Editorial

The main source for obtaining knowledge of prehistoric times is from archaeology, where the use of different kinds of methods and theories help us to get answers to our inquiries and insight into many different aspects of the living conditions at that time.

One method of gaining knowledge about interactions and influences among prehistoric peoples and cultures is to compare ornamental styles of objects found in excavations. This is the topic of the first article in this issue. Several of the following articles deal with the theme of interaction between people during the Viking Age. As travellers, the Vikings met people from near and far, with different manners and customs. Of course these meetings had an impact on everyone involved, and traces can be found in the archaeological material today.

As we all know, the Vikings have also made an impression on people in later times. For example, this can be seen on stamps. In this issue we are happy to present the article on Philatelic Vikings on page 16.

There are many other methods that enable us to get closer to our past, like reconstructions. As often stated previously, reconstructions are not a simple matter. They require both research and imagination and it is important to remember that the prevailing attitudes of our time will always influence the process.

The summer season offers us many opportunities to encounter Viking reconstruction; by taking part in events like festivals, markets or plays, interacting and experiencing history. The Vikings still make their presence felt.

Have a really good summer and enjoyable reading!

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Words of Wisdom

A guest should be courteous
When he comes to the table
And sit in wary silence
His ears attentive,
his eyes alert;
So he protects himself

From Hávámal
(Words from “The High One”)

Viking market. A young teenage Viking girl weighs a large chunk of amber for purchase; while in the background a Viking warrior negotiates for an axe he wants to buy. Drawing by Lou Harrison, thunderheartstudios@yahoo.dk

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One of the most exciting Old-Icelandic sagas is the Jómsvikinga saga describing the history of warriors from the Jómsborg fortress established by the Danish king, Harald Gormson Bluetooth, in the second half of 10th century. Jómsborg was situated somewhere on the Wendic coast of the Baltic Sea at the Oder river estuary.

Over the ages researchers have had different opinions with reference to the Old-Icelandic sagas. Opinions have changed from uncritical trust in sagas as the historical source-book's historical fables. In this paper I don't pretend to reinforce or deny the hypothesis about whether or not Jómborg and the Jómsvikings existed. The aim of my paper is to research the specific part of archaeological evidence of Danish presence in the Oder estuary in the end of the 10th century and the beginning of 11th century. Since the Polish archaeological excavations in Wolin began in 1952, there are an increasing number of Scandinavian artefacts visible within the dominating Slavic context. This progress is especially evident in the last four years.

The Scandinavian artefacts from Wolin are represented by pottery, coins, wooden staves with runic inscription, open-work scabbard chapes decorated with birds, combs and comb-cases made of antler, spindle whorls, soapstone pots and moulds, whetstones, game pieces, circular brooches typologically Sp2 (Terslev) (fig. 1), jeweller's vice with decoration (fig. 2), bodkins, pendants, Thor's hammer amulets made of amber, buckles, wood and antler decorated knife handles, and wooden spoons with ornamentation and a lion-head stopper made of silver.

In this collection are numerous objects of Scandinavian art and local (Slavic or Scandinavian) artistic creativity with foreign Borre-style...
influences (fig. 3). The Borre-style objects are the most common, next to the Ringerike-style and Mammen-style finds. The Mammen-style artefacts from Oder river estuary are the main subject of this paper.

The Mammen style is dated to 960-1020, named after a grave in Mammen, Jutland, and identified by the famous silver-inlay design found on an iron axe. Mammen style is characterized by the double contour line, spiral-shaped shoulders and hips, and by the development of neck and tail lobes into luxuriant acanthus-shaped crests (Fitzhugh & Ward 2000).

Apart from the axe-head from Bjerringhøj in Mammen, the main Mammen-style monuments are the Thorleif stone cross from Kirk Braddan on the Isle of Man, the King Harald memorial stone at Jelling in Denmark and two caskets from Bamberg in Germany and Kamięń Pomorski, situated about 30 km from Wolin in Poland.

The Kamięń casket, which disappeared in the Second World War from the treasury of the Kamięń Cathedral in Poland and of which only copies are preserved, is unique and the best example of Scandinavian art. This Trelleborg house-shaped reliquary of Saint Kordula was richly decorated with plant and S-shaped animals, semi-naturalistic lion, bird and mask motifs in the typical Mammen style, a widespread form of ornamentation in Scandinavia from the close of the 10th century. It measured 63 cm in length, 34,5 cm in width and 22 cm in height and was made of wood covered with 22 carved elk-horn plates held together by bands of gilt bronze tipped with casts of beasts and birds’ heads.

The Kamięń casket was made before the year 1000 A.D. We still don’t know how and when this casket came to Kamięń. There are a few opinions about this question. According to the first interpretation, the presence of the casket in Kamięń is connected with one of two Christianising missions by Bishop Otton of Bamberg. He was in West Pomerania twice, in 1124 and 1128 A.D. According to a second version the Kamięń casket could fall prey to the Slavic war campaign against Konungahela in 1136 A.D. According to another view the casket come to Kamięń in the period 1176–1188 A.D. as a gift for the new Cathedral in Kamięń. In another hypothesis worthy of notice, the Kamięń casket could have been made in a local West Pomeranian workshop.

The last hypothesis is especially interesting in the presence of numerous objects decorated with a Borre-style ring-chain ornament probably made in a local workshop in Wolin, too (Duczko 2000). However at present there are only a few Mammen-style objects from West Pomerania able to support this theory.

Within this theory the close morphological parallels between bronze beast heads on the Kamięń casket and the small wooden beast’s head discovered in the harbour of Wolin are very interesting (fig. 4) (Duczko 2000). It measured 5,0 cm in length and 2,3 cm in width (Filipowiak 1983). Perhaps the wooden beast’s head from Wolin was the pattern for the bronze beast’s head on the casket from Kamięń?

We can date this object based on dendrochronological dating of the wooden remains of harbour constructions (dates: 943±15 & 994±13 & 1010 A.D.) to the end of 10th or rather the 1010s (Ważny & Eckstein 1987).

Since the number of surviving Mammen-style objects is extremely few, the new Mammen-style find from the last archaeological excavations in Wolin has an even greater importance. It was found in 2002 during archaeological excavations on the Wolin Gardens site situated between the Old Town and early medieval Wolin’s production-commercial district at Silver Hill. This excavation was next to one of the earlier main excavations in this area revealing the remains of the next harbour and wooden buildings and a lot of Slavic artefacts.

It was within this context that the wooden disc interpreted as the sun-compass (see VHM 2/02), the dragonhead in Ringerike-style, the objects with Borre-style decoration (Stanisławski 2002) and the circular brooches typologically Sp2 (Terslev) were discovered (fig. 1).

The new Mammen-style find (fig. 5) can be connected with the settlement level from the neighbouring excavations dated on the basis of dendrochronology (dates: 935+x±7 A.D and 995±6 A.D. and 996+x±7 A.D. and 1005±6 A.D. and 1011+x±8 A.D.) to the end of 10th or the beginning of 11th century.

This artefact is cylinder-shaped and empty inside with cutting at the wall. It measures 4,9-5,1 cm in length, 2,7-3,5 cm in width. It is decorated on the faces with the carved ribbon-shaped bodies of three snakes in different sizes forming loops, which belong to the most typical Mammen-style motifs (Fuglesang 1991). On the surface between the snakes the big bumps very popular in Mammen style are visible. The body of the biggest snake isn’t complete and the middle part is missing. The bodies of the two main snakes are underlined by a double outline. Like the many other decorated artefacts from Wolin, the Mammen-style object is made of antler.

The Mammen-style objects from West Pomerania like all other Scandinavian
Artefacts from Wolin are dated to the short and compact period of the last quarter of 10th and first half of 11th century. Some of them are part of everyday life like the pottery, spindles or soapstone pots. Some of the artefacts belong to the sphere of Scandinavian mythology like Thor’s hammer or the decorated jeweller’s vice (fig. 2).

Many of them are exclusively Danish style like the objects decorated in Borre, Mammen and Ringerike-styles, open-work scabbard chapes, game pieces or jewellery and are the evidence of a Scandinavian warrior elite in West Pomerania (Duczko 2000). So all of them together with runic inscription (one from Wolin and the second from Kamień) represent the compact system of Scandinavian culture that existed among the Slavs.

It coincides very well with the era of the Jómsvikinga saga but also to the period of intensive and close dynastic relationships between Poland and Denmark. So perhaps this might be a good place to look for the roots of sagas and the Scandinavian presence in West Pomerania evidenced by archaeological research.

**Fig. 4. The wooden beast’s head discovered in the harbour of Wolin – Old town. (From Filipowiak 1983).**

**Fig. 5. The new Mammen-style object decorated on the faces with carved the ribbon-shaped bodies of three snakes from Wolin-Gardens. Drawing M. Jusza.**

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**References**


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**About the author**

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The Novgorod Prince Oleg the Prophetic seizing Kiev (882 ad.)

Prince Rurik eventually died in the northwestern region in the year of 879. Before this, he handed over the administration to his relative – Oleg, the son of Rurik – as Igor was too young at the time, perhaps only 5 years old. Most historians consider Oleg to be the brother of Rurik’s wife, Infanda, and a Norseman by birth. He was a very remarkable leader and the true founder of the Kievian Rus State. Being the little prince’s regent, he ruled for 33 years as a Great Prince himself. During this period he won many famous victories, reached a peak of power and glory and became the real founder of the first Russian early state federation – the Kievian Rus.

The moment depicted is when Oleg threw off his merchant dress and appeared before his surprised opponents (the Kievian rulers, Ascold and Dir) as a powerful and formidable prince-warrior, surrounded by his true družina. And when he raised his young heir – his nephew, Prince Igor, in his hands with the words: “Here is the true Prince!” – Ascold and Dir were killed.

Oleg is dressed in a Rus-Slavic costume with a strong Scandinavian influence. He is richly armed: his short hauberk with short sleeves is typical for the East-European region. His helmet, equipped with a half-mask, is a Viking type similar to the one found in the Giermundbu grave (10th c., Norway), representing strong Vendel traditions. The silver inlaid decoration of the half-mask, covering the nasal and eyebrow goes back to the earlier style of Oriental mode. High leather boots (without heels at that time) were also the result of Oriental influence, but through the ages they became the favorite kind of footgear for Russian aristocracy and rich townspeople.

A warrior with a long battle knife – skramasax – also has the nomadic-style Kazanian costume, reconstructed according to finds from the Dimity Archeological complex of the 9th c. His domed steel helmet is made of two pieces of iron, held together by a iron vertical ribbons and hoop. This helmet was also found in a družina burial mound at Gnezdovo (10th c.) and also has an Oriental origin. The mail aventail was attached to the helmet with a special thong, pulled through the mail rings and iron bushings, cut out and curved from the lower edge of the helmet hoop. This system of attaching the aventail to the helmet allows it to be quickly taken off for cleaning or repair and then attached to the helmet again. Through the ages this system would fade and change into the west-European basinet with the same construction of the removable aventail during 15th–16th cc.

A warrior with a battle-axe and shield is dressed in his

Introduction

The permanent Slav colonization of the East-European plain may have taken place from the Carpathian Mountains region and continued for many centuries, while different East-Slavic tribes settled in the basins of the great rivers, Dnieper, Upper Volga, Dvina, Ladoga Lake and the Baltic Sea, mixing peacefully with the Finno-Ugrian and Baltic peoples.

Since the 9th century, settlements of Rus were mentioned among them, which according to the archeological finds and other sources could be identified as Scandinavian or mixed Scandinavian-German-Slavic. They were the merchants and great warriors – the Arabian authors admired their “Frankish” (or “Solomon’s?”) swords and “fine, priceless mail shirts”.

Their name “Rus” (which came from “Ruotsi” and meant in some Finnish dialects “the warrior-oarsmen”) became the basis of the name for both the country and the Russian nation. And one of the most interesting spheres of mutual cultural penetration in the mixture of the Norman-Slavic military affairs, weapons and joined campaigns in the vast regions of Eastern Europe can also be seen.

