca. 1260) indicates that Norwegian merchants might occasionally remedy the Greenlanders’ shortages, but such long distances made shipping very costly. The Greenlanders would have preferred to obtain lumber and iron through their own efforts.

As was to be expected in a society where Eirik the Red was the greatest chieftain of them all, he and his sons organized the expeditions needed to investigate the economic potential of the lands to the west, from which Eirik’s circle obviously intended to control the profits. The economic motive is clear from the very names given to the three North American regions they observed. In accordance with Norse custom, each was named for its most outstanding feature and economic potential. We must also consider this naming practice when we evaluate the evidence found, on both sides of the Davis Strait, that the Greenland Norse continued to exploit North American resources for a long time after Leif and his contemporaries had shown the way.

Leif Eiriksson’s barren Helluland was obviously Baffin Island, and Markland began with the vast Labrador-Newfoundland forest belt. But we still debate where the eminently useful “Forest Land” gave way to “Wine Land”, although the name indicates that the Norse had sailed at least as far south as to the Nova Scotia region, where the range for wild grapes as well as for white maple or butternut begins. We know from Birgitta Wallace’s reports that both fruits and worked wood of butternut have been found in the Norse culture layer at L’Anse aux Meadows. However, like the other two “countries”, Vinland was simply a general region, not a geographically definable and limited location.

The leaders of those first Norse expeditions and those who came after them were all practical people to whom, despite the luxury associated with the name Vinland, only Markland would have been worth future crossings from Greenland. Back home, the Norse Greenlanders had plenty of rocks as well as sufficient pastures to give homesteading among hostile natives a low priority. Grapes are perishable, and many of the other resources available south of the St. Lawrence are also found north of Amerindian territory. The Norse had found forests well before reaching Leif’s wintering site at L’Anse aux Meadows, and we know from excavations there that they made use of both this resource and of the local bog iron, which they smelted in a hearth pit and forged into ship-rivets.

It has been commonly supposed that the Greenlanders were so disillusioned by their run-ins with the natives that they no longer yearned for the west once they had returned home. Despite clear archaeological evidence that the Greenland Norse continued to use the information gained on those earliest voyages, Icelandic saga writers did not refer to later voyages from Greenland to North America at all, although they described the Vinland voyages at least two centuries after the events themselves, during which time there had been steady contact between Iceland and Greenland. Evidently, what the Greenlanders did later had no place in the commemoration of voyages that had largely involved Icelanders. Kevin Smith’s recent research on ten jasper fire-starter fragments found at L’Anse aux Meadows, which suggests a predominance of Icelanders at that site, confirms this aspect of the two Vinland sagas. The only other times Icelandic sources mention voyages from Greenland across the Davis Strait, the stories again focus on Iceland. Bishop Eirik of Greenland, who reportedly went in search of Vinland in 1121, was actually Icelandic, and a small ship which drifted off course on its way
home to Greenland from a voyage to Markland, in 1347, was notable because it ended up in Iceland. It was to destinations considerably north of L'Anse aux Meadows that the Norse Greenlanders continued to access their far northern hunting grounds, on both sides of the Davis Strait, and to exploit North American resources, evidently all on a seasonal basis. Most, but not all, of our evidence for these later voyages comes from medieval house ruins associated with the Dorset and Thule people, with whom the Norse had contact and occasionally traded. At a thirteenth-century Thule site on the south coast of Baffin Island, the archaeologist Deborah Sabo found a tiny carving of walrus ivory, which clearly represents a European, but which does not show the clothing of a Norse hunter or fisherman. Many explanations have been ventured for this intriguing work, none of them convincing and all of them assuming that the figure is male. I suggest that the carving may represent a Norse woman in her everyday clothes, observed in the course of an expedition into Hudson Strait to reach Ungava Bay.

From Greenland, the sheltered southwest corner of Ungava Bay would have been the nearest place to find lumber and iron. Here, the forest of black spruce and larch reaches practically down to the shore. High grade bog iron from the Labrador iron trough also runs down to the shore, close to or on the surface, ready to be smelted with charcoal made from green (freshly cut) wood, as the Norse method required. Another advantage, from the Greenland Norse point of view, would have been the absence of Amerindians in this area at that time. From such a voyage the Norse could also have carried home many kinds of exotic furs.

Wood analyses performed on ten ship’s parts from Norse Greenland revealed six specimens of larch, which is native only to North America and Siberia. Had these samples not been specifically from ships, one might concur with this study’s conclusion that the larch was possibly driftwood from Siberia. A simpler and more likely explanation is that the Greenland Norse availed themselves of North American lumber for their shipbuilding. Ever since “green” or fresh wood to smelt bog iron into crude lumps or “blooms”. Interestingly, although they had no bog iron in Greenland, there is plenty of evidence that they worked slag out of iron blooms in their home smithies. Their most likely source of raw material is the Labrador iron trough. The radiocarbon dates (1240-1400 and 1160-1280) so far obtained on a couple of medieval iron blooms found off the southeast coast of Baffin Island, in a barren region as devoid of bog iron as Greenland, fall within the time of Norse tenure in Greenland, and charcoal fragments in these blooms indicate four wood species common to the southern Ungava Bay region: spruce, larch, birch, and alder.

If the Greenland Norse availed themselves of resources in Ungava Bay or elsewhere in Markland, most of their activities would likely have taken place right on the shore, to guard against native attacks and to avoid the voracious mosquitoes inland. It would also have facilitated the launch of any ships they may have built over there. The elusive work Inventio fortunatae — said to have recorded the experiences of an English Minorite friar (not Nicholas of Lynn!) who sailed to Norse Greenland around 1360 and then explored further “north”, appears to have described precisely such Norse shoreside activity on the western side of the Davis Strait, along a stretch which this medieval English voyager most likely considered a continuation of the Greenland coast as it veered northwest with a solid belt of ice to the north.

The evidence for the Norse Greenlanders’ wide range over the centuries is important to understanding the likely consequences when their American and Arctic voyages ceased. We need to ask whether there is a relationship between these development and the end of the two Norse Greenland settlements within a century or so of each other, and between these events and the economic forces at work in the North Atlantic rim countries throughout the fifteenth century. In the early sixteenth century, European cartographers still drew southern Greenland as a continuation of the

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To be continued on page 23
The Vikings are and have been a natural feature of the regional identity in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, ever since the Norwegian archaeologist Anne Stine Ingstad and her husband Helge Ingstad in 1961 found the remains of a Norse settlement in L’Anse aux Meadows near Newfoundland’s northern tip. In 1978 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and it is also a National Historic Site. The site has a modern interpretation centre and a small reconstructed village. In addition, there is an interpretation program, The Viking Encampment.

This year the Vikings are perhaps more in focus than ever before. The year 2000 marks the 1000th anniversary of the Vikings arrival in North America. Throughout the year, L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site will be the focal point of a series of major events. In addition, the communities throughout the entire Viking Trail region, which includes the Northern Peninsula and Southern Labrador, will be holding a series of regional events. The development of these events is being co-ordinated through a partnership between the Viking Trail Tourism Association, the Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador, and Parks Canada.

The Viking Trail Tourism Association is leading an initiative to develop and market the tourism industry on the Great Northern Peninsula and Labrador Straits area of Newfoundland, Canada. The Viking Trail is not an actual hiking trail, but a comprehensive approach that links communities, attractions and facilities in an effort to bring more tourists to the region. The Viking Trail Tourism Accord, signed in 1994, identified the partners, their roles, and the strategic direction to prepare the region for the Year 2000 Celebration of the first Europeans arriving in North America. With Viking history going back a thousand years, the region is well positioned to benefit from the growing interest in educational and culture-based tourism. The Viking Millennium Celebration in the year 2000 was once considered the end goal of this initiative. Now it is seen as the starting point of great things to come.

A brief outline of the major events follows:

**Viking Sail 2000**
Date: End of July – beginning of August
Place: Labrador coast to L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site
On July 28, the world’s attention will be focused on the shores of the only known Viking settlement in North America. A fleet of up to 15 replica Viking ships will gather on the coast of Labrador. They will sail to Red Bay and from there across the Strait of Belle Isle to L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site on July 28 where they will join in the celebrations at Norstead: A Grand Encampment. The fleet will include the Icelandic vessel,
Norstead: A Grand Encampment
Date: July 17 – September 8, 2000
Place: Garden Point, L’Anse aux Meadows
The summer of 2000 will see the creation of a Viking port of trade at Garden Point, L’Anse aux Meadows, reflecting the Viking Age. Norstead will run for a minimum of eight weeks and will feature historical re-enactors from the local area and from overseas. Norstead will have a chieftain’s hall, stave church, boat shed and an outdoor amphitheatre. From July 17 to September 8 activities will be ongoing. Weekly themes include music, Viking weddings and battles. The visitor will be able to experience with traditional Viking food and culture, learn about boat building, weapon making, one-needle knitting, wool spinning, weaving, iron-working and a lot more. On July 28, a fleet of Viking ships will arrive at L’Anse aux Meadows. This represents the peak period for the Norstead site as ships from around the world will converge on the village and spend several days.

Viking Millennium International Symposium
Date: September 16-24, 2000
Place: L’Anse aux Meadows and Labrador Straits areas, Corner Brook
This academic conference will bring together international scholars and Viking experts to discuss aspects of Norse culture during the period of exploration that spurred the New World journeys of Leif Ericsson. Among the themes to be explored are Norse culture and exploration prior to the Vinland voyages, the Norse voyages of exploration from Greenland to Vinland, the settlement at L’Anse aux Meadows, and aspects of Norse life in the New World.

Full Circle: First Contact – Vikings and Skraelings in Newfoundland and Labrador
Date: June 2 – August 6, 2000; August 25 – October 9, 2000
Place: St. John’s and Corner Brook
In conjunction with the Newfoundland Museum, this 2800 square foot exhibit tells the story of the Vikings and their contact with the aboriginal people of Newfoundland and Labrador, one hundred thousand years after their ancestors had left the African continent and gone in separate directions. The exhibit includes large-scale reconstructions, photography, models, artists’ renderings, maps, and several video presentations. Soundscapes and lighting effects are used to create mood and atmosphere. The archaeology and history of L’Anse aux Meadows will be prominently featured, along with Viking artefacts made of gold, ivory, iron and wood from Nordic country museums.

For further information please visit:
The Viking Trail Tourism Association, http://www.vikingtrail.org
The Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador, www.gov.nf.ca/

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By Allan A. Swenson

Leif Ericson was the first known European to visit The New World, and Vikings led by Thorfinn Karlsefni were the first European settlers, 1000 years ago, according to world famed explorer Dr. Thor Heyerdahl. He was the keynote speaker at the Leif Ericson Millennium Celebration in Philadelphia in October, 1999.

From his years of methodical, global research, Dr. Heyerdahl provided an audience of 250 attentive listeners with a carefully documented historic perspective about Vikings and their contributions to the world. His newest book, about Vikings, has been published in Norway. An English edition will be published this year.

"When we start looking at the world map we Europeans think that history began with us. But there is not one spot where there were no people there before us. We Europeans have never been the first to set foot ashore on any continent or any island." Dr. Heyerdahl emphasized.

"We in Norway like to think that we discovered Iceland, but Irish monks had settled on the West Coast before we arrived. They did a great benefit to those Norwegians who escaped when King Harold the Fairhair, united Norway from 12 little kingdoms into one country. Leaders of the other little kingdoms fled and took with them the elite of the population to Iceland," Dr. Heyerdahl explained.

"We have good reason to be happy they did go to Iceland and learn to write Latin from the Irish monks. Thanks to what they preserved in Iceland we have a history to look back upon.

"We can be proud that Leif Ericson had ancestors from Norway, but must admit that Leif Ericson was an Icelander. His father, Erik the Red, was born in Norway and emigrated to Iceland. Leif was born on Iceland and he was a fairly big boy when he followed his father to settle on Greenland," Dr. Heyerdahl pointed out.

"For a year I have been researching and writing a new book about Vikings. It is astonishing what we can learn in research today with Internet and international collaboration. We had at our fingertips 11 Academies of Sciences who answered back immediately what we asked about. We had access to the libraries and the secret archives of the Vatican, where few Protestants have ventured to go in and look.

"We decided to combine what many authorities know. In Iceland, for the first time, the complete Sagas have been published in English, accessible to all of us. We had access to what the Danes know from excavations in Denmark. We obtained information from Finland about the early history of Norway and what the Finns had obtained from the Orkney Island sagas," he told a spellbound audience.

"We had contact with Russia, Latvia, Ukraine to Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea.
and China,” Dr. Heyerdahl announced. “In China, they have excavated mummies of Nordic type, which the Chinese believed must have been descendents of the Vikings. They had the cranium, blond hair, blue eyes; all the aspects of Scandinavia. What we had to do was to piece their information with what we got from the rest of the world,” the veteran explorer and anthropologist explained.

“We learned that Nordic people, the Caucasian type, had spread from the Caucasus into China, 1800 years before Christ. They passed from the same Caucasus area up through Europe, first in Denmark then to Sweden and then to Finland and Norway in the beginning of the Christian era, the end of the first century after Christ.

“All this you can piece together by bringing archeology, history, all the documents together. When you do, you come to the conclusion that the Scandinavian countries and particularly Norway and Iceland were not the wild Vikings that we think they were,” the famous anthropologist emphasized.

“Leif Ericson had never been on a Viking ship. He was born on Iceland and he was raised on Greenland as a farm boy. His father, who founded Greenland, sent him to Norway with merchandise on a Knarr, a merchant vessel, about the year 1000, according to historic records. His cargo was furs, walrus tusks and other products for sale.

“I have always wondered why this year 1000. It didn’t seem natural. Columbus sailed in 1492 and we have written records of that. We don’t know when Leif Ericson actually sailed, so we round it off to 1000,” Dr. Heyerdahl explained.

“When we talk about who came first to North America, Leif started 492 years before Columbus, so there was no contest who came first. If you have a competitor for ‘First to see The New World’ we find him in the Viking Sagas. His name was Bjarni Herjolfsson. While traveling from Iceland to Greenland, he was blown off course in a storm and saw the new land but he did not go ashore and he was criticized badly by his own crew. By the time he finally came to Greenland he could say he had been there” Dr. Heyerdahl pointed out from his extensive book research.

“Leif is the first known European person, undoubtedly, who set foot ashore in North America. There are many people who sailed from Greenland to America in the years to come! Sagas tell us about the explorer Thorfinn Karlsefni who led the first group to settle in North America 1000 years ago.

“Personally, I think we can conclude it was Leif Ericson’s encampment where they settled because he found it where he estimated on the basis of the Saga that it should be. I think that speaks in favor of him having found Leif’s first settlement” the world renowned explorer and author said.