The Army and Družina (850–950)

During the period of the “Dark Ages”, when the process of forming the Kievian Rus state had begun, the social structures of military democracy still dominated those vast territories. This situation had determined the structure of the armed forces.

The different tribes lived in clans, each with its own recognized territory. The tribal aristocracy (музhi, which means “men”) served their chief, who under Avar and Khazar influence was first called Kagan, but then – in the European way, Kniaz (Prince). All the free men were armed and fought as warriors. At that time this kind of situation was typical of the outlying districts of Europe, though more advanced countries in the west and south were already adopting the feudal system.

So, from 9th c, we can distinguish the professional military revenue of the princes in Russia, which at first consisted mostly of the Varangian mercenaries. But soon they mixed with the local aristocracy, adopting the Slavic language, gods, costume and armament. Those companies of professionals, comparable with those already seen in Scandinavia, formed the prince’s družina.

http://viking.hgo.se
Military Affairs

Part 1

How ever, they were more than an ordinary detachment of mercenary professionals. The word comes from the Russian “дружба” (druzhba) – which means “friendship”. And indeed the young druzhinas grew up, played, studied and trained together with their prince. They ate in one room with him, took part in hunting and gathering of tributes with him, formed his council and, of course, fought for him in battle, being the main unit of the army and the most loyal and well-armed reserve. It was said: “The prince fights for glory, but the druzhina fights for the prince”.

As a result of the union of the Slavic and Finno-Ugrian tribes, great military campaigns had begun, which required the mobilization of large armies. As early as the 9th c. they were not socially homogeneous. For more than two centuries the professional druzhinas and Varangian mercenaries banded together with the voy (which means “warriors”) or tribal militia with the urban levy to form the Kievian armies.

From the early ages of the Christian era the Slavic tribes fought on foot as infantry. This tradition seemed to continue until the end of the 11th c. though the cavalry equipment is widely spread in the archeological finds since the 9th c. This is especially typical for the druzhina burial mounds, where the warrior is often buried together with his weapons and his war-horse. Near Kiev a special grave for a war-horse of that period was found. He was buried in his own mound like a warrior, equipped with the spear, bow and a quiver with arrows!

The druzhina seemed to develop a cavalry capability only after clashing with nomadic peoples of the steppes. As for the early centuries of the Kievian ordinary everyday clothing. It consists of a thick long-sleeved woolen coat reaching to mid-thigh, belted at the waist, and rather tight woolen trousers. It looks like Scandinavian style, but the long slit in front of the coat (down to the belt) is shown according to a pagan amulet from a Slavic grave of the 9th c., made in the shape of a male figure. The jewelry, generally worn by men, was arm rings of braided or twisted gold or silver – the gifts of princes.

Another kind of mail adornment was a richly ornamented leather belt, equipped with a silver or bronze gilt buckle and different silver, braided gilt plates and pendants. According to ancient steppe tradition such a belt marked the range of the warrior, showing the history of his heroic deeds and war exploits. They originate from Khazaria, Volga (Black) Bulgaria and nomadic Hungarian tribes.

A spherical-conical type richly decorated helmet was also found in the Gnezdovo complex (9th–10th c.). Its skull is covered with gilt-carved strips and equipped with a slender riveted peak at the top. The helmet is made of 4 metal segments and again goes back to nomadic Central Asian traditions.

Reconstruction and drawings by the author.
Rus, these warriors seemed to use the horses only as means of the conveyance and prestige. In a description by the Persian author at the end of the 9th c., Mohammed al-Aufi: “The Rus excel over all others in force, but they don’t use horses. If they could master horses, then they would have domination over many peoples.”

The first cavalry combat the Rus had with the Byzantine *kataphractoi* (the heavy armed cavalry) were recorded by the Greek historian, Lev Deacon, during the wars of the Prince Sviatoslav in Bulgaria (971). But infantry formations were still used there as the main military units in the closed formation of a shield-wall. Thus they managed to withstand attacks by the superior numbers of the enemy.

The skill of archery was widely spread both in *druzhina* and urban militia. Bows and arrows are mentioned together with shields and spears as the early weapons of the Slavic tribes by the Byzantine authors of the 4-6th c. And later even the heavily armoured knights of the senior *druzhina* (the *boyars* – from the Russian word “60’, which means “battle”) were equipped with composite bows. Perhaps this was the result of constant combat with flying detachments of the nomadic steppe neighbors.

The junior *druzhina* (where the young warriors served) consisted almost entirely of mounted archers, often including mercenary representatives of the different nomadic tribes again. But it was never the dominating arm (for example like the mounted archers in the Mongol armies or infantry bowmen in England). Their bows were not very strong and defensive armour proved a good valuable protection for the professionals.

Fortification was at the beginning of its development. Different forms of city walls, border fortresses and local castles were made of wood or in the earth-rampart style. But the earliest Slavic-Scandinavian center in the northwestern part of Russia down the Volkhov River – Ladoga (which was built even before Novgorod) had strong stonewalls as early as the ruling period of the Prince Oleg (in the end of the 9th c.).

*To be continued in next issue.*

* Ed. note: There has been much debate about the origin of the word Rus. One of the best-known explanations is that *Routsi* is the west-Finnish name for Sweden. The word Rus has also been connected to Roslagen, a coastal area north of Stockholm.

The public military-historical society, “The Prince’s Druzhina”, of St. Petersburg, Russia (Leningrad, at the time) was established in 1990. Since then the society has taken part in different historical re-enactment events. Today the society has around 100 members. Besides ordinary re-enactment activities they contribute research on questions of military history, equipment, arms and armour, costumes and material culture of the region and near-by peoples (the historical period of 10th–15th centuries).

They have very close contacts with the institute of History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences, Hermitage and others in St.Petersburg and also with “Vikingabyn Storholmen” the Viking village from Norrtalje, Sweden and other organisations. Right now they are preparing for this summer’s big event, “The Village of Vikings in St.Petersburg”.

### About the author

Piotr A. Vasin has been working as a marine engineer on ships around the world and later in a research institute for engine diagnostics. His second scientific and practical interest concerns the medieval and military history of Eastern Europe and Russia. In 1990 he took part in establishing the public military-historical society called “The Prince's Druzhina” in St. Petersburg, where he is chairman today. Email: druzhina@mailbox.alkor.ru
Reunion of Tribes
Vikings and Slavs met in Ukranen land to strengthen alliance

By Geir Sør-Reime
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The Destination Viking Baltic Stories project has as one of its objectives to demonstrate the interaction between Scandinavian and Slavonic groups during the Viking period. The partners of the project include both Scandinavian Viking villages like Storholmen, Gunnegården, Fotevikens Viking Reserve, Trelleborg and Avaldsnes, and Slavonic Viking-period villages like Ukranenland in Germany and Arai Lake Fortress in Latvia.

Not surprisingly therefore, the second ordinary partner meeting of Destination Viking Baltic Stories was held at Ukranenland Prehistoric Village. The village is situated at the outskirts of the town of Torgelow in Germany, close to the Polish border. (Read more about Ukranenland on page 12.) The meeting took place between April 10–13, 2003.

Delegates from the Avaldsnes project (Norway), Ale Viking project (Sweden), Fotevikens Museum (Sweden), Storholmen Viking Village (Sweden), Gunnes Gård (Sweden), Gotland University (Sweden), the Museum at Trelleborg (Denmark) and from the lead partner, the region of Scania attended the meeting, in addition to the delegates from the host, Ukranenland in Germany.

And in fact, this was a reunion, as the area just north of Ukranenland, along the river of Uekra, was a place of intensive interaction between Scandinavians and Slavonic people even in Viking times.

Probably, there was a Scandinavian trade settlement at Menzlin, and the only known Scandinavian Viking cemetery on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea has been uncovered here. It consists of some twenty female burials with ship-shaped stone enclosures. Over the centuries, these enclosures had been covered by sand, but they were excavated in the 1980s.

In any case, this cemetery is a concrete testimony to the interaction between the Scandinavian and Slavonic peoples during the Viking period.

The meeting started at the Ukranenland administration building.

Ukranenland is named after the river Uekra and today consists of a number of elements, including a Viking-period Slavonic village by the river close to the administration building, a Medieval Centre under construction in the centre of the town of Torgelow. Here we find the ruins of the medieval castle of Torgelow and, sheltered by these ruins, Ukranenland is
currently constructing a small medieval settlement and museum.

In addition, Ukranenland has a shipbuilding yard in Torgelow, where they have built a number of ship replicas. Now, a replica of a Hansatic Kogge is being planned. When ready, it will berthed in the Stettiner Haff at the port of Ückermünde.

Ukranenland also runs a youth hostel in Torgelow, where schoolchildren visiting the prehistoric village etc. can be lodged. A new youth hostel will be incorporated into the plans for the development of the Medieval Centre, too.

The first day, the meeting concentrated on Work Package 5, marketing and tourism. Mr. Nils-Arvid Andersson, in charge of co-ordinating this work package, gave a presentation on current trends in tourism. He stressed that the packaging of experiences into priced products is a hot trend at the moment, and all partners were given a homework assignment to try and create a priced package for their own area.

After the end of the formal session for the day, the whole group visited Ukranenland proper, the Viking-period prehistoric village. This is an impressive village with a vast array of different buildings. There is also a quay, where the various ship replicas are berthed. School classes and other visitors have the opportunity to watch and participate in various handicrafts, and also to row one of the ships up or down the river.

The day was rounded off with a dinner in the administration building. Ukranenland runs a cafe in the building, and the cuisine was absolutely up to restaurant standards!

**Friday morning we first visited**

Ukranenland’s shipyard, followed by a visit to the Medieval Centre under construction in the centre of Torgelow.

After lunch, the party proceeded to the Viking cemetery at Menzlin, and we also paid a visit to the port of Ückermünde, where Ukranenland plans to station its Kogge under construction.

In the evening, we met with the Mayor of Torgelow, Mr. Ralf Gottschalk, at the newly inaugurated Town Hall. After a historic introduction by the Mayor, we were shown a film about the Torgelow and its history. In fact, Torgelow was not granted town privileges until 1945. Torgelow was both a major iron-working centre and the main base of the East German Army until after “Die Wende” (The Turn, that is, the fall of the East German communist regime). Today little remains of the iron working industry, but the German Federal Army still has a garrison there. The town is now looking for new opportunities, and the support for the Ukranenland projects is part of the town’s efforts to create new growth and prosperity for a region with an unemployment rate of around 45% at the moment.

The Mayor’s presentation at the Town Hall was followed by a dinner which hosted in a nearby restaurant.
On Saturday, the meeting delegates had to work very hard with all kinds of matters relating to the running of the project. Only in the evening could they relax a bit again. Then Utkranenland invited to a dinner party at the prehistoric village, serving a tasty dinner outdoors, accompanied by music played on historic instruments. During the evening, we also rowed one of their boats up the river and back.

The main topic of discussion during the day was the quality assessment scheme and how to apply the basic principles of authenticity, accuracy and academic research to reconstructions, replicas and re-enactments. A form for describing various aspects of quality has been adapted for use with reconstructions and replicas, whereas it has proved harder to develop a form to describe the quality level of a re-enactment group and its performance. Some of the problems and challenges related to this matter will be the subject of a separate article in this magazine.

Partners were also reminded of their responsibilities for marketing the Viking Heritage Magazine and getting more subscribers, retailers and sponsors.

On Sunday morning it was time to say farewell to our generous German hosts. During our stay the weather changed from snow and winter to spring and warmth. In wonderful sunshine most of the delegates returned to Rostock and the ferry to Trelleborg in Sweden.

The next ordinary partner meeting of Destination Viking Baltic Stories will take place in Trelleborg (in Denmark) September 17–21, 2003. The spring 2004 meeting will take place in Ale (Sweden).