“Today we can build on what the Danish archaeologists have done in Greenland and what the Norwegians, Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad; Helge the explorer, and the archaeologist Anne Stine In

Ingstad, found at L’Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland. That has been radio carbon-dated. There is no question that the artifacts they found are from the Nordic visitors,” Dr. Heyerdahl assured his intent audience.

“There were three big countries that the Greenland colonists saw, running all the way from Hudson Bay and Labrador in what we call Helluland and Markland, the rocky land and the forested land, and when you come down to St. Lawrence Bay and Newfoundland, that is the area which was Vinland. This one bay at L’Anse au Meadows is not Vinland. It is part of Vinland,” Dr. Heyerdahl believes from his research.

“The Icelandic geographers have found today grapes growing wild in the St. Lawrence area, and I myself have received as a gift from them, wild grapes picked in that area. We also know today about the climatic changes over the millennium. The Greenland coast and the Northeastern Coast of America was much warmer until roughly 1350, AD.

“We have a fair idea of what happened. Halfway between Iceland and Greenland on some very early maps are some islands that are not on modern maps,” Dr. Heyerdahl pointed out. But on a map of 1400’s, it was stated that about 1350 the last of these islands burned up.
Oceanographers had discovered that there are sunken volcanoes in that area. There was volcanic activity then as there still is today. The shallow water around the reefs blocked the cold water from the Arctic current from coming further down the Greenland coast.

The famed Norwegian explorer also was granted special access to Vatican files and ancient documents during his book research.

"I was let in to the secret archives of the Vatican and I was given by the Archbishop, in person, the original manuscript from Adam of Bremen, written in the year 1070; 200 years before the Sagas. Here was a report to the Vatican about the Norse discovery of a land we call Vinland, west of Greenland.

"We the Protestants had not been willing to go and ask for it, and they, the Catholics had not been willing to volunteer. So everybody has been happy with the idea that Leif Ericson was a just a Viking and Columbus discovered America.

“What we have re-discovered from archeology in Greenland, Iceland and Newfoundland, translations of historic documents, research in Vatican archives now available is that Leif Ericson did discover The New World, circa 1000 AD. It was first settled by Vikings accompanying Thorfinn Karlsefni and his wife, most likely at L’Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland.

“There is much more to discover about Vikings and it is a continuing challenge to all of us to find answers from all the sources now available to us,” Dr. Heyerdahl concluded.

To celebrate and commemorate Leif Ericson’s epic voyage of discovery and Viking history, the Viking Trail Association of Newfoundland has organized a Vikings 1000 project. Replica Viking ships from Nordic countries will converge on L’Anse aux Meadows this summer at a Grand Encampment.


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Europe: The North Sea Viking Legacy is seen within a broader European network. In relation to the Council of Europe approved Viking Route, the North Sea Viking Legacy is seen as a development project within a more restricted geographical region. The North Sea Viking Legacy also has established working relations with the Viking co-operation in the Baltic Sea region.

Main programme issues
The North Sea Viking Legacy focuses on a number of important issues, such as the Vikings – a common North Sea heritage
- establish, maintain and promote Viking attractions in the region
- develop and apply a set of quality assessment criteria for the selection of heritage sites, museums and Viking centres to be included in the promotion
- promote co-operation between museums and Viking centres selected in respect of exchange of knowledge, experience and co-ordinated marketing activities
- promote co-operation between Viking festivals and re-enactments in order to improve authenticity, accuracy etc. based on current knowledge, and to further co-ordinated marketing activities and exchange of ideas, mutual participation etc.
- the North Sea is a centuries-old link promoting interchange of ideas, goods and people and these links still exist: the Viking heritage is shared by most regions around the North Sea

lasting effects
- all project elements aim at establishing lasting effects
- the route to Viking attractions around the North Sea will remain a major tourist attraction for years
- the North Sea Viking Legacy will be established as (a part of) a permanent programme of co-operation

Quality assessment
A major element in the North Sea Viking Legacy programme is to develop a set of quality criteria to select attractions to be included in the promotion of the Viking heritage. These criteria should also stimulate partners to improve aspects of their attractions to fulfil the selection criteria.
- Attractions included should demonstrate
  - authenticity
  - knowledge
  - accuracy
based on scientific research.
- Authenticity applies to the attraction itself. Either the site, the material
The Handicraft of the Viking Age

The history of boat-building is as old as the settlement at the coast of Norway. The building of small boats is a craft that was already very advanced during the Viking Age, and it is one of the crafts of our time that can be directly compared with its Viking Age counterpart.

The Oselvar is one of three traditional Norwegian styles of boat, the products of a living tradition of boat-building. There are still boat-builders who have fully developed their skills within this tradition. The boat itself has its origin in Os, a few miles south of Bergen on the west coast of Norway.

In Os there is a well-documented tradition of building such boats from the sixteenth century, and the export of boats from Os to Shetland, to Orkney and to the Scottish mainland was a thriving industry. Even then, however, such boats had been built in Os for centuries, probably from the Viking Age, but perhaps from even earlier. The Oselvar is the small traditional Norwegian boat which has most in common with archaeological finds of boats from the Viking Age (the Gokstad excavations). Most of the hand-tools used by today's Oselvar builders are of a kind similar to those that must have been used in the Viking Age. The boat-builder's knowledge has been passed from father to son over generations in an unbroken chain - as the boat slowly developed in close contact between the builder and the fisherman, making it the ideal craft for the coastal conditions.

Today, the Oselvar is without doubt the product of a tradition unbroken since the Viking period.
mind. The proprietors, however, wish to increase public interest in the Oselvar by establishing an information centre in the boatyard, the Oselvar Centre, to show the building and use of the Oselvar boat. In that connection the close relationship between the small Viking Age boats and the modern Oselvar boat is of especial interest.

The exhibition in The Oselvar Centre will show the development of boat-building from the Viking Age to the present and the historical and modern use of the boat. It will show how the boat was developed as a direct result of a close co-operation between the user - the fisherman - and the boat-builder, where the boat-builder had sufficient knowledge to build a boat with the exact characteristics which makes it fit for its purpose.

From the year 2001 we shall be able to welcome tourists to our exhibition in the Oselvar Centre.

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Language checked by Ian S Gibson

Photo: Vidar Langeland
The Project Ale in the Viking Age

BY BODIL PETERSSON

In 1933 a farmer at Åskekärr, north of Gothenburg, found the remains of a ship dating from the 10th century. The parts of the ship, the only one from this period preserved in Sweden, are today exhibited at the Göteborg City Museum. In 1994 another ship was excavated at Åskekärr. These excavations form the basis of the project Ale in the Viking Age which was started by the Committee of Education and Culture in Ale in the spring of 1999. This project is associated with the research project The River and the Ship managed by the University of Gothenburg and the regional museums. I shall write within the framework of this project, the surrounding countryside, analyses of the Göta river valley and of the Åskekärr area.

Within the project Ale in the Viking Age there are three sub-projects:

1. Nature- and Culture-Paths
2. The Ale Viking Age Village
3. The Göta River valley in the Viking Age

1. In the near future there will be a nature- and culture-path in the grounds of the ancient castle at Ranneberget, Älvängen. The history of Ale, mainly focusing on the Viking Age, will be depicted along this path; we also want to focus on and protect the valuable natural assets found in the area along the river Göta. In this project we are co-operating with the Lödöse Museum and the Ale Society for Nature Conservation. Another path will be constructed in connection with the planned Viking Age village at Häljered just south of Älvängen. The two nature- and culture-paths will be linked to each other.

2. The project group working with the Ale Viking Age village has produced the groundwork on which is based the construction of a Viking Age house of the 10th century. Discussions have taken place with Mr Leif Johansson, Lödöse Museum, Mr Lars Lundquist, Central Board of National Antiquities West, Mrs Dorthie Kaldal Mikkelsen, Viborg, and Mr Jochen Komper, Stavanger Museum. From now on, an architect will work with the project to produce a reconstruction of a complete Viking Age Village as it would have looked in Ale 1000 years ago.

3. In parallel with the research project The River and the Ship, we are collecting existing and future research material on the Göta River valley in the Viking Age. Opportunity will be given to the schools of the municipality, the public and to amateur scholars to search for information. It is planned to publish part of the data on the internet.

Steken

Did Harald Finehair come with his fleet to Steken in Agnesberg in 869? The word ‘steken’ means “a stake driven down into the water”. The earl, Rane, ordered stakes to be driven into the river Göta älv in an attempt to prevent the Norwegian king from advancing into Bohuslän.

Nödinge

During an examination of Nödinge church in 1981, archaeologists discovered relics of the 12th century church under the floor of the present church. Some ten graves were found under the church walls, where the bodies, wrapped in birch and other bark, had been laid. A wooden coffin was also found. The graves are dated to the beginning of the 11th century, in the late Viking Age.

Åskekärr

In 1933, a farmer discovered the Åskekärr ship while digging a ditch. It proved to be a 521 foot (16 metre) long merchant ship with high freeboards. Judging by repair work, it had been used for sailing for about 100 years. The ship was built entirely of oak, caulked with sheep’s wool and resin and dated to the 10th century.

Lid

Ten bracelets and two neck-rings made of silver were discovered in Lid in 1853. Silver was the gold of the Viking Age. The word ‘lid’, which means an ‘army’, was of particular significance to the Vikings: kings and chieftains each had their own army, a troop of soldiers who had vowed loyalty to him personally.

Grönköping

Grönköping means “the trading place by the river Gröna”. The word ‘köping’ comes from Old English and means ‘trading place’. According to tradition, there was a Viking Age trading place at the junction of the rivers Grönnän and Forsån.

The Viking Project in Ale is also co-operating with the adult educational associations in Ale which give lectures and courses on Viking themes. Members of the project team are Mrs Birgitta Adler and Mr Thomas Sundsmyr, project leaders, and Miss Bodil Pettersson, project secretary. You can reach us by telephone at +46-31-979662 or by e-mail at vikingar.ale@swipnet.se

History: Ale in the Viking age

Source: Mona Lorentzson, the Göteborg City Museum

The river Göta älv

The river Göta älv is frequently mentioned in the Icelandic sagas as a transport and communication route and a border between the Nordic countries.

Language checked by Ian S Gibson
Avaldsnes is called the first royal residence of Norway because Harald Fairhair made this his main residence after the unification of Norway in 872, but it was the legendary King Augvald who gave the place his name.

Augvald, who lived around 600 AD, was "a descendant of gods and a forefather of kings." It was its strategic position by the Karmsund – the North Way – that made Avaldsnes a centre of power for 3000 years. The Karmsund was the main route to the ancient royal residence, and the Viking manor was situated in the midst of this fairway which gave our country the name Norway.

Through the Avaldsnes project we want to ensure that in any future development the historical value of this area is firstly considered. We wish to make sure that the cultural heritage and the archaeological traces in the soil and the sound are protected. In this way Avaldsnes will be able to secure its rightful place as a focal point in a national context. By so doing, we hope to make the project an important part of the conservation of our cultural heritage for the future. Education and knowledge are the main parts of this concept.

The project aims to make Avaldsnes an area of public interest. We hope to achieve this by various means. The main aim is to build visitors' centre to be called "Nordvegen". This will present a cross-section of Norwegian history, from the Stone Age through to the present time. The foundation of the centre should begin within the next year and completion is expected in the year 2003.

The Viking farm
The Viking farm is situated a ten-minute walk from the medieval church at Avaldsnes. The building of the Viking farm is an experimental archaeological research programme. The 25m longhouse is a trestle construction with curving walls and a double-curved roof covered with wooden shingles. Pine and oak are the main building materials and pieces of Muscovite in the window frames allow daylight into the building. The furniture and equipment are constructed as accurately as possible after archaeological finds and information from the saga-literature. The farm is fenced in accordance with traditional methods, and we grow herbs, vegetables, barley, rye and flax on the farm. There is also a smaller house, which is a reconstruction from Ytre Moa, Sogn. The outer walls hide modern "necessities" such as WC, wardrobe and showers. We are also planning to build a 32m boathouse and two smaller houses are at present under construction. Older
species of sheep and chickens are already roaming the island.

**The historical Viking-school**

What you hear, you forget. What you see, you remember. What you do, you will also understand.

Most children of today only get theoretical knowledge through books and in the school environment. On the Viking farm we teach the children about our cultural heritage and our history after the ‘practical’ principle.

During the period between March and October the Viking farm is the focal point for a Viking school. The idea is simple: we teach children not the history of dates and kings, but the everyday forgotten history of day-to-day life. The children spend the day living and working as Vikings and taking part in a series of activities which include the preparation of the day’s meal, field-working, construction of fences, ovens, etc., textile-work and many other tasks. This day gives the children a unique insight and understanding into life thousand years ago. We also have a 4-day program available. During this period the children spend one night in a Viking tent, learning how to survive "the Viking way". Time is also spent exploring other aspects of the area’s history.

**Banquets in the Longhouse**

It is possible to rent the longhouse for special occasions, from a simple guided tour to a Viking banquet, where you are served a full meal according to Viking tradition, with sagas and songs. While the fireplace sparkles and the flames cast shadows on the wall, you will be taken back to the 10th century.

**The summer season**

In the summer season you will meet guides who will invite you into the house and tell you about the Vikings and their way of life. There is a Viking boat at anchor by the shore where the children can look for crabs and smaller fish. Or perhaps you might like just to follow the paths through the peace and quiet of the forest.

**The Viking festival**

Every year Vikings from home and abroad congregate at Karmøy for the Viking Festival. From an exciting programme we can mention:

* Viking Market at the Viking farm, Avaldsnes
* Exhibitions
* The Asbjørn March
* Saga evenings at the Viking farm
* Closing concert at St. Olaf’s Church, Avaldsnes

For further information, please contact:
The Viking farm,
telephone: 52 83 90 85
fax: 52 83 26 76
mobile: 95 10 36 12
E-mail address: 
http://www.karmoyped.no/avaldpros/

Language checked by Ian S. Gibson
New finds of Viking Silver Hoards

In Viking Heritage Newsletters 3/99 and 4/99 we told you about the huge silver hoards discovered this summer in the same field in Spillings, Gotland. We are proud to present these exceptionally large hoards on the front cover of this issue of the Newsletter.

The hoards are still being excavated, but their weight is estimated to approximately 70 kg! But not only Gotland has Viking silver hoards hidden in the ground. Lately several other silver hoards have been brought to light in different parts of Viking-related areas.

Blekinge in the South of Sweden
In a crevice in Mörrum in the county of Blekinge, Sweden, a large Viking-Age silver hoard has been found. The largest part of the hoard is 140 coins, minted in several countries. Most of them are English, but there are also German and French coins. Most of the coins are dated to around 1050 AD. Besides the coins, the hoard consists of two bracelets, one closed and the other open. This is the biggest silver hoard ever found in the county of Blekinge.

Source: Arkeologiska nyheter & facta - Internet Malmö 2000

Holland
In November 1999, for the second time, a silver hoard was found in Westerkief (Wieringen) Holland. This new treasure consists of silver ingots and silver pieces, 17 whole and 3 broken Carolingian coins, and fragments of 61 Arabic coins. The whole treasure consists of a total of 319 g silver and is dated to the 9th century.