The meeting turned out to be a real reunion of tribes, and there was a very good exchange of ideas and experience between all partners at the meeting.
More than 1000 years ago the German empire of Otto I was extended as far as the country of the Slavonian tribe, called Ukranen. Two written documents from the years 948 and 965 name this Slavonian tribe for the first time. They were living along the river “Ukra”. Today nobody can say, which came first, the name of the river or of the tribe. In any case, we suppose the meaning of the roots of the name to be: u kraj — in the country (near to the country) or also on the border. The word: u (Jug) also can mean south, so the south part of the ranen tribe. They were living on and around the island of Rügen. The similar Slavonian words: u granič, have the same meaning. The land of Ukranen was always on the border, between German empire and the extensive Slavonian world.

During the spring of 1993, a group of people interested in the history of the Ücker-Randow district had a meeting. Some of them had seen Danish museum-villages, so they came up with the idea of creating a similar project about the Slavonians who had formerly lived here. More precisely they wished to create a Slavonian settlement of traders and craftsmen from the 9th and 10th centuries, as an employment project for long-term unemployed and young people lacking their final school examination. The idea was to do something to combat high unemployment in this poor region and to enrich the cultural offerings here as well as teach people their own history. During this difficult time when East and West Europe were uniting, we were also trying to make a small contribution to tangible teamwork across the borders. After the initial inspiration from Denmark, contacts with several Viking sites all over Scandinavia are now in progress. In the past few years Viking groups in Wolin (Poland) have established a tradition of visiting each other during activities, celebrating of festivals, battles etc.

Last September we went to Biskupin (central Poland), for a long time a meeting point for East European archaeologists, historical craftsmen, warriors and musicians. Here they portray cultures from Stone Age until Viking Age. So we met with Belarussian and Lithuanian musicians in Biskupin. This meeting was full of experiences and contacts, a great source for instruments, sheets and invitations for concerts in these countries.

Returning to our Ukranenland. Not far from here, on the Peene River, near the village of Menzlin, a famous trading place of Vikings and Slavonians was excavated, with the only known cemetery with Viking artefacts south of the Baltic Sea. If we look at the place with its geographical position, the landscape around it and good connection to the Baltic Sea, we can very well imagine how colourful life here had been.

It is our aim to become a similar place. Even now the name of our town Torgelow means trading place. The following chronicle will show the development of our settlement from beginning until the present:

Part 1: 1994–95
Employing and training the first workers to prepare them for the following tasks.
Making 3 different house-models, scale 1:100. After that, building them outside in natural sizes.
Preparing project days for school classes

The port with the two reconstructed Slavonian boats. Copyright: Ukranenland
and historically significant days.

Among the first handicrafts: house construction, carpenter work and other wood handicraft, blacksmithing, pottery, textile work, boat-making and other associated crafts like rope and sail-making.

We took examples for our house constructions from excavations between the Oder and Elbe rivers. The best evidence came from Gross Raden, Neubrandenburg, Wolin and Stettin.

Part 2: 1995–96
The trained workers now had to teach their new colleagues, interested tourists and school classes.

They also reconstructed 4 more houses, a port for ships and a Slavonian boat copied from a find at the Ralswiek – Rügenisland excavation. Besides that they laid out small agricultural fields.

Part 3: 1996
Dividing settlement with the traders’ road closest to the port and the craftmen’s road behind.

Due to the very wet ground it was necessary to construct wooden footbridges as we know them from several discoveries.

Part 4: 1997–98
The reconstructed Slavonian boat was mostly on tour to tourist fairs and other activities in other places. That’s why it was important to build a second one, which can always stay in our port as an important attraction for school classes and tourists.

So we looked for sources other than Ralswiek. Our interest fell on the maritime museum in Stettin. There they display a Slavonian ship found on the Baltic coast; at 15 metres it was 5 metres longer than our first ship. The owner of museum was kind enough to give us all the information we needed, something we had never experienced in Germany.

After 8 months our second ship, called “SVANTEVIT” was finished and our port looked very prosperous with 2 ships.

Contrary to the common opinion that the Slavonian ships could travel only on rivers or near the seacoast, it was an interesting experiment to demonstrate the contrary.

So, in the summer of 1998, our ship went to Denmark with our own crew. This 492 miles at sea took twice as long as we had reckoned. However it was possible and our team survived!

Part 5: 1999–2000
During this period we built ovens for baking, firing pottery and melting bronze. In the middle of the settlement we dug a well for utility (non-drinking) water. For the children, a historical playground was constructed, beside a stable and corral for our goats. We planned for sheep later on too.

Next we made a bigger port, with an extension of approximately 50 m. Since we knew that we wanted to build a third boat, it was clear that we needed a bigger port. Sometimes it was a difficult job to prepare the shore for building the port’s footbridges, because a lot of huge willow trees were growing here. So it took a few weeks for our specialists just to dig out the trees with their roots.

Due to the high tide in spring, our historical playground was flooded. It was impossible to dry it out before Easter. That’s why we’ve shifted the playground completely to another place.

Another problem we had was with our goats. Our fences weren’t good enough to keep the goats inside the corral. We couldn’t allow them to walk through our village constantly, for not only did they eat our newly planted trees, but even the reed roofs. So it took a few days to make the fences more secure.

A bigger project was to erect a big wooden oak gate with a long wall. The archaeological model for this building comes from the gate found in Behren-Lübchin, near Parchim. Six people took a year to build it. It is 3 m high, 80 m long and filled up inside with sand.

Last autumn we educated our team. In October we made historical instruments like lutes and kanteles, and in November there was a course in making bone and horn craft.

In December 2002, we began to build 4 new log houses. Before building them, we made a higher foundation to protect against the wet. We planned to finish them before next summer.

During the last week of March we finished them and we are very proud of our finished work. Our settlement seems a much bigger with 4 more buildings. Four others who are using the houses, now have the job of creating pleasant interiors. This is not so easy with the season for school classes and tourists beginning.

The first major activity this year was our Easter feast with many participants from several Viking groups from north-western Germany. A puppet player named Kiepenkasper provided humorous entertainment for adults and children, in between 2 musical groups playing medieval music.

Our museum is situated 18 km south from Uckerminde near the Polish border and southwest from Wolin Island.

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An interpretation of a Viking-age farmstead, modelled on archaeological findings from Tissö in Denmark, is being constructed in Western Sweden in the municipality of Ale. The first building is now under construction. This is a three-aisled building, 16 metres long and 7 metres wide. There are five roof-bearing timber structures, consisting of two posts joined together with a tie beam. Inside the building there are three structures sunk into the ground and one structure stands on each gable ground-sill.

Preparations
First we laid out the ground-sill that the walls are to stand on, and then the roof-supports were raised into position. By being meticulous when laying out the ground-sill, we got a great number of reference points on this that we could use later on for measuring out the positions for the roof-supporting posts. The upper side of the ground-sill formed a reference level for every subsequent height measurement that we made. Moreover, the ground-sill could be used to stay the wall poles that had been raised.

The roof-supports were assembled resting on trestles on the ground and were erected once they were ready. Each structure was laid on six trestles. We began with the middle roof-support, since this was the highest and thus the most difficult. The holes for the posts were dug wide enough to make it possible to stand and work in them. A large, flat stone was placed in the bottom of each hole. The exact position of the post was measured on this stone using a plumb and a string stretched between reference points on the ground-sill. A substantial packing of stone was put into the ground behind the post hole.

The two posts in each roof-structure were positioned in three directions:

• Horizontally, to make it possible to fit in the tie beams.
• Parallel with the long side of the building.
• Transversely, so that the posts stand exactly straight across the long side of the building.

Once both the posts had been carefully positioned, they were locked firmly to each other using two, sturdy spruce poles. This ensured that the posts would not become dislodged while being lifted. The tie beam was knocked into position between the posts and was nailed in place using wooden rivets. The lower sections of the posts were given a coating of wood tar. Six ropes were tied firmly to the upper sections of the posts: 1 thick hauling rope, 1 brake rope and 4 stay ropes.

Ancient handicrafts part V
From Ale Viking Age project

The first pair of poles half way up. They rest on support as we are about to disengage the winches. The heavy pulling-rope is ready. Note the stones in the holes serving as counterweight. Note the diagonal beam used to lock the two poles in fixed positions.

A moment of concentration before pulling. All manpower was needed to get the poles starting to move upwards, but as soon as they were underway, two appointed persons could rush over to the other side, to man the important stopping-rope.

The first poles are erected, and the most difficult part of the entire building work is over. Note all the ropes used as stays until the long stay-spars have been erected.
The method normally used for erecting roof-bearing structures is to push them up from below using long, lashed poles. Instead, we decided to pull them up using long, strong ropes. There were two main reasons for choosing to do so. Firstly, the structures are extremely heavy, weighing between 1200 and 1400 kilos a piece. Secondly, they are tall, standing some 7.5 metres above ground level. We were not willing to take any risks by having people standing under such tall, heavy wooden structures while lifting them. Pulling the structures into place with long ropes meant that all those involved in the process would be working at a safe distance beyond the radius of a falling post.

The structures that would stand in the ground holes were erected in three stages:

- **Lifting** – the roof-support was tilted and lifted to an inclined plane so that it could then be actually raised into its final position.
- **Raising** – the roof-support was raised by pulling on a rope, with or without tackle.
- **Staying** – the roof-support was secured temporarily with stays to prevent it from falling. These stays were replaced later on with other stabilising building components.

**Lifting**

Using large tripods and powerful lifting tackle, the roof-support was lifted to an inclined plane. At this point, we removed the lowest trestles. The posts were swung down into the post holes onto the stone that they were to rest on. When we pulled on the lifting tackle, the posts slid in to the stone packing and stopped there. They could then be lifted again slightly, to a gradient of 20°. With the structure in this position, we pushed a couple of taller trestles in to provide support and we then uncoupled the lifting tackle.

**Raising**

It was now time to raise the first roof-support into its final position. Since our hoisting point was not high, it was an extremely heavy lift. We had a team of 16 men and women for the job. With a tremendous effort, they managed to start raising the roof-support. When it was half-way up, two people manned the brake rope. Slowly and surely, the roof-support was pulled into position, and when it was nearly plumb, the brake rope was secured round a stake in the ground. The first roof-support was now standing vertically up in place! We all gave a great shout of joy. What a moment!

**Staying**

We immediately secured the raised pair of posts with four stay ropes round trees and stakes in the ground. This whole operation took about three and a half hours from start to finish. That same day, we started to stay the roof-support with long spruce poles that were wedged firmly against the ground-sill and were lashed around the upper sections of the posts.

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A few months later all the poles have been erected. Note the perfection in positioning.
Thematic Philately

Someone who does not collect stamps probably thinks a philatelist is a person who collects stamps issued by particular countries. However, philatelists’ interests are often far more diverse. On the one hand it can mean the collecting and study of not only stamps but also postmarks, covers, so-called postal stationery (cards and envelopes with imprinted pre-paid postage) and a number of other postal objects. On the other hand collections can be made according to criteria other than the country of issue.

One discipline, that of Thematic Philately, is the collection of stamps and other philatelic according to a theme (or topic) regardless of the country of origin. I have been a stamp collector for many years and having a particular interest in Vikings it was natural for me to combine these interests in a philatelic Viking collection.

In a thematic collection you need to describe the theme using philatelic items and short explanatory texts in a correct and logical way. A typical page is shown in fig. 1.

The collection must begin with a ‘plan’ – an index of chapters – that shows with headlines how the collection is developed. Thus, fig. 1 comes from my chapter entitled ‘Sources’. My collection comprises 160 A4-pages and therefore has an extensive plan. It would take us too long to show the entire plan and here I restrict myself to its main headlines.

My title is “The Vikings” with the subtitle “Farmers, Seafarers, Merchants, Artists, Pirates, Founder of States and Colonizers”. After the titles I have thought it necessary to give a short definition of the era covered: “The Viking Age is considered to begin around year 800 and end in the last part of the 11th Century, covering the most exciting part of Scandinavian history”.

The Plan:

A. Background
   1. Origins
   2. Sources
   3. The Political Situation in the World around

B. The Viking Society
   1. Economic Life
   2. Social Life
   3. Political Life

C. Expansion Outwards
   1. Piracy
   2. Founding of States
   3. Colonizing

D. Conclusion
   1. Effects
   2. The Modern Image

It is not possible here to cover the entire collection so, in the following you will find illustrations from selected parts.