From the Spillings' silver hoard. Photo: Dan Carlsson

Hoard of silver and bronze objects from Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny Ireland

By Dr. Andy Halpin, Assistant Keeper, Irish Antiquities Division, National Museum in Dublin

In November 1999 the National Museum of Ireland was informed of the discovery of a hoard of silver and bronze objects in Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny. When recovered and brought to the National Museum of Ireland, the hoard proved to consist of 43 objects of silver and bronze, along with one glass bead and small fragments of leather and textile. The hoard is of Viking Age date – among the objects are 14 silver pennies from Anglo-Saxon England, which allow us to state that the hoard was probably concealed in the cave within a few years either side of 970 AD. Another hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins was found in the same cave in the 1970’s, dating to c.925 - 930 AD and probably connected with a massacre known to have taken place in the cave in 928 AD. The new hoard clearly has no connection with the massacre.

The most important feature of the hoard is a group of 16 objects of beautifully woven silver wire, shaped rather like conical buttons in three sizes. These are a new type of Viking-Age artefact, not known previously either in Ireland or elsewhere. There are also fragments of a delicate ornament in knitted silver wire and it is possible that both this and the button-like objects were attached to a garment of some sort. Only a small fragment of textile survives, but this appears to be a very fine imported silk. Also found were a matching bronze buckle and strap-end from a leather belt, both highly decorated in Hiberno-Norse style. The belt may have been worn with the same garment as the silver ornaments and it is possible that the other objects, mainly the coins and a number of ingots of silver and bronze, were wrapped in the garment and tied up with the belt, before being hidden in a rock crevice in the cave for safe-keeping. For whatever reason, they were never recovered.

Unfortunately, the objects were removed from the rock crevice at the time of discovery; had they been properly excavated by archaeologists, considerably more information could have been recovered about the circumstances in which the hoard was deposited. Some excavation was subsequently carried out by the National Museum of Ireland at the findspot and further work is planned. In the meantime, full conservation of the objects is to be carried out by the National Museum of Ireland, which should restore the to their original splendour and hopefully, tell us more about the construction and function of the unique woven silver objects.
Viking mums

BY ING-MARIE MUNKTELL

(The actress comes running in, dressed as a Viking mother. She sits down in front of a big iron pot and at the same time she corrects her dress. Picking up a few of the children’s toys she suddenly notices a stranger) .

WELCOME!! And who are you?? Have you seen about the festivities in the Viking Hall. The place that I have had built in the marketplace. You are so many! How did you get here? I saw strangely looking carriages outside - coaches without horses! Were the horses inside looking carriages outside - coaches?

I am Ingeborg Ingvarsdotter, married to Torbjörn Starke, at this moment he is on his way home from Miklagår. Three winters have passed since he left with his ship Skicludnere. Our four children have suffered hard since the time when Torbjörn left. We have hardly anything to eat, a lot of diseases have plagued us and the miss growth has hit us hard. A couple of the slaves that Torbjörn brought home from his last trip have died. Now we have to work hard harvesting and taking care of the animals, but fortunately I still have a few things left in my chests and store-rooms.

Now I see!! You’re wearing strange clothes, not at all as nice and useful as mine!! My cloth is made of the finest linen. The flax harvests have been good the last couple of years and besides, I love the blue flowers it bring to the fields, the fields that surround the grave-mounds with our loved ones. Do you know that Tora, our neighbour, has pleats on her linen dress! My dress is pretty ample, to give room to the times when you need something bigger. For example, when Torbjörn comes home we will have time to snuggle and maybe my stomach will grow big!

The skirt I made is both warm and pretty, it has lots of lovely borders which I made in my loom. I really appreciate the sheep as I don’t know what we should do without their wool!!

My buckles are all made of bronze. Torbjörn made them for me before he went away. My woollen mantle is lined with the finest of squirrel fur. Torbjörn wants me to have the best when he is away. Tora and I spent last winter making new mantles. Tora had both fox and marten skins, she such a show-off!!

Have you seen the new hall? Isn’t it lovely!! Gunnar, my sisters husband, helped me with the erecting!! Do you believe that my new house is made out of timber, 20 meters long and 6 meters deep. There are enough space for both the humans and the animals. We sealed the house with cow droppings and the roof is made of chip, birch-bark and moss. My house is a lot better than the house of Estrids and Gunnars in Birka. Their house is very simple with walls made of branches and soil. Have your realised how closely the houses are situated, and how small their courtyards are? Some of the roads are of course made of planks but they smell from the ditches where you find pigs, hens, cats and a lot of black rats too!!

Further up, along the city wall there are a lot of bigger houses. This is were the nobility and the most prosperous of the businessmen live. If I had a house in Birka, it would be one of those.

Imagine that they really want to live that close together!! I can understand the thrill of having all the traders and businessmen nearby. They all have lovely goods to sell, but Estrid and Gunnar are not able to buy anything. We keep them with seed, porridge, leek, sprouts and beans for their daily living. We also bring firewood for the fire and feather down to keep the cold out. Sure thing, when I visited last time I was jealous when I saw all the lovely silk, glass and amber. It is incredible being able to listen to all kind of different languages, and to meet people from faraway. Last winter, Tyra, Estrids daughter was sick for several weeks. It started with a cough but ended up in a belly ache.

Estrid didn’t know what to do so she sent for me. I had to hurry along the ices to Birka. My own kids, I thank God, were very healthy and out on the sea ice-skating. Tyra was indeed very sick, she lay mostly in bed. She had thrown off all her coverings, but a couple of my special porridge compresses and some juniper berries soon made her well again. My sister was so thankful, she gave me the most beautiful comb, and a necklace with cornelian and crystal! She also let me know that she will be Christened.

I had thought about the same thing so many times. Do you know why? Because the Christians say that you are only allowed one wife, which means that Torbjörn is only going to be with me. I’m not sure what will happen to his children with Gunhild, maybe they will be illegitimate? I think I have to take this into consideration before I do something. And who knows, maybe Torbjörn has already become a Christian during his journey.

Well, I have to get myself ready for Torbjörns arrival! The house is new! I would have liked some small windows on the house, covered with really thin animal skin to let the daylight in. Gunnar was not

MEAD

A Drink for Gods and Kings

A recipe for about 12 glasses

2,5 litre honey
2,8 litre water
1 dl dried bog myrtle or hops
15 grams of yeast

Method:
1. Boil the water and the honey. Add the hops and stir.
2. Let the mixture cool to finger warm, 370 C. Add the yeast.
3. Let it ferment at room temperature for three days and nights without stirring.
4. Strain and pour into bottles, and store in a cool place.
5. Drink the mead within two weeks.
in a very good mood at the end, so I didn’t get any. I will have to use thorn sticks and oils lamps instead (I use the oil from seals and herring). I wish I could buy some wax candles as people say they burn beautifully without smoke! I have enough smoke and noise in the house already, with all the children and the animals.

Not to long ago, when I sat down with my loom, Björn, the smallest one, had taken all my loom plummets of burnt clay and was playing with them outside. I sent him out to carve some barks instead.

When Torbjörn comes home, the children will be out playing with shields and wooden swords…. And Lill-Ingelborg, she put all her rag dolls in my new washing tub that I was using to dye some yarn, so now I have to make her new dolls!!

Recently, me, Estrid and Tora talked for a whole evening about the coming feast. We will all help each other with the mead. Estrid wants us to use hop in the mead, but Tora says that bog myrtle is much better. Estrid is stubborn about the mead, as she has recently opened a new Inn in Birka, and she is already well known for her mead. I have both bog-myrtle, hop and wild-honey, so we just have to wait and see which of them we will use!! The mead always turns out good and strong in the end anyway!

We will make plenty of Enhärdricka (home made gin), made of juniper berries and honey! And we will bake some fresh bread, made of the leaven left in my baking tray!

Barbecued pig is a must on the table, so we will have to slaughter the biggest and fattest one! Meat and onion porridge is one of Torbjörns favourite dishes. I will make it when he comes back. The best way to make the onion porridge is to leave barley, peas and grain of wheat to soak overnight. You then mince the meat and the onions and fry them before you mix all the ingredients together in a big iron pot and let it all simmer for an hour.

Nobody can beat my äppeltårta (appletart)!! Made of the finest wild-apples in the neighbourhood! This time of year we use a lot of dried apples! We are all very busy! Everybody talks about the new millenium! I only know that we had a great year of crop failure when I was expecting my first child, and that was 14 years ago…… So what about 1000 years!!

Of course I can remember a few of the Viking chiefs from before…. But I must confess I am little bit worried about the future. The only thing that is certain is that time as well as the earth have a beginning and an end. Well, I must get out into the sun and have a look at my new hall! Your are all welcome to drop by!

Translation from Swedish to English: Maggie Hynd, Uppsala.

About the author:

“In my life: I have recently taken on the directorship of the Museum Gustavianum in Uppsala, Sweden, with a passion for mediating knowledge. Imagine what a treasure I am sitting upon, the entire University of Uppsala! Ph.D. Historian, 4 children, 2 dogs, 2 cats and a lovely husband!”

Ing-Marie Munktell
E-mail: ing-marie.munktell@gustavianum.uu.se
A Viking Mother of Today

By Marie Gustavsson

Five years ago I had my first contact with people who live as Vikings, at least during the summer seasons, and for the last four years I have been one of them. My family, Claes, Jimmy, Alva and myself, Marie, belong to the Ranerna re-enactment group in Viken in northern Bohuslän, on the West Coast of Sweden.

In this article I would like to try to convey my thoughts about being a modern mother living a Viking lifestyle versus whether there is something in common with the mothers of that time and what perhaps our children of today are lacking. This is absolutely not an academic paper and I have no evidence to support what I am saying, but these are my own thoughts concerning this subject and I swear to having been very critical of the sources of information on many occasions...

I have come to realise that this Viking life of ours is a unique opportunity for our children to experience history in a living and, in many respects, correct way. Without being aware of living in the midst of history, the children see the houses, boats, clothes, weapons and so on. They smell the smoke of campfires, rough homespun and tarred ropes. I think these things are what you remember later, when you become a grown-up.

The first time we went to the Viking market in Foteviken, my interest in this lifestyle took on a new dimension when Jimmy, my older son, came with us. He ran around all weekend with his new friends shooting with a bow and arrow, playing tag, swimming and keeping busy. The only times we saw him were when he was tired or hungry. He never once asked for a TV, computer or when we were going home. That was when I understood that this is what children of today need. It was as if he took on a role when he put on his Viking shirt and trousers. (The same thing happens to us grown-ups too; at least that is how I feel. It is as if no clocks or stress factors exist, you live by the sun and your stomach.)

It was a load off my mind when I saw how wonderfully free he and his friends felt from all the demands we grown-ups and other children make on each other: how to behave, to dress, about toys and so on. Here he was free as a bird, while I must, at the same time, point out that all
the grown-ups acted as parents even if they hadn’t any children of their own. This is what makes it so pleasant, keeping company with these fantastic people, that everyone cares and takes responsibility.

I can always hope my son will become interested in history and his own part in it. Maybe one day he will want to make his own bow or knife, then we grown-ups can offer him the knowledge and desire. My role is to show and guide when the questions come, I am neither able to nor want to force anything on my children. Clearly, this is where the aspect of books enters the scene. Is there anything more exciting than listening to stories of crazy chieftains, thrilling journeys and angry Gods? The only comparison would be when Peter Park becomes Spiderman.

When my second child Alva was born, I began to contemplate children in ancient times. A small newborn child is so frail and helpless, but still so aware. Everyone who has gazed deeply into the eyes of a newborn has felt totally unmasked. An enormous trust in the observer flows from the child, and you can feel a nearness that is almost tangible. When I lay my baby to my breast to give the best I can offer and see how my child becomes nourished and satisfied, I feel a mutual connection with my child first of all but also with women throughout the ages. This is primeval!

Nothing has been changed in this symbiosis, except perhaps the reason why we breast-feed. Today we are so “privileged” that we can choose whether or not we want to breast-feed our children. I nursed my children for 6 and 7 months and I enjoyed it. In ancient times breast-feeding was perhaps the sole lifeline for several years, except for different kinds of porridge. I wonder how the children of ancient times managed with all the salt in the food?

I also wonder about everything we Westerners consider necessary to bring up our children properly. What’s the use of all those Fisher Price toys and Waldorf dolls? It is you yourself who is the most interesting! It seems as if we are trying to buy our children’s childhood, that it will be better if they have expensive toys, instead of giving our children our own time. Of course there are commercial reasons too, as we are constantly fed information about what children simply must have in order to develop.

Today we have also forgotten what an important role relatives and friends play in a family’s life. Furthermore we have been brought up to believe that children can not take part in the parents’ activities, that they are disturbance and in the way. We give a second of our precious time to the baby by staying home the first year of its childhood. Then we allow other people take care of our children and instil them with their set of values. Most often we are forced to do this for economic reasons. We have to go back to work as soon as possible, preferably even faster.

That is why it is so important that our children are able to play as freely as ours do (I don’t mean only mine) and become a part of a big family, which we re-enactors actually become when we meet.

So, to return to the heading of this article, I feel proud of being a “Viking Mother of Today” and having the opportunity to give my children the kind of upbringing that allows them to be able to see, experience and feel something totally different than anything a computer game can ever match.

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**About the author:**

Marie Gustavsson is a member of the Viking re-enactment group Ranerna, Sweden.

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Two “Viking” boys, Staffan and Jimmy, in Hög’s Viking village 1997. Photo: Marie Gustavsson
information concerning the size and structure (a crude cist) of the grave was documented for the first time. Among the 40-odd artefacts found in the grave were: tortoise brooches of silver, an equal-armed silver brooch, two silver arm-rings, an Irish hanging bowl, glass beads, bronze mountings from three drinking horns, two Irish bronze mounts from a reliquary shrine and 13 gilded bronze mounts from a horse harness. The harness mounts were found on a horse’s cranium in the grave.

Last year (1999) three boat-burials were discovered and excavated at Gausel. They were located around 750 meters from the nearest shoreline, and about 70 meters above sea level. The largest of the boat-burials was almost intact, having surprisingly survived 150 years of intensive farming in the area. The grave contained a male weapon burial in a nine meter (27 feet) long vessel. The deceased was equipped with two swords, three shields, an axe, arrows (and probably a bow), a knife and several blacksmith tools. Among the artefacts were also remains of a horse-harness with traces of gold and silver decorations. The harness was probably put in the grave fitted to a horse’s head, since horse-teeth were found together with the harness remains. Some traces of textile were found in the corrosion on some of the objects. There were no remains of the deceased himself due to the poor conditions for survival of organic materials in the acid soil of western Norway. Approximately 400 rivets and nails from the boat were found in situ, hence the boat’s form and size can be reconstructed. Attached to a large number of the rivets were pieces of mineralised wood from the boat itself. The remains of the other two boat-burials were far more severely damaged from ploughing. One of the graves was a male weapon burial containing a fragmentary sword and shield, a knife, bronze-ring, a wetstone, horse teeth and ca. 120 boat-rivets. The third boat grave was almost totally destroyed by ploughing, and the only thing that remained was a 6 meter boat-shaped depression in the ground containing rivets and nails, indicating a vessel of 6-7 meters length.