Sources
Of the ‘Sources’ of our knowledge about the Vikings, the runic stones are
the only testimonies written by the Vikings themselves. The Rök stone and one of the Jelling stones are shown on stamps, fig. 2. Snorre’s Eddas and the Icelandic sagas are other important sources as is Nestor’s Chronicle, see figs. 3 and 4. The archaeological finds are of course of immense value as for instance the Oseberg and the Gokstad finds, represented in fig. 1. In this figure you can see that also postal cancellations can be used to illustrate the theme. On the same page you find scenes from the Bayeux tapestry that also provides an insight to contemporary history.

Fig. 5 illustrates both rural and town life as recorded in the Domesday Book and common Viking time farmhouses can be seen on the Faeroe stamp and a reconstruction of a Bishop site on the Greenland stamp in fig. 6.

The Viking ship
The most common Viking philatelic illustrations feature their ships, sometimes more imaginative than correct. The two most important inventions, the keel and the clinker build hull are best shown on the Manx stamp booklet, fig. 7, another form of philatelic issue that can be used in the collection.

Thanks to the many philatelic items, it is possible to illustrate several details of the ship. For instance that the helm was situated on starboard, see fig. 8, from which we have the Scandinavian word ’styrbord’ (styra = steer) and the English ’starboard’.

On the same stamp we can also see the vane (read the article in VHM 1/2003) in the mast-head and an animal head on the prow. The animal might be a lion, a snake or a dragon, the latter often used as a term for the ship itself. The purpose of the figure-head was twofold; to frighten enemies and to guard against evil sea spirits. When on peaceful missions the figure-head was removed in order not to provoke friendly land spirits.

The Icelandic stamp (fig. 9) depicts Ingolf Arnason’s arrival in Iceland as the first settler and it clearly shows that the animal head has been removed. The most common mistake is shown in fig.10, shields were never hung outside the gunwale when sailing, the risk of losing them being obvious. Besides, if the shields covered the oar holes, the shown rowing would not be possible.

Religion
During the period the religion changed from Æsir belief to Christianity (fig. 11). Odin and his Sleipner can be seen on the meter cancellation (fig. 12) with the logo of the Swedish Historical Museum.

Heimdall is illustrated by a postal label (fig. 13), put on letters which were damaged at the wreck of s/s Heimdall in 1929. That the old gods are still living can be shown by the postmark on the Danish letter in fig. 14.

The introduction of Christianity is shown by fig. 15, the Christ figure from the large Jelling stone.

Poetry and Art
Poetry was an important part of the social life and another meter cancellation (fig. 16) from another museum can illustrate the Sigurd tale.

The Viking time art is according to David M Wilson “the most exciting and interesting art form during this time period”. It had its roots in Germanic animal ornaments but was also influenced by Celtic art, compare the two cancellations in fig. 17.

We can distinguish several styles: from the Oseberg style, via Borre, Jelling, Mammen to the final Urnes style, all named after typical finds. The Urnes style from the slim, elegant animals on the portal of the Urnes stave church in Norway, fig 18. The Christ figure in fig. 15 is made in the Mammen style.

Expansion outwards
For a long time the Vikings were only known as pirates and they probably began that way.

Sometimes the Viking period is considered to begin with the pillage of the Lindisfarne monastery in 793, at least it is the first pictured. The well known fragment of the Lindisfarne picture stone has been used for a German (?) cancellation (fig 19).

The Englishmen themselves remember the battle of Maldon in 991 (fig.20), when Olav Trygvasson got 22 000 pounds of gold and silver in so
They then enlarged the realm to cover most of Ukraine and parts of today’s Russia. The greatest of the rulers was Jaroslav ‘The Wise’, who can be seen to the left in fig. 25, holding his book ‘Ruskaja Pravda’, the first written Russian law. In the background is Kiev of the tenth century.

To the Southwest

When the Vikings arrived the British Isles were divided into small kingdoms. As more and more of the Viking invaders settled down and formed their own colonies, some of the local kings were defeated by Viking chieftains, who formed their own small kingdoms. This was the case for instance in York, Dublin and in the so called Danelaw. In these parts we can still trace the settlers’ names and language in the today’s place names. Several thousand towns and villages in Britain have Scandinavian names, more or less corrupted today. For instance (fig. 26) Swansea = Sweins ey = Swein’s island.

In 1013 the Danish king Swein Forkbeard invaded England and conquered most of its small kingdoms but he died after a short time. It was his son, Cnut the Great who finally united the country under his own sceptre. Cnut is seen on a coin on the Danish stamp booklet in fig. 27.

In France the Viking raids became such a torment along its coast and rivers that the French king Charles the Simple offered one of the Danish chieftains, Ganger Rolf, the province around the Seine estuary in exchange for the defence of the river against other Vikings. This arrangement became a success for both parties that the Seine area then escaped the ravages and Rolf (Rollo in French), was made Duke of Nordmannia (Normandy). What Rollo looked like is unknown, but a Jersey stamp (fig. 28) depicts his imagined effigy, where he is shown with his great great great grandson William (the Conquerer). Rollo brought in many compatriots and also here we can trace the Scandinavian influence in the place names, for example the town Yvetot (fig. 29) got its name from the village Ivetofta in the south of Sweden (in Denmark at that time).

When the English king Edward the Confessor died in 1066 without an heir, his earl Harold Godwinson immediately proclaimed himself king. However two other pretenders to the throne soon appeared, king Harald Hardrada of Norway (fig. 30) on dubious grounds, and William, the seventh Duke of Normandy (fig. 28), claiming that Edward had promised him the throne.

Harald Hardrada was the quicker to act and sailed with a great fleet up the river Humber but was defeated and killed by Harold in the battle of Stamford Bridge. Only a few weeks later William landed in the south and after forced marches Harold met him in the famous battle of Hastings.
illustrated in the Bayeux tapestry (fig. 1) and today also used in tourist propaganda (fig. 31). After the battle William accomplished the final unification of England under Norman rule.

In 1016 some Norman pilgrims returning from Jerusalem, joined the Lombard side in a war against the Byzantines in southern Italy. After reinforcements from Normandy, they soon took command over the whole area, including Sicily, the latter taken from the Saracens. Roger Hautville became Great Count of Sicily in 1101 and his son was crowned by the Pope as King Roger II, who also built the cathedral of Palermo, all shown in fig. 32. The two Rogers initiated the ‘golden epoch’ of Sicily, which lasted about 100 years until the family became extinct on the male side.

To the Northwest
When Norway was united under Harald Finehair in 872, many chieftains sailed westward (fig. 33). Some of them settled on the Faeroe Islands and some went further on to Iceland. In fig. 9 we can see how the first settler, Ingolf Arnason, is throwing his high settle post overboard off Iceland. He settled where the gods decided to wash them ashore, a place he named Reykjavik (Smoke Bay). To mark the millennium of the Icelandic parliament, the Althing, in 1930, a set of 15 stamps was issued, most showing scenes from early settlement times. In fig. 34 we can see the Law Speaker at The Thing.

In 982 Erik the Red was outlawed in Iceland and went further west to avoid punishment. He settled on the west coast of the land he named Greenland and maybe with the help of that selling name he encouraged more Icelanders to join him in this new colony. In fig. 35 we can witness the somewhat romantic Monegasque view of Erik’s arrival to Greenland.

Erik’s son Leif (fig. 36) was the first European to reach America, but if he found grapes, they could not have been as big as those shown in fig. 37. The first settler in America was Thorfinn Karlsefni, already shown in fig. 23 but the whereabouts of his settlement is as unclear as where Leif found his grapes. We know for sure that some Greenlanders lived for some time at L’Anse aux Meadows on Newfoundland (fig. 38) but probably neither Leif nor Thorfinn were among them. Nor do we know what a Norwegian coin (fig. 39) found in an Indian village in Maine indicates.

Conclusion
This is just a short survey of the story I have told in my collection and a sample of the abundant philatelic ‘Viking items’ that I have used. It is certain that more discoveries will be made that will tell us more about the Vikings and it is hoped that they will be subject of philatelic issues. There are also several articles in the Viking Heritage magazine that give useful information that can help with the collection.

Language checked by Ron Backhouse

Some of the stamps are here reduced in size.

About the author
Gunnar Dahlvig is a retired graduate engineer and senior master from Helsingborg, Sweden. 1976–1988 he was chairman of the Swedish Thematic Collectors’ Association and is now their honorary chairman. 1975-1986 he was on the board of the Swedish Philatelic Federation (SFF) and its President 1989–1996, and now its honorary president. Vice president of the International Thematic Commission 1988-2000. He signed The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in the year 2000. The author of some hundred of articles about Thematic Philately and several about Vikings in philatelic magazines and books, published both in Sweden and abroad.

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Discussion
This part of the article will deal with the use of gilded vanes based on our experience during crossings of the open sea, and our many fjord and coastal sailings, along with situations when the boats were sailed, rowed or moved along rivers, lakes and canals. Also, even while in locks, at rest on beaches or in harbors we were able to observe the practical function of the vanes. This understanding, our seamanship and what we think we know about the Vikings, have all produced some answers and new questions as to the proper function and use of the golden vanes. It is our hope that this material will lead to a new dialogue and further research on the use of golden vanes in Viking ships.

Weather Vanes
The vanes’ function as wind indicators is poor. Even if they might have acted as such in time on top of churches at a later point, this could not have been achieved on board a boat at sea. The slightest movements of the boat made the vane swing or spin around, even if a fair wind was blowing. The vanes’ oblique shape and the weight of the animal figure on the outer rim made them unstable and highly susceptible to shifting with the slightest movement of the supporting rod.

Going downwind was the common way of Viking sailing as it would be for any ship rigged with square sails. In such cases any longboat would roll and jaw quite a bit in a following sea, and a vane on top of the mast would keep spinning from port to starboard constantly. Not even during an optimal sail with a strong wind from behind on a smooth sea would the vane stand downwind, as it theoretically would do on a displacement ship. In our very light vessels with their rather long hulls and narrow beams and a flat bottom amidships the scenario would usually be that the crew on board felt little wind because the ship was travelling almost as fast as the wind, surfing or sliding on the surface of the sea. We never experienced that the vane would stand downwind during such incidents. The vane in the bow of the "Hitra" would be behind and covered by the sail and not experience much wind from any direction, as the sail would capture the wind’s force.

Our simple and reliable wind indicators on all our missions would be a light piece of yarn fastened 6–8 feet up windward on the aft shroud in each ship. We also used a slim lace about 1–2 feet in length at the very tip of each mast, above the vane. This was our means of determining where the wind came from, and I wouldn’t be surprised to learn if the Vikings did just the same. On board a Viking ship, as on any square sail boat, it is very important to observe the wind and to keep it behind the sail at all times. Failing to do so would be much much more hazardous than on any other type of sailing vessels with a different rig. The vanes would not work for this purpose.

Only when sailing close-hauled or with the wind from the side could we experience that the vanes stood the same way as the wind blew. This is when the boats will heel over under the pressure.

This is a typical picture of a golden vane in port. Even in overcast weather it glows and gives a powerful appearance. Notice the wind indicator above the vane.
of a full or a reefed-down sail. Under these specific conditions the vanes both in the bow of the "Hitra" as well as in the masthead of the "Froya" tended to stand down leeward, at least for some time before shifting or swinging, and with the upper rim more or less parallel to the horizon. On these occasions, I personally felt that our golden vanes showed themselves off best. They looked gorgeous.

Sailing Aid
For any Viking ship to perform well under sail with the wind from the side the hovedsman would try to counterbalance the wind's lateral force by moving people over to the windward side, just like a modern yachtsman would. If a long boat-designed ship develops too much of a list, the keel loses its grip as one side of the flat or belly part of the bottom will go deeper in the water, thus allowing the ship to slide sideways rather than moving forward and keeping its height towards the wind. This should be avoided.