All were three boat-graves probably originally in the form of grave mounds/cairns and all burials were inhumations.

This example from Gausel shows that archaeology still can find rich archaeological finds in farming areas where the ancient monuments were removed and “destroyed” more than 150 years ago.

The find is currently under analysis and interpretation, and will be published in 2001.
Baffin Island coast and depicted its obviously strategic location between Iceland and North America. It is difficult to believe that mere coincidence caused Greenland’s Norse outpost to vanish just when the European exploitation of American resources began in earnest.

**ADDITIONAL READING:**
------- “How Strange is a Stranger? A Survey of Opportunities for Inuit-European Contact in the Davis Strait before 1576”, Meta Incognita: A Discourse of Discovery.
Martin Frobisher’s Arctic Expeditions 1576-1578, Thomas H.B. Symons, ed., Hull, Québec, 1999, vol. 2

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**The largest-ever Viking ship replica to be built in Denmark**

Roskilde Viking Ship Museum in Denmark is about to build the largest-ever Viking ship replica. The ship will be a full-size copy of one of the five Viking ships excavated in thousands of pieces from Roskilde Fjord in 1962, and it is known as Skuldelev 2. The other four finds have already been reconstructed and the replicas can be seen in the museum.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the original ship was built in Dublin, Ireland, around the year 1040. At that time the Vikings had settled in Ireland and built several fortified bases along the coast.

This ocean-going longship has an unusually long and narrow construction; the length is 29.37 metres and breadth 3.8 metres, with 30 rowing benches and 60 oars. The crew will consist of 80 – 100 men, with 60 of them at the oars.

The ship will be built using the same methods, tools and materials as the Vikings used nearly 1000 years ago. It will be built in the open air at the museum’s shipyard, allowing the public to follow the project. It is planned that the ship will start its maiden voyage from Roskilde to Dublin in 2005.

The reconstruction has been made possible by a donation (DKr 10,5 m = euro 1,41 m) from the Tuborg Foundation and Carlsberg’s Memorial Bequest, both part of the Danish brewing group, Carlsberg A/S.

For further information: [http://www.carlsberg.com/info/viking/ship.html](http://www.carlsberg.com/info/viking/ship.html)
The first Viking market on the island of Åland, Finland, will take place in Saltvik on July 28-29, 2000. The market is located at the native place of Hlödver the Tall, a Viking who, according to Snorre Sturlason, sailed with the Norwegian king Olav Trygvason. This king is known for his choice of the most competent men within and outside his kingdom.

Visit the place as it looked like 1000 years ago, with an up-to-date long-house and Viking ships anchoring in the bay close to the market area. There will be reconstructed market stalls where food, drinks and personal souvenirs will be on sale. Clever craftsmen will turn pottery, forge, and process wool and seal skins using old methods. Butter churning and tablet-weaving will also be shown.

Visitors can try ancient sports like archery, tug of war and axe throwing. A medieval orchestra, Austrvega, and the male choir, Åländska sångare (Singers of Åland), will entertain with music in keeping with the times. Theatre with a Viking Age-theme will be performed for the whole family. For children there will be a chronicle play including both Vikings and Viking princesses. It will also be possible for the whole family to take a horse and carriage ride.

A runestone to the memory of Hlödver the Tall and a wooden sculpture of Hlödver will be unveiled on the first day. The first day of issue of the Hlödver postage stamp will also mark the occasion.

For further information contact: Johanna Nissinen
e-mail: programcentralen@turist.aland.fi

Exhibition “Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga”

The Viking Exhibition “Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga” will be opened in the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC, on April 29 by America’s first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The theme of this extensive exhibition is uncovering the Viking past and the heritage the Vikings left for the generations that followed. The literary references found in the Icelandic Sagas will receive special emphasis.

The exhibition will travel to several cities in the United States and Canada during the next three years.

The Academic Conference: The Age of Conversion in Northern Europe

To mark the arrival of the new millennium, the Department of Archaeology and the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York are hosting an international conference to celebrate and explain the art, architecture and archaeology of the first millennium of Christianity in Northern Europe. The conference will take place July 17 – 21, 2000 at the King’s Manor in York, England and it is a part of a number of events that will be held in the city of York, England, in July 2000 to mark the Christian anniversary.

Two sessions (morning and afternoon) will be held each day, with each session consisting of papers on a common theme. Many prominent lecturers from different countries will participate. Other activities will also take place, such as excursions and tours of the richly historic city of York and its churches. There will be numerous exhibitions and presentations on the subject of Christianity in the First Millennium.

In the evenings delegates are invited to take part in a series of celebrity lectures on First Millennium Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Recent Discoveries.

For further information:
http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/york2000/conference.htm
Gall-Ghaidheil:
The Western Isles in the Viking World
Conference in the Hebrides

A conference about the Norse settlement and life on the islands, will take place April 3 – 7, 2000 on the Isle of Lewis, in the Hebrides.

The Norse occupied the Hebrides for nearly five hundred years, between the end of the eighth century and the end of the thirteenth century. This long period of coexistence left a profound impression on the culture and archaeology of the Western Isles, one that is often underestimated in the light of the succeeding centuries of Scottish affiliation.

This conference will bring together the latest research in linguistics, numismatics, archaeology and history to examine the Norse settlement and life in the islands, and the role of the Western Isles in the wider sphere of the Viking and Norse cultural hegemony. The topics will include Migration and Identity: Style and Ritual, Sites and Settlement and Landholding, Trade and Travel.

The conference takes place in Stornoway with study trips and public lectures in other parts of the Isle of Lewis. During the conference, an exhibition with the same title will be opened at Museum nan Eilan.

The conference is organized by Museum nan Eilean & Arc-eòlaiche nan Eilean Siar, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

For full programme, further details and application form: http://www.w-iles.gov.uk/museum/viking.htm

Swedish Ships to New York!

As many already know the American Vikings had big plans for a Viking flotilla to sail along the east coast of USA after the visit to Vinland. However, these plans have now been reduced to a rather smaller scale. Chief Dennis Johnson of NORSEMAN, Philadelphia, has invited to a shortened programme – and at least two SWEDISH SHIPS – two very fine ones! – will try to join.

VIKING PLYM
– oldest in the world
SKIDBLADNER
– biggest in the world

We shall sail together with NORSEMAN (and perhaps some others as well) into New York on 2 September. Later we shall visit a Viking feast in Philadelphia. And of course also the big Viking exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

Viking ships being greeted by the statue of Liberty – quite a sensation!

Runes carved Feb 23 Year 1000AL (After Leif)
Carl “Bråvalla” Norberg
Täby Vikinga Skeppslag

Language check by Ian S. Gibson

Fröjel Discovery Programme
Excavation of a Viking-Age harbour at Fröjel, Gotland
Summer 2000

The third season of excavations and survey of the Viking-Age harbour will take place at Fröjel, Gotland, between June 26th and August 12th. The excavation will be organised in two different forms.