Many times I therefore wondered if the oblique 6-degree angle of the Heggen vane, and similar slant on other vanes, is not a function of a maximum list for any Viking ship. It should not heel over more than 6-8 degrees, or be "dipping the animal", sailing along with the wind from the side in a good breeze. If a ship had vanes in the bow and the stern, the crewmembers could only look at the vanes and the horizon to know when to move over, but then again many would probably already be on the right side long before the ship reached that angle. It is more likely that when the list approached six degrees it was time for the crew to give out on the lines keeping the sail down, thus reducing the force on the sail and righting the boat, to get a better grip on the sailing performance and at the same time preventing it from capsizing.

Sailing a Viking ship back then, just as with our traditional longboats today, must have required great teamwork with a lot of coordination and alertness. When a sudden squall or gust of wind rushing down from a mountain hits such a ship sailing with the wind from the side, it will capsize it in a matter of seconds if the captain and crew don't know what to do and react instantaneously. In our boats, sailing along the west coast of Norway with a full sail, we soon learned to be very much awake and do the right thing under such circumstances. It was
also important that the ship be ballasted properly. Failing to reduce sail or ease the pressure at the right moment would leave you in the water with a disabled boat before you know it. If that happens, and the boat is ballasted correctly, with glacial stones, it will shift the ballast helping the boat around, dropping the stones and offering you a wet ride on its bottom. Out at sea you may observe a squall from far away and reef down in time before it hits you. Normally you would try to sail away from the wind if it increases a lot, and if it is changing directions you will have to bear with it. The sea will also start growing. Under such circumstances the vanes will be of no use as sailing aids.

**Signaling and Identification**

My idea is that the vanes would be of good use for controlling the boat and aiding the crew under sail, especially along the coasts where the winds often tend to be gusier than out on the ocean. This would also be when people on land would observe the flashing vanes. The vanes’ signalling effect has been mentioned. That was what gave us the greatest surprise. They functioned extremely well as communication devices and I am certain that a significant part of their function was to flash messages to shore that an important ship was coming.

The signalling effect would be less for a vane in the bow compared to a vane at the top of the mast that would send its signal a much longer distance. However, the signalling effect was good even for a vane placed in the bow of a ship. Our vane moved sufficient for any person in front or to the side of the ship to observe its distinctive blinks. But people at the aft quarter or behind the ship would be unable to see this. To compensate, another vane in the back of the ship would be necessary. Old documents indicate that this could very well have been the case. Obviously a vane at the top of the mast would send its flashing signal a longer distance. Ships could even be spotted from land well before they could be seen on the horizon. Ships fleeting returning home or royal and high status processions along the coast would naturally be the right place to use vanes. The same would be the case in battle situations and for expeditions or visits in the Viking world. The vane was the standard of a mighty person and followed him at sea as well as on land.

Most of the Northern Sea is between 55 and 75 degrees North. That was the main body of water the Vikings sailed. At noon on mid-summer the sun does not rise very high. The angles from which the sun’s rays hit the golden vanes are perfect for an optimal reflection to be registered by an observer. In a boat under way the vanes will continue to swing, shifting its surfaces’ azimuth and elevation plane constantly in an endless motion, sending its reflecting rays randomly in any given directions. Even without a direct hit the golden vane will glow and give a strong signal, while a direct hit will catch your attention even if not looking, just as when someone catches the sun in a modern day’s mirror and reflects it into your eye. This significance of the golden vanes reflects wealth and power and would clearly be a symbol worthy of a king.

The Oblique Vane

It makes a lot of sense to make the top angle of the vanes greater than 90 degrees and place an animal on the outer end to make them unstable. While sailing and observing the vanes over a long time and in all imaginable scenarios, I came to believe that this was just the way it had to be. A ship’s mast or its bow is not vertical, but constantly tilting, when the ship is underway. With an oblique shape the guiding animal would look up and towards the horizon, even if the ship were under pressure of a full sail and heeling over. At that time the upper edge of the vane will tend to be parallel to the horizon.

On a 90-degree vane placed on board a ship the animal would often look as if it is falling off into the sea and it would be looking down instead of out and up. When resting in port at anchor or close to shore the oblique vane will have a majestic appearance shining in gold and overlooking everyone and everything. Its high centre of gravity caused by the animal and its high angle will make it swing about at the slightest movement of the boat, or with the help of the wind, and add to this superior attitude, while reflecting a golden beam of light. With a slight list of the boat to one side, as often happens when a longboat sits on its keel on a beach, the vanes will tend to stand parallel to the beach giving a maximum signalling effect from land if the wind is calm. On the beach at Holy Island we landed our ships much like the Vikings must have done. Our vanes made a majestic picture. The visual and esthetical effect was astonishing not only to us, but even more so to visitors who greatly admired our golden vanes.

Their appearance resembles the many figureheads I have researched in sailing vessels or museums from more recent times.
The Chieftain Ring

is the most valuable of the Viking rings found on Gotland. A great man’s ring characteristic of the Viking age, rich with gold and decoration. Designed and handcrafted by our goldsmith ODD, in 18k solid gold. Revel in the art of medieval jewellery at its best. Treat yourself or someone you love.

Modelled on a 1000-year old ancient relic from the Viking Age

Order your jewellery now – direct delivery
Pay cash or 20% upon delivery and the remainder in 6 or 11 months.
Even if placed underneath the bowsprit they look up and forward. This was a custom even long before the Vikings, so why should they introduce vanes with an animal looking down? A vane with a greater angle than 90 degrees is as poor a match as a weather vane on top of a church or on a farm, as a right-angled vane would be on board an open longboat during a brisk sail on the coast. Such a ship would need vanes with a 96–98 degree upper angle to look right.

**Proper Use – On board**

Our conclusion with regards the use of the vanes out at sea is that the top of the mast is the best place to have a vane. The masthead on a ship at sea, however, is a place you can’t easily get to. As a signalling device between ships or between a ship and land, this is obviously the best place to set a vane. It is seen in all directions whereas the vane on the stem only can be seen forward of the boat if it is under sail. Furthermore, its place is not as well protected as the top of the mast. More than once we had to rush to the rescue to save the Heggen vane in the bow from major damage. In one close call we saved it from getting entangled in another ship’s rig. Another time we just missed an obstacle approaching a lock. In a busy port it would be difficult to manoeuvre with a vane in the bow among vessels with masts, yards and rig. Fortunately, we had secured the vane’s rod in such a way that it could easily be recovered. This was the sole reason why we managed to save the vane from damage.

Sending signals ashore must have been an important function for the use of the golden vanes at sea. Then the masthead is not as well protected as the top of the mast. More than once we had to rush to the rescue to save the Heggen vane in the bow from major damage. In one close call we saved it from getting entangled in another ship’s rig. Another time we just missed an obstacle approaching a lock. In a busy port it would be difficult to manoeuvre with a vane in the bow among vessels with masts, yards and rig. Fortunately, we had secured the vane’s rod in such a way that it could easily be recovered. This was the sole reason why we managed to save the vane from damage.

Sending signals ashore must have been an important function for the use of the golden vanes at sea. Then the masthead would have been the preferred place for a vane.

If the boat was rowed along the coast or resting in port the mast would often be down and the highest point of the boat would be the bow or the stern as most double-enders have close to the same shape at both ends, disregarding the end decorations. Usually it would be the bow sitting on the shore. But one can easily think of instances when boats would be beached the other way around, with the steering oar up. Then the stern would be up on shore and probably also represent the highest point of the ship.

While in port we noticed that the vanes got a lot of attention. We were asked about the OTE-emblem as well as the motif on the bird and the animal side if the Heggen copy. I believe the different motifs on the surface of the vanes, the animal on top and the decoration or symbols attached to the rings could have been the way of identifying a ship or an important person on board while in port. In an illiterate society during the Viking era it would be easy to know the right ship given a description of its vane. Ships had names even in those days but no nameplate or registration tag. Information had to be learned by memorization. Mounting two vanes together is also recorded in historic sources. We did make the “Hitra”’s rod in such a way that it could support both vanes, one above the other and fairly close together. We mounted them in this way several times and learned that they would swing independently which would add extra reflecting power thus conveying certain knowledge. This was our way of telling that hovedswoman, Gunn of the “Froya”, sailed along in my boat. The proper way of displaying joint strength would be to keep the vanes together and display them on a major ship.

**– On Land**

We often brought the vanes along to representations and social events in England and Scotland, partly because we were afraid they might get stolen if left behind in the boats. Also, they gave us an extra topic of conversation. City Mayors and other dignitaries had their regalia so it was natural that we should have our vanes as a mark of prestige and identification. Especially the decorative surfaces of the Heggen vane received much attention, and were studied and admired by everyone. This thrilled us and I believe it would be quite natural if the golden vane had followed the Viking chieftain when he left his ship and that the golden vane, his ship’s standard, served as the king’s **merke** when on land.

The gilded surfaces reflecting power would become much more effective when the golden vane had a **merke** or royal insignia King Olaf used during the battle at Stiklestad where he was killed. It must have been a hard-surfaced item, not a flag. I believe his **merke** may well have been a golden vane. This king later became the patron saint of Norway.
Wear and Tear

I am more doubtful if golden vanes were commonly used during ocean crossings. They were precious items, expensive to make and difficult to maintain during rough ocean passages. They carried a lot of significance, and were important in regard to status. The vanes functioned poorly out on the ocean apart from the signalling effect between ships if they were kept on top of the mast. This has to be weighed against the wear and tear on them and the maintenance problems we experienced. After only few days of use on the masthead “Froya’s” vane had marks of wear on the lower fitting that rested against the supporting ring. Copper had been worn off during the short passage.

Even more noticeable were the marks on the vane on board the “Hitra”. This vane was slightly heavier and had less copper at the pivot point to support the vane’s weight and motion. At times lead-weights were added to the animal’s ring, which partly explains why the vane mounted lower on board the ship and not exposed to the same forceful movements clearly had the most wear. The vane at the top of the mast had five layers of copper plate to support its movements as the pivot point rested on the vane itself and its lower hinge together. The Heggen vane only had three layers for support (see pictures). We never interchanged the vanes, but kept one in each boat when they were not mounted together on board the “Hitra” or in use on land. We asked metal experts what type of bushings we should use and settled for brass. We believe the result to have been much the same if we had used an iron ring for support.

There were few marks of wear and tear on the inside of the cylindrical hinge, the conclusion being that a major part of the noise must have come from the friction between the copper and the ring at the pivot point. With the recorded rate of deterioration, the vanes’ lower fittings would be badly worn during a couple of months at sea. Also the salty air tended to deteriorate the golden surface. But we have no answer as to the gilding technique the Vikings used and how resilient that would have been.

He christened the country with the axe and used the “sun cross” as a symbol. More than any Viking king he was associated with Christianity and the church. Would golden vanes later have been placed on churches to honour Saint Olaf? Their ability to capture the sun and become a symbol of golden brightness and purity is obvious. Such a function must have meant much for the introduction of Christianity in Norway a thousand years ago.

Years after the vanes were in use on the Northern Sea their gilded surface makes them flash a bright and golden beam of sunlight as Hakon demonstrates in this present-day picture. This major characteristic reflects wealth and power and would evidently be a symbol worthy of a Viking-age king.

By using the vanes on board our two boats we got much more attention and also finally could see and learn how they looked and worked. For the latter part of our last missions we therefore decided not to bother with them. So we abstained from keeping them up when we were heading out to sea for a new voyage. It became important to save them from excessive wear and tear. We left them well protected, wrapped up and kept in a chest. Besides, we really had no use for them during the crossing. Upon sighting land, we would take the vane out, and mount the one in the bow of the “Hitra”, to tell the people ashore that we were coming. We would be able to see each other and keep in contact. In pitch dark, as they could have experienced sailing to the south, the only option is to connect the boats with a line as we did, to be sure as to not lose sight of each other. Sighting land is the time to get the vanes out to inform “we are coming”. Sailing along a coast the top of the mast would be the right station for the vane. Coming in from the sea the stem is an easy place for presentation, as it would be in port and with the mast down.

After many years of sailing on extensive Viking-type expeditions in traditional Norwegian longboats we had covered 3700 nautical miles of the Northern Sea. We visited the major countries in the old Viking world to the West, and called on more than one hundred townships. This has given us good knowledge of the seas where the Vikings used to roam, as well as a general feeling for the Vikings’ way of sailing. Only after we started bringing golden vanes along did we add an exciting new dimension to our simple “navigation without instrument” expeditions.

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Viking Learning Vacation

A new concept of learning travels, called Sagas of Discovery, has been worked out by Viking Trail Tourism Association in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The first seven-day tour will take place from August 24–30, 2003. The tour will depart from Deer Lake, NL. The travels are presented in association with Parks Canada.

Sagas of Discovery

Vikings in the New World

On a summer’s day around the year 1000, a Viking expedition from Greenland landed on the shores of what is now L’Anse aux Meadows, a community in northern Newfoundland. Under the leadership of Leif Eiriksson, they established an encampment that served as a base for exploring south throughout the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The encampment remains the only authenticated Viking site in North America and provides the earliest evidence of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere.

Experience the Viking Age on a seven-day tour of Vinland! The tour will include informative lectures by Viking specialist, Dan Carlsson, coordinator of the Council of Europe’s Viking Routes initiative. Supplemental programs by Parks Canada specialists will provide insight into the ancient cultures of the Northern Peninsula - the Maritime Archaic, the Dorset and Groswater Paleoeskimos. A walk along the coast to Philip’s Garden will provide evidence of the ancient dwellings. Overnight in Plum Point.

Day One: Introduction
The first day will be an arrival day with an orientation to the Viking Trail and UNESCO World Heritage Site, Gros Morne National Park of Canada. There will be an introductory lecture by Dan Carlson at the Marine Centre in Norris Point and an overnight in the Park.

Day Two: Vinland
Parks Canada specialists will lead the group on an exploration of Gros Morne National Park of Canada. Take a boat tour of the spectacular Western Brook Pond inland fjord. In the evening, the Gros Morne Theatre Festival troupe will entertain you with traditional Newfoundland entertainment. Overnight in Cow Head.

Day Three: The Original Inhabitants – Before the Vikings, Part One
A visit to Port au Choix National Historic Site, one of the richest archaeological sites in North America, will introduce you to the ancient cultures of the Northern Peninsula - the Maritime Archaic, the Dorset and Groswater Paleoeskimos. A walk along the coast to Philip’s Garden will provide evidence of the ancient dwellings. Overnight in Plum Point.

Day Four: The Original Inhabitants – Before the Vikings, Part Two
The ongoing archaeological digs at Bird Cove will provide an opportunity for you to experience and meet archaeologists at work. Learn basic techniques as part of a mock dig. A local interpreter will provide a demonstration in flint knapping. A visit to Grenfell Historic Properties in the afternoon will orient you to the traditional fishing village that will serve as a base for the next two days. An evening lecture on Viking culture and heritage. Overnight in St. Anthony.

Day Five: The Day of Discovery
In the morning board a boat to experience icebergs and whales and experience the Vikings exploration of the rugged coastline. Travel to UNESCO World Heritage Site L’Anse aux Meadows and visit the Viking encampment. Parks Canada specialists will provide a guided tour of the remnants of eight 11th-century Norse buildings, outlining the discovery of the site in 1960 by Dr. Helge Ingstad, a Norwegian historian and explorer and his wife Anne Stine Ingstad, an archaeologist. Evening lecture about life in a Viking port of trade. Overnight in St. Anthony.

Day Six: The Norse In Newfoundland
Visit Norstead, the recreated Viking port of trade where you will participate in a day of interactive traditional Viking activities. Meet the chieftain and listen to his stories. Learn the secrets of navigation and shipbuilding. Become familiar with the trade routes and trading goods. Learn Viking games, textile and cooking techniques, as well as pottery making and blacksmithing. A visit to the Dark Tickle Economuseum will introduce you to the traditional berries and wild fruits of the barrens. Your visit culminates with a Viking feast and celebration. Overnight in St. Anthony.

Day Seven: Wrap-up
Travel back down the Viking Trail to Deer Lake.

Reservation Information
To book your reservation or for more information, please contact the Viking Trail Tourism Association toll-free at 1-877-778-4546. A 25% non-refundable deposit is required upon booking and the balance of payment is due 60 days prior to departure. If cancelled 30 days or before prior to departure date, a refund of 50% will be issued. No refunds will be issued 29 days or less prior to departure date. Cancellation and interruption insurance are strongly recommended. Ask your travel agent for details.

Website: www.vikingtrail.org
Email: info@vttta.nf.ca

Copyright: Viking Trail Tourism Association in Newfoundland and Labrador

http://viking.hgo.se
“Vikingabyn” (the Viking Village) is situated on the west coast on the island of Gotland, Sweden. It is a year-round business, based on activities focusing on historical events. The construction of the Viking village started in 1989 and since then it has been under constant development. During the spring of 2003 the area has expanded even more and ten new handicraft houses are under construction to be ready for this coming summer. There are a few existing small houses and a Viking Hall with the whole village surrounded by a rampart. The buildings are constructed according to expert knowledge and will be equipped for different handicraft workshops manned by craftsmen.

The Viking village is open to the public throughout the whole summer. Their philosophy is based upon participation and experience by doing and that there should be something of interest for adults as well as playful younger Vikings. They offer activities like spinning yarn, weaving, making Viking jewellery, milling flour and baking bread over embers. For the more competitive visitor there are games and sports and for those who wish to learn more about the history of the Vikings they have storytelling in the longhouse.

Apart from historical events from the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, “Vikingabyn” has a wide range of other activities like team-building, nature experiences, health and recreation. They arrange events all over Gotland for groups, conferences, school classes and other visitors.

The Vikingabyn experience company is a part of the Gotland Viking Island network (see articles published in VHM 3/2002 and this issue) and will continue their expansion heading up to the Viking year of 2005.

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www.vikingabyn.se
Gotland University offers two Viking Courses presented in English

Few periods in our history stimulate our imagination to the same extent as the Viking era. Gotland University now gives you the opportunity to learn more about the Vikings. Two courses on the Viking theme are being given and both are in English but at different levels and with different prerequisites. The courses have a definite connection to current research carried out by Gotland University. Visit the University’s homepage www.hgo.se to get more course information, syllabus, schedules and application forms.

The Viking Society – General Course, 10 Credits (15 ECTS)

This course gives a basic knowledge about the Viking-age society and its development. It is interdisciplinary and uses primary and secondary sources to analyse the Vikings and Viking Age. In e-discussion groups we will be considering different issues such as the view of Vikings and changes in the Scandinavian society during Viking Age, for example the processes that led from paganism into Christianity. The main purpose of the course is to give a complex and varied picture of the Vikings and their society. The focus of interest is on Scandinavia during the Viking Age.

The course is at A- or basic level, which means applicants must meet basic entrance requirements for university studies to be able to take the course. There will be no physical meetings and much emphasis is put on individual study. Study will also be through e-discussions with given topics as well as by written assignments. Today we have 18 students from all over the world reading, discussing and participating in the chat-groups. Our e-classroom serves as a meeting place open 24 hours a day.

The Viking Landscape – Field Course, 5 Credits (7.5 ECTS)

This is an international field course and study will be through lectures, seminars and a site excavation at Fröjel. Fröjel is situated on the southwest coast of Gotland (Sweden). It’s one of the island’s largest and most important Viking-age harbour and trading places. Excavations and research have been carried out over the past 5 years. Both settlement remains and graves have been investigated. The picture we have is of a port of trade that was swarming with activity over a period of 400 years. Merchants with goods from near and far came and met with local craftsmen and tradesmen to barter and trade goods. A cluster of buildings surrounded the harbour with its jetties and in small workshops the craftsmen produced their wares.

The course is at C-level which means that you must have completed at least one year of full-time study in archaeology, anthropology or a similar subject equivalent to 40 credits or 60 ECTS. The aim is to give an introduction to the Viking Age and to provide practical and circumstantial knowledge of archaeological and human geographical methods. Focus is put on different field methods such as recognising stratigraphic details, excavating and documenting different constructions. Special emphasis is placed on analysing and interpreting excavated material. Thirty-six students are registered for this summer’s course and we all look forward to meeting in July and starting the excavation (applications for next summer can be downloaded on the university’s homepage!).

From the excavations in Fröjel, Gotland. Copyright: Fröjel Discovery Programme.
One day about 1000 years ago a Norseman visited the cathedral of Hagia Sofia in Miklagård, the Viking name for today's Istanbul. He must have been so impressed by the architectural masterpiece from the 6th century that he had to carve a message in the banisters on the arcade. The inscription was quite peculiar, although it has been rewritten thousands of times through the history. What makes it still so special is that he used runes when he carved "Halfdan var her" ("Halfdan was here").

We know nothing about Halfdan, but since he carved the inscription on the holy walls, probably a great irritation for the priests, a lot has happened both with the city and the building.

At that time Miklagard or Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine Empire, but in the year of 1453 the city was conquered by the Osmans, a Turkish people, and renamed Istanbul. Hagia Sofia was rebuilt as a mosque, four minarets were added and its decorations were covered with lime. In the middle of the 19th century a restoration started to bring the decorations back into light and this work continued, with some pauses, until 1958. On the initiative of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Hagia Sofia was made into a museum in 1934.

So why bring up the subject of Halfdan and his graffiti now? Because both he and the carving have become an exhibition with the obvious title "Halfdan was here!"

Last spring the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger (AmS) received an inquiry from Statoil as to whether they were interested in producing an exhibition about meetings of cultures the Migration Period and the Viking Age between peoples from the North and the Byzantine Empire. This request was based upon co-operation between Statoil and a Turkish chief of trade and industry, Rahmi M. Koc, the owner of a private museum in Istanbul that bears his name. During a journey in Norway, R. M. Koc became fascinated by the connection between the Nordic countries and the areas around the Black Sea and the Mediterranean ("...stately men, they are like palm trees, ruddy-cheeked and with red hair...").

From Norse writers we can learn from Snorre who told about incidents from the same area, where Norwegian Vikings were involved in both trade and fighting. The merchandise that was brought south most of the time was skins from different exotic animals like beaver, blue fox, squirrel and sable.

Central to the exhibition is trade, but it is also a starting point for a presentation of the meeting between different ethnic groups and peoples. The Arabian scriptures tell that people were very fascinated by the Viking manners and customs and descriptions of how they buried their dead, traded, dressed and how they were on their guard against attacks were related in detail.

The exhibition is focused on Harald, who later became king of Norway under the group, the Khazars, dominated the silk trade in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries. They ruled over the lower reaches of the rivers, in today's Ukraine, the southern part of Russia, Romania and Bulgaria.

There are a number of Arabian contemporary scriptures where the writers tell about the influence the Vikings had on people round the Black Sea and the Mediterranean ("...stately men, they are like palm trees, ruddy-cheeked and with red hair...").

The exhibition is focused on Harald, who later became king of Norway under the...
nickname Hardråde, and who served in the emperor’s guard for 15 years. He was an officer and regarded as being so indispensable that when he wanted to return to Norway, both to escape a story with a woman and to fight for the Norwegian crown, he had to sneak out of the harbour in the dark of night. A part of the thick chain in the basin that was to hold Harald’s boat in place has been lent to us from the Museum of Archaeology in Istanbul and will be shown in the exhibition.

The exhibition is complemented by printed matter, translated to both Turkish and English. The main responsibility for the exhibition and the printed matter lies with Siv Kristoffersen (manuscript), Elin Taranger (design) and Tove Solheim Andersen (graphic design). The head of information at Statoil, Einar Bergh, has had the responsibility for, and put a lot of effort into, both translating the exhibition texts and carrying on current communication with the museum in Istanbul.

Norwegian museums very rarely organize an exhibition composed for a foreign audience. This makes “Halfdan was here” quite a special, unique event. It has been exciting to set up an exhibition when there is little knowledge of what the recipients are expecting. The Turkish people, the Seljuks and the Ottomans, did not arrive in the area until well into the 11th century and later, and mainly Greeks, Italians and other ethnic groups populated Constantinople. With this in mind, the exhibition should be about the cultural meeting between the Nordic people and those who lived in and around Constantinople during that period of time, i.e. between the year 400 and the middle of the 11th century when Harald was in the area, not the meeting between the Nordic people and the Turks.