Between June 26th and July 14th, a two to three week course of archaeology will be carried out through the Residential College for Adult Education at Hemse. This course is open to anybody interested in joining an archaeological excavation.

The second field course will take place between July 16th and August 12th, and is a four week course run by Gotland University College and open to archaeologists and archaeology students and experienced amateurs from all over the world.

For further information, please contact
http://frjoel.hgo.se
E-mail: dan@hgo.se
The Third International Viking Festival in Hafnarfjörður, Iceland, June 22–25, 2000

The theme of the Third International Viking Festival in Hafnarfjörður will be “Discovery” both in the past and the future. The courage and the curiosity of the Vikings a thousand years ago led to the discovery of new countries and cultures. Even today, modern Vikings have these same human instincts of searching and discovery. These aspects of the Viking era will be emphasised in talks and exhibitions during the festival, as well as the daily life of the Vikings, their families and their children.

Viking groups from many countries have been invited to the festival. An authentic Viking atmosphere will be created and the program will include Viking markets, Viking food, performances, music, theatre, lectures, exhibitions and tours.

The festival is being organised by the Landnám-office in the town of Hafnarfjörður, situated only 10 minutes drive from Reykjavik, Iceland’s capital city. Reykjavik is designated the European City of Culture in the year 2000. Numerous events on the theme “Culture and Nature” will take place inside and outside the capital during the year.

The festival will be part of the Millennium year in Iceland, when the discovery of America by the famous Viking Leifur Eiríksson will be celebrated. Throughout the year Iceland’s historical transition from the ancient religion of the Vikings to Christianity a thousand years ago will also be celebrated.

For further information:
www.hafnarfjordur.is/vikings
E-mail: vikings@hafnarfjordur.is

Frans G. Bengtsson now as a cartoon-epic by Charlie Christensen

(The Long Ships, the first part, or how Orm became left-handed.)
Publisher: Ordfront Galago 1999.

Orm is one of those heroes who never dies. The stories of the Viking hero, created by the Swedish author Frans G Bengtsson in the thirties, are among the most loved and read books in Sweden. The books are often reprinted and today they are translated into 19 languages. The adventures of Orm have also become a film, a musical, radio theatre and the stories have also been related on the world’s longest tapestry, 90 metres.

Now, the adventures of this Viking hero have also become a comic book, created and with drawings by Charlie Christensen, a well-known Swede. This is the first volume of five planned books.

Charlie Christensen has created a totally new cartoon-epic, which in narrative art is not far from the original in terms of humour, drama and structure. In this first part we are able to follow how Orm mistakenly embarks on his maiden voyage and together with Krok’s men goes on plundering-raids along the Spanish coast. Among the mountains of Asturia and the cliffs of Galicia, the company meets with incidents that have dire effects on their continued voyage.

The book is available only in Swedish.

Britannica.com award for Viking Heritage Web site!

On Jan 31, 2000, the Viking Heritage Server & Database received a new award, this time from Britannica.com. The motivation is: “Britannica.com is contacting you because our editors have selected your site as one of the best on the Internet when reviewed for quality, accuracy of content, presentation and usability.” “…in the company of an elite group of Web sites.”

Britannica.com is a knowledge and educational centre on the Internet, including the trusted and authoritative Encyclopaedia Britannica, reviews by experts on the most visit-worthy sites on the Internet, and selected articles from the leading magazines of the world, such as Newsweek, Discover and The Economist.

In the Viking Heritage Database you can obtain information and knowledge about many aspects of the Vikings, about their life and voyages, and also about how the Viking-Age theme is used today in different parts of the world.

Of course, the staff of Viking Heritage is very proud of the award and it gives us extra energy and motivation to maintain the high quality of our site.

Since we act as a network, we also need your help in collecting information to update the site. So you are always welcome to contact us with ideas, new projects and events, research etc, in other words – everything relating to the Vikings and the Viking Age.

Britannica.com:
http://www.britannica.com
Viking Heritage: http://viking.hgo.se
Thanks for an interesting story about the impressive function of the "sun compass". It has evidently proven to provide quite exact heading information. However the author doesn’t mention that no maps existed – so measuring headings as we do now was not possible.

The Vikings didn’t know about latitudes as we do, but – and this is thrilling – they practised latitude navigation anyway. This is, of course, well known to the author but I think he should have mentioned this important principle to make his story complete. As it stands now it might be somewhat misleading if the reader thinks the sun compass will help almost like our compass.

In fact I believe they didn’t have to use a "complete" sun compass at all to get to a distant target. A simple "sun board" for the target latitude in the appropriate season was enough.

With Viking greetings, Carl "Bråvalla" (Norberg), sailing VIKING PLYM, the oldest ship on the seas (built 1912).

I have the following comments to Carl “Bravalla’s” Sun compass without heading?:

Please note that I was directed to make my article a short one not exceeding 3 pages, and my books on the Viking compass are all about 40 pages, so I could not include all the interesting details in the article. Please read my Danish version: VIKINGETIDENS NAVIGATION OG AMERIKAS OPDAGEELSE, based on the words of the sagas, or my English version VIKING NAVIGATION. In these books you will find answers to most questions on Viking “path finding”.

Please note that the sagas contain 7, maybe even 8 sailing directions with courses and sailing times between all important places in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic islands and even all the way to North America. They knew their headings. I had an article about these sailing directions in the British periodical: The Journal of Navigation, Vol. 50, No 1 1997.

No, you are right. The Vikings did not know their latitude, but in my books I call latitude sailing Equal altitude navigation. Although we have no clear evidence that they measured the altitude of the sun, it seems likely that they kept the same noon sun’s altitude by watching the shortest length of the sun’s shadow at noon on their voyage, and were probably aware of the small changes, that could occur on the voyage. The small change in latitude has no important influence on sun-compass reading.

To my judgement the surest navigation will be a combination between the sun-compass to plan the course and the “Solskuggefjøl” – the sun shadow board – to check that you are on the correct track on the voyages west/east or east/west.

The above mentioned books are available from my publishing company: The Viking Compass, 342 Teglgaardvej, DK-3050 Humlebæk. The prices are Danish version 100 DKK, English version 80 DKK plus postage.

With best wishes, S. Thirslund

P.S. We have older ships than yours in Denmark, and they are still sailing very well.

Exhibition “Living and Reliving Sagas”

In March 2000, an extensive exhibition of Icelandic manuscripts and literature entitled “Living and Reliving Sagas” will be opened in Iceland. It will then travel to the Library of Congress, Washington DC, where it will open on May 24. At the end of July, the exhibition will go to Cornell University, NY, USA, and later to Winnipeg, Canada. This exhibition is collaboration between the National Library of Iceland, the Library of Congress and Cornell University.
The objectives of the network are:

- To develop and maintain the European Institute of Cultural Routes project.

- To co-operate with schools, universities etc. in the field of education and training in the study of the Vikings.

- To collect information of present Viking history activities, and to distribute information about Vikings and their history.

In promoting these aims, VIKING HERITAGE provides an information service with the newsletter Viking Heritage Newsletter in co-operation with NORTH SEA VIKING LEGACY. The newsletter is acting as a monitoring and advisory body on all issues relating to an enhanced understanding of the Viking history.

**Subscription fee 2000**, four issues
Sweden: 200 SEK
Denmark, Finland and Norway: 210 SEK
Other countries: 250 SEK

As a new subscriber of Viking Heritage Newsletter you will receive complimentary copy of the guidebook *Follow the Vikings, Highlights of the Viking World*. The book contains 50 of the most important destinations in different countries, selected by an international group of archaeologists and is richly illustrated in full colour.