However this does not seem to have had any influence on the interest in the exhibition. When it opened, on November 8, 2002, at the Museum of Rhami M. Koc, over 40 journalists gathered and around ten television companies, among them the Turkish CNN, interviewed Harald Jacobsen, the director of AmS.

I have toyed with the thought of whether a Turkish-produced exhibition at a Norwegian museum, with a similar theme, would have received the same attention from the media? AmS, like most of the other museums in Norway that have shown a foreign exhibition, knows the answer. Though extensive marketing, I have noticed that media show a lame interest. Either the Turkish media work in a way we can learn from or the simple truth is that the Turkish people are more interested in the prehistoric times and culture history than Nordic people. We should not ignore the fact that Turkish media give priority to other things than Norwegians do, either.

The response from Turkey was good. People were interested by the prehistoric guests from the North and the theme of the exhibition was appreciated. The design characterized by a mixture of authentic and copied artefacts, specially made models of Vikings, other three-dimensional elements, enlargements in colour and texts written in a more literary than factual style, aroused attention. Altogether 20,000 people visited the exhibition in Istanbul.

The exhibition was in Istanbul until January 26, 2003 and on May 4th it opened in the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger where it will continue until September this year.

Statoil has economic interests in Turkey and wishes to create a distinctive image for themselves vis à vis the industry and the Turkish authorities. It is, however, very interesting for Norwegian museums and other parties of the cultural sphere that this kind of profile gets these kinds of results.

This is an opportunity for an additional contribution to the existing modest public funds for presentation of the Norwegian history, culture and art abroad, again something that could be the beginning of cooperation with foreign culture institutions.
A Viking Feast and Viking Market were held in Melbourne Australia at the end of March 2003. The events were arranged and run by a range of groups including Friends of Norway and The Danish Club, as well as the re-enactment societies New Varangian Guard, Frojel Gotlandica, La Trobe University Historical Re-enactment Society and Nordmannia.

The idea came about as more and more movers-and-shakers from the Scandinavian-Australian community became interested in the Viking history. There is a lot going on here! The Council of Adult Education runs regular programmes on Norse myths, monuments and runes. Also, the University of Melbourne runs a programme in Viking Studies. The range of historical societies re-enact the culture and lives of the Vikings.

The Feast was held on March 29 at a restaurant in The Danish Club complex. Set up in a very-Scandinavian U-shape, more than 110 people enjoyed an evening of feasting and drinking.

Traditional costume abounded – even for those who were not part of the re-enactment clubs! Of course, there were also plenty of the stereotypical horned helmets and even a Xena-Warrior Princess (claiming to be a Valkyrie!). In the Australian spirit of giving everyone ‘a go’, the varied interpretations of Norse costume were received with good humour and patience by those who take authentic re-enactment more seriously. In this way, the experience was very accessible for the average person. Door prizes and fashion parades for men and women completed the entertainment.

On the menu was a range of seafood, meat, vegetables, bread and cheese, all washed down with Danish beer and mead from ornate drinking horns.

The Sunday brought a market stall atmosphere to The Danish Club and to the beach opposite. Organisers estimated that several thousand people came through – welcoming the opportunity to purchase Scandinavian food and products, all represented in the one spot.

The Danish Club has a lot of non-Scandinavian members because of its prime location and club facilities, but Australian, Danish or other – all its members were treated to an event that was reminiscent of the Scandinavian celebrations that were common many years ago in Sydney’s Valhalla club.

The re-enactment societies had set up an encampment on the beach overnight where they sold crafts and put on battle displays for the public throughout the Sunday.

A storyteller drew children and adults indoors for some Norse myths and the makers of long boats from the Australian Viking Ship Museum Association rowed around in the bay in their beautiful, handcrafted vessels – a brave feat in choppy conditions!

The event was very different to the Viking Moot that I have been to at Moesgaard in Denmark. There, the build up of atmosphere happens as you walk through the forest glade, down to a beach and a cove where the re-enactment encampment is set up. Battle begins with many of the Vikings arriving on horseback and then the public can witness the re-enactment in the forest clearing.

Of course, in Australia we do not have the ancient horse species or the forest so near to the beach – so our battle took place on the beach itself - tough terrain for the traditional footwear. Notwithstanding the differences, I found it to be quite an absorbing day, especially once the novelty of dressing up wore off and we relaxed on the beach to enjoy the battle displays.

Who needs Moesgaard, anyway?! In Melbourne we were very fortunate to have the support and dedication of an impressive group of people who could put on a Viking battle with the best of them, bringing the history to life.

The organisers have already resolved to run these events next year – for some of us, that will mean starting on our costumes and all-important Viking accessories now!

About the author
Heidi Vestergaard is the president of the Danish Australian Cultural Society and attended both events as an ordinary (but costumed) punter. Email: dacsaus@optushome.com.au
Norse Drape, hand painted by Keith Whitbread, also known as “Chips”.

A Viking fleet will land in Georgia

In the beginning of the 1040s an armed force with Varjag* i.e. Scandinavians, came to the small place Bashi, situated by the river Rioni in Georgia. In the old Georgian chronicle Kartlis toureba it is stated that they were 3000 men and presumably they had been rowing up the river after sailing eastwards on the Black Sea, most likely from the estuary of the Dnjepr River.

After an agreement had been made with Bagrat, the king of Georgia, 700 of them continued to travel further into the country where they took part in a battle against the king’s enemies on the wooded shores of Sasirethis, a few miles west of Tbilisi.

Despite their help, the king lost the battle and fled. After reaching an agreement with the hostile army, the Scandinavian force returned westwards, thereafter disappearing from history.

Both the geographical area, the course of events and the time period make it probable that the story in the Georgian chronicle is a trace of the fatal Swedish expedition by the chieftain, Ingvar den Vittfarne (Ingvar the Far-Travelled), mentioned on at least 26 rune stones in mid-Sweden as well as in an imaginative saga from Iceland. Archaeologist, Mats G. Larsson, Ph.D, maintains this theory in his book “Ett ödesdigert vikingatåg – Ingvar den Vittfarnes resa 1036-1041” (“A fatal Viking Raid – the journey of Ingvar the Far-Travelled 1036-1041”).

Expedition Vittfarne

How did they travel through the land that is Sweden today, in the Viking Age? And how did they travel from here to Russia and the Black Sea? What did the boats look like and how could they find their way on narrow rivers, past rapids and over land between different watercourses? The only way to get more knowledge about this is to do practical tests with similar kind of boats.

Many experiments like this have been carried out during later years, but often with boats that were mostly adapted to sailing and thus far too heavy and clumsy for journeys on rivers and pulling on land.

At an archaeological information meeting about ships, held at Vik’s castle in 1994, Mats met the Viking enthusiast Håkan Altrock. They started to talk about Mats’ idea of testing the practical prerequisites needed for a voyage in the wake of Ingvar den Vittfarne through Transcaucasia, with a replica of a Viking ship. Later on their conversation resulted in Håkan’s decision to build a light, flexible Viking ship for the expedition.

The keel of the ship was laid in 1998 and it was launched in 2001. Since then it...
has been test sailed. In 2003 the non-profit association Vittfarne was formed, in charge of planning for the expedition.

We in the Vittfarne association intend to test the possible route of Ingvar den Vittfarne through Transcaucasia with a Viking ship replica suitable for the purpose. The aim is historical research as well as creating international contacts between people.

The Viking boat “Himingläva”
The Viking boat replica we plan to use is called Himingläva and was built with this expedition in mind. The original is a boat found in a grave mound excavated in 1880 in Gokstad, Norway. In the mound a very well preserved, 23 metre-long ship was found.

The king buried in the mound seems to have enjoyed being at sea because, among his grave gifts, there were also three smaller boats. The largest and smallest of them have been reconstructed and are now on exhibit in the Viking Ship House on Bygdøy in Oslo. The largest seems to fulfil the requirements for a river traveller while still being able to manage sailing in fairly close coastal waters.

The boat, that has been named “sexäringen” (“the six oars”), is 9.75 metres long and 1.86 metres wide. It has room for 9 people on longer trips. It is driven by six pairs of oars or a square sail of 16 square metres.

From the “Old Swedish-village” to Serkland
The expedition will start in the Old Swedish-Village (Ed. note: Swe. Gammlavenskby, present-day Ru. Kakbokska. The old Swedish-village is a village where the inhabitants, whose ancestors emigrated from the Baltic Island of Dagö, still speak Swedish.) in the south of Ukraine in spring 2004. Here the scientific expedition that brought the Viking boat Aifur from Sigtuna, Sweden to the estuary of the Dnjepr via river systems in the late Soviet during the seasons of 1994 and 1996, was broken off. Our journey can be seen as a continuation of this expedition.

The journey starts out from the Dnjepr River, passes the Crimean peninsula and along the Russian and Abchazian coast to the mouth of the Rioni River at the Georgian port of Poti. Via Rioni and its tributaries we will proceed to the village of Zuare where the traverse over the water divider will take place. The boat will then be launched in the Kura River that flows out into the Caspian Sea at the coast of Azerbajdzjan. The final destination is Baku, the capital of Azerbajdzjan.

Interested?
We are looking for sponsors, people with useful contacts, as well as a crew. The crew we are looking for does not necessarily have to be sailors or weightlifters. Rather we want physically ordinary people who can easily mix in a group, sometimes even under difficult psychological and physical conditions, people who are not afraid of digging in and who have a general positive attitude. A strong interest in history and/or boats is a merit as well as a degree of competitive instinct. You must be more than 18 years old.

Anyone who thinks he/she is qualified is welcome to apply, women as well as men. During the sailing season of 2003, you will have the opportunity to test rowing, sailing and maybe pulling the boat on land. After this season we will know how we get along together and who will be chosen to take part in the expedition.

Preliminarily the expedition will be divided into seven stages of 14 days each. The more stages a person can participate in, the better.

In your application please tell us about yourself and why you want to join. More information about the expedition’s dates etc., can be found either on the website – www.vittfarne.com – or by email.

Please send applications to info@vittfarne.com or by letter to:

Håkan Altrock
Arkövägen 8
121 55 Johanneeshov
Sweden

Ed. note
* The word Varjagi (Varangians) is mentioned in the Russian Nestorian Chronicle as a name of a people living beyond the Varjagic Sea (the Baltic Sea). According to the chronicle (chapter XV) the Varjagi included many tribes or ethnic groups, among which Rus, Swear, Northmen, Anglians and Goths are listed.
This is a short presentation of a doctoral thesis written by Mats Roslund. In a coming issue we hope he will provide VHM with a more in-depth article presenting and discussing this thesis.

The subject of interest is Slavic-Scandinavian contacts during 900 to 1300 or more specifically the relations between the Slavic visitors and their Scandinavian hosts. The thesis covers around 500 pages, with the last 200 pages a free-standing catalogue presenting pottery finds as the empirical basis, methods of pottery documentation and terminology. The thesis is written in Swedish with a shorter summary in English.

The author has chosen to study everyday pottery as a way of discovering evidence of the occurrence of Slavic foreigners in Scandinavia. The relationship between the so-called Baltic ware (Östseeware, vendiskt svartgods) and the presence of Slavic people is the main topic of the thesis. The area that has been investigated is the region corresponding to modern Sweden during the period in question. The source material constitutes pottery from different excavations, Sigtuna and Visby among others.

Some of the questions at issue are: Baltic ware has traditionally been regarded as a purely Slavic product. What does the so-called Baltic ware tell us about the contacts between the Slavs and the Scandinavians? How were these pottery-making traditions transmitted to Scandinavian potters? Did they reach Scandinavia through trade and free-moving artisans or as a result of co-operation between Slavic and Scandinavian potters?

The aim of the thesis is to capture the dynamics in the interaction, to distinguish regional differences between the two traditions and thereby minimise the number of possible interpretations.

One of the most important towns in the Viking world was Birka, situated some 20 kilometres west of present-day Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. The town was built on an island, and existed between c. 720 – 950 AD, when it was abandoned and probably succeeded by the town of Sigtuna. There have been many years of excavations at the site, starting with the huge excavations of Hjalmar Stolpe in the end of the 19th century. The last major excavations of the town itself were carried out between 1990 and 1995. These excavations have produced a tremendous lot of new material as well as new information about the town and its history and the result will be published in a series of books in coming years.

This new volume is a revised version of Eva Andersson’s dissertation in archaeology from 1999, analysing the tools for textile production from Birka’s Black Earth, Hedeby, and some of the hinterland sites.

Andersson’s main discussion focuses on the evidence of spinning and weaving in Viking-age towns in Northern Europe, mostly for the production of fine textiles, but seldom for sailcloth and homespun clothing textiles.

The series is published by the Birka Project at the National Heritage Board and the National Historic Museum in Stockholm, in connection with the 1990-94 excavations.

All volumes are printed in English and illustrated with photographs and line drawings. To date, 8 volumes have been published, covering different aspects of the town, as well as more general issues concerning Viking-age history in middle Sweden.

Dan Carlsson
Some of the Viking events in the summer of 2003

**June**

Training camp at Foteviken, Sweden
June 7 – 8
A training camp for fighters and archers will be arranged these two days. Pre-registration necessary.
Phone: +46 40 45 68 40
Email: info@foteviken.se
www.foteviken.se

Viking Festival, Karmøy, Norway
June 11 – 15
On historic ground you can take part in Viking celebrations, see how the Vikings lived, attend concerts and exhibitions, visit a Viking market or participate in historical marches and Viking processions.
Phone: +47 52 85 75 00
Email: uil@karmoy.kommune.no
www.vikingfestivalen.no

Viking Festival in Hafnarfjörður, Iceland
June 17 – 22
Festival with Vikings, crafts, fighters, music, drama, feasts, Viking tents and lots of other activities.
Phone: +354 565 12 13, +354 565 18 90
E-mail: vikings@fjorukrain.is
www.fjorukrain.is

The Viking Play at Lindholmen Høje, Denmark
June 17 – 29
Open-air performance of the Viking play “Blodkenens Feide” daily from June 17 –29, except Monday, 23/6. On Saturday 28/6 there will be a special midnight performance.
Phone: +45 98 17 33 73, +45 21 40 11 20
Email: vikingspil@hotmail.com
www.geocities.com/vikingspil
/end-frame.html

Scandinavian Midsummer Festival, Burnaby, BC, Canada
June 20 – 22
Entertainment by music, dance, storytellers, magicians and Vikings. Try cultural foods, see interesting displays and visit the vendors. To repeat the replica Viking ship, play Viking games and stroll in the forest.
Phone: +1 604 294 2777
www.scandinaviancentre.org

Viking Play at Fredrikssund, Denmark
June 20 – July 6
This year’s performance is called “Brokk’s Besværgelse” and after the performance visitors have the opportunity to attend a Viking Feast. Saturday and Sunday, 21 – 22/6 there is also a Viking market with Viking games and stalls at the Viking site on Kalvøen.
Phone: +45 47 31 06 85
Email: info@vikingspil.dk
www.vikingspil.dk

The Viking week at Foteviken
June 23 – 29
A week filled with activities, games and sports, handicraft courses and one of the biggest Viking markets in the Nordic countries, June 27-29.
Phone: +46 40 45 68 40
Email: info@foteviken.se
www.foteviken.se

**July**

Jels Vikingspill, Jels, Denmark
July 4 – July 20
Every summer for 25 years a Viking play has been performed in Jels. This year’s performance tells the story of Valund the Smith, mentioned in “Den Ældre Saga”. July 5–6 there will also be a Viking market.
Phone: +45 74 55 21 10
Email: info@jelsvikingsp il.dk
www.jelsvikingsp il.dk

Gudvangen Viking Market, Naeroydal, Norway
July 10 – 15
A Viking market and feast in the beautiful surroundings of Naeroydal.
Phone: +47 57 63 37 07
Email: georg.viking@online.no
http://home.enter.yg/vikinge team/

Viking Market, Bronseplassen, Norway
July 18 – 20
Vikings from all over Europe show their crafts and fighting skills.
Phone: +47 37 27 41 69
Email: vikingsgenes.verden@living-history.no
www.living-history.no

Hlödvær Viking Market, Åland, Finland
July 25 – 26
A feast with handicrafts, food, axe-throwing, singing, dancing and much more.
Phone: +358 18 24 259
Email: johanna.enberg@turist.aland.fi or strand_141@hotmail.com
www.aland-vikingar.com

**August**

Hornbore Ting, Hamburgsdus, Sweden
August 1 – 3
For the eleventh year in succession, a Viking Ting is being arranged. Craftsmen, merchants, musicians and storytellers from near and far. Experience a Viking play, axe-throwing, fighting and archery, ships, horses and more.
Phone: +46 525 345 23
Email: helen.eltervag@telia.com
www.hornboreby.o.se

IX Viking’s Festival, Wolin, Poland
August 1 – 3
Annual festival with warriors, craftsmen, Viking ships, music and ceremonial groups.
Phone: +48 91 32 61 975, +48 91 32 60 471
Email: stowarzyszenie@jomsborg-vineta.com
www.jomsborg-vineta.com

Viking Market, Körunda, Sweden
August 16 – 17
Viking market with crafts, food, acting, horses, battles and more.
Phone: +46 8 52 03 04 98
Email: goranlid@swipnet.se
www.forumopen.com

Largs Viking Festival, Scotland
August – September
The Largs Viking Festival celebrates the Battle of Largs in 1263 – the end of the Viking’s political reign in Scotland. The festival includes a Viking Village, themed activities, live animals, Battle of Largs re-enactment, burning of a longboat, fireworks display and entertainment throughout.
Phone: +44 1294 32 44 94
Email: phamilton@north-ayshire.gov.uk
www.vikingar.co.uk

The Saint Olav Drama, Stiklestad, Norway
July 25 – 29
This drama is performed every year in the end of July. It’s a historic play dedicated to St Olav and the introduction of Christianity to Norway.
Phone: +47 74 04 42 00
Email: stiklestad@snk.no
www.stiklestad.no

Moesgård Viking Festival, Denmark
July 26 – 27
Annual festival with a market, Viking ships, horses, feasts and more.
Phone: +45 89 42 11 00
Email: moes-info@moesgaard.hum.au.dk
www.mo esmus.dk

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“VIKINGS RAPED, PILLAGED AND THEN DID THE IRONING”

Now Vikings are said to be responsible for introducing ironing to Scotland, a written in Scotland's Daily Record paper, “The pillaging Scandinavians were surprisingly conscious of their appearance and regularly smoothed their clothes.”

To make the job easier the Scandinavians used ironing boards and smoothing stones, which has been proved by archaeological excavations across Scotland. Dr Euan MacKie, of Glasgow University, said he found out about the ironing culture by chance 10 years ago, when his colleague’s child found a piece of a whalebone on the Hebridean island of North Uist.

To say that Vikings introduced ironing to Scotland is probably right because before the Viking era no archaeological findings have shown any evidence of similar activity. Still only a few ironing boards and smoothing balls have been found in Scotland. The ones discovered have been in female graves, which suggests women did most of the ironing. Dr Euan Mac Kie continues “Vikings tend to be known as murderous invaders and vandals but that was just the wild part of them.”

Most likely ironing was initially introduced in areas of Viking settlement, such as Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles and Caithness. In an excavation of a burial ship from 950 AD in Orkney, a Viking whalebone ironing board was uncovered. This board was classified as an early version of similar equipment still being used in Norway during the early 19th century.

Source: www.dailyrecord.co.uk, May 5 2003

The renaissance of the Vikings on Gotland in 2005

The Gotland Viking Island network (See article published in VHM 3/2002) is now working at full speed to plan the Viking Year in 2005 on Gotland, Sweden. The celebration year will be built upon four big events that will symbolize how a year could have been during the Viking Age with the high festivals, ships, trading and everyday life. Another highlight during the year will be the opening of the exhibition of the Spillings hoard, the world’s largest silver hoard, at the County Museum of Gotland.

Apart from these bigger events, other activities like seminars, Viking-age handicraft, walking-tours in the steps of the Vikings and more will take place during the year. To follow the development of the Viking year on Gotland 2005, visit the website www.vikinggotland.com. The website is currently under reconstruction and will soon be ready with a whole new layout.

Catharina Lübeck

The 10th International Symposium on Boat and Ship Archaeology (ISBSA 10)

The 10th symposium will be held in Roskilde, Denmark on September 22-26, 2003. The program committee wishes to emphasize aspects of maritime archaeology and ship studies that are of current relevance as well to revisit key topics addressed by the first ISBSA in 1976.

The overarching theme for the symposium, “Connected by the Sea”, is subdivided into three main areas: long-distance seafaring and bonds between cultures, the coastal zone and the relationship between land and sea, and maritime archaeology and the interrelation of research disciplines.

The official language of the conference will be English. Further information about ISBSA 10 can be found on the Internet (www.isbsa.com), or by e-mailing the organising committee (isbsa01@isbsa.com). The postal address is: ISBSA Secretariat, The Viking Ship Museum, Vinderboder 12, DK-4000 Roskilde, DENMARK

Viking Ship Museum to be set up in Australia

The planned Australian Viking Ships Museum aims to make comprehensive information about Viking-era ships, and modern replicas, available to the general public. The first replica ship to be built will be a full scale copy of the Gokstad ship. One reason for doing this is that ships of the Gokstad tradition are part of the heritage of so many Australians.

Read more at http://www.australianvikingships-museum.surf.to/
“How to Sail the Single Square Sail” course

The course will be held at the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, Denmark, 23-27 June 2003. The museum has been building and sailing reconstructions of Viking ships and other traditional square-rigged boats for more than 20 years. This course offers a great opportunity to take advantage of the research and knowledge that has been accumulated through this work.

Lectures will be held by researchers: Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, Anton Engler, Søren Nilsen, Max Winner and Erik Andersen. The lectures will be in English covering both practice and theory.

The course also includes sailing practice in traditional, square-rigged boats and a two-day cruise on the Roskilde Fjord. For further information and booking please contact:

The Viking Ship Museum
Att: Poul Nygaard
Vindeboder 12, DK-4000 Roskilde, Denmark
Phone (dir): +45 46 300 257, fax: +45 46 300 256
E-mail: pn@vikingeskibsmuseet.dk"VIKINGS"

The Hugin replica will be repaired

The replica Viking ship, Hugin, which has stood on a cliff in Kent, England for more than 50 years will finally be repaired. Thanet District Council has agreed to put £105,000 and the Heritage Lottery fund £25,000 towards repairing and refurbishing the vessel. The money will pay for the ship to be lifted and repositioned to allow major repair work to its hull.

The Danish experts that were invited in 2001 recommended that timber struts based on traditional Viking boat-building techniques replace the existing masonry supports around the hull.

Dennis Hart, a member of Thanet District Council, said councillors had decided the cost of maintaining the ship has been justifiable because of the level of public support. He said: “The public have given us their opinion– we’ve got dozens of letters highlighting the public’s concern and we feel duty bound to do something about it.” The ultimate aim is to make a visitor attraction out of it.

Source: BBC News, 2003-03-18

Absolutely Viking

Photo exhibition in The Viking Ship Museum, Bygdøy, Norway
04.05.2003 - 31.12.2003

Absolutely Viking is a photo exhibition and documentation of the present Viking sub-culture in which people in our times live out their dreams by creating a Viking identity of their own.

The Norwegian-British photographer Lill-Ann Chepstow-Lusty has visited Viking festivals and Viking gatherings in Scandinavia, England, Shetland, Poland, Spain and the USA.

Besides the exhibition a book is published with the same title: Absolutely Viking (Absolutely Viking). It is in Norwegian with a summary in English.

The exhibition has earlier this year been on display in Midgard Historical Center, Vestfold, Norway.

Have a look at some of the pictures at http://www.ukm.uio.no/uts Stillinger/absoluttviking/
